Response to Five Reviews by Robert Kysar, Sandra Schneiders, Alan Culpepper, Graham Stanton and Alan Padgett) of The Christology of the Fourth Gospel; Its Unity and Disunity in the Light of John 6

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*Christology of the Fourth Gospel: Its Unity and Disunity in the Light of John 6.*

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**Response:**
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The following reviews were originally read on 21 November 1998 at the SBL’s annual meeting in Orlando, Florida.

**Reviewer:** Robert Kysar

Paul Anderson has done us a great service in exploring the unity and disunity of the Christology of the Gospel of John, particularly as it is evidenced in chapter 6. Not only has he significantly furthered Johannine scholarship with his careful investigation. He has also addressed an important feature of Christian faith itself by inquiring about the Fourth Evangelist’s dialectical thought. On the threshold of a postmodernist age, the contemporary church would be well advised to take Anderson’s work seriously in terms of its implications for faith and theology today. To begin this critical review, I express my sincere gratitude to Paul for his scholarship and commitment to the church.

My assigned task is to review in critical fashion the first of the three parts of Anderson’s massive and expansive book. I do so gladly but reserve the right to allow my reflections to overflow beyond the confines of the first sixty-nine pages of the opus. This paper is, then, comprised of three parts: First, a brief overview of Part One; second, some critical reflections on this portion of the book; and, third, several thoughts and questions about the book as a whole.
I. A Review of Part One: “Three Relevant Surveys”

Professor Anderson begins by setting up the issue of the unity and disunity of the Christology of the Fourth Gospel and how, if at all, scholarship has handled it. Without oversimplification, he suggests in the book’s introduction three obvious ways in which one might go about negotiating the Gospel’s diverse christological statements. The first of those three options is to minimize one set of christological features in favor of another set of such features. In the second and third options, however, the contradictions are taken seriously as they stand and explanations are sought to account for them. The second option seeks such an explanation outside of the text of the Gospel itself and “external to the thinking of the evangelist” (4). The third option is to suppose that the christological contradictions may be explained by recourse to the way in which the evangelist thought (i.e., “internal to the thinking and writing of the evangelist” [10]). Since the third is the option Anderson will pursue, he suggests at this stage that the interpreter needs to take into account three possible levels of dialogue intrinsic to the evangelist’s mode of thought: One between the evangelist and the historical situation; another between the evangelist and the implied reader of the text; and still another within the mind of the evangelist. This delimitation of the options will prove to be important to Anderson’s development of his thesis.

Turning to chapter 6, or what he calls the “Grand Central Station” of Johannine theology (7), Anderson surveys recent scholarly approaches to the Christology of John in general and in chapter 6 in particular. This entails, first of all, his overview of “Recent Approaches to the Christology of the Fourth Gospel” (chapter 1). He identifies five major approaches which he calls “Comprehensive Overviews of John’s Christology,” “Text-Centered Approaches,” “Theological-Christological Approaches,” “Literary-Christological Approaches,” and “Historical-Christological Approaches.” In these various approaches he finds a widespread acknowledgment of the issue of unity and disunity in Johannine thought but “remarkably few” attempts to address the problem directly.

Next, Anderson examines five significant commentaries written between 1941 and 1978. Understandably, he asks how contemporary commentators handle the unity and disunity of the Gospel’s Christology. He elects to discuss commentaries by Bultman, Barrett, Brown, Schnackenburg, and Lindars. One of the important contributions of this second chapter is the discovery that the manner in which a commentator deals with christological unity and disunity is closely linked to the commentator’s theory of the composition of the Gospel. In chapter 3 Anderson surveys three approaches to the unity and disunity of John 6 found in articles and monographs. The first is this author’s argument for a growing consensus around the sources employed in the chapter; the second is Borgen’s thesis that the chapter con-
stitutes a homiletical midrash; and the third is Barrett’s proposal that the evangelist thought dialectically. In this chapter Anderson succeeds in calling into question source criticism as an adequate external solution of the unity and disunity of the Christology of chapter 6. Furthermore he demonstrates that Borgen’s midrash theory is flawed in several respects and that Barrett has introduced but not explored a potentially promising internal solution.

In his summary of Part One Anderson offers three conclusions: First, diachronic treatments of John 6 suggest the importance of Bultmann’s treatment of the chapter. Second, “The presence of different groups within the Johannine audience often accounts for shifts in theme . . .” (69). Third, “the tensions within John’s Christology must be explored as internal to the dialectical thought of the evangelist” (69).

II. Some Critical Reflections on Part One

The introductory surveys are preeminently fair and accurate, as well as insightfully critical. However, they offer a rather curious sort of combination of materials as a means of setting up the thesis of the book. That combination admittedly moves from the more general (Johannine Christologies) to more specific studies. Still, in addition to offering a research report on the issue before him, Anderson seems to want to accomplish two things in this initial part. First, he wishes to begin the process of narrowing the options for understand christological unity and disunity to the internal dialectical character of the evangelist’s situation and thought. Second, he seeks to set up Bultmann’s contribution to the diachronic explanation for careful examination in the second part of the book.

Whatever the intended function of Part One in the scheme of the book, in my judgment Anderson sets out in the right direction. His argument that source criticism is not a profitable enterprise in Johannine studies—much less the assumption that source-critical work holds possibility of reaching a consensus—is precisely right, I believe! His critique of my 1973 article decisively deconstructs the argument there with vigor and insight. (It is an article which remains something of an embarrassment to me, since my position on source criticism of the Fourth Gospel has changed radically since that publication.)

What is far more interesting is Anderson’s use of traditional historical-critical methods in his study. Clearly, he wants to hone those methods for the task of christological inquiry. While correctly rejecting source criticism, he will claim that the Sitz im Leben of the Gospel is accessible to the historical critic and important for understanding the dialogical nature of Johannine Christology. Moreover, he is willing to adopt and adapt a developmental pattern in understanding the composition of the Fourth Gospel and hence the possibility of discerning at least something of the evangelist’s use of tradition. In effect, he seems to say that, while external solutions of unity and disunity are not convincing, it is still worthwhile to employ what might be called external historical concerns in order to understand fully the evange-
list's internal process of theological reflection. My point is simply that Anderson is selective in those critical methods that merit our use. One could fault his work, I think, in terms of its optimism about the historical enterprise, especially regarding the Fourth Gospel. I wonder if our historical methods are sophisticated enough to sustain Anderson's assumptions about the Gospel's original setting, the development of its composition, and the evangelist's theological method. (More on the last point later in my review.)

It may be worth saying here that even if an external (including a source-critical) explanation of the unity–disunity problem were possible, it would never be complete until one dealt with the evangelist's use of those sources. Why would the author incorporate source materials that contradicted another Christology, which supposedly had replaced that of the sources? Short of having to assume that the sources or the traditions had such authority that they had to be preserved, one is forced to begin to consider how the evangelist, as a redactor, understood the juxtaposition of such differing christological assertions. The most obvious answer to that question resides in the suggestion that the evangelist valued dialectical exchange between and among the christologies of the sources and of the contemporary community. Hence, even if one isolates the external traditions incorporated into the Gospel, the investigator is thrust into the internal issue of the evangelist's own thought. This is not really to criticize Anderson's thesis but to point to the inescapable task of trying to understand the evangelist's theological method regardless of whether or not it utilizes external tradition and to affirm the general direction of Anderson's project.

III. A Critical Reflection on the Whole Work

My greatest reservation about Anderson's book may be posed as a simple question: Does the text (even when illumined by historical reconstructions of its original setting, as well as theories regarding its development and its community) give us sufficient grounds for learning how the author thought? I have grave doubts that it does. I wonder if the limitations of the text prevent such an ambitious enterprise. Or, to ask my question in another way, do the limitations of the text bar our access to the theological method of its author? I share the suspicions of many today in biblical criticism that we can never know an author's intention in a particular document. If we cannot discern authorial intention behind a text, how can we discern authorial modes of thinking? The most we can hope to discover is the way the text itself thinks, and that may or may not be the way the author thought.

In the case of the Fourth Gospel, we are given some hints as to the author's mode of thought. I think, for instance, of the role attributed to the Paraclete. Unfortunately, however, the evangelist does not provide us with a prolegomena on methodology, as a contemporary systematic theologian might. Beyond those few hints of theological method, we are left with only a problem—one which Anderson calls the unity and disunity of the Gospel's
Christology. Yet it may be important to note that the problem is ours, and we have no demonstrable textual evidence that it was a problem for the evangelist! The limitations of the text seem then, in my opinion, to restrict what we can know about the evangelist, much less his or her theological method.

I would prefer to remain strictly at the level of the text itself, rather than trying to move behind it. In that sense, you might say that I propose a far more internal solution than Anderson does, namely, a solution entirely internal to the text itself. At that level and with concentration on the function of the text in the reading experience, we might and should, I believe, conclude that the text seduces the implied reader into dialectical Christology.

On that very score, it seems to me, Anderson successfully highlights the depth of the ambiguity of Johannine Christology, particularly in reference to its unity and disunity. The Gospel again and again privileges ambiguity, and Anderson has simply but powerfully displayed the thickness of that ambiguity in its Christology. It is not merely a linguistic ambiguity but a theological ambiguity. The question as to why such a radical degree of equivocation should pervade a Christian document like this Gospel is difficult and, I must for now conclude, impossible to answer. What purpose does such ambiguity serve? I suggest that at best we can witness to the results it has in our reading of the text, but I doubt that we shall ever be able to explain it in such a way as Anderson supposes he has done in this most provocative and scholarly work.

Still, to illuminate the dialectical method of theology, laden with ambiguity as it is, in a canonical book serves the church in significant ways. It is precisely such a theology, I suspect, that will need to become the mode of operation for the church of the future in North America. Thank you, Professor Anderson, for elucidating it for us.

Reviewer: Sandra M. Schneiders

I. Introduction

Let me begin by thanking Professor Anderson for writing a book that not only admirably addresses the topic he assigned himself, namely, the Christology of the Fourth Gospel in the light of John 6, but brings together in one volume a remarkable array of critically digested Johannine scholarship.

