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Adoption

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CURRENT ISSUE: ADOPTION: THE FORGOTTEN BLESSING

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From the Editor

The robust doctrine of the magisterial Reformer John Calvin, adoption, was largely eclipsed due to the conflation of adoption with the doctrine of justification, according to David Garner. Thanks to the Puritans it was recovered and embodied under its own rubric in the Westminster Confession and Catechisms. Garner's article, "Beloved Sons in Whom He is Well-Pleased," reminds us of the pastoral and homiletical importance of this oft-forgotten blessing. He also offers a useful selected reading list.

In this season of intense discussion of politics and culture, two important books are reviewed by Darryl Hart and Douglas Felch. Hart's review article, "Some Pluralisms Are More Inclusive than Others," explores issues about the cultural shift from the fifties to the present raised in George Marsden's latest book, *The Twilight of the American Enlightenment: The 1950s and the Crisis of Liberal Belief*. Felch reviews Mark Larson's *Abraham Kuyper, Conservatism, and Church and State*, in which Larson compares American conservatism with Kuyper's political thought, both in many ways similar to Edmund Burke's political principles.

John Muether reviews Naomi Schaefer Riley's *Got Religion? How Churches, Mosques, and Synagogues Can Bring Young People Back*. As with many books of this kind, as Muether observes, its strength of analysis is not matched by its poverty of solution.

Finally, don't miss the gorgeous George Herbert poem, "A True Hymn."

Blessings in the Lamb,
Gregory Edward Reynolds

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Ordained Servant exists to help encourage, inform, and equip church officers for faithful, effective, and God-glorifying ministry in the visible church of the Lord Jesus Christ. Its primary audience is ministers, elders, and deacons of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, as well as interested officers from other Presbyterian and Reformed churches. Through high-quality editorials, articles, and book reviews, we will endeavor to stimulate clear thinking and the consistent practice of historic, confessional Presbyterianism.

ServantTruth

Beloved Sons in Whom He is Well-Pleased

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by David B. Garner

Those given the eyes of saving faith find boundless reasons to celebrate the gospel. Clear vision of the Savior evokes songs of praise. That the Righteous Judge of the universe forgives sinners, that Almighty God makes peace with his enemies, and that the dead in sin become alive in Christ—these gospel truths blow away all human notions of grace, mercy, authority and power. Gospel grace confounds even as it transforms.

Unfathomable as they are, these rich treasures do not deplete the gospel. Redemptive grace moves from the cosmic courtroom to the welcoming presence of the Almighty, from the heavenly tribunal to the household of God. To the redeemed, God is not only a forgiving Judge; he is the loving heavenly Father. The Covenant of Grace is a covenant of sonship, so that the sons of Abraham by faith are the sons of God (Gal. 3:25–29). Filial language saturates the biblical exposition of gospel grace because redeemed sinners _are_ the children of the loving Father. "See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are" (1 John 3:1a).

For the Apostle Paul, this familial essence of the gospel is best expressed by the term _adoption_. The theological weight and scope of this term are striking—enough for J. I. Packer to gloat, "Adoption through propitiation. . . . I do not expect ever to meet a richer or more pregnant summary of the gospel than that."[1] Not all share Packer's appreciation for this filial grace. The blessing of adoption belongs to _all_ the redeemed_;_ its teaching, however, has a checkered past. In comparison with other redemptive themes, adoption has seen disparate attention.

Adoption and (as?) Justification

The Westminster Confession (chapter 12) presents its earliest confessional expression. In its confessional wake, the Puritans eloquently capitalized on adoption's pastoral treasures.[2] These Westminsterian and Puritan strands owe their debt to Calvin, whose own articulation of the gospel has been rightly dubbed, "the gospel of adoption"[3] because "the adoption of believers is the heart of John Calvin's understanding of salvation."[4] And though Calvin's theology largely set the course for the Reformed, his permeating appreciation for the gospel's familial lifeblood failed to carry the day.

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[1] J. I. Packer, _Knowing God_, 20th anniversary ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1993), 214.

[2] See Joel R. Beeke, _Heirs with Christ: The Puritans on Adoption_ (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage, 2008).

[3] Brian A. Gerrish, _Grace and Gratitude: The Eucharistic Theology of John Calvin_ (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1993), 89.

[4] Howard Griffith, "'The First Title of the Spirit': Adoption in Calvin's Soteriology," _Evangelical Quarterly_ 73 (2001): 135.

Several have postulated reasons for adoption's perpetual shelving.[5] Here I simply note that key influencers' praiseworthy allegiance to justification triggered a teetering toward a forensic monopoly, and in countering Roman Catholic error, has inadvertently overshadowed the familial cast of the gospel. As essential as the Reformation's meticulous articulation of justification was, polemics won the day and the familial faded behind the forensic.

One key catalyst to adoption's diminution will suffice to illustrate. Embracing the bold affirmation of biblical soteriology as expressed afresh in the Reformation, Francis Turretin commendably makes much of justification. Countering the medieval conflation of justification with sanctification and standing on the shoulders of his Reformation forerunners, he vigorously expounded justification by faith alone. Debts cancelled and forgiven, the redeemed are declared righteous in the Righteous One: "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 3:23–24). Justification is forensic, declared righteousness, and as such must be protected from any semi-Pelagian intrusion.

When he turns to adoption, we encounter sharp disappointment. Turretin squeezes adoption into a forensic straightjacket. Adoption, to Turretin, is "the other part of justification."[6] He insists, "Adoption is included in justification itself as a part which, with the remission of sins, constitutes the whole of this benefit."[7] Discernibly contrary to Calvin and ostensibly departing from the Westminster Confession of Faith, Turretin stuffed adoption into justification, and led hordes of others to do the same.[8] In this concept fusion, the distinct meaning of adoption falls to the theological sidelines, if not off the field altogether.

If adoption is justification, adoption's distinctively celebrated splendor lacks any "justification." Among other problems, it becomes impossible to entertain Puritan celebration of adoption's personal and pastoral value. After all, a not-guilty verdict of an Almighty Judge does not make the criminal a son. Adoption is no more justification than justification is sanctification, and history attests to the theological distress associated with this latter confusion. Though less frequently discerned, the conflation of adoption and justification correspondingly distorts.

The Biblical Profile: Adoption[9]

"Adoption" (Greek, *huiothesia*) appears only five times (Eph. 1:5, Gal. 4:5, Rom. 8:15, 8:23, and 9:4), yet it carries considerable clout in Paul's theology. Its infrequency is incongruous with its import. A terse survey of these passages and of adoption's role in each belies any doubt.

