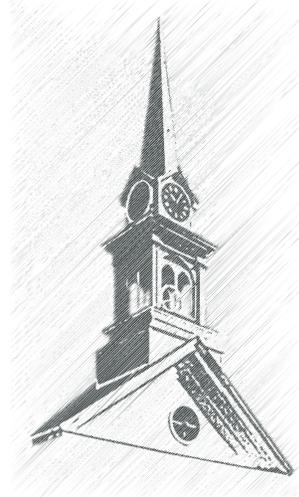


Conference  
on the  
Church



for  
GOD'S  
GLORY



May 19, 2003  
First Baptist Church  
Rockford, Illinois

# Schedule

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## **Proclaiming and Living The Whole Counsel of God**

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Ken Brown

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### **Acts 20.25-35**

Introduction: The modern pulpit is filled with men who have a mistaken sense of their calling. Many are nothing more than CEO's or motivational speakers. But God has called His shepherds to protect His Church by the proclamation of His Word from one whose life supports the message.

**Proposition: Pastors have been given the responsibility to protect God's Church by our consistent life and message.**

#### **I. Pastors Have a Divine Appointment. (25-28)**

A. We have been appointed to our task. (28)

B. We have been appointed to give account. (26-27)

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**II. Pastors Have Been Appointed to Protect God's Church.  
(29-35)**

A. We protect out of necessity. (29-30)

B. We protect by God's message and our lives. (31-35)

1. Our message must be God's message. (32)

2. Our lives must support God's message. (33-35)

## Open Theism in Fundamental Pews and Pulpits?

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Steve Thomas

*Steve Thomas is pastor of Huron Baptist Church in Flat Rock, Michigan, where he has served since 1983. He holds the M. Div. and Th. M. degrees from Detroit Baptist Theological Seminary. Pastor Thomas is currently completing his D. Min. degree at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. He and his wife, Sheree, have two daughters.*

Introduction: Our understanding of providence depends in part on the answer to this question: What does God know and when did he know it? All of Christendom has answered this question with a single voice throughout church history: God has exhaustive knowledge of all things: past, present, and future. During the past 20 years, a new movement has raised a challenge to this foundational belief. That movement, originally called “freewill theism,” has popularly assumed the title “open theism.” The main body of these notes survey and evaluate open theism and examine biblical data regarding the omniscience of God using Isaiah 40-48 as a test case.<sup>1</sup> This material provides a background for the current workshop discussion. The focus of this workshop will be the Addendum, which asks the question, “Is open theism a threat within fundamentalism?”

### I. Open theism creates a god of diminished glory.

The following brief summary of open theism draws heavily from Gregory A. Boyd’s book, *God of the Possible: A Biblical Introduction to the Open View of God* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000). Boyd has been instrumental in popularizing this theological position. See the attached bibliography for a list of other influential works.

#### A. What is open theism?

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<sup>1</sup> The main body of these notes was originally presented at the 2001 Fundamental Baptist Fellowship Annual Meeting held at First Baptist Church, Troy, Michigan.

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1. It is the belief that God cannot know the future choices of free creatures or the consequences of those choices.

Open theism is a relatively new development in American contemporary neo-evangelical theology, as evidenced by Boyd's admission that he began to grapple with the specific elements of the model as recently as 1983.<sup>2</sup> Even so, it is making deep inroads into several denominations, most notably the Baptist General Conference.<sup>3</sup> The theological perspective is founded on one basic tenant from which several conclusions necessarily follow.

The crucial issue is whether the future is established and known by God, or open and unknown. Boyd argues that the label "open view of God" is actually a misnomer. A better label, he suggests, would be "the open view of the future." He argues that for God, some aspects of the future are determined while other aspects are open to him. The difference between the two aspects lies in the role of free agency. God cannot know any event that is contingent on the choices of free agents because there is nothing that can be known until they exercise their wills to choose. Consequently, God's determinate will applies only to events that do not involve choices made by men and women.

In spite of this, open theists continue to affirm belief in the omniscience of God, but distance their view from the historic doctrine by claiming that omniscience means that God knows everything that is knowable, i.e., all things past and present, and only those future events he is able to foreordain because they do not impinge on free choices.

<sup>2</sup> Boyd, *God of the Possible*, pp. 7-8.

<sup>3</sup> For a concise synopsis of the devastating impact of this issue in the BGC, see Bruce Ware, *God's Lesser Glory: The Diminished God of Open Theism* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2000), pp. 21-23.