I must, at the outset of my remarks, confess that I am in substantial agreement not only with the thesis of this volume but with almost all of its developments and conclusions. From the time that I first encountered C. K. Barrett’s essay "The Dialectical Theology of St. John" in the 1970s I was convinced that he was correct in his hypothesis that the seemingly contradictory, or at least inconsistent, theological positions of the Fourth Evangelist on a number of topics were, first, not so much contradictory as tensive, and second, that the tension was due not to a plurality of sources or redactors but to the dialectical character of the reflection that produced this Gospel. Dr.
Anderson has very well exploited Barrett's seminal insight in exploring John's characteristic Christology.

I have a few questions, of course, about one or another point in the book. For example, I wonder why Professor Anderson, such a champion of stage 5 dialectical thinking, comes down on p. 154 in such disjunctive terms on the relationship between seeing signs and believing in John vs. the Synoptics. It seems to me that, while John characteristically presents seeing signs as the condition of believing, there are places in which believing is the condition of possibility for seeing the sign as sign. For example, although Jesus accuses the crowd who follow him to the other side of the lake in John 6:26 of having failed to see the gift of bread as sign, which makes them incapable of believing, Jesus tells Martha in John 11:40 that only if she believes will she see the glory of God, that is, the raising of Lazarus as sign. So, does seeing signs lead to believing, or does believing lead to seeing signs? Yes! This tensive relation between sign and believing is, in my opinion, one of the most illuminating of John's truly dialectical positions. However, despite a few such questions, I find myself in basic agreement with Dr. Anderson's thesis and conclusions.

II. Reflections on Methodology in Light of Anderson's Work

That being the case, I had to find something substantive on which to comment that might stimulate conversation. So I turn to what I found most interesting about the book, especially Part Two, which was my special assignment, namely, what this study illustrates about the development of methodology in biblical studies in general and Johannine studies in particular over the past three decades. I cannot say much on this topic that will startle anyone who has been engaged in New Testament scholarship during this time, but it might be instructive to pull together, in light of this single study, some of the developments that have, in one sense, snuck up on us through various back doors and unlatched windows of the historical-critical house, but, in another sense, are the invited long-haired friends of a younger generation of scholars whom the elders, in spite of themselves, are beginning to like.

A. The Basic Question: What Kind of Text is the Gospel?

It is overly simplistic to say that the proliferation of methods has arisen from a gradual shift from regarding the biblical texts as primarily, if not exclusively, historical documents to seeing them as primarily literary works. But I believe this is the most influential shift of perspective and one that has influenced almost everything else that has changed. The sustained conversation this book offers between Bultmann, the quintessential historical critic, and Anderson, who takes a primarily literary approach, highlights the extent and complexity of the differences between the two approaches. But I will suggest below that it perhaps highlights something else that neither Bultmann nor Anderson planned to reveal directly, namely their shared and, I would argue, misplaced anxiety about scientific objectivity in interpretation.
I find it intriguing that while Bultmann and Anderson both start with a recognition regarding the content of the Johannine text, namely, that there are theological “inconsistencies” in John, both then detour through the supposedly “scientific” method of analyzing the Gospel’s stylistic characteristics in order to deal with this inconsistency. But Bultmann concludes to stylistic disunity and Anderson to stylistic unity. Thus Bultmann undertakes to establish a plurality of sources and/or redactors, corresponding to the diverse styles, to explain the differing theologies while Anderson undertakes to establish the dialectical character of the evangelist’s thought in order to explain the unity in diversity of the theology which he finds reflected in the unity of style. So far it is easy to recognize the contrast between the diachronic and analytical approach of the historical critic and the synchronic and synthetic literary approach.

My question is, why the recourse to the method of stylistic analysis at all? It seems to me that both interpreters are really basically concerned with the truth claims of the text, that is, the theology or theologies in the text, and both have a basically pastoral motivation for that concern, namely, to make that theology credible and persuasive to their respective contemporaries. Bultmann’s targeted audience is the modern scientifically demanding believer (read: white, male, German academic) who (supposedly) can only respond to revelation through a text that is either as totally consistent as a mathematical demonstration or whose inconsistencies can be explained with appropriate scientific rigor. Anderson’s targeted audience is the contemporary believer whose own faith life has moved or should move from the rigid consistency of a conformist mentality to the flexibility and tolerance of ambiguity of a dialectical mentality and who can be helped in that development by such multivalent literary devices as irony, double entendre, symbol, literal misunderstanding, and word play.

Actually, the methodological argument from style seems in both cases to be a projection onto the text of conclusions about the theology derived from other than stylistic premises. And it serves neither scholar’s agenda very well. Bultmann’s “discovery” of stylistic variation is not especially convincing as Anderson very well demonstrates following Ruckstuhl and others. But Anderson’s “discovery” of stylistic unity actually does not really establish anything about the unity of John’s theology. If the theology were really inconsistent, one could easily explain the stylistic unity by positing a very accomplished redactor who polished the literary surface without harmonizing the theological content. Anyone who has read student papers knows that a beautifully presented manuscript often contains much less than meets the eye. In other words, the assumption that ancient writers or redactors were clumsy literary tailors who always sewed on the wrong side of the material leaving their seams showing is a bit of historical hubris on our part that is fortunately losing its grip on our interpretive imaginations. Unity of style, even if it can be demonstrated, is no proof of unity of thought.

Could it be that the recourse to the method of stylistic analysis is, in
both Bultmann and Anderson, an academic ploy to avoid appearing to start with the pastoral rather than scientific agenda, that is, with the question: how does or can this text be interpreted for or by actual or potential contemporary believers in such a way that they can, through it, encounter Jesus as the evangelist plainly intends them to do? Both Bultmann and Anderson shy away from appearing to start with this engagement of content and appeal to their readers from a supposedly scientific basis, namely, the analysis of stylistic characteristics. Presumably these characteristics are "objective"; they are "in the text." Identification and analysis of them should be able to be verified scientifically through repeated exegesis by diverse critics arriving at identical or comparable results. But, obviously, such is not the case in this instance since Bultmann and Anderson, working with the same text, and using the same method, came to opposite conclusions about the unity of the Gospel's style.

I am not arguing in any sense that method is irrelevant to interpretation or that analysis of style cannot be a very useful methodological tool for certain purposes. But I am asking whether the anxiety about "objective" method that seems to have dictated a rather fruitless methodological detour in both Bultmann and Anderson in regard to John's theology in chapter 6 is misplaced. And, further, is such misplaced anxiety about objectivity modeled on the physical sciences perhaps still operative in many exegetical studies? If we were to start out interpretive projects with a straightforward espousal of the purpose of the text itself, at least when that purpose is as clear as it is in John, and allow that textual agenda to guide the development of an appropriate methodology, we might get further faster.

B. The Emergence of Interdisciplinarity

In fact, despite his recurring invocation of the stylistic argument, I think Anderson does actually follow the lead of the text's agenda by moving to an interesting interdisciplinary methodology integrating contemporary developmental cognitive theory applied to faith development with modern literary theory about texts and readers serviced where necessary by traditional historical criticism. In my opinion, his experiment is highly successful because it manages to both explicate the text (i.e., clarify its meaning) and interpret it (i.e., mediate the reader's engagement with the text's subject matter).

Starting with Barrett's insight that the Gospel's theology is dialectical, Anderson asks what kind of reflection produces such theology. He answers that it is reflection informed by what James Fowler calls conjunctive (stage 5) faith. He then asks what kind of text can bring such conjunctive or dialectical faith to articulation and concludes that it is a literary text rather than a purely historical record. He then asks how such a text can engage the reader in the kind of transformative encounter with Jesus that the evangelist says is the purpose of the Gospel text, namely, "that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in [Jesus']
name" (John 20:31). He answers that the text engages the reader the way literary texts do, by involving the reader in a story, catching her or him up in ironic dynamics, appealing symbolically to the imagination, and so on.

Anderson's most original move, in my opinion, and one that probably could not have been made twenty years ago by any doctoral student who wanted to graduate, is raising the question about the mind of the evangelist. His question is not the classical historical-critical one about the author's intention, namely, "What could have been or was in the mind of the Fourth Evangelist about the Eucharist?" but rather, "What kind of mind reflects dialectically and how does a person develop such a mind?" In times past, this would surely have been repudiated as blatant "psychologizing," a mortal sin if applied to a character in the text but matter for excommunication from the guild if applied to the supposed author.

I think the reason such an inquiry can be credibly undertaken today is precisely that the move to literary approaches to the biblical text implies a real author analogously to the way that a strictly historical-critical approach implies primarily traditions, forms, and sources utilized by redactors who function somewhat robotically depending on the exegete's presuppositions. In other words, the literary approach assumes a personal agent who is a thinking and writing subject while the historical-critical model is more at home with anonymous and even impersonal compositional forces.

But once we begin to take the real (rather than only the implied) author seriously we have to raise questions, as Anderson rightly does, about how to validly deal with this no longer available literary subject. How valid is it to apply a model of cognitive development derived from research on twentieth-century, first-world, English-speaking Anglo-European subjects to a first-century, Greek-speaking, semitic author from Palestine or Asia Minor? The same question, of course, has to be raised about applying twentieth-century sociological theory or anthropological models to first-century individuals, communities, and relationship systems, or contemporary structuralist theory to ancient narratives. The use of such new models and methods is making us explicitly aware of something of which we were insufficiently aware in the heyday of historical-critical hegemony, namely, that the historical models we were using were just as time and culture specific as are the literary, sociological, anthropological, psychological, or linguistic models we are beginning to use today. We were excruciatingly aware of the historical-cultural gap between our world and that of the text, but not of the nonuniversality of our critical methods themselves. Nevertheless, the question of criteria of validity remains, and it becomes more urgent as our analyses become less mechanically objective.