With eyes illumined to the heavenly realms, in Ephesians 1 Paul falls to his knees, overwhelmed by the revelation of divine grace. He writes what he receives and prays what he writes, while the heavenly backdrop to redemption pilots his apostolic pen. By way of covenant (*pactum salutis*) the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit determined to secure a redeemed

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[5] See, e.g., Tim J. R. Trumper, *When History Teaches Us Nothing: The Recent Reformed Sonship Debate in Context* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2008), 1–32.

[6] Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, ed. James T. Dennison Jr., trans. George Musgrave Giger (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 1994), 2:666. There is no question that adoption entails a forensic element. But its biblical use and theological function extend beyond the forensic domain.

[7] Ibid., 2:668.

[8] See, e.g., Michael S. Horton, *The Christian Faith: A Systematic Theology for Pilgrims* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), 645.

[9] For a much fuller probing of the filial grace of adoption in its biblical and systematic expression, see David B. Garner, *Sons-in-the-Son: The Theology of Adoption* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, forthcoming [October 2016]).

family from among fallen sinners: "even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved" (Eph. 1:4–6).

Behind the sweetness of its application and antecedent to its accomplishment, adoption springs from the counsel of God. Enraptured by his heavenly vision, Paul ponders this pre-temporal starting point of redemption: the paternal love of God for his elect. No abstraction, this love takes an explicitly familial form even as it does a redemptive one:

> God has chosen us and has predestined us to adoption 'to himself' (*eis autōn*). This ties in with love as the basis for his predestinating act and reinforces the idea that he views his people as his own glorious inheritance (Eph. 1:18). The final purpose of election then is relational,[10]

so that God is Father of his redeemed family.

On the stage of history, the elect enter the family of God when they receive the Spirit of adoption (Rom. 8:15). But this Spirit's outpouring depends upon the incarnate and covenantal obedience of the Son of God, whose attainment at his resurrection delivers covenant promise. And as expressed in the opening verses of Ephesians 1, theologically antecedent to the Son's essential work is the loving purpose of the Triune God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. In other words, adoption began in heaven before it came to earth. Put in Southern idiom, God's love for his sons and daughters is older than dirt.

Out of his loving purpose, God sent his own Son to earth to secure his family. Clearly expressed in this Ephesian doxology, the Son's role takes center stage in Galatians 4:4–5, "But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons." In keeping with its pre-dirt primacy, Paul gives adoption far-reaching redemptive contours. Building on his Abrahamic and Mosaic covenant argumentation in Galatians 3, he explains in Galatians 4 the gritty and gracious logic of the incarnation. God became man—the Son of God became the Son of Mary, so that he might make the sons of fallen Adam the sons of God. Adoption entails all that the gospel delivers. The gospel in this Son is *adoption*.

As in Ephesians and Galatians, in Romans 8–9 Paul situates adoption in cosmic, covenantal categories. Romans 8 encompasses creation to redemption to consummation, and puts the resurrection and revelation of these adopted sons at the heart of God's entire program (Rom. 8:22–23):

> For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.

Israel's corporate adoption (Exod. 4:22–23) serves as the Old Covenant type to its New Covenant counterpart. This typological adoption (Rom. 9:4) facilitates Paul's organic filial paradigm, in which adoption attains eschatological realization in the person and work of

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[10] Clinton E. Arnold, *Ephesians*, Zondervan Evangelical Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 10:82–83.

Jesus Christ (Rom. 9:5). Israel's true Son Christ Jesus came to secure for the elect the typified and promised final adoption. Anticipated by Old Covenant adoption, the outpouring of the Spirit of adoption (Rom. 8:15) affirms Jesus's redemptively efficacious, eschatological victory as Son.

United to this Son of God by faith then, the sons of God receive Christ as resurrected Son, who pours out his Spirit of adoption upon them.

> For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!" The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him. (Rom. 8:15–17)

The sons' Spirit-wrought cry to the Father depends upon Christ's eschatological triumph—both for the *now* in suffering and for the *not yet* of glory.

Already the sons of God by faith, final filial transformation awaits the resurrection of the body: "And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies" (Rom. 8:23). Adoption, as with all saving grace, is already but not yet. Already in possession of the Spirit of the resurrected Son of God—the Spirit of adoption, the sons of God will realize their adoption in full at their own filial transformation, resurrection. Full conformity to the image of the resurrected Son of God (Rom. 8:29) marks the final attainment of adoptive grace.[11]

Adoption thus draws upon Trinitarian counsel, is revealed in Old Covenant typological form, and serves as a comprehensive expression for the gospel in its realized and unrealized forms. With such expansive theological pedigree, all of its expressions expectedly center upon Christ as Son, as adoption is "in and for [God's] only Son Jesus Christ" (WCF 12). In keeping with the intra-Trinitarian covenant, Christ delivers the redemptive blessings as the Son of God, so that the familial purposes of God for his people attain fully and finally:

> As indeed he says in Hosea, "Those who were not my people I will call 'my people,' and her who was not beloved I will call 'beloved.' " "And in the very place where it was said to them, 'You are not my people,' there they will be called 'sons of the living God.' " (Romans 9:25–26)

Adoption of Christ: The Beloved Son

A survey of Old Testament history confirms that no son of Adam (or of Abraham!) ever qualified to redeem Israel. Generations of sons came and went, with no son comprehensively excellent, each of them stained by covenant disobedience, and each of them therefore wholly disqualified to represent and secure the holy family of God. This multi-generational filial disappointment produced an intensifying eschatological restlessness. How long, O Lord, before you redeem your people? Another feature of Old Testament revelation surfaces clearly over these generations: redemption required *divine* intervention—provision of a prophet, priest, and king, a *Son* like no other. Only God could deliver his people from the stranglehold of sin. Only God could meet his own covenant demands.

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[11] Adoption possesses forensic and renovative characteristics. How this is so without confusing or conflating justification and sanctification receives full attention in Garner, *Sons-in-the-Son*.

Anselm argued in *Cur Deus Homo* that atonement for sin required both man and God: man *ought* to make the needed satisfaction as the debtor, but only God *could* make the needed satisfaction; thus, it was necessary "for a God-Man to make it."[12] Yet the hypostatic union, while necessary, was not sufficient. Redemption required incarnation *and* filial obedience unto death. Accordingly, as sent by the Father, the eternal Son took on flesh *and* took to obedience. Enfleshed as the son of Mary and entrenched in his covenant calling, Jesus came to do the will of his heavenly Father (Heb. 10:7). Forever the Son of God, born of woman and having learned obedience under the law (Luke 2:52; Heb. 5:8), he became Son in a new way. By flawless filial faithfulness to the end, he became that Beloved One in whom the Father was well pleased (Eph. 1:6; cf. Matt. 3:17; 17:5).