2. Implications:

The basic tenant of open theism carries at least three startling interrelated implications.

- a. Open theists have created a god who must learn moment by moment.

Open theism is a subset of Arminian theology. Historically, classical Arminianism has affirmed the exhaustive foreknowledge of God, while denying that it has any determinative aspect. Various explanations have been set forth to account for significant human freedom in view of God's omniscience. Regardless of the respective nuances, each explanation necessarily concludes with God acting as an observer who knows because he sees, not because he ordains. Open theists, however, acknowledge this truth: if an omnipotent being foresees an event, then he in some sense ordains that event.<sup>4</sup> "The concept of absolute foreknowledge . . . is incompatible with the dynamic portrait of God that is basic to Arminianism."<sup>5</sup>

The solution to this tension in Arminian theology is resolved in open theism by rejecting "the alleged timelessness of God" and

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<sup>4</sup> ". . . if God knows that a certain event will take place if he chooses not to act, and then in fact so chooses, it is hard to see how his restraint differs from absolute decree." D. A. Carson, *How Long, O Lord?: Reflections on Suffering & Evil* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1990), p. 34.

<sup>5</sup> Richard Rice, "Divine Foreknowledge and Free-Will Theism" in *The Grace of God, the Will of Man : A Case for Arminianism*, ed. general editor Clark H. Pinnock (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1989), p. 133.

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redefining his immutability.<sup>6</sup> The end result is a god who interacts with creation within time, and therefore learns moment by moment.

- b. Open theists have created a god who is continually at risk.

Since he cannot know much of the future, God risks disappointment and failure as he interacts with creation. Sanders illustrates this element of risk with the establishment of the first couple in the garden, a context that included the possibility of disobedience and death:

“God, in freedom, establishes the context in which a loving and trusting relationship between himself and humans can develop. God expects that it will, and there is no reason to suspect . . . that any other possibility will come about. A break in the relationship does not seem plausible considering all the good that God has done. Yet the possibility has been introduced by God’s commandment . . . Here we have the sovereign risk!”<sup>7</sup>

This casts God in the role of a respondent rather than an actor in the arena of his universe, at least as far as his relationship with volitional beings is concerned. Notice that Sanders’ suggestion that the fall of man is implausible necessarily demotes the plan of redemption to the status of a “backup plan.” Boyd remarkably suggests that a God subject to risk is worthy of greater glory because of his infinite resourcefulness in creating a plan B or C

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<sup>6</sup> Clark Pinnock, “From Augustine to Arminius: A Pilgrimage in Theology” in *The Grace of God, the Will of Man: A Case for Arminianism*, ed. general editor Clark H. Pinnock (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1989), pp. 24-25.

<sup>7</sup> John Sanders, *The God Who Risks : A Theology of Providence* (Downers Grove IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998), pp. 45-46, emphasis his.

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(etc., ad infinitum) whenever man thwarts his plan A.<sup>8</sup> Thus, God's greatness is seen in his omniscience.

- c. Open theists have created a god who merely guesses about the future—and is sometimes wrong.

According to open theism, God does not make infallible decisions regarding the future. The biblical statements that describe God changing his mind are not anthropomorphisms; God truly regrets certain decisions he makes. For example, God actually was sorry that he created humanity (Gen. 6.6), regretting his own decision. The flood is evidence that God did not know how his creation would turn out at the time he made humankind.<sup>9</sup> Put more bluntly, God is sometimes wrong about the future. This does not constitute error because God knows all possibilities, even though He might not expect actual events.

Obviously, such reasoning calls into question the reliability and wisdom of God. God's inability to know the outcome of the choices of free agents, whether those of his creatures or his own, reduces divine wisdom to skilled guesswork. In a theological construct that allows for divine confirmation of personal choices by inner peace, wise counsel, etc., one can never experience certainty that God's will affirmed today will turn out well tomorrow. Free choices of other people might thwart God's best intentions for his children.

### B. What is the appeal of open theism?

<sup>8</sup> Boyd, *God of the Possible*, p. 106.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 55.

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How does one account for the rapid rise and widening acceptance of a theology that apparently turns historic, biblical theology proper inside out?

1. Ostensibly, open theists:
  - a. Seek to ease the tension of the problem of evil.

Open theism attempts to resolve the problem of evil by attributing ignorance to God. As noted above, God knew that Adam possibly could plunge the world into evil but was surprised when it actually happened. Therefore, God supposedly is absolved from culpability for creating masses of humanity that will be damned.