Anderson's study may supply, by implication, one response to the question of methodological validity in interdisciplinary approaches, one that might, however, make those of a more scientific bent a bit uneasy. Maybe the
only real test of the validity of a methodological approach is what it produces. If it contributes to an interpretation that handles the text as a whole without resorting to excisions or rearrangements, does a better job of explaining the apparent anomalies in the text than previous efforts, integrates previous work that has stood the test of time, and breaks new explanatory ground it is probably valid. But—and this may make some people even more nervous—it may be that the best test of all is whether the method mediates for the interpreter a transformative engagement with the subject-matter of the text. In other words, does it enable the text to live, spiritually, for the people for whom it was written? Actually, this is precisely the test we use for the interpretation of other artistic works, a play, for example, by a cast, or a symphony by an orchestra. Does the interpretation of the text move the audience appropriately?

C. Spirituality and Biblical Interpretation

This brings me to my final observation about methodology as it surfaces in Anderson’s study. On page 165 Professor Anderson claims, rightly in my opinion, that the theology of the Fourth Evangelist arose from the evangelist’s own transforming encounter with Jesus, whether that was the encounter of a historical eyewitness with the earthly Jesus or the mystical encounter of a later disciple with the glorified Jesus present and active in the Johannine community. In other words, the line of development of the Gospel text is not from historical events in the life of Jesus through community reshaping of the tradition to textual formulation but from the spirituality of the evangelist (mediated of course by community participation) to its articulation in the theology of encounter embodied in the literary text that interprets history in order to foster the spirituality of the reader. This suggests that the path of valid interpretation must retrace this development in the opposite direction. Rather than going from text (analyzed stylistically or in some other objective way) to historical community experience to historical events in the life of the earthly Jesus, the interpreter goes from literary-historical subject matter embodied in the text to the theology in the text to the spiritual experience in which the Gospel originated. And its purpose is to facilitate for the reader a spirituality analogous to that which gave rise to the Gospel text, that is, a living relationship with Jesus. The historical dimension of the text, rather than being the primary subject matter for analysis and its explication the primary object of the interpretation, is properly seen as the material molded into the literary project that engages the reader. Historical critical methods will then be subsumed into the larger interdisciplinary methodology whose real purpose is to interpret the text in such a way as to facilitate the transformative encounter of the reader with Jesus through the text.
III. Conclusion

I end as I began, by thanking Professor Anderson for an extremely competent and enlightening study of John’s Christology which is also a very thought-provoking example of spiritually engaged scholarship developing an appropriate methodology whose validity is established by the competence of the interpretation it grounds. I would love to have heard what our beloved colleague of happy memory, Raymond Brown, who peeked out from behind his historical-critical persona in his very last book, *A Retreat With John the Evangelist*, would have said about *The Christology of the Fourth Gospel*.

Reviewer: R. Alan Culpepper

Paul Anderson’s *The Christology of the Fourth Gospel* is an exceptionally comprehensive monograph. One would make a mistake to judge from its title that it is a treatment of Johannine Christology in any narrow sense or to judge from its subtitle, *Its Unity and Disunity in the Light of John 6*, that it is simply a monograph on the interpretation of John 6. In fact, one quickly discovers that John 6 is merely the window through which Anderson looks at the history of the Johannine community and the effects of its crises on the development of the Gospel and its Christology.

Part Three of the book defines three levels of dialogue in John 6: The dialogue between the evangelist and his tradition, the literary means by which the evangelist attempts to engage his audience in dialogue, and the socioreligious factors that influenced John’s Christology (p. 168). Rather than analyze the role of these three levels of dialogue in the whole chapter or in any one part of it, Anderson treats them sequentially, the first in verses 1–24, the second in verses 25–66, and the third in verses 67–71. This approach to the three levels is shrewd because the feeding of the multitude and the crossing of the sea in verses 1–24 allow for comparison and contrast between John and the other Gospel traditions. Verses 25–66 contain the distinctively Johannine dialogue on the true bread, and verses 67–71 contain the exchange...
between Jesus and the disciples, Peter’s confession, and references to defections.

In chapter 8, Anderson argues that John is not directly dependent on the Synoptic Gospels but develops an independent tradition of the feeding of the multitude and the walking on the sea. The details that are unique to the Johannine account, Anderson contends, are evidence of an early, vivid tradition, not of later embellishment or interpolation. Jesus acts out the role of a prophet like Moses but resists acclamations of kingship. Anderson perceptively relates this tension between Mosaic and Davidic models to John’s dialogue with the Marcan (and in Anderson’s view, Petrine) tradition. The contrast between the Mosaic and Davidic models and the equation of the Marcan and the Petrine traditions are both illustrated in two sentences that appear on pages 181 and 182:

The Petrine tradition perceives Jesus’ saving work in terms of seizing power over nature and spiritual forces of the age, while the Johannine tradition perceives it in terms of revelation.

The differences between the Marcan and the Johannine perspectives are foundational to the respective traditions, not later alterations of an identical traditional source.

Anderson’s next step is to move from discussing traditions to making assertions about historical events: “Given the corollaries between Mark 6 and 8 and John 6, it is obvious that a cluster of events (...) must have occurred in Jesus’ ministry” (p. 183). The feeding was a “reenactment of the Elisha story (2 Ki. 4)” (p. 183). Similarly, John’s sea-crossing narrative is the least developed and therefore the most primitive of the Gospel accounts. Indeed, Anderson contends, at least some of the differences between the Marcan (Petrine) and the Johannine accounts may be traced to “the diverging ‘first impressions’ of two men in the same boat” (p. 187). The nonsymbolic, illustrative detail in John’s account is suggestive of the account of a “first-hand story-teller” rather than a “historicizing novelist” (p. 188). Similarities between Mark and John can be accounted for as the result of “contact during the oral stages of their traditions” (p. 192). Anderson concludes, therefore, that as a window on the evangelist’s dialogue with his tradition, John 6:1–24 “may best be understood as his reflection upon either his own experiences or traditional stories about Jesus’ ministry” (p. 192).

I confess that I find this chapter alternately insightful, mystifying, and in places the least persuasive chapter in Part Three. I agree with Anderson’s endorsement of the Gardner-Smith—Dodd tradition, which holds that the similarities between John and the Synoptics can be explained through their dependence on common oral tradition rather than on John’s adaptation of Synoptic materials. On the other hand, Anderson moves too quickly from tradition to eyewitnesses to historical events. He would have us believe that the distinctively Johannine details in the feeding story are due to “its proxim-
ity to the events themselves" (p. 173). At the same time, "the connection with the Elisha story was a part of the early Marcan and Johannine traditions" (p. 174). The Johannine tradition was then shaped by a prophet-like-Moses Christology, while the Marcan tradition was shaped by a Christology of Davidic kingship. Although these latter observations about the development of the tradition are well founded, the argument from detail to historicity is weak.

Graphic nonsymbolic details are no evidence of historicity, as E. P. Sanders demonstrated in his work *Tendencies in the Synoptic Tradition*. Although his examination of "Increasing Detail as a Possible Tendency of the Tradition" (chapter 3) was limited to the Synoptic materials and the post-canonical tradition, it is instructive nevertheless. Sanders concluded "that the principal lesson to be learned from the study is that of caution. It is clear that the criterion of detail should not be used too quickly to establish the relative antiquity of one document to another."2 Sanders noted further, however, that "popular characteristics" such as descriptions of Jesus' emotions or his penetrating glance at someone, which have often been taken as indications of an eye-witness account, are better understood as later additions.3 Crediting D. E. Nineham, Sanders recognizes the difficulty of accounting for "eye-witness details in material which has been handed down by a community supposedly disinterested in details."4 The presence of nonsymbolic details in the Johannine narrative therefore really does not constitute significant evidence for its historicity. At a minimum, the rationale for this argument requires the kind of systematic analysis that Sanders did for the Synoptic Gospels.

Although Anderson gives careful attention to the Old Testament motifs in the feeding narrative, he misses the evocative references to the Lord's walking on the sea in Psalm 77 and Job 9:8, and the numerous references to the Lord's mastery over the sea (e.g., Ps. 107:23-30). Anderson's interpretation of the Marcan tradition as "Petrine" is clever in light of the debate with the ecclesiology represented by Peter later in John 6, but it is forced in this chapter. In all likelihood, the story began not with two disciples in the same boat but with early Christian reflection on this biblical motif. Jesus was their deliverer, just as the Lord of the Exodus and the Psalms delivered his people from the sea. After a lengthy analysis, John Meier concludes that although many Gospel accounts of Jesus' miracles are "permeated with the 'atmosphere' of the OT," the walking on the water is substantively different because "the elements of epiphany and of OT allusions have moved to center stage and have become the very stuff of the narrative." Therefore, Meier con-

3. Ibid., pp. 283-84.
4. Ibid., p. 149.
cludes, "the walking on the water is most likely from start to finish a creation of the early church, a christological confession in narrative form."5 Similarly, in a persuasive article last year Gail O'Day argued that the walking on the water functions in the Fourth Gospel "as a narrative embodiment of the Gospel's Christology."6 John's account is more taut than the Marcan and Matthean accounts, but that is because John has changed the story from a rescue miracle to a theophany. Whether this development occurred when the evangelist appropriated common oral tradition or when he redacted an early signs source, I find much more difficult to determine.

Chapter 9 turns to the literary means by which the evangelist develops the dialogue with his audience. Anderson declares, and I think rightly, that the Johannine misunderstandings always make a point toward one sector of his audience, and that Johannine dialogue as a whole is designed to draw the reader into a “divine/human” dialogue. Anderson agrees with Bultmann that verse 27 is the beginning of the “Bread of Life” discourse and disagrees with Borgen regarding the function of verse 31. The manna theme, Anderson contends, is characteristically used as “a rhetorical trump,” and John’s use of the manna theme is drawn from Psalm 78 rather than Exodus 16. These theses are welcome contributions to the debate over the interpretation of the “Bread of Life” discourse, but I will leave it to others to evaluate and adjudge their merit. The heart of Anderson’s work comes to view in the contention that John 6 reflects three crises in the history of the Johannine community and that each has left its imprint on this chapter of the Gospel. First, the Johannine community rejected “the earlier Petrine interpretation of the feeding as a thauma” (p. 217). In John, therefore, when Jesus rebukes the sign-seeking crowd, the evangelist is addressing the prevalent, thaumaturgical Christology of Petrine Christianity. I think this is no doubt correct, but again I am not convinced that the thaumaturgical emphasis was limited to the Petrine tradition, or that this issue can be limited to the first phase. That John rejects the primarily thaumaturgical interpretation of the miracles for one that views them as signs of Christological import is clear, however. Second, the Johannine community responded to the conflict between the Johannine believers and the synagogue. Anderson contends that contrary to J. Louis Martyn, this conflict now lay in the past and was not the most acute crisis at the time John 6 was written. The most acute crisis was the third one: the effects of docetizing tendencies on the community, particularly the ethical implications of deemphasizing the humanity of Jesus. On the whole, I find Anderson’s interpretation of the evidence for these three crises convincing.

and I particularly applaud the way in which he construes their presence within John 6 while maintaining the literary unity of the chapter. In contrast to many earlier interpreters, Anderson does not feel constrained to divide the chapter in three strata corresponding to the three crises.