In fact, according to Romans 1:4, Jesus "was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead." Though Paul never uses the term adoption (*huiothesia*) directly concerning Jesus Christ, this declaration concerning Christ's transforming and vindicating resurrection should be understood no other way. The Almighty Father in heaven looks upon the perfect covenant performance of his perfected Son (Phil. 2:5–11; cf. Heb. 2:10; 5:9), and upon his resurrection from the dead, *declares* him the excellent Son. Having delivered the eschatological promises in full, this Son *par excellence* is now Son in a new and redemptively effectual way:

> Verse 4 [of Romans 1] teaches that at the resurrection Christ began a new and unprecedented phase of divine sonship. The eternal Son of God, who was born, lived, and died *katà sárka* ["according to the flesh"], has been raised *katà pneûma* ["according to the Spirit"] and so has become what he was not before: the Son of God in power.[13]

This new resurrection sonship attainment, as Richard Gaffin and others have argued, *is* Christ's own adoption.

After Jesus's baptismal affirmation, the Father's statement out of the cloud at the Mount of Transfiguration anticipates, even certifies, this forthcoming resurrection declaration. As Luke offers his account prior to the travelogue (Luke 9:51–19:27), during which time Jesus takes his final steps towards Jerusalem to complete his filial/messianic mission, the consummative and cosmic concerns come positively into focus. The Son of God has neared the finish line of his covenantal responsibilities, and this mountaintop attestation by the Father combined with the foretaste of radiant glory, profiles the eschatological and redemptive import of his imminent death and resurrection. In this final phase of his "indestructible life" (Heb. 7:16), the heights of heaven will meet the bowels of earth, and the kingdom of the justifying and sanctifying Son will gain its fixed redemptive footing.[14]

Drawing the Law and Prophets to their eschatological fruition by the telling presence of great Moses and great Elijah, with palpable proleptic force the Father affirmed the Son and called hearers to "listen to him!" (Luke 9:35b). What the Father affirmed on the mountain informs what Paul means by Christ's adoption/resurrection in Romans 1:4. Transformed in his resurrection, Jesus *becomes* Son of God in power by the Holy Spirit, and in this cosmic and eschatologically consummate way, enters filial glory for the sake of redeeming the elect

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[12] Anselm, *Cur Deus Homo,* in *A Scholastic Miscellany: Anselm to Ockham*, Library of Christian Classics 10, ed. and trans. Eugene R. Fairweather (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1956), 151.

[13] Richard B. Gaffin Jr., *Resurrection and Redemption: A Study in Paul's Soteriology*, 2nd ed. (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 1987), 111.

[14] This paragraph is a slight rewording of a section from chapter 7 in Garner, *Sons-in-the-Son*.

(Rom. 8:18–30).[15] Necessary for this Son of Mary was his own matured and excellent sonship, whereby he could properly become the Son of God in power. Eternally Beloved, he indeed became the covenantally excellent Beloved Son. At that hinge moment in history in which Christ raised from the dead, the Father selected his only begotten Son as his adopted Son.

Some might find the adoption of Jesus odd, even distressing. How can it be that the Son of God is adopted? Yet the question itself betrays a misunderstanding of the covenantal context of Christ's work. Surely he was the eternal and incarnate Son, but by virtue of his filial obedience and filial suffering he qualifies to become the covenant Son, the adopted One, the great filial Mediator. The affirmation of Christ's adoption is no denial of his hypostatic union and no return to some Arian-friendly heresy (i.e., adoptionism) which claims Christ became Son *first* at his baptism or his resurrection. On the contrary, it was because he was eternal and incarnate Son that he became the adopted Son who successfully accomplished the covenantal demands. His sonly success in temptation (Heb. 5:7–10) and decisive sonly acceptance as marked by his resurrection (Rom. 1:4) produce the indispensable redemptive purposes. So essential are these filial attainments that without the adoption of the Redeemer, there is no adoption of the redeemed.

Adoption in Christ: The Beloved Sons

The pleasure of the Father in his Son then lies squarely in the Son's personal obedience *for its redemptive, adoptive efficacy*. The redemptive power associated with the Son as life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45) graciously yet mightily overwhelms. For the elect, Adam's fallen sonship gives way to the Last Adam's resurrected sonship. For the redeemed, those united to the risen and appointed Son, filial grace becomes their full possession. The power of Christ's resurrection life bestows the full bounty of his new filial status upon those united to him by faith. The Father is pleased, his predestined family is secured, and by the resurrected Son's adoptive glory, the gracious familial purpose of the Father prevails (Eph. 1:3–10). In the qualified Son, the *in Christ* familial dynasty is established forever, and in his sons the Father's will is done on earth as it is in heaven. The redeemed sons are resurrected sons in the resurrected Son; they are adopted sons in the adopted Son.

Moreover, because of the necessary tie between Christology and soteriology, to deny Christ's adoption necessarily proscribes the believer's adoption. The soteriological rides on the Christological—where Christ has not gone, neither can the one united to him go. Instead the filial attainment at the resurrection means something for believers precisely because it meant something personally, cosmically, eschatologically, and redemptively for Christ Jesus. There is therefore no stray blessing occasioned by saving grace, no conferral of redemptive blessing not attained by the Personal Source of redemption himself. The vital and intimate union between the sons and the Son remains unyieldingly robust: "Nothing can be more personal than the intimate relation which the Christ (particularly the Risen Christ) sustains to the believer."[16] Believers are adopted only *in* and *through* Jesus Christ.

To be sure, the apostle affirms inviolable distinctions between the sons and the Son: Christ is Firstborn, Firstfruits, the one Mediator between God and man, and Last Adam; but the sons united to him enjoy full participation in *all* that he has attained as the eschatological

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[15] Robert A. Peterson, *Adopted by God: From Wayward Sinners to Cherished Children* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2001), 59–63, distinguishes four historical declarations of Jesus's adoption: (1) his baptism (Matt. 3:17), (2) his transfiguration (Matt. 17:1–13), (3) his resurrection (Acts 13:27–30), and (4) his ascension (Heb. 1:3–5).
[16] Geerhardus Vos, *The Pauline Eschatology* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1930), 166.

Son. The driving union-with-Christ paradigm of his soteriology celebrates the stunning privileges of a gracious, Spirit-wrought concatenation of the redeemed with the Redeemer, of the sons with the Son.