In a continuing pattern of ignorance, God does not know with certainty that evil and suffering will occur in anyone's life or that anyone will perpetrate evil. Thus, Boyd can tell his agnostic father that God did not know that Adolf Hitler would commit monstrous crimes against humanity.<sup>10</sup> God might be able to react to evil and cause some good to come from it, but much evil and suffering in the world is utterly purposeless. Either way, we can take comfort from knowing that God does not intend the pain we suffer because of evil.

This construct over-simplistically and deceptively fails to consider God's culpability for creating a world with the possibility of evil choices over which he has no control. The

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<sup>10</sup> Gregory A. Boyd and Edward K. Boyd, *Letters from a Skeptic*, (Wheaton IL: Victor Books, 1994).

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proposed solution to the age-old problem of evil is merely a slight of hand trick.

- b. Seek to stress the relational significance of interaction between God and man.

Supposedly, comprehensive foreknowledge makes God's relationship with created beings a mere illusion. A real relationship can only develop in a context of mutual interaction in which each party learns about the other. Sanders displays the open theists' animosity toward any system that allows for an element of determinism. He brazenly declares that if God effectually draws a blind sinner to repentance, then He is guilty of "divine rape because it involves nonconsensual control; the will of one is forced on the will of the other."<sup>11</sup>

Rather than grappling with the theological difficulties of the relationship between finite human beings and an infinite, unique God, open theists simplistically resolve the matter by projecting human attributes on the Creator.

- c. Seek to clarify the purpose of prayer.

According to Boyd, open theism transforms the Christian's view of prayer. Since the future is significantly open, it "genuinely depends on prayer." Humankind was created with personality and "say-so" in how things transpire.<sup>12</sup> This is essential to personality. God has ordained prayer as the means that people use to influence his decisions about the future.<sup>13</sup> This fact, in turn, translates into passion and urgency in prayer.

<sup>11</sup> Sanders, *The God Who Risks*, p. 240.

<sup>12</sup> Boyd, *God of the Possible*, pp. 95-96.

<sup>13</sup> One can only assume that God's decisions about the future only concern events that do not involve free agents, otherwise our attempts to influence God are futile.

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In fact, open theism does not endow prayer with greater significance. Even if God only has exhaustive knowledge of the past and present—knowledge that increases microsecond by microsecond, then prayer can never inform him of anything that he does not already know and about which he has not already decided to act.<sup>14</sup>

2. Ultimately, open theists seek to establish the autonomy of man.

The driving force behind open theism seems to be the desire to protect the significant freedom (autonomy) of human beings. An individual's destiny, whether temporal or eternal, rests only in his or her own hands because God does not determine the choices of free agents. Consequently, all references to election necessarily describe corporate election; only the individual can choose to be among the elect. Consistent with all Arminian theology, Boyd concludes that even the security of the believer is dependent on his continuing choice to believe.

Historically, all theologians, Calvinists and classical Arminians alike, have acknowledged a mystery associated with the biblical teaching concerning the sovereignty of God and the responsible freedom of the human will. "But what if the foreknowledge of God, and the liberty of the will, cannot be fully reconciled by man? Shall we therefore deny a perfection in God to support a liberty in ourselves? Shall we rather fasten ignorance upon God, accuse him of blindness, to maintain our liberty?"<sup>15</sup>

### C. What is the "biblical" basis for open theism?

<sup>14</sup> This fact will not go unnoticed in open theism. It is very likely to provide impetus for further redefinition of omniscience.

<sup>15</sup> Stephen Charnock, *Discourses upon the Existence and Attributes of God* (revised ed., Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1979), p. 450.

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Rationalism provides the basis for open theism. Clark Pinnock illustrates this fact when he speaks of his personal theological moves that “logic required” and “Scripture permitted.”<sup>16</sup> Even so, open theists appeal to Scriptural authority.

1. Open theists appeal to “normal” principles of biblical interpretation.

Boyd passionately argues for a consistent, literal hermeneutic.

“The open view is rooted in the conviction that the passages that constitute the motif of future openness should be taken just as literally as the passages that constitute future determinism.”<sup>17</sup>

It is this insistence that makes open theism widely appealing to the theologically naïve. Proper hermeneutics require the interpreter to take a passage at face value unless the context demands otherwise. Within the largest context, namely the whole canon of divine revelation, the interpreter finds numerous truths about God, both declared and illustrated, that must be properly correlated. This analogical approach demands that numerous passages be regarded as anthropomorphic expressions of God’s relational interaction with history.