Chapter 10 examines the socioreligious factors that influenced John's Christology. Focusing on John 6:67–71, Anderson observes that in contrast to Matthew, “it is clear that in John it is not Jesus who gives authority of Peter (and those who follow in his wake), but it is Peter who affirms the sole authority of Jesus” (pp. 226–27). Jesus alone has the power to reestablish God’s Davidic kingdom on earth (p. 229). Peter’s statement is all the more significant because of the absence of such Davidic motifs in John, where the prophet-like-Moses motif predominates. Moreover, John’s omission of exorcisms may indicate that implicit in Jesus’ correcting of Peter in John 6:70 is a different view of the character of God’s reign on earth (p. 259). In chapter 10, therefore, it becomes clear why Anderson stretched to get Peter into the discussion of John’s interpretation of his tradition in chapter 8. On the other hand, one may ask whether this parallel in concerns between phase 1 and phase 3 does not erode Anderson’s ability to distinguish between them: both concern the Johannine debate with the Petrine tradition (broadly understood).

Anderson contends that the debate with the synagogue has “cooled,” while the primary and acute internal issue in the Johannine situation was the community’s “familial model of church organization” (p. 233). The dissenting Baptist in me resonates with the Quaker tradition in Anderson when he writes,

The entrustment of the keys to the Kingdom of the Heavens to Peter is the archetype of an institutional model of church government, while the entrustment of the mother of Jesus to the Beloved Disciple is the archetype of a familial model. In other words, the ‘basileic currency’ of the institutional model is power within a hierarchy, while within the familial model it is love within an egalitarian community. (p. 239)

Parenthetically, working independently in South Africa, Jan G. van der Watt has just completed a monograph on the familial metaphors in John that I expect will confirm the importance of Anderson’s observations at this point."

On a related point, Anderson separates the crisis of 1 John 2:18–25 from that in 1 John 4:1–31, contending that the first concerned those who refused to believe that Jesus was the Jewish Messiah, while the second dealt with the docetizing Christians. Some were tempted by them to abandon the community of faith. Hence, the call to perseverance and faithfulness is consistent in the later strata of the Johannine writings.

We cannot begin to trace out and debate all the theses that Anderson advances. Inevitably we will each find various points with which to agree or take issue. His primary contribution, as I see it, is that he has brought a multifaceted approach to the interpretation of John, examining its tradition history, its literary character, and its sociohistorical setting. His method actually has a great deal in common with Vernon Robbins’s definition and development of sociorhetorical criticism.8 For Johannine scholarship, Anderson’s work is particularly salutary because it responds to traditional historical-critical questions while creatively employing new literary and sociorhetorical perspectives. The result is that Anderson manages to balance the unity and disunity of John 6 by finding it to be the work of a reflective historian, author, and theologian who retains and refashions his tradition in dialogue with the crises of his community, producing a coherent and unified composition. No mean achievement, and neither is Anderson’s monograph.

Reviewer: Graham Stanton

I am indeed honored to be asked to comment on Paul Anderson’s major contribution to Johannine studies. However, I do so with considerable sadness: I have been asked to take Raymond Brown’s place on the panel that he would have graced in his own special way. He was the doyen of Johannine specialists, with no peers and very few equals this century. Although we shall not be able to savor Raymond Brown’s detailed appraisal of Paul Anderson’s monograph, we do have this brief comment, which appears on the jacket of the paperback edition. First rate! Probably the most perceptive study of John 6 available today. I am happy to endorse those comments.

I agreed to join this distinguished panel of reviewers of Paul Anderson’s book on the understanding that my comments would be those of a generalist in NT studies rather a Johannine specialist. For some years now one of my special interests has been Matthean studies, so I was naturally particularly interested in Anderson’s comments on the similarities and differences between Matthean and Johannine Christianity. In fact Anderson’s book raises a number of issues of interest to any scholar concerned with early Christianity.

I shall begin by commenting on a few of the many points that caught my eye, or points with which I am broadly in agreement. I shall then turn to several issues on which I have some hesitations.

(1) First, I was impressed by the emphasis Anderson places on the
Prophet-like-Moses Christology in the Fourth Gospel. I have long been convinced that Deut 18:15-20 played a much more important role in earliest Christianity (and in early Judaism) than a mere list of references and allusions to this passage might suggest. One of my own Ph.D. students is at present writing a dissertation on this topic. I like the way Anderson uses the Prophet-like-Moses motif to develop a fascinating portrayal of the relation of the Son to the Father in John. His work especially illumines the equality of the Son and the Father, as well as the subordination of the Son to the Father, and it shows how these were not separate “Christologies” but part of the same christological schema. Others have noticed this agency motif and its relation to Deuteronomy 18, but Anderson has done some interesting and original work in showing its particular development in John.

(2) Anderson contributes to several major questions of method. Source-critical and redaction-critical theories are carefully and judiciously appraised. I appreciate his emphasis on the ways in which a literary text engages an audience. The idea that the early Johannine and the pre-Markan traditions may have enjoyed an “interfluential” relationship is very interesting, and the thesis that Luke seems to favor the Johannine oral tradition over the Marcan at times is indeed provocative (see Appendix VIII). This book makes an important contribution to discussion of the relationship of Synoptic and Johannine traditions.

(3) I was also pleased to see Anderson’s impressive attempt to identify the interplay between oral and written stages of the tradition. Rather than assuming that Johannine traditions were all written or all oral at one time or another, he suggests that we probably have a more fluid set of interrelationships between varying forms of Gospel tradition and makes some helpful suggestions about how those developments may have emerged. His work makes me want to look further into the oral character of the traditions used by Mark and John, in contrast to ways Matthew and Luke have used written Mark.

(4) Anderson’s references to Matthew’s Gospel set me thinking yet again about the relationship between Matthew and John. Very nearly all the earliest papyri of the Gospels are fragments or parts of Matthew and John. The papyri published very recently in The Oxyrhynchus Papyri series, volumes LXIV (1997) and LXV (1998) include two very early papyri of Matthew (P103 and P104), and four early fragments of John (P106-P109). In the latter part of the second century these two Gospels were copied many times in or near Oxyrhynchus. We can be almost certain that in spite of their obvious differences, Christian communities in this area used both Gospels at the same time. What is the significance of this fact? Were the differences between Matthew and John simply ignored, or were they held together in tension?

These are just a few of the ways Anderson's book raises important issues well beyond the Fourth Gospel. I turn now to some of points at which I was not entirely convinced:
I wonder whether Matthew and John are quite as far apart as Anderson supposes. On p. 256 (paperback edition) he writes as follows: The Matthean tradition poses an institutional model of church organization, while the Johannine tradition poses a familial and egalitarian model of the same. I am not sure that this is quite fair to either Gospel. The Johannine traditions that reflect rivalry between the Beloved Disciple and Peter suggest that questions of precedence in leadership were not unknown in Johannine circles. Egalitarian is surely an overstatement!

In the case of Matthew, I think that Anderson has given too much weight to Matt 16:17–19 at the expense of other passages in this Gospels. For example, in Table 20 (p. 240) he contrasts Matt 16:17–19 and its Christocratic Corrective in John.

It is important to note that although Peter plays a leading role in many passages in Matthew, in some he is less prominent than in the corresponding passage in Mark. Compare, for example, Mark 16:7 and Matt 28:7; Mark 11:21 and Matt 21:20. And second, and even more importantly, the authority to bind and loose which is given by Jesus to Peter in Matt 16:19 is given to all the disciples in 18:18.

Matthew’s use of the important phrase “the little ones” suggests a familial model, the very term Anderson uses to describe the Johannine model of Christocracy. I am convinced that within Matthean Christian communities special ministries were exercised by three groups: prophets, the righteous, and “wise men and scribes.” No doubt these groups were not mutually exclusive: some prophets may also have been scribes.

There is no suggestion that these groups enjoyed a particular status or used titles of honor. This observation is confirmed by Matt 23:6–12. In contrast to synagogue communities, followers of Jesus are not to be concerned with status or titles of honor. “The greatest among you must be your servant” (23:11). Within Matthean communities special but not exclusive forms of ministry were certainly known, but status, rank, and titles of honor were eschewed.

I fully appreciate the reasons why Anderson has focused his attention on the Christology of John 6. Nonetheless, I do not think that John 6 can be appreciated fully in isolation from the other great christological passages in this Gospel. The backdrop to John 6 is formed by the great christological motifs from the Prologue, and (for example) the christological titles and confessions attributed to Nathanael and the Baptist, as well as the sayings of Jesus about the ascending and descending Son of Man. John 6 is written in the shadow of John 1 and John 3!

The appendices to this book are particularly interesting and important. The first six set out excellent succinct summaries of Johannine themes, which teachers and students will value. A clear presentation of John’s Exalted Christology is juxtaposed with a carefully worked out presentation of John’s Subordinated Christology. “Johannine Signs as Facilitators of
Belief” are juxtaposed with “Johannine Signs and the Existentializing Work.” And finally, Johannine Realized and Futuristic Eschatology are summarized.