So what then is the scope of this adoption for believers? In his book on the Holy Spirit, Sinclair Ferguson remarks, "In Christ the forensic and the transformative are one (Rom. 6:7). More, justification, sanctification, and glorification are one; declaratory, transformatory and consummatory coalesce in this resurrection."[17] The manner in which the apostle Paul aligns resurrection and adoption requires that we affirm this coalescence with Christ's newly attained sonship as well. In other words, at this cosmic moment in the history of redemption, Jesus secures all the redemptive benefits as resurrected *Son.* In his covenantal attainment as adopted/resurrected Son, the forensic and transformative are one. Christ's adoption marks his comprehensive covenantal and filial success *and* marks the point at which he becomes life-giving Spirit. By the grace of Christ Jesus, the life-giving Spirit of adoption, "believers are . . . put in the same position as Christ, who is the firstborn among many brothers (Rom. 8:29)."[18] He pours out the Spirit of adoption precisely because he is the adopted Son. He gives to the elect by grace what he has achieved by right.

Adoption then functions as no synonym for an *aspect* of union like justification, but offers rather a complex metaphor entailing his divinely declared *and* transformed identity at his resurrection. Truly, "justification, sanctification and glorification are one" in his resurrected sonship; the "declaratory, transformatory and consummatory coalesce" in his adoption. Coordinately and derivatively, these facts are as true of the sons as they are of their Elder Brother. Affirming the forensic in justification and the renewal in regeneration and sanctification for the believer, A. A. Hodge asserts, "Adoption includes both. As set forth in Scripture, it embraces in one complex view the newly-regenerated creature in the new relations into which he is introduced by justification."[19] Though he neither expands nor expounds, Hodge here resonates with Calvin, who resonates with the apostle Paul. As adopted Son, Christ distributes himself and his benefits to all the elect, making them sons in full possession of all that he is and has.

Adoption thus provides the covenantal and filial context for Christ's once-for-all redemptive work as the Beloved Son of God. The efficacy of his filial attainment draws those united to him into the full blessing of filial grace—in its forensic and transformative dimensions. As adopted sons in Christ, we become the *beloved sons in whom the Father is well pleased*.

Soli Patri Gloria. Soli Filio Gloria. Soli Spiritui Gloria.

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[17] Sinclair Ferguson, *The Holy Spirit* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1996), 250.

[18] Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, ed. John Bolt, trans. John Vriend (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008), 4:227. Though Bavinck argues differently concerning the sonship of Christ and the adoption of believers, this statement from him functions better when understanding the *shared* adoption of the redeemed sons in the Redeemer Son.

[19] Archibald Alexander Hodge, *The Confession of Faith* (repr.; Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1998), 192.

ServantReading

Some Pluralisms Are More Inclusive than Others
A Review Article

by Darryl G. Hart

The Twilight of the American Enlightenment: The 1950s and the Crisis of Liberal Belief, by George M. Marsden. New York: Basic Books, 2015, xxxix + 219 pages, $26.99.

George M. Marsden once laughed when I suggested, almost twenty years ago, that he write a memoir. He did not think his experience was worthy of the genre. With *The Twilight of the American Enlightenment*, Marsden comes the closest yet of his many thoughtful historical inquiries to reflections on his own past. Granted, it is a window with a small opening—the mid-twentieth-century decades of his youth. But the book's introduction has the ring of nostalgia for an America that has now been lost:

> I remember well how, in the spring of 1949, when I was ten years old, the fields near my home where we used to roam were suddenly marked off with patterns of stakes. A building project was launched with some fanfare. . . . By the next spring, our town had a full-fledged suburb, where I would soon be delivering newspapers. In such places, more and more young families could participate in the American dream of owning their own homes endowed with up-to-date modern conveniences. (ix)

In those new suburbs, father went to work, mothers reared children, children rode bikes, families watched television and went to church on Sundays. "There was little reason not to believe that," Marsden recalls, "if peace could be maintained, progress would continue."

That sense of optimism and how it failed is the subject of Marsden's book. In it he analyzes the assumptions of mainstream American culture in the 1950s, the ones that tempted Americans like Marsden to think peace and prosperity might be the wave of the future, where religion figured in those assumptions, and what the collapse of the post-war consensus meant for Christianity in America.

The 1950s recipe for the consensus that Marsden explores was two cups Enlightenment and two tablespoons liberal Protestantism. The origins of this concoction went back to the American founding and the belief that reason was an adequate basis for fair government and individual rights, along with a recognition that a free society depended on virtuous citizens who needed religion to underwrite a sense of moral duty. Americans in the 1950s could read lots of public intellectuals who worried about the fragility of this consensus. Some, like the literary critic Dwight MacDonald, lamented the

effects of mass culture (television, radio, and other such middle-brow expressions) on American character. Some, like the op-ed writer and political advisor Walter Lippmann, feared that the American consensus lacked an adequate philosophical basis. Others, like the sociologist William Whyte, fretted that the application of science to the nation's organizations was destroying American individualism and the ideal of personal autonomy. Even so, Americans were still united in defending individual freedom, free speech, civil rights, equality before the law, due process, economic opportunities, and civic-mindedness.

Marsden does not observe that most if not all of these ideals are still in full force though applied differently. What he does point out, which may explain the differences between the 1950s and today, is that the consensus after World War II rarely included minorities and women. American attachment to political liberty also assumed sexual restraint and the value of families as part of the social order. The sexual experimentation that surfaced in the 1960s seriously undermined that part of the 1950s consensus. Another segment of the American population that mainstream society in the 1950s neglected were religious conservatives—fundamentalists, evangelicals, and Roman Catholics. These believers did not necessarily experience discrimination, but they were clearly outside the American consensus. The Protestantism of the mainline denominations did enjoy a place at the table, whether the moralistic optimism of *Time* magazine's Henry Luce who promoted an American exceptionalism rooted in belief in God, or the haunting pessimism of Reinhold Niebuhr who reminded Americans of the selfishness that afflicted all humans thanks to original sin. Even so, the mainline churches achieved their centrist status by avoiding statements and actions that might look dogmatic or intolerant.

The 1960s witnessed the collapse of this consensus and in response the rise of a militant Christianity to clean up the debris. With only a pragmatic justification for political liberty and reliance on science, the Christian Right tried to fill the vacuum that the sexual revolution, civil rights movement, and anti-war protests exposed. Marsden detects in much of the Christian Right's agenda nostalgia for the pro-family and patriotic 1950s. With Francis Schaeffer, evangelicals were reading a leader who sought to supply America with an adequate foundation—a Christian one. But Marsden faults Schaeffer for offering a Christian outlook that was fundamentally divisive and partisan. It alienated and threatened non-Christians and failed to provide an inclusive pluralism.