2. Open theists appeal to passages that seem to teach that God learns and changes his mind.

See: Gen 6:6, 18:9-21; 22:12; 1 Sam 15:10, 35; Jer 3:6-7, 19:5, 32:35, etc.

The key text seems to be Gen 22:12:

<sup>16</sup> Pinnock, “From Augustine to Arminius” in *The Grace of God*, pp. 19-20.

<sup>17</sup> Boyd, *God of the Possible*, p. 54.

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"And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me. "

Supposedly, God learned what was in Abraham's heart by testing him with the command to sacrifice Isaac. This interpretation raises several questions. For example, how could a God with limited foreknowledge know what was in Abraham's heart unless Abraham actually completed the deed? More importantly, didn't God know the depth of Abraham's commitment before he ascended the mountain with Isaac since apparently his faith was sufficient to trust that God would raise Isaac from the dead (Heb 11:19)? Obviously, God intended to use anthropomorphological language to communicate something like, "Abraham, I am with you, I see your faith, and I am pleased." The intended beneficiary of the event was Abraham, not God.

### D. Taking a closer look at the case for open theism. . .

#### 1. Exegetical/Hermeneutical problems

##### a. There are cases where open theism proves too much.

Genesis 18.20-21 is notable for its absence in the literature of open theism. It is absent because it cannot bear the weight of their assumptions when a "literal interpretation" is sought.

"And the LORD said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous; 21 I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me; and if not, I will know. "

If taken at face value, this verse not only requires the denial of God's knowledge of the future but also of the present and the past. Further, it demands rejection of the doctrine of omnipresence.

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- b. There are cases where open theism proves too little.

In John 13.38 Jesus predicts, not only that Peter will deny him, but also the specific number of times the denial will occur.

" Jesus answered him, Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied me thrice. "

Jesus did this to demonstrate the fact of his deity (cf. John 13.19). Boyd nearly ignores the fact that Jesus predicted a threefold denial and rests his explanation of this verse on a remarkable unsubstantiated assertion:

“We only need to believe that God the Father knew and revealed to Jesus one very predictable aspect of Peter’s character. Anyone who knew Peter’s character perfectly could have predicted that under certain highly pressured circumstances (that God could easily orchestrate) he would act just the way he did.”<sup>18</sup>

In other words, this prediction is so simple that anyone could make it! Thus, he skims over a text that presents devastating evidence against the major premise of open theism. Note another problem with the assertion quoted above. He declares that God “could easily orchestrate” the circumstances of Peter’s denial so that he would indeed deny Jesus three times. Here Boyd stumbles into a two-fold inconsistency within his own theological system. First, how could God orchestrate a situation that involved the free choices of several people (the maid at the door, the soldier at the fire, etc.)? Second, does this not make God culpable for Peter’s sin—the very charge that open theism is designed to mitigate?

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 35, emphasis added.

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### 2. Theological problems

Arminianism struggles to account for divine foreknowledge. Classical Arminianism at least attempts to preserve the biblical orthodoxy of God's exhaustive foreknowledge. In this writer's opinion, open theism is a more logically consistent expression of Arminianism. That does not mean, however, that it is a more acceptable view of God. Numerous factors combine to heighten the offensiveness of open theism as a theological construct.

#### **Disconnect with historical theology**

History does not determine doctrine. Yet, it provides powerful benchmarks against which to measure our exegesis. Gregory Boyd acknowledges that one must have compelling reasons to move outside the scope of historical theology. Even so, open theism takes a cavalier view of historical theology in that it not only steps into a new arena of thought,<sup>19</sup> but in so doing it destroys a view continuously held throughout history. It is one thing to reformulate a doctrine, incorporating new insights that are compatible with historical orthodoxy (for example, dispensationalism). It is quite another to smash a tenant of historical orthodoxy and replace it with a novel idea. The open view of divine omniscience has done the latter.

#### **Logical incoherence**

It simply is not possible to reconcile the open view with biblical prophecy that communicates very specific details. God risked becoming a liar when he predicted the coming of Cyrus, unless he truly foreknew his name nearly three hundred years before he was born. Any attempt to reconcile Christ's prophecy of Peter's threefold denial is disingenuous.

#### **Anthropocentric concept of "good"**

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<sup>19</sup> That is not to say that one cannot find elements of open theism scattered throughout church history. Aspects frequently lurked in the theological systems of heretical groups such as the Socinians.