These juxtaposed themes take us to the heart of the evangelist's concerns, but also to one of the central enigmas of this Gospel. How did these tensions arise? How are they to be resolved? What implications do they carry for Christian theology? Anderson does not ignore these questions, but I would like to have seen them discussed more fully. Perhaps they will form the agenda for Anderson’s next book!

I always encourage my Ph.D. students to read widely beyond their own field of specialization. Unexpected questions and new vistas always appear. This is certainly true of Anderson’s book, which deserves to be taken seriously by all students of early Christianity.

Review Essay: Alan G. Padgett

It was a pleasure for me to read and review Paul Anderson’s book on Christology in the Fourth Gospel. It was a pleasure in no small part because I have long enjoyed the study of the Gospel of John, one of the most profound works in all of early Christian literature. My own scholarship in biblical studies has tended to focus on that other great theologian, Paul the Apostle. Fortunately, my part in this set of review essays is not one of a specialist in Gospel studies. My colleagues fill that role with their usual learning and grace. Instead, I take it that my role is a slightly different one, namely, to play the part of a theologian. Anderson’s volume does raise some interesting theological issues, and I am happy to discuss and develop them further in dialogue with him. First of all, I will set forth what Anderson has established concerning John 6 in the field of biblical studies. This will then lead to a consideration of philosophical and theological questions I would like to raise concerning his book.

Anderson has built upon the work of Peder Borgen, giving convincing arguments for the stylistic and literary unity of John 6, against Bultmann and other source critics. The disunity within the chapter is for the most part to be understood within a Rabbinic context and rhetoric. Anderson’s argument that the feeding of the 5,000 in John is a “testing” sign is most fruitful and deserves further reflection and research.

As part of his argument for the literary unity of John 6, Anderson helpfully develops the thesis that our Evangelist is a complex and sophisticated thinker, able to hold in tension both a “glory” and a “flesh” Christology within one Gospel. Here Anderson has followed an older article by Kingsley Barrett, to the effect that the Fourth Evangelist is a “dialectical” thinker. He has developed this point further, by considering recent work in “faith development” by James Fowler and others. The ability of first-century authors to
mediate between two or more perspectives is a significant conclusion, which should be incorporated into future NT scholarship. Just to clarify things (since NT scholars are usually allergic to philosophical doctrines): by "dialectical" here we do not imply some heavy metaphysical commitment, such as one finds in Plato, Hegel, or Marx. Rather, "dialectical" stands for sophisticated, complex, and able to hold tensions or paradox together. John and Paul are the most advanced and dialectical thinkers among NT authors. This fact should caution those who too easily relegate different Christologies to different sources.

The virtues of this volume, then, are many. I recommend it to anyone interested in the academic study of John's Gospel. But there are some questions I have for Anderson in the area of method and in the doctrine of the sacraments. I will then close with a reflection on the christological implications of his book.

First of all, it does seem to be somewhat anachronistic to apply the studies of James Fowler, James Loder, and contemporary structuralists to the ancient world. I do applaud the use of philosophy and other interdisciplinary work by NT scholarship. I believe that careful historical research also requires at least some philosophical and hermeneutical sophistication. Ben Myers, for example, used the work of Bernard Lonergan in his biblical scholarship, and more recently Tom Wright published a kind of philosophical prolegomena to his multivolumed work on Christian Origins and the Question of God (29-145). I would have no problem at all, then, with Anderson applying the work of Piaget, Gilligan, Fowler, or Loder to the thinking patterns of modern NT scholars.

However, it is only with the greatest care and caution that we should apply current psychological or philosophical research to the past. The excesses of "psychohistory" are many, and I did not find the section of the book devoted to the psychohistory of the Fourth Evangelist very convincing. Anderson is clearly aware of this problem. He writes, "While one may object that late twentieth-century studies ought not to be applied to a first-century piece of writing, one must also acknowledge that applying diachronic theories of composition to account for theological tensions is no improvement" (151). This opinion is certainly correct; however, two wrongs don't make a right! Especially in a postmodern age, we need a healthy dose of skepticism about claims to universal significance for our philosophical or psychological schemes.

I prefer the earlier work of Kingsley Barrett at just this point. Barrett drew his example for sophisticated and dialectical thinking from Socrates, an example chronologically and culturally closer to the Fourth Evangelist. In any case, Anderson does not really need Fowler and company to make his case. Once we show that Greco-Roman authors were capable of sophisticated dialectical thinking, there is no reason in principle why John or Paul may not have been, too.
The second area of my concern is the way the sacraments are treated in Anderson’s volume. This is certainly not a main issue in his book, but John 6 itself demands some sacramental reflection, and Anderson engages this topic to some extent. Oddly, the one place where Anderson follows Bultmann is in the misunderstanding of the theology of the sacraments. In Anderson’s excursus “What is a Sacrament” (112–119) he creates a false dilemma between “believing in Christ being enough” on the one hand, and “views which prescribe any external action as necessarily expressive of inward trust and mediatory of divine grace” (112). Citing Bultmann explicitly, Anderson repeats this false dilemma on the next page in this loaded question: “Is inward belief in Christ efficacious, in and of itself, or is it contingent upon using the right words or participating in any external rite or form ‘correctly.’” As a Methodist theologian and follower of Wesley, I want to question the bifurcation implied in this loaded question. Living Christian faith and participation in the sacraments are not diametrically opposed alternatives. Instead, right participation in the sacraments grows organically out of a vital, living faith. The efficacy of saving faith and the completed work of Christ are not at issue here. Bultmann and Anderson confuse justification with sanctification in their misunderstanding of the sacraments. For Bultmann, this is grounded historically in his existentialism, and for Anderson I suspect it comes from his Quaker background. In any case, both of them criticize the sacraments on the basis of justification by faith—which is totally irrelevant. The purpose of the sacraments is to assist us with grace for sanctification, and thus for final, eschatological forgiveness—not present forgiveness (justification). Against their simplistic dichotomy, we must press the fact that justification through faith leads to sanctification in grace, including participation in the community of faith and its sacraments. It takes living and vital faith to participate rightly in the sacraments. Participation in the sacraments, in turn, is part of the community of faith, which we join through water and the Spirit. “Amen, Amen I tell you, no one can enter the Kingdom of God without being born of water and the Spirit” (John 3:5).

At the end of the twentieth century, we are, alas, still caught up in the negative rhetoric of Reformation and Counterreformation. Unfortunately, the sacraments as sacred rites that should heal, cleanse, and unify the church have been, and to some extent still are, signs of division and misunderstanding in the body of Christ. Some theological care, then, is needed in discussing them. I am glad that Anderson has defined his terms regarding the sacraments, but we need to reflect critically upon such definitions.

First of all, a sacrament is more than “a physical and outward sign of a spiritual and inward reality” (113). Let us use instead the term “sacramentality” to refer to this broad sense in which almost anything can be a sign of an inner spiritual reality. But a sacrament is more than just any event of sacramentality. A sacrament is by definition a religious ritual, not just anything which happens to point to a sense of the presence of God. This sense of ritual,
tradition, and community is missing from Anderson’s discussion of the sacraments. Second, a sacrament differs from a sign, since a sacrament is a vehicle for spiritual grace, and does not merely point to it. Finally, in Christian circles, sacraments originate in the life and teachings of Jesus Christ as these are found in the Gospels. They are part of a vital tradition and community of faith, passed down through the millennia. We might call these three points, taken together, a basic or simple concept of a sacrament.

Following this simple idea of a sacrament, we must further distinguish what Anderson calls “institutional sacrament,” that is, the sacrament as ordered and understood by a particular church (113). I would like to add two further terms to his discussion, however. There can develop an empty ritualism in which the sacraments are participated in without faith and vital piety. Also, there can be a quasi-magical understanding of the sacraments, a kind of sacramentalism that sees the ritual itself as somehow efficacious.

Anderson is a Quaker scholar. At the origin of the Society of Friends, George Fox and Margaret Fell encountered an empty ritualism and a strong sacramentalism in the Church of England in their day, which they rightly rejected. But most Christians since their day—Protestant, Catholic, and Orthodox—believe they threw the baby out with the bath water. A modest, faithful, and communal theology of the sacraments can avoid the individualism of rejecting these rituals outright, while also avoiding a strong sacramentalism or an empty ritualism. With respect to the understanding of John’s Gospel, Anderson, along with most all interpreters, sees a strong sacramentality in the Fourth Evangelist and his community. This, of course, is quite correct, given the deep theological symbolism of this Gospel. However, there can be no question (as David Aune has rightly argued) of finding any institutional sacraments, or arguments against them, this early in Christian history. Yet Anderson keeps falling into a false dilemma of either a symbolic sacramentality in John or institutional sacraments. For example, he writes, “The question here, though, is whether John 6:53–58 calls for adhering to the cross of Jesus (vs. 51c) and maintaining corporate solidarity in the face of persecution by means of employing eucharistic imagery, or whether it requires cultic participation in the formal eucharist” (125). This loaded question forces us to choose between two options, neither of which is helpful for understanding John’s Gospel and its original audience. There can be no question of a cultic, formal eucharist at this point of Christian history. But John 6:53–58 is also about more that just some inner adherence to the Cross. The idea that one might form an inner attachment to the Cross by means of, and expressed in, the rituals of the Christian community seems to have escaped Anderson theologically.

In the long run, I find it is Anderson who is anti-sacrament, not John. For Anderson goes on to press: “The appeal is to adhere to the cross (vs. 51c), not to engage in a symbolic meal” (126). He later writes, “The presence of eucharistic terminology does not necessarily imply the advocacy of institu-
tional sacramentalism” (130). This sentence is true, but totally irrelevant to a balanced interpretation of the Fourth Gospel. Anderson ignores the far more probable, modest sacraments that John’s Gospel rather obviously does discuss. Anderson is just wrong to assert that the Fourth Gospel “denies the ordination of sacraments by Jesus” (156). John nowhere denies the ordination of the sacraments, but simply transforms them into symbolic narratives in the ministry and teachings of Jesus. That John translates the early Christian sacraments into narrative and symbolic roles within the life of Jesus is widely accepted by NT scholars and completely in accord with the narratological theology of the Fourth Gospel as a whole. By translating his discussion of the Lord’s Supper from the end of his ministry to the feeding of the five thousand, John is able to point to the deeper meaning of the sacraments, and to warn away any empty ritualism. Anderson reads his own antisacramentalism into John 4:2 and skews the interpretation of the sacraments in this Gospel, including the eucharistic character of John 6.