That phrase, "inclusive pluralism," is in fact the point of Marsden's narrative. It is the subject of his last chapter and even the last two words of the book. Unlike the 1950s synthesis of the Enlightenment and liberal Protestantism or the Christian Right's blend of fundamentalism and partisan Republican politics, Marsden regards Dutch Calvinism as a better alternative. How different that alternative is is not immediately apparent by the time that Marsden explains what a genuinely pluralistic society looks like. Post-World War II American liberals, according to Marsden, were "passionately committed to principles such as individual freedom, free speech, human decency, justice, civil rights, community responsibilities, equality before the law, due process, balance of powers, economic opportunity . . ." (57) Their problem though was their naive optimism about human nature and neglect of an adequate philosophical or religious foundation for such ideals. Marsden also faults these liberals for failing to see that their "universal" values were the product of a "particular" social setting—white, middle-class, suburban,

university-trained men. The same problem afflicts contemporary secularists who aspire for the same ideals but sound just like the 1950s consensus.

Yet, when Marsden himself argues for the kind of pluralistic society that he believes will emerge from a proper theological basis, it sounds remarkably similar to the 1950s liberal project he critiques:

> The primary function of government is to promote justice and to act as a sort of referee, . . . patrolling the boundaries among the spheres of society, protecting the sovereignty due within each sphere, adjudicating conflicts, and ensuring equal rights and equal protections for confessional groups. (169)

This vision of liberal society seems almost the same as what 1950s liberals wanted. Is the difference that Marsden arrives at his social order because he has the correct theology? If so, then how will Reformed or evangelical Protestantism provide an adequate basis for a society in which spiritual descendants of the Protestant Reformation are a minority?

Maybe the difference is that Marsden is recommending a pluralism that flourished in the Netherlands during the first two-thirds of the twentieth century, one that derived from policies conceived and implemented by Abraham Kuyper during his political career from 1880 to 1915. What distinguished Kuyper's project from other efforts to accommodate modern society's diversity was a commitment to principled pluralism, one that did not treat science as objective or neutral but that made it a legitimate competitor of other outlooks, including religious ones. According to Marsden, Kuyper's "richly pluralistic society" protects Christian groups by guaranteeing equal rights for such institutions. But these protections were also in place in 1950s America. The OPC, for instance, had certain legal protections during the heady days of the American Enlightenment even if the pluralism of the 1950s meant not being "too dogmatic" and being "open to other points of view" (124). Protestant denominations might not be open to other ideas within their own structures and membership, but they had to be open to the possibility of people outside their fellowship holding positions of power in the wider society.

Marsden may be right to think that Kuyper had a better account of pluralism than America's liberal establishment did. Even so, Kuyper's theory of pluralism was not a requirement for obtaining legal protections in the Netherlands. In other words, Kuyper did not supply a foundation to eradicate the differences among Roman Catholics, Protestants, and secularists. His theory merely provided a platform by which these groups could live together, and in that sense the American liberal consensus of the 1950s was equally pluralistic and inclusive. The limits of that inclusive pluralism are now obvious but they came with benefits such as marshaling national resources to oppose the spread of Communism and eradicating prejudices that subjected African-Americans to legal discrimination. If the Netherlands had emerged from World War II as the West's super power and if it had needed to address racial segregation in one of its provinces, does Marsden think Kuyper's principled pluralism would have succeeded?

In fact, the example of New School Presbyterianism, the topic of Marsden's first book, *The Evangelical Mind and the New School Presbyterian Experience* (1970) might suggest why Kuyper's proposal for pluralism was out of sync with the American religious mainstream. As Marsden well demonstrated, New School Presbyterians, the

ones who favored the Second Great Awakening and supported the parachurch cooperative endeavors (the ones that led Old School Presbyterians to defend confessional standards and Presbyterian polity), those pro-revival Presbyterians rallied around evangelistic, moralistic, and nationalistic aims. For New Schoolers, along with Congregationalists who supplied the leadership and financial backing for a host of religious voluntary societies (Bible, tract, Sunday school), the health of the United States depended on extending Protestantism from the East Coast to the frontier. Without a Christian influence, morality would deteriorate and social order disappear. The ideal was for a unified political, economic, religious, and educational order that reflected Protestant (but only generically so) standards. Societal evils such as slavery and alcohol were roadblocks to a Christian America, as were religious and cultural outsiders like Roman Catholics and Mormons.

The sort of cooperation Protestants exhibited before the Civil War in attempting to fashion a Christian society was all the more prominent after the war. When Old School and New School Presbyterians in the North reunited in 1869, their merger prompted cooperative efforts among Protestants on an even larger scale. Presbyterians took the lead in interdenominational agencies that culminated in the 1908 formation of the Federal Council of Churches. That body's first official act was to ratify a "Social Creed for the Churches," a Protestant version of the sort of political reforms associated with the Progressive Party. It was also a classic statement of the major concerns of the Social Gospel. Its aim was to establish a society with the justice and equality only Christian ideals could supply. And while Protestants continued to hope for greater church union— they tried and failed in 1920 to form the United Protestant Church of America—those from Anglo-American backgrounds (Congregationalist, Presbyterian, Baptist, Methodist, Episcopalian, Disciples, even Unitarian)—also supported increased centralization of the nation's political and economic structures. Coordinating industry and transportation, along with supplying the manpower, for the United States' intervention in World War I was a major component of such centralization of the nation's major institutions. Loyalty to the cause for which the United States fought was another ingredient in what J. Gresham Machen lamented as the creation of America as "one huge 'Main Street.' "[1]

However widespread the factors, the United States was, during the very same years that Kuyper was operating at peak levels, moving in an opposite direction from the Netherlands. In fact, Protestants of British descent would have had trouble swallowing the sort of pluralism that Kuyper proposed and eventually introduced among the Dutch. Early in his career, Kuyper spoke out vigorously against the sort of cultural uniformity that characterized modern liberal politics (and the centralized state building that went with it). In his 1869 address, "Uniformity: the Curse of Modern Life" (1869), Kuyper saw that even if political uniformity ended in disappointment, the more dangerous strategy of liberalism was to rob people groups of "their characteristic genius" and render them "homogenous." The result, he feared, would be a "false unity . . . celebrated on the ruins of what land and folk, race and nation" had contributed to social variety. "Cries for brotherhood and love of fellow-man," Kuyper added, prevented an appreciation for "the distinctive features of the face of humanity" and ground away "with a coarse hand all the