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The line of reasoning that shapes open theism begins with a preconceived notion of what is good in the life of a human being. From this, adherents extrapolate what must be true about God. This is faulty reasoning in and of itself; however, the problem is compounded by a narrow, self-centered determination of “the good.” Sanders provides the typical, emotion-laden argument:

“The Holocaust is pointless evil. The rape and dismemberment of a young girl is pointless evil. The accident that caused the death of my brother was a tragedy. God does not have a specific purpose in mind for these occurrences.”<sup>20</sup>

In view of Rom 8.28, it is the height of presumption to pronounce an event “meaningless” because it does not fit one’s personal definition of good.

### **Ethics of meaninglessness**

The question of ethics is thrown into turmoil in view of an anthropocentric conception of “good.” Biblically, it can be argued that all suffering accomplishes one of three purposes: 1) personal character development, 2) development of personal testimony, or 3) or simply the glory of God (though this is not separated from the other two). But, if the individual has the right to declare an instance of suffering void of meaning, then de facto, he or she is absolved from the necessity of seeking to live within the purpose(s) that God has designed for that event. This throws the door open to the possibility of irresponsible action. This certainly is not advocated by open theists, but one wonders where such conclusions will lead in the practical outworking of the open view in the lives of those who receive their counsel.

## **II. The Bible reveals the God of infinite glory.**

<sup>20</sup> Sanders, *God Who Risks*, pp. 262-63.

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Open theism rests its case on selected biblical passages but the Bible is saturated with data to the contrary. Attention given to the sweep of Scripture and to numerous passages carefully exegeted affirm the classical view of God's omniscience.

### A. The biblical data reveal an omniscient God: One who possesses exhaustive, determinative knowledge.

The biblical data are overwhelming.<sup>21</sup>

1. 164 texts explicitly teach/affirm God's foreknowledge.
2. 271 texts explicitly teach/affirm other aspects of God's omniscience (e.g. knowledge of past or present or possible states of affairs).
3. 128 texts offer predictions of what God will do through nature.
4. 1893 texts state predictively that God will do something or other in or through human beings.
5. 1474 texts state predictively what human beings will do, apart from God directly acting in or through them.
6. 622 texts state predictively what unbelievers will do or have happen to them.
7. 143 texts affirm God's sovereign control over human choices.

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<sup>21</sup> The data cited above were accumulated by Steve Roy for his doctoral dissertation. Roy is a doctoral student and faculty member at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. The information is expected to be published in the near future. This summary comes from Bruce Ware, *God's Lesser Glory*, p. 100, n. 2.

Viewed another way, there are 4,695 total verses that affirm the classic view of divine omniscience, while open theists can only cite 105 “proof texts” for their position.

**B. A test case: Isaiah 40-48**

Boyd suggests that foreknowledge is a peripheral issue.<sup>22</sup> The Scriptures present a weightier view of the matter. Isaiah provides a crucial test case. Chapters 40 through 48 constitute the first section of God’s declaration of his intent to redeem Judah. It is significant that these chapters appear against the Scriptural backdrop of judgment for, among other offenses, idolatry (chapters 1-39). God’s act of foretelling this redemption is highlighted as the distinguishing characteristic between the majestic God who objectively exists and the false gods worshiped in pre-exilic Judah and all the Gentile nations. Consequently, according to Isaiah 40-48, foreknowledge is a touchstone of orthodox theology proper.

1. God neither depends on nor welcomes our “say-so.”

**Isaiah 40.12-15**

"Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance? 13 Who hath directed the Spirit of the LORD, or being his counsellor hath taught him? 14 With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him, and taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and shewed to him the way of understanding? 15 Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance: behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing. "

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<sup>22</sup> Boyd, *God of the Possible*, p. 20.

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2. The exercise of foreknowledge affirms the claim of deity.

### **Isaiah 41.21-24**

"Produce your cause, saith the LORD; bring forth your strong reasons, saith the King of Jacob. 22 Let them bring them forth, and shew us what shall happen: let them shew the former things, what they be, that we may consider them, and know the latter end of them; or declare us things for to come. 23 Shew the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye are gods: yea, do good, or do evil, that we may be dismayed, and behold it together. 24 Behold, ye are of nothing, and your work of nought: an abomination is he that chooseth you. "

3. God's glory is inextricably bound up with his foreknowledge.

### **Isaiah 42.8-9**

"I am the LORD: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images. 9 Behold, the former things are come to pass, and new things do I declare: before they spring forth I tell you of them. "