The work of the late Ray Brown on the sacraments in John is a more reliable guide than Anderson. Brown rightly stated in 1966:

What a comparison with the Synoptics does show is that, while John may treat of Baptism and the Eucharist, this Gospel does not associate these sacraments with a single, all-important saying of Jesus uttered at the end of his life as part of his departing instructions to his disciples. The Johannine references to these two sacraments, both the more explicit references and those that are symbolic, are scattered in scenes throughout the ministry. This seems to fit in with the Gospel’s intention to show how the institutions of the Christian life are rooted in what Jesus said and did in his life. (1: cxiv)

Having raised two critical issues with respect to this volume, I would like to close as I began, with a more positive tone. The main thesis of Anderson’s book is about the Christology of the Fourth Gospel, not about the sacraments. And in this main arena, Anderson has a great deal to teach us. What are the theological implications of seeing John as affirming both a “glory” and a “flesh” Christology at the same time? Can we continue to hold this paradoxical understanding of Jesus? I believe that we can, and we must. The Christian faith and the Gospels themselves alike require it.

The thesis of this volume helps us to see that the trajectory from the New Testament to Nicea is not as great a leap as some scholars would have us believe. Orthodox theology is a legitimate development from NT Christology. Even if orthodoxy (the Creeds) is not the only reasonable reading of the NT witness to Christ, it is a reasonable one. This is a significant result, to my mind, given the contemporary critical rejection of orthodoxy in the study of early Christianity.

While John’s Gospel is an important step in the development of early Christian Christology, the need to hold in dialectical tension the humanity and the divinity of Jesus has hardly gone away. The Christology of John points to our current need for a contemporary Christology that affirms both a
divine and a human reality at work in Jesus. In this regard, Anderson’s work is in line with the most profound Christology of our century, developed by a significant dialectical theologian. Of course I mean Karl Barth. Barth, too, maintained a dialectical tension between the man Jesus, and the divine Lord as God the Son. He rightly saw an identity-in-difference between the historical Jesus who gave his body as “bread” for our salvation, and Christ who is and will be Lord over all. For example, in his discussion of John 6:51, Barth wrote:

It must not be forgotten that as the New Testament sees it this man Jesus who was given up to death is identical with the Lord now living and reigning in the community, and that this Lord again is the One whose universally visible return is for the community the sum of their future and of that of the world. He has overcome death by suffering it. He has risen again from the dead. And it is in this totality that He is. “for” humanity. (111/2, § 45.1, p. 214 [German original, p. 255], translation altered)

Given the criticism that orthodoxy has received, it may be more difficult to maintain a sophisticated Christology at the end of the twentieth century than it was in the first. If Anderson’s volume can help NT scholars understand this vital tension in the first century, it may lead Christian theologians to continue developing a faithful and true view of Christ in the century to come.

Works Cited


Response: Paul Anderson

I must begin by saying what an honor it is to have such thoughtful reviews by such fine scholars. Upon considering them together I am impressed at the variety of issues each chose to engage, which brings to mind the wide-ranging assortment of issues the book seeks to address. While the central interest is the epistemological origins of John’s christological tensions, other matters come into play. Because approaches to John’s Christology have engaged many other issues, these also had to be addressed, and what results is a constellation of literary, historical, and theological findings which, as Moody Smith says in the book’s foreword, pose fresh attempts to address some of the key Johannine riddles. Let me now engage the reviews themselves.

(1) First, I feel very privileged to have Professor Kysar assess the literature review. Because his knowledge of the Johannine secondary literature is legendary, his approval of the literature treatments is very confirming, to say the least. I am especially pleased to see his judgment has changed regarding the 1973 essay on source-critical approaches to John 6.1 What I believe the approach reflects is a misappropriation of Synoptic source- and form-critical methodologies applied to the Fourth Gospel. Here is where John’s tradition formation differs most from the Synoptics’. Mark was obviously a gatherer of traditional bits, which he preserved and ordered into a narrative sequence, at times combining themes in Jesus’ teaching with events in the narrative. Matthew and Luke do similar things with traditions available to them. The Fourth Evangelist may have done some of this synthesizing work, but it appears that sign and discourse, or event and reflection, enjoyed a connected history in John’s development, perhaps from quite early times. This is one of the ways Bultmann went wrong. Likewise, the redaction work evidenced by Matthew’s and Luke’s use of Mark disconfirm the likelihood that John is based on alien written sources, Marcan or otherwise. We do have earlier and later Johannine tradition, which at times shows signs of contextual engagement and formation, so the investigation continues, but in a different vein. Thus, John’s tradition reflects a basic synchronicity of authorship and origin emerging through a diachronicity of situation and context.

Kysar’s warning about the degree to which we can establish the intention of an ancient writer is well taken. Two points, however, follow. First, John 20:31 offers the clearest statement of authorial intentionality anywhere in the canonized corpus. The author claims his intention is to evoke a believing response from the reader. Questions emerge, of course, as to what is meant by “believe,” what is associated with “life in his name,” and how the presentation of John’s material furthers such intentions. Second, even if one

cannot finally know what the author of a text is thinking, or who that author is, structures of thought can be identified and assessed analytically. In appreciation of Henry Cadbury’s work, his view regarding the structures of language and motives is that these could be identified at least somewhat empirically, regardless of an author’s identity. The same applies to aspects of cognition. The structure and character of thought can be inferred, and to some degree also the origin, even if the intention and/or identity of the author remains unknown. In that sense, this is not as speculative a venture as it might seem.

Actually, it is Bultmann and other scholars, who in forcing a text into a straitjacket of meaning, are guilty of an overly facile set of cognition-related assumptions. They just don’t acknowledge it. Bultmann limits the evangelist to a Stage 4 (Individuative-Reflective) demythologizing level of faith, and assumes his sources and redactor operate on Stage 3 (Synthetic-Conventional) popularistic levels of faith. This necessitates the modern “rescue” of these more wooden faith expressions by scholars operating on Stage 5 (Conjunctive) or Stage 6 (Universalizing) levels of faith. A bit presumptuous! If the character of Johannine faith becomes accessible to us as a more dialectical reflection of faith matters (although not all are treated on Stage 5 levels in John), we become better enabled to grasp the theological content of John’s Christology as well as being extended the permission to appreciate the ambiguity—and the wonder—of the Johannine reflection upon the Incarnation.

(2) Professor Schneiders makes several good points in her customarily insightful way, and one of them causes me to alter, or at least to put differently, one of my views. She points out helpfully that preliminary faith is indeed a factor in miracles being produced in John, and that this is another example of the dialectical treatment of the issue by the evangelist. Well put! Further, if one regards obeying Jesus as an indication of one’s faith (John 3:35), one might add to Schneiders’s reference the healings in chaps. 4, 5, and 9 as examples where either faith, or responsiveness to the Lord’s instruction indicating faith, precedes a miracle in John. On the other hand, the explanation of lack of faith as the reason miracles do not happen is found very little in John, as a contrast to its prevalent role in the Synoptics. Rather, the value of miracles in John becomes recast as facilitators of faith. The point I do want to make is that within the pre-Marcan and Johannine traditions both narrators address not only the value of the miraculous, but they also deal with issues related to the relative dearth of wondrous outcomes for later settings and generations. They explain, in other words, why miracles do not happen as often as desired for later generations. Within both traditions, and these developments involved reflective theologizing as cognitive processes.2

On Bultmann, I find it less helpful to label the scholar and his ap-

2. See also Paul N. Anderson, “The Cognitive Origins of John’s Unitive and Disuni­
proaches, and more valuable to test his arguments to see where they are compelling and where they break down. But why engage Bultmann at all? Because Haenchen (1984:34) was right about his contribution. Within Johannine studies in the twentieth century, Bultmann’s work has dominated the field, like a giant oak tree preventing much of anything else from taking root under its shade. At this point Professor Schneiders need not psychologize the present author’s interest in stylistic issues either. One feels a scholarly obligation to test Bultmann’s own claims regarding the stylistic, contextual, and theological evidence for multiple sources in John. While Schweitzer and Ruckstuhl have demonstrated John’s pervasive stylistic unity, I still wondered how Bultmann and his followers could maintain their views as they have. So, I tested all three kinds of his evidence within John 6 (where we should have four of his five sources present) to see if it stacked up on its own terms. It did not. In fact, not only was the stylistic evidence non compelling, it was non indicative.

Contrary to Schneiders’s view, therefore, the problem here is not with “objectivity” proper, but with inadequate analyses of the facts themselves. Bultmann’s mistake here lay not in the absence of literary data, but in their faulty organization and interpretation. True, traits of so-called “Semitizing Greek” are found in the signs narrative, but these same traits occur throughout John 6, and the rest of John, for that matter. One might ask if there is any part of John which does not exhibit signs of “Semitizing Greek.” Likewise, traits of “Hellenized Aramaic” are found in the I-Am sayings, but they also occur elsewhere in Johannine narrative and discourse. Ironically, the use of stylistic features to confirm the multiplicity of sources, when plied equally to other sections, actually disconfirms many of Bultmann’s source-critical assignments. Just as John may not be a seamless literary robe, woven from top to bottom; neither is it an aggregate of leftover fragments, to be blessed, broken, and gathered into their respective literary baskets! John’s pervasive literary unity is thus as problematic as its occasional disunity.