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[1] Machen, *Christianity and Liberalism* (New York: Macmillan, 1923), 15.

divinely engraved marking on the copper plate of life."[2] To remedy the standardization of life that modern politics nurtured through invocations of universal, abstract rights, Kuyper led in the "pillarization" of Dutch society. As James Bratt explains in his authoritative biography, Kuyper advocated a social system (one that dominated the Netherlands until the 1960s) that included a "complete array of associations in which the various religious or ideological groups—Calvinists, Catholics, and Labor, with liberal humanists carried along by default—could live their separate lives from cradle to grave." Bratt calls this a "clannish division of public space."[3] Kuyper's counterparts in the United States resisted such clannishness by using public schools to assimilate immigrants into the "American way." The one trace of clannishness that persisted in the United States was race-based segregation. But that also became questionable due in part to the barriers that came down thanks to white and black soldiers fighting a common enemy during World War II.

One notable exception to the claim that mainline Protestants in the United States opposed the sort of pluralism that Kuyper advocated was J. Gresham Machen. His reasons for resisting centralization in American life were partly political. As a Marylander with deep sympathy for the tradition of States' Rights, Machen was predisposed to resent the federal government's expansion of power and influence. His testimony before Congress in opposition to a proposal for a Federal Department of Education was one such instance of resistance. Like Kuyper, Machen also was a defender of the rights of families and local communities to regulate their own lives. And as a confessional Presbyterian, Machen opposed cooperative plans that brought his denomination into closer ties with non-Presbyterians because he believed such endeavors typically reduced the unique claims of Reformed theology to vacuous ideals of spiritual uplift and moral suasion. In effect, though with different influences at play, Machen was as alarmed by cultural homogeneity as Kuyper. His decision in 1929 to form Westminster and his inclusion of Dutch-American Calvinists on the faculty (Van Til, Stonehouse, and Kuiper) was an American Presbyterian version of Kuyper's pillarization on a much more modest scale—one that had no support from taxpayers and very little cultural cache in wider intellectual circles.

When Marsden almost twenty-five years ago wrote about Machen for a talk delivered at Princeton Seminary, he chose to view the original Orthodox Presbyterian through the lens of the South and its racist and secessionist legacy. To be sure, Marsden believed that Machen could teach mainline Protestants lessons about the value of education and ideas since Marsden was then working on a project on the secularization of American universities. But Marsden did not notice a connection or affinity to Kuyper's point about pluralism. Of course, the South itself, even if for nefarious reasons, objected to the growth of the federal government's power and control of a broad range of American activities. But Marsden noted Machen's defense of the Confederacy, his lingering racism,

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[2] Kuyper, "Uniformity: The Curse of Modern Life," in James D. Bratt, ed., *Abraham Kuyper: A Centennial Reader* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 24–25.
[3] James D. Bratt, *Abraham Kuyper: Modern Calvinist, Christian Democrat* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013), 343.

and his "radical libertarianism."[4] In fact, Marsden thought it plausible to interpret Machen's departure from the PCUSA in 1936 as the ecclesiastical equivalent of the Confederacy's secession from the United States. Had Marsden looked at Machen's affinities with Kuyper in resisting cultural and political centralization and in leaving the mainline or established church, he might have recognized within the OPC's founder an American Presbyterian version of Dutch Calvinism's pillarization.

That older perspective on Machen, not the cultural pluralist but the rebellious southerner, may account for Marsden's silence in *The Twilight of the American Enlightenment* about the communion in which he grew up, the OPC. Marsden's experience of 1950s America and its enlightened progressivism did come, after all, in the context of worshiping at an OPC congregation and being a member of a household where Machen's name was highly regarded. Yet, Machen's ideas about religious and ethnic diversity, civil liberty, and the spirituality of the church make nary a dent on Marsden's reflections on American society since World War II. Machen's ideas about civil liberty showed remarkable toleration for diverse groups; a life-long Democrat, Machen defended the rights of Communists, Roman Catholics, and fundamentalists at a time when the ties between the Enlightenment and liberal Protestantism were solidifying. At the same time, Machen's idea for a church set apart to pursue not public or civil but spiritual ends with spiritual means provided a way for confessional groups to retain theological fidelity without having to compromise religious convictions for political purposes. It was also a version of principled pluralism that emerges directly from the American Presbyterian experience and so has the advantage of not requiring the United States or its Protestants to reinvent themselves as belonging to a small, intriguing, and substantially homogenous country like the Netherlands. Had Marsden proposed Machen instead of Kuyper, his critique of the thinness of the 1950s consensus may not have been substantially different. But his proposal for a remedy might have connected his reflections on 1950s intellectuals with his own experience as a teenager who heard as many Orthodox Presbyterian sermons as he did platitudes about national greatness.

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[4] Marsden, "Understanding J. Gresham Machen," in *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 196.

ServantReading

Abraham Kuyper, Conservatism, and Church and State
by Mark J. Larson

by Douglas A. Felch

Abraham Kuyper, Conservatism, and Church and State, by Mark J. Larson. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2015, xii + 111 pages, $15.00, paper.

Interest in Abraham Kuyper is growing rapidly, and rightly so. Kuyper was a significant Christian political thinker, who established an influential Christian political party and served as Prime Minister of the Netherlands (1901–5). Now, just in time to stimulate our thinking during this 2016 election year, comes a notable contribution to Kuyperian scholarship by OPC minister Mark Larson. In his book, Larson connects Kuyper with traditional political conservatism.

Larson maintains that Kuyper provides a body of thought "of enduring value for the political engagement of the Christian community in our time" (xii). His introductory chapter ("Conservatism") sets forth the intriguing and provocative thesis that Kuyper stands "in the trajectory of core conservative principles affirmed by Edmund Burke and more recently by Ronald Reagan" (2–3). Kuyper does so by affirming three foundational biblical principles that reflect "fundamental concerns of conservatism" (3–4, 12): the reality of natural law, the need for limited government, and the importance of personal freedom.

Larson begins chapter 2 ("God and Humanity") by arguing that American conservatism emphasizes natural law as an enduring and objective moral order, ultimately grounded in belief in God, that maintains an essential role for religion in civil society (13). In a parallel fashion, Kuyper maintained that "the imprinting of this eternal law upon the mind of man" was necessary in the political life of the nation (16).