4. Foreknowledge demonstrates God's exclusive claim of deity.

### **Isaiah 44.6-8**

"Thus saith the LORD the King of Israel, and his redeemer the LORD of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God. 7 And who, as I, shall call, and shall declare it, and set it in order for me, since I appointed the ancient people? and the things that are coming, and shall come, let them shew unto them. 8 Fear ye not, neither be afraid: have not I told thee from that time, and have declared it? ye are even my witnesses. Is there a God beside me? yea, there is no God; I know not any. "

**Isaiah 45.21**

"Tell ye, and bring them near; yea, let them take counsel together: who hath declared this from ancient time? who hath told it from that time? have not I the LORD? and there is no God else beside me; a just God and a Saviour; there is none beside me. "

5. God freely determines the future.

**Isaiah 45.11-13**

"Thus saith the LORD, the Holy One of Israel, and his Maker, Ask me of things to come concerning my sons, and concerning the work of my hands command ye me. 12 I have made the earth, and created man upon it: I, even my hands, have stretched out the heavens, and all their host have I commanded. 13 I have raised him up in righteousness, and I will direct all his ways: he shall build my city, and he shall let go my captives, not for price nor reward, saith the LORD of hosts."

6. God's determination of the future is exhaustive.

**Isaiah 46.8-11**

"Remember this, and shew yourselves men: bring it again to mind, O ye transgressors. 9 Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, 10 Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure: 11 Calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man that executeth my counsel from a far country: yea, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it."

Conclusion: The very godness of God is at stake when we fail to define omniscience in terms that include exhaustive, determinative foreknowledge.

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Practical implications:

- 1. The All-Knowing One brings comfort to the heart of those who trust him.**
  - a. We rest in the knowledge that our distresses never take God by surprise.
  - b. We rest in the knowledge that God fills our distresses with eternal purpose.
- 2. The All-Knowing One should strike fear in the hearts of those who do not trust him—we cannot hide from God.**

### **ADDENDUM**

#### **Is Open Theism A Threat Within Fundamentalism?**

Open theism presents a god so radically different from the God proclaimed in fundamental churches that we might legitimately ask whether discussion of the movement has any value outside the sphere of academia. On the surface, there seems to be no real threat, however on closer examination one may conclude that fundamentalism may indeed suffer casualties to open theism. Our exposure to risk lies in the fact that some segments of fundamentalism have certain commonalities with open theism. These commonalities serve as a seedbed of future compromise.

#### **I. There is a common foundation: Arminian theology**

Arminian theology has made strong inroads into fundamentalism. Open theism is a subset of Arminian theology and is arguably more logically consistent than classic Arminianism. Consequently, open theism potentially will find sympathies, if not agreement, in some fundamental pews.

It is important to note that there are significant differences between open theism, classic Arminianism, and fundamental Arminianism. For example:

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Arminian fundamentalism differs from both classic Arminianism and open theism on the security of the believer.

Open theism differs from both Arminian fundamentalism and classic Arminianism on the extent of God's knowledge.

Open theism differs from most Arminians by rejecting the timelessness of God.

In spite of these differences, all structures of Arminian theology agree on two points of doctrine:

### A. Arminian theology rejects the sovereignty of God.

Sovereignty has become a buzzword that is used in elastic, even contradictory ways. Many who deny that God controls all things in his universe still speak of his sovereignty. However, indeterminate sovereignty is a logical contradiction.

### B. Arminian theology rejects the total depravity of man.

Arminians believe that men have the ability to respond to the gospel apart from a personal work of God, whether through innate ability (Pelagianism) or because of a universal, non-effectual work of God (prevenient grace).

## **II. There is a common focus: man rather than God**

### A. Arminian theology upholds the autonomy of man.

At the top of his list of objections to determinate providence, Jack Cottrell insists that it eliminates the freedom of man's will in any significant sense

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of the term.<sup>23</sup> This is typical Arminian argumentation against the idea that God has planned all things from eternity past.

### **B. Arminian theology emphasizes soteriology over doxology.**

Many threads of ministry in fundamentalism were spun by revivalist ministries emerging from the Second Great Awakening. Richard Hofstadter (*America at 1750: A Social History*) describes attitudes of that day:

They evolved a kind of crude pietistic pragmatism with a single essential tenet: their business was to save souls as quickly and as widely as possible. For this purpose, the elaborate theological equipment of an educated ministry was not only an unnecessary frill but in all probability a serious handicap; the only justification needed by the itinerant preacher for his limited stock of knowledge and ideas was that he got results measurable in conversions. To this justification very little answer was possible.<sup>24</sup>

Hofstadter might over-generalize the situation, but it is incontrovertible that pragmatic evangelism has often been the bane of fundamentalism. It is incompatible with a doxological approach to ministry.