On the other hand, Bultmann noticed many things (aporias, subtle turns, and unevennesses in the text) that demand to be addressed, albeit otherwise. Constructively, then, Bultmann’s critical eye guides us to many issues evoking alternative solutions (140, n. 2). In these ways, I see myself not as departing from Bultmann, but as conducting historical/critical investigations into the epistemological origins of John’s unitive and disunitive Christology building on his work; and, like Bultmann, one has had to address broader matters, such as the origin and history of the material, the character of its formation, composition possibilities, relations to other gospel traditions, and the theological issues confronting the interpreter. Schneiders is thus right on when she points to the interdisciplinary contribution of the book! Are cognitive analyses of gospel traditions today about where sociological analyses were three decades ago? Only time will tell. I should point out, though, that neither Fowler nor Loader considers himself a psychologist.
They are religious epistemologists, both interested in factors of human cognition and thought formation.

May I just comment appreciatively on one more of Professor Schneiders's observations and tease it out a bit? At the very least, we have as an epistemological origin of John's dynamic Christology the post-resurrection consciousness of a faith community in the middle-to-late first century CE. Most scholars will find this noncontroversial. The most provocative aspect of the book, in my view, lies in its attempt (using Loder's transformational model) to show how the human source(s) of the Johannine tradition might have experienced "Aha experiences" as early as the ministry of Jesus, which affected, then, the development of this distinctive tradition. I am delighted Professor Schneiders affirms this exploration and its conclusion. As none of the other accounts for the origins of John's material stands up to critical analysis, and due to the unexpected authorship-related discoveries outlined in Appendix VIII (274–77), this possibility must again be critically explored.

(3) Professor Culpepper picks up well on the significance of John 6! His newly edited volume of essays on John 6 is the most significant collection ever drawn together on this pivotal chapter, and his appraisals are highly valued. Culpepper rightly puts his finger on the three levels of dialogue evident within John 6, and I appreciate his endorsement of the importance of integrating various approaches to John into a meaningful whole. As a premier historian of the Johannine school and a leading analyst of John's dramatic and literary power as a narration, one is pleased to stand with Culpepper in affirming the integration of sociohistorical and literary-rhetorical analyses. I hope my use of Mikhail Bakhtin's form-critical work in sketching the rhetorical function of the Johannine misunderstanding dialogue (as well as revelation and rhetoric—two dialogical modes of narration in John) in conjunction with my sketching of several crises within the Johannine situation will be helpful.

Culpepper joins Kysar in feeling wary about my treatment of historicity issues in John, and they represent the current posture of many Johannine scholars. Schneiders, Brown (103f. n. 6) and others, however, believe "the critics have played us false" on matters of historicity in John, and there are many ways in which details and accounts in John seem more historically compelling than parallels in the Synoptics. Even Ed Sanders would agree on this. I do agree with Culpepper that the allusions to Job, the Psalms, and the

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3. Critical Readings of John 6, ed. Alan Culpepper (Biblical Interpretation Series 22; Leiden: Brill, 1997). My essay, “The Sitz im Leben of the Johannine Bread of Life Discourse and its Evolving Context” (1-59), develops further some of my views, especially on the rhetorical use of manna, the use of two dialogical modes in John 6 (revelation and rhetoric), and the sketching of four sequential crises (Synoptic-type thaumaturgy, Synagogue tensions, Docetizing teachings, hierarchical centralizing within the church) within the Johannine situation.

4. In his book The Historical Figure of Jesus (London: Penguin Press, 1993), E. P. Sanders
Elijah narratives are present in the Johannine narration of events, but attempts to explain the epistemological origin of the Johannine sea-crossing or feeding narratives as fictive constructions rooted solely in scriptural rescue and provision motifs seems extended. Likewise, Homer. What makes such views untenable is the fact that there are two independent feeding traditions also in Mark (as well as two sea-crossing narratives), making three independent traditional accounts of apparently similar events. Given John’s basic independence from Mark, this seems quite likely. Problematic perhaps, but likely. These particular events are also more coherently narrated in John in contrast to their dispersion in the Synoptics. I do believe embellishments upon events did occur, and that O'Day and Meier are correct in identifying the christological associations formative in the narrations’ developments, but three independent narrations (considering the criterion of multiple attestation, bolstered by the differences in the narrations) relating associated events in Mark and John suggest the converse of Meier’s conclusion regarding this cluster of events. Rather than a historicized drama, John seems to be more realistically a dramatized history.

At stake here is assessing adequately the essential character of the Johannine tradition. We indeed have narrative embodiment of Johannine convictions and experiences over sixty years, but the central theme of that narrative is the divine embodiment in the Incarnation, which is manifest in the reporting of events and their consequences, not simply christological constructions. The textual evidence also supports the view that much of the Johannine tradition contains reflections upon ironic outcomes which reflect surprise at unlikely developments and unexpected turns in events. Granted, we may have here a writer of fiction who has added details to make the narrative more gripping for readers, but one’s findings challenge seriously such a view's plausibility.

While some narrative detail was probably added to enhance the reception of gospel narratives, the peculiar thing about John 6 and its corollaries in Mark is the fact that many of the nonsymbolic, illustrative details are missing from Matthew’s and Luke’s redactions of Mark. While Matthew and Luke add units (short and long), they rarely add detail outside of a new unit, but characteristically leave details out. Names of disciples are exchanged for general references, times and places are often omitted, and such details as 200 denarii, the grass, and aspects about the settings are left out. Why? Who knows, but the same pattern also shows itself in the Passion narratives and the Temple cleansing, the units of greatest similarity between John and the Synoptics. The view that John added detail to an earlier narrative as was done by contemporary writers is thus disconfirmed by the two closest parallels to John—Matthew and Luke (Tables 10–15). Rather, the presence of non-

makes many comments as to the preferability of the Johannine rendering of a particular detail or event.
symbolic detail in Mark and John more likely reflects their proximity to the oral renderings of these stories. Sanders’s caution is well taken, but it is equally problematic to impose symbolic or even spiritualized meanings over details in John’s text that serve no explicit symbolic or theological function in the narrative. One can only take so much of the conjectural “this detail was obviously added to further the theological interests of the evangelist” before one must insist upon greater exegetical sobriety. I am told by one of his students about the way Raymond Brown would sometimes conclude his course on John at Union Theological Seminary. He asked the class to explore theological or numerical reasons for the 153 fish in John 21. After a bewildered exploration with no likely solutions emerging, Brown would conclude the class with the comment: “Maybe, just maybe, there were 153 fish!”

On John’s dialogues with the “Petrine” tradition(s), let me clarify. These are most explicit in the juxtaposing of Peter and the Beloved Disciple as a corrective to rising institutionalism in the late first-century church. I agree with Culpepper that the thaumaturgical semeiology found in the Synoptics is not limited to “Petrine” influences, but I do think there is validity in inferring a Petrine valuation of miracles as a power-oriented appraisal of Jesus’ ministry that is corroborated by the presentation of Peter in Acts and some related material in 1 Peter. Culpepper is also correct in pointing out that the Johannine commentary on Jesus’ signs and their revelatory value probably continued over several decades. In this sense, my work may seem actually a bit more radical than Bultmann’s. Rather than seeing the Fourth Evangelist as coopting dialectically a back-water signs source, in John 6:26 Jesus is portrayed as overturning the prevalent valuation of the feeding miracle in all five Synoptic accounts: they “ate . . . and were satisfied.” I had written a 42-page excursus on seven topics of dialogue spanning several decades between Petrine and Johannine traditions, which I left out of the book and replaced with note 22 on page 155 (see also notes 20–26). Some of this material is also part of the supplementary material added to the first edition (the Prologue, chaps. 6, 15–17, and 21) and reflects part of the interest in the compiler’s finalization and circulation of the witness of the Beloved Disciple. “His testimony is true!” thus sounds clear ideological tones, ecclesiologically and otherwise.

(4) Professor Stanton’s views as a leading Matthean scholar and gospels critic are especially welcome as they relate to the book’s implications for NT studies. Stanton puts his finger rightly on the Prophet-like-Moses Christology in John, which I believe is responsible for much of the tension in the Father-Son relationship. I also think this Mosaic agency typology may have been closer to Jesus’ self-understanding than Davidic or Elijah associations which probably accrued as factors of early Christian Messianic constructions. Interestingly, the claim to be equal with God is portrayed in John 5 as a key source of provocation regarding the Judean religious leadership. Such tensions reflect the Johannine situation in the 70s and 80s, but these contempo-
rary debates may not have been the origin of the controversy narratives, themselves. I appreciate Stanton’s positive comments on my attempts to integrate a theory of composition with theories of Johannine-Synoptic relations and a synthesized history of the Johannine Situation (Table 21). Headway on one of these fronts, of course, bears with it implications for others.

I also appreciate Professor Stanton’s comments regarding the ecclesial realities reflected in, and resulting from, the finalizations of Matthew and John. The papyri evidence of Matthew and John indeed suggests not only their widespread use but also their organizational impact across primitive Christian communities. At the same time, Stanton is correct in pointing out that Matthean and Johannine organizational approaches might not have been all that dissimilar. Nor was Matthean Christianity a clear-cut institutional hierarchy just yet. I might even add to Stanton’s examples the fact that while Peter is entrusted with instrumental keys to the Kingdom, he is also called to extend forgiveness 7 x 70; and, the emerging Matthean leadership shows it has the capacity to judge—while opposing judgmentalism, and the willingness to affirm authority—while calling for the gracious exercise thereof. Clarifying, even though one detects at least seven ways the Petrine unit of Matthew 16:17–19 is answered in John (apparently correctly, Table 20 and pp. 234–40), it is not a written text in Matthew that the Johannine tradition is engaging. Nor is Matthean Christianity itself the target of the Johannine corrective. Rather, the larger movement toward centralization and hierarchy, assisted by the Matthean text and other associations more acutely, is what John seeks to confront in the name of Jesus’ original intention for the church.

This especially would have been the case if the ecclesial moves of Diotrephes and his kin (3 John 9f.) were experienced adversely by Johannine Christians. In response to a variety of issues—the death of the apostles, the growth of the movement, the adaptation of Jewish organizational structures, and especially the need to stave off Docetist defections—a patriarchal form of hierarchy apparently gathers steam in the 80s. It may even have been touted as a “new and improved” way to hold the church together. The Johannine response, however, was not simply an organizational one. It saw beyond the structural interests to the spiritual and theological issues at stake and sought to preserve the inclusively accessible leadership of the resurrected Lord within the community of faith at all costs. This is why I used the term “Christocracy.” It affirms the belief that the risen Christ is accessible to all (by means of the Parakletos) and that church leadership bears the responsibility not to simply be heard themselves but to insure the living voice of Christ is heard—and obeyed—as the life-producing way forward.