However, the reality of flawed humanity leads to a second core principle of conservatism, "the necessity of limited government due to the deep distrust of human nature" (17). Kuyper's Calvinistic political philosophy rests not on some sense of human greatness, but on the reality of sin. Government restrains sin's destructive power in the world (18–19), but the same sin that necessitates the formation of government also requires limiting it. Simply put, "Government is necessary because men are not angels, but men who are not angels run government" (20).

This leads Larson in his third chapter ("Limited Government") to explore the need for governments to be constitutionally restrained. While both liberalism and socialism assume that the state is able to solve many if not most problems, conservatives stress that government, operated as it is by morally flawed individuals, must be restrained by limiting its role in society and by the application of constitutional safeguards.

Kuyper concurs. In his *Lectures on Calvinism,* Kuyper affirms his commitment to "a just constitution that restrains abuse of authority, sets limits, and offers the people a natural protection against lust for power and arbitrariness" (26). Kuyper's affinity with the Tenth

Amendment of the US Constitution can be noted in Article 10 of his Antirevolutionary Party platform of 1879, which affirmed the importance of a decentralized government (29).

Such decentralization is reinforced by Kuyper's concept of sphere sovereignty.

While insisting that final authority rests firmly in God, Kuyper argues that the Lord has delegated authority to semi-autonomous societal spheres (such as family, business, church, science, art, agriculture, industry, education, journalism, labor, and government). The plurality of spheres resists any tendency of government to usurp all authority to itself. As Kuyper notes, "The state cannot legitimately assert its authority over against the father, nor a prince over against the rights of other governing bodies and the people within their spheres of competence" (31).

Sphere sovereignty, for Kuyper, also helps to protect religious liberty, a topic Larson addresses in chapter 4 ("Church and State"). Kuyper attempts to ground his commitment to religious liberty and church disestablishment in the writings of Calvin himself. Larson rightly points out that drawing a straight line of connection is problematic and argues a stronger continuity between Kuyper and the thought of James Madison, the principal architect of the First Amendment and the American constitutional tradition (45), "despite an element of continuity with Calvin's teaching" (43).

In his fifth chapter ("Madisonian"), Larson outlines the shared principles between Kuyper and Madison on religion and politics, beginning with freedom of worship. Both men affirmed an "unalienable right" for every man to worship according to his own conscience. This distinguishes both Kuyper and Madison from Calvin, who asserted that government had an obligation to preserve and protect true religion (50). Kuyper and Madison also believed that all citizens should be treated equally before the law with regard to religion (50) since the state lacks jurisdiction in that area (51, 53). Kuyper insists the weapons waged against false religions by the church must be spiritual, not governmental (51), because "the government lacks the data of judgment" in matters of religious conviction (54). Indeed, the assumption of such jurisdiction by the state should be interpreted as despotism (54).

The two men also agree on disestablishment. Madison presented two arguments against establishment: First, the church did not need to be supported by taxes and actually prospered more when it received no government support (57). Kuyper agrees: "Churches flourish most richly when the government allows them to live from their own strength on the voluntary principle" (57). Second, says Madison, establishment tends to have a negative effect on the integrity of the church and its clergy and would likely encourage or require conformity (57–58). Kuyper concurs: "The separation of church and state . . . proceeds from . . . the realization that the well-being of the church and progress of Christianity demand it" (58). Larson finds it remarkable "that the head of a political party in another country appeals to the First Amendment of the American Constitution in support of his own program" (58).

Larson's analysis that Kuyper's political principles parallel those of traditional conservatism and that his position on religious liberty and disestablishment are rooted more in Madison than Calvin are worth the price of the book.

However, in his last two chapters Larson charts a different course. He wants to show that Kuyper's "perspective on the church and social reformation stands in continuity with the Calvinist tradition" (59). In doing so he moves from analysis to targeted application. He is concerned to criticize the judicial tyranny of the US Supreme Court and to consider how the church ought to engage in resistance and reform in opposition to it.

Thus, in chapter six ("Tyranny") Larson largely shifts his discussion from Calvin and Kuyper to the contemporary scene. Somewhat surprisingly (given his concern about

establishment), Larson laments the Supreme Court's erosion of the freedom of religion clause of the First Amendment by removing prayer, Bible reading, and the Ten Commandments from public schools (68). Unsurprisingly (given his concern about judicial activism), Larson also decries the rejection of strict constructionism and the setting aside of the Constitution in contemporary constitutional law, as in the egregious *Roe v. Wade* decision (69).

In mustering Calvinian forces against judicial activism, Larson cites Calvin's powerful opposition to abortion, and records Calvin, Bullinger, and Bucer's criticisms of incompetent or corrupt judges. However, it remains unclear how these critiques relate directly to current judicial activism, which is itself the misdirection of a constitutional form of government unknown to the magisterial Reformers. Allusions to Kuyper and Machen are closer to the mark, but even they could not have foreseen these developments. Larson's concern is real enough, but his argument that opposition to judicial activism can be derived directly from Calvin and Kuyper needs strengthening.

Similarly, it is difficult to root Larson's call in chapter 7 ("Resistance and Reform") directly in the Calvinian tradition. Both Calvin and Kuyper saw the church's response to tyranny as twofold: it should offer "an annihilating critique of sin in the state" and "instruct and exhort the state in the way of righteousness" (75). Further, Larson cites with approval John Murray's caution that the church should not engage in politics but that church members must do so as citizens of the state (77), although there are times when the church has the obligation to condemn the failure of the civil magistrate to "exercise his God-given authority in the protection and promotion of the obligations, rights, and liberties" of its citizens (78). As an example of the latter, Larson applauds the efforts of the D. James Kennedy Center for Christian Statesmanship (78).

Yet Larson's discussion lacks specifics as to how ordinary Christians ought to be engaged in the labor of resistance and reform in the face of judicial activism beyond prayer, godly example, and voting (84–85).

Given the force of his analysis in the first five chapters, Larson might have used his earlier chapters to strengthen the discussion in the last two. Instead of appealing to the dissatisfaction of the Protestant Reformers with incompetent judges, a more fruitful line of argument against judicial activism might be found in affirming and defending the Reformers' (and conservatism's) support of the natural law tradition that originally undergirded American jurisprudence and constitutional law. Judicial activists reject this tradition, whereas Calvin, Kuyper, Madison, and Burke all subscribe to it.

Finally it is important to note that Kuyper's Christian thought and activism defies easy categorization or labeling. Kuyper not only organized a Christian political party, he also advocated for Christian labor unions to address the plight of the worker and established two Christian newspapers to champion a Christian worldview in all areas of life, in addition to politics. It would be interesting to explore the relationship of these other activities to Kuyper's political conservatism.