### **III. There are common cultural influences:**

<sup>23</sup> Jack Cottrell, *What The Bible Says About God The Ruler* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2000), p. 83.

<sup>24</sup> Quoted by Michael Scott Horton, *Made In America: The Shaping of Modern American Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1991), p. 44.

## Workshop 1

Open theism plays to common currents in American culture. These currents often flow into the pew—even in fundamental churches. William C. Davis outlines four significant cultural influences.<sup>25</sup>

### A. Suspicion of authority

Western culture is dominated by what Davis calls the “Neitzschean expectation”—a “generalized suspicion that all authority rests on power and serves only to maintain power structures.”<sup>26</sup> This prevailing attitude fortifies the ever-present resistance to authority that is the hallmark of depravity. Open theism plays to this suspicion by creating a god who exercises little authority—an appealing deity to many nominal Christians.

### B. Infatuation with liberty

Libertarian freedom is unquestionably accepted and loved throughout our culture and in many pews with devastating results.

In line with our culture’s infatuation with liberty, evangelical thinking about liberty loosens the connections between husbands and wives, and between members of churches. And it makes us receptive to the idea that God is dependent upon us in order to fulfill his designs. . . . The point is only that we live in an age when jealous regard for our autonomy makes us increasingly willing to accept these implications. This is fertile soil for the growth of open theism.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>25</sup> William C. Davis, “Why Open Theism Is Flourishing Now” in *Beyond The Bounds: Open Theism and the Undermining of Biblical Christianity*, ed. John Piper, Justin Taylor, Paul Helseth (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2003), pp. 120-26.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 120.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 124.

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### C. Impatience with mystery

Americans have little tolerance for theory that seems abstract. Instead they value pragmatic efficiency. Traditional theism does not fare well in this context because of its insistence that some questions about God must be answered by “submission to the mystery of God’s majesty.”<sup>28</sup> Open theism is appealing because, at first glance, its over-simplified theology proper seems to leave fewer loose ends.

### D. Pragmatism about community

American culture has imbibed Richard Rorty’s hypothesis that community and transcendent truth are incompatible.<sup>29</sup> Therefore, Christians must choose between doctrinal precision and peaceful coexistence. For many, the latter is the more desirable choice.

## **IV. There are common assumptions:**

Many fundamental Christians have memorized elements of orthodox theology but have not learned to “connect the dots,” or correlate truth in a systematic way. Consequently, they affirm God’s omniscience, immutability, and sovereignty in theory, but in practice they embrace assumptions about God’s relationship to his universe that contradict these affirmations.

### A. God learns

Aside from open theism, there are two common Arminian explanations of God’s foreknowledge:

1. Simple prescience

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p. 125.

<sup>29</sup> Richard Rorty is one of postmodernism’s most influential proponents.

2. Molinism

Neither of these formulations fulfills its intended goal of eliminating a deterministic explanation of providence. Furthermore, both of these views inadvertently and undeniably assume that God must learn from the choices of men, either actual or hypothetical.

B. God changes

Christians commonly believe that their prayers and deeds influence God's actions. Cf. the common expression, "Let God. . ."

C. God exercises partial control over his universe.

The common view of God's relationship to the world is almost deistic, namely that God set natural laws in motion to govern the universe. On occasion, he directly intrudes through "special providence" which means that God intervenes by acting upon natural laws and influencing human decisions so as to cause results that would not have occurred without the intervention but which are still within the possibilities of natural law itself and which do not violate the integrity of free will.<sup>30</sup>

Conclusion:

If this analysis is correct, we must shape a plan to protect our people from the influence of the false teaching of open theism. To do this, we must make two broad commitments:

**1. We must warn our people of the dangers of this false teaching.**

- Thoroughly, not simplistically
- Specifically, not generally

**2. We must "sterilize" the seedbed of compromise.**

<sup>30</sup> Cottrell, *What The Bible Says About God The Ruler*, p. 117.

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- Uphold the sovereignty of God and the inability of man.
- Create a doxological perspective in ministry.
- Expose the infiltration of godless culture in our churches.
- Teach and preach the attributes of God and their practical implications.