A key problem, of course, with the word “Christocracy” is that it may come across as heavy handed; but, the Johannine Gospel insists on the opposite. I adopted the term specifically in response to Philippe Menoud’s (1978) view that “Christocracy” in the early church was always apostolic and
always hierarchical. When I ran across this perspective, it occurred to me that such was precisely what the Johannine leadership believed—and argued—Christ’s leadership was not limited to. Like the grieving Samuel tradition that perceived Israel’s lust for a king as the abandonment of theocracy proper, here the Johannine leadership perceived such an innovation not merely as a problematic and sometimes strident development, but it regarded it as a departure from the Spirit-based essence of the Jesus movement. Thus, we have not the apostolic tradition versus the Johannine; rather, we have from the Johannine perspective the problematic coopting of apostolic coin toward the bolstering of a centralizing and structured form of leadership that threatened the pneumatic and familial character of Christian fellowship, which had as its basis its own traditional heritage. This accounts for the juxtaposition of Peter and the Beloved Disciple in John. The Beloved Disciple becomes a pattern for authentic discipleship just as the legacy of Peter contributed to evolving institutionalism elsewhere.

Stanton also rightly mentions some of the Christological motifs that deserve to be explored more, and these will be developed in further projects. Sketching the development of the Christ hymn in the Prologue, however, would involve experiential factors in the worship experience of early Christians drawn into discussion with the testimony of the Baptist and the Jewish agency motif developed within a Hellenistic context. Likewise, the evangelist apparently draws disparate theologies into his narrative, such as the Baptist’s “Lamb of God” Christology, and a few other motifs as well. On addressing the christological tensions mentioned in Appendices I–VI, their inferred origins are sketched in Table 22 (266–71, 262). The result of all of this is to suggest the christological tensions in John are not due to a multiplicity of authors or alien sources, but they largely reflect four general origins: (a) the evangelist’s dialectical style of reflective thought, (b) the evangelist’s conception of an agency Christology, (c) a series of acute crises in the Johannine situation, and (d) the literary crafting of an engaging narrative. Granting these considerations, however, a further task remains: interpreting what these christological tensions mean in ways that are theologically adequate and existentially meaningful.

(5) Professor Padgett offers some helpful comments, then, as a theologian. It is good to have theologians interpreting scripture and to have biblical scholars engaging theology. We need more of that! I am also pleased with Padgett’s clarification of what is and is not meant by “dialectical.” Sometimes dialectics can be discussed in ways monological, which becomes oxymoronic. While his warnings against hermeneutical excess are well taken, I want again to clarify that Fowler and Loder are not psychohistorians. They are religious epistemologists, conducting empirical research into human cognition and thought formation, who also reflect on their findings theologically. Rather than forcing a dichotomy here between classical philosophers and modern cognitive theorists, it may even be profitable to analyze how
Socrates and Plato sought to bring their audiences from one level of understanding to another—constructing a crisis (aporia) in the thought of the reader requiring the exploration of higher levels of thought—in the light of Fowler’s and Loder’s works. Not only do their works help us grasp a better understanding of what Barrett believes was the dialectical theology of the Fourth Evangelist, they may also help us understand better the cognition-related work of classic, and subsequent, philosophers, as well.

Padgett’s second concern surprisingly occupies the bulk of his theological critique. In it he has overlooked several important things and is mistaken on a few others, although one does not have space to treat them all. (a) First, his errors begin by failing to notice the exegetical basis for Bultmann’s judgment—and mine. The issue here is not whether outward forms may have been meaningful for the Fourth Evangelist or even facilitative of authentic belief. They may have been. The problem lies with John 6:53—“Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in yourselves!” These are strong, divisive words! If this ultimatum refers to a particular cultic expression as a requisite for receiving eternal life, it absolutely contradicts John’s Christocentric soteriology, let alone John 4:21–24. Jesus is the way, and authentic worship in John is in Spirit and in Truth, transcending place and form! In taking verse 53 as a ritual reference Padgett must therefore take the text to be saying that outside of cultic, eucharistic participation all humanity is damned! As an exegete, and as a theologian, I side with Bultmann on this one.

(b) Bultmann’s appeal to the “medicine of immortality” in Ignatius, however, is problematic in that he assumes it represents Egyptian theophagy. However, Ignatius was not emphasizing the eucharistic loaf as magically salvific, but the breaking of one loaf, as opposed to multiple loaves, which was the efficacious remedy to schismatic death. Thus, Ignatius raised the walls of the church and sought to bolster the value of community inclusion by requiring exclusive eucharistic participation and submission to the bishop as essential for salvation. The Fourth Evangelist addresses similar centrifugal threats, but in very different centripetal ways. Rather than raising outward markers as indicators of blessed faithfulness, he raises importance of the center—solidarity with Christ the crucified and risen Lord—and calls for abiding in the Lord and his community as the authentic and life-producing way forward. This is one of the most important advances the book makes for investigations of sacramental theology; Padgett does not appear to have noticed it.

(c) A third puzzlement with Padgett’s review regards his apparent failure to appreciate the ways the excursus “What is a Sacrament” (sic; actually, “What Is Meant by ‘Sacrament?’”) (pp. 112–19 sic; actually, 112–14) advances the discussion. Distinguishing between “sacrament” as an incamational reality, an institutional form, an ordinance by Jesus, and as quasi-magical instrumentalism seems to me extremely important for discussing adequately Johannine
sacramentology. In John there is no institution of the eucharist at the Johannine supper, nor is there any institution of baptism, nor is there any ordinance by Jesus for anyone to perform any symbolic rite in John (John 13 is an exhortation toward servant leadership, not a foot-washing ordinance). In John 4:2 the evangelist clarifies that Jesus himself did not baptize, only his disciples did. This seems to be a historical clarification, correcting emerging ordinance claims that probably served to legitimate the evolution of Christian baptismal rites as originating with Jesus. On the other hand, all of John is "sacramental" in the incarnational sense of the term, and I stand with C. J. Wright (1950:81f.), C. K. Barrett (1978:82), and others5 in affirming the paramount sacramental reality to which John indeed points: God become human in the flesh of Jesus. What we have literally in John 6:51-58 is an appeal for corporate solidarity with Jesus and his community—to be willing to follow the example of Jesus who gave his flesh on Calvary if they expect to be raised with him on the last day. Willingness to suffer with the Lord is the issue here, not a question of whether disciples are willing to participate in a cultic rite. Padgett may wish to lump all of these meanings together, as many sincere folks may do anachronistically, but one cannot credit the Fourth Gospel with the association. It must be a non-Johannine move.

(d) A final criticism of Padgett's second concern regards his crediting of my Quaker background with the source of my views. Likewise weak is his blaming of Bultmann's "existentialism" for that with which he disagrees and only partially understands. I do not assume, however, this reflects upon Padgett's Wesleyanism or even his faith commitments. I do fear, though, it may deflect the discussion away from the exegetical merits and weaknesses of the work itself, seizing on unhelpful religious stereotypes and assumed beliefs to make a case. By the way, the words "empty ritualism" do not occur anywhere in my writings. As for early Christians and early Friends, the problem was not "empty ritualism," but zealous ritualism, which Paul (Galatians 2) and George Fox opposed in the name of the new covenant through Christ. Padgett's zeal is impressive here, but it is misdirected zeal.

While my perspectives and experiences will indeed affect the sorts of questions I raise—as well they should—I hope they do not alter the outcomes of my research. My commitment is to the truth rather than any particular appraisal of it, personal, traditional, or otherwise. I actually feel my Quaker background facilitates exegetical even-handedness, as I feel very little need to insure dogmatic or cultic outcomes resulting from my work. Padgett may be pleased to know that I really do believe Paul can be seen moving from a communal meal to a more symbolic meal between 1 Corinthians 10 and 11. I simply do not believe there is any evidence that Johannine Christianity has made the same formalized move by the time John was final-

5. See the 146 references in Bibliography II, "John 6" and the 45 references in Bibliography III, "The Sacraments in John" (287-93) for broader discussions of the issues.
ized. On this point, I stand with Bamabas Lindars, Robert Kysar, Craig Koester, and other leading Johannine scholars (111–36, 194–220) in stating that the Fourth Evangelist and his community may have been quite innocent of cultic sacramental piety—despite its meaningfulness for Wesley, and their own Catholic and Lutheran traditions.

My greatest disappointment, however, with Padgett’s theological review is its all-too-brief treatment of the epistemological origins of such christological tensions as the humanity/divinity of Jesus, the Father/Son relationship, the relation between faith and miracles, and present/futuristic eschatology in John. These are the main issues the book treats, and both sides of many historic theological debates have equally cited the Gospel of John for their divergent positions. I do appreciate Padgett’s discussion of some of these themes at the end of his essay, but what I would really like to see is further theological grappling with this book’s central concern—which relates directly to the central concern of, and debates of, Christianity—how God is at work in Jesus as the Christ.

To conclude, as “the spiritual Gospel,” modern relegations of John to a distanced, late-and-only-late stylization of the Jesus story are misleading and false. John’s christological tensions betray proximity to, and dynamic engagement with, their subject, not distanced detachment from it. Most of the christological formulations leading up to Chalcedon restore the tension to a set of perspectives found within the Fourth Gospel. As biblical theologians it thus behooves us also to bear in mind the questions to which the Fathers posed their orthodox answers. Even as the biblical source of these debates, dogmatic certainty eludes the experience and inclination of the evangelist because the reality engaged is a living reality, encountered at times in ways apparently unexpected as well as anticipated. This is the scandal—and the glory—of the Gospel of John. If one may also draw Barth into the discussion (163, n. 33), the Fourth Gospel is a communication which presumes encounter with the living God through Christ . . . , and it creates that which it presumes.