These last three paragraphs are not meant as criticisms, but simply suggestions for future research. In the present, Mark Larson has made a valuable contribution to Kuyperian scholarship by uncovering significant conservative roots to Kuyper's political thought.

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ServantReading

Got Religion? *by Naomi Schaefer Riley*

by John R. Muether

Naomi Schaefer Riley, *Got Religion? How Churches, Mosques, and Synagogues Can Bring Young People Back.* West Conshohocken, PA: Templeton Press, 2014, $24.97 (cloth), $15.95 (paper).

   Got Religion? is journalist Naomi Schaefer Riley's contribution to a growing field of books that seeks to expand on sociologist Christian Smith's groundbreaking analysis of the spirituality of "emerging adulthood." This term, recently coined by developmental psychologists, refers to eighteen- to twenty-nine-year-olds who are delaying their transition into adulthood. Often labeled as the "millennial generation," emerging adults tend to defer the "traditional markers" of adulthood such as leaving home, assuming financial independence, getting married, and establishing roots in a community. One surprising result of Smith's studies is that this demographic may actually be more spiritually inclined than their boomer parents. But that does not translate into faithful commitment to traditional religious practices.
   Riley explains that "delayed adolescence" extends to several faith traditions. Separate chapters are devoted (in order) to evangelical Protestants, Muslims, Roman Catholics, Jews, Mormons, and African American churches. In every case, a sharp loss of religious identity markers results when these religious minorities assimilate into the broader host culture following college graduation. She cites two particular common factors that shape the religious sensibilities of emerging adults.
   First, there is a strong anti-institutional bias. Millennials prefer the à la carte experience that feasts on a merry-go-round of choices. And in a world of unbridled choice, paralysis can set in because "consumers of jam and religion think that they will not be happy with their choice because they will always think there was something better out there" (132). Institutional loyalty is a hard sell in a culture of choice.
   Compounding institutional resistance is a second factor that is perhaps more profound: many young people are busy in the cultivation of multiple identities. A young Jewish adult explains: "If I were going to describe myself, I wouldn't use Jewish in the top five descriptors. I'm from Atlanta, an artist, I love to play Frisbee. Judaism is a big part of my identity but not the main label" (79). As young people are encouraged to experiment with lifestyle options, identities become less stable and more malleable. Again, institutional restraints are eschewed. As one young adult put it frankly: "What people in the past have gotten from the church, I get from the Internet and Facebook" (89).
   Riley challenges some of these assumptions in a lively prose that often turns a clever phrase, as, for example, when she insists that "practicing faith is a team sport" (82). Here is "plausibility structure" made simple. Without social confirmation from a religious community, faith commitments will atrophy under the intensely pluralistic pressures of modern life. She also turns a skeptical eye toward some popular religious trends. Short-term missions experience often gets "lost in translation" and does not result in a long-term commitment to religious service. She upholds the value of smaller churches and warns that the attractional church can cease to be the church.

At the same time, Riley identifies initiatives that she believes may bring young people back to institutional commitment. Millennials are urban tribes, and peer-to-peer activity seems to work, at least for the short term. One example she commends is an urban church plant (a congregation in the Presbyterian Church in America) in a large southern city that is attracting young people with a particular emphasis on a "theology of place." But even here, the reader is left wondering whether concessions to the millennial mindset might jeopardize long-term success. The church eschews gimmicks, the pastor noted, "because twenty- and thirty-somethings value authenticity" (30). But might "authenticity"—rarely is that virtue ever defined—simply be the latest gimmick? Consider that Riley goes on to note that this congregation is so eager to welcome and affirm all of its members that it only recently took the step of installing elders (and this was to spare the pastor from making all of the church's financial decisions, including his salary). A congregation without discipline seems a mighty thin expression of genuine community.

Another innovation that Riley commends is "Charlotte ONE," an ecumenical collaboration of forty evangelical and mainline Protestant churches that seeks to bring college graduates back with more "wow factor"—expensive bands, charismatic speakers, and elaborate social events—with the intention ultimately of "funneling" them back into more traditional churches. By pooling their resources, these churches pledge not to compete against each other for this demographic. Charlotte ONE deliberately avoids features of traditional Christianity that prompted young people to leave in embarrassment (i.e., the "cringe factor") and high on that list was the sermon. Young people do not listen, organizers explain, because they "want to have their voice heard" (126). It is difficult to imagine how this mindset will funnel millennials into settled, adult spirituality, enabling them to "grow into their faith." In these and other initiatives that Riley commends, we see superficial expressions of community that conform to the desires of young adults rather than engage them in their spiritual formation. The language of self still seemed to trump any vocabulary of service.

The challenge of (re-)incorporating millennials into religious communities is at the same time the task of taking them from "here to maturity," to borrow from the title of Thomas Bergler's latest book. In this and in his previous book, Bergler has perceptively described the problem of "juvenilization" in American churches[1] (which he defines as the developmental characteristics of adolescents becoming normative for Christians of all ages). It seems wise to explore the extent to which juvenilization plagues the spirituality of emerging adults, but this is a question left largely unexplored by Riley.

Got Religion? is a lively introduction to the challenge of emerging adulthood. Riley documents adequately how the "whole idea of delayed adolescence is very much real" (91). But she comes up short in demonstrating concrete solutions for turning emerging adults into sustaining members of religious communities. In the end, her suggestions of innovative forms of young adult ministry only serve to delay the inevitable crisis of belonging. She virtually concedes this point when she posed this question in her description of a Latter Day Saint program to segregate Mormon millennials into "Young Single Adult" wards: "What happens when they turn thirty-one?" (103).

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[1] *The Juvenilization of American Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012), and *From Here to Maturity: Overcoming Juvenilization in American Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014).

ServantPoetry

A True Hymn
by George Herbert (1593-1633)

My Joy, my Life, my Crown!
My heart was meaning all the day,
    Somewhat it fain would say,
And still it runneth muttering up and down
With only this, My Joy, my Life, my Crown !

Yet slight not those few words ;
    If truly said, they may take part
    Among the best in art :
The fineness which a hymn or psalm affords
Is, when the soul unto the lines accord.

He who craves all the mind,
    And all the soul, and strength, and time,
    If the words only rhyme,
Justly complains that somewhat is behind
To make His verse, or write a hymn in kind.

Whereas if the heart be moved,
    Although the verse be somewhat scant,
    God doth supply the want ;
As when the heart says, sighing to be approved,
"O, could I love !" and stops, God writeth, "Loved."