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## Learning Hermeneutics from *The Prayer of Jabez?*

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Ed Williams

*Ed Williams pastored for 20 years and taught college level for 8 years. He holds M. Div. and Th. M. degrees from Detroit Baptist Theological Seminary and a D. Min. from Westminster Theological Seminary. He is currently a member of the adjunct faculty at Central Baptist Theological Seminary. He and his wife, Bev, have three children.*

### I. The Book: The Prayer of Jabez

- Multnomah Books
- 93 pages
- 9 Million copies sold

### II. The Author: Bruce Wilkinson

- A. Education
- B. Background

### III. The Content of The Prayer of Jabez

#### A. The Text Itself

"And Jabez was more honourable than his brethren: and his mother called his name Jabez, saying, Because I bare him with sorrow. <sup>10</sup> And Jabez called on the God of Israel, saying, Oh that thou wouldest bless me indeed, and enlarge my coast, and that thine hand might be with me, and that thou wouldest keep *me* from evil, that it may not grieve me! And God granted him that which he requested."

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### B. The Premise of the Book

“I want to teach you how to pray a daring prayer that God always answers. It is brief—only one sentence with four parts—and tucked away in the Bible, but I believe it contains the key to a life of extraordinary favor with God” (p. 7).

### C. Testimonials

“If you long to live your life the way it is meant to be lived in Christ, The Prayer of Jabez is a must read. A small book, a life-changing message! Highly recommended!”

Howard Hendricks  
Dallas Theological Seminary

### D. Good Points

Emphasizes:

Trusting in God

Praying to God on a daily basis

Seeking to do great things for God

## **IV. The Necessity of Hermeneutics**

To Provide the Principles of Interpretation

To Allow Proper Application

### A. Definitions

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## Workshop 2

“Hermeneutics is the science and art of biblical interpretation. It is a science because it is guided by rules within a system; and it is an art because the application of the rules is by skill, and not by mechanical imitation.”

Bernard Ramm, *Protestant Biblical Interpretation*, 1.

### B. Context

“Not only the sections of a biblical book but the author’s purpose in writing and the major theme of the book should be construed as “context,” i.e., the thematic unfolding of a book. In this same vein, the biblical theology of a book is important as a form of “context.”

Rolland D. McCune  
Detroit Baptist Theological Seminary

### C. Biblical Theology

Biblical theology is “that branch of theological inquiry concerned with tracing themes through the diverse sections of the Bible (such as wisdom writings literature or the Epistles of Paul) and then with seeking the unifying themes that draw the Bible together.”

Grant Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral*, 263

The Biblical Theological Context of Chronicles

1. 1 Chronicles 17.7ff
2. 2 Chronicles 36.22ff
3. 2 Chronicles 6.36ff

### D. A Text Can Never Mean What it Never Meant

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## *Conference on the Church for God's Glory*

An axiom in this regard is: “A text cannot mean what it never meant” (Fee and Stuart, *How to Read the Bible For All Its Worth*, 27).

“A believing scholar insists that the biblical texts first of all mean what they meant” (Fee and Stuart, *How to Read the Bible For All Its Worth*, 13).

### E. The Meaning of Scripture is Based on Authorial Intent

Words derive meaning from the author who wrote them, not from themselves. Proper biblical hermeneutics determines the authorially intended meaning and conveys that same meaning and message today.

### F. Biblical Language is Univocal (One Voice)

Words have but one signification in one and the same connection. They can have but one set of propositional, cognitive values in any given place.

Note the words of William Ames (1576-1633):

“Hence there is only one meaning for every place in Scripture. Otherwise the meaning of Scripture would not only be unclear and uncertain, but there would be no meaning at all—for anything which does not mean one thing surely means nothing.”

### G. The Analogy of Faith

The interpretation of a given passage must fit into the overall big picture of biblical teaching. All hermeneutics/exegesis comes together in systematic theology. This is usually called “the analogy of faith.”

## **V. Application of Hermeneutics to *The Prayer of Jabez***

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A. Jabez's Prayer is not a Prayer for all the Ages

It is descriptive not prescriptive

Israel is in view not the church

The prayer merely asks for more land and no painful trials

B. Examples of Prayers for Today

1. The Lord's Prayer

2. The Prayers of Paul

**V. Conclusion**

"Reading the Bible can get you into a lot of trouble. Few things are more important in the Christian community than reading the Scriptures rightly. The holy Scriptures carry immense authority. Read wrongly, they can ignite war, legitimize abuse, sanction hate, cultivate arrogance. Not only can, but have . . . So caveat lector -- let the reader beware. Read; but read rightly."

Eugene Peterson, "Introduction," in Elmer Dyck, ed., *The Act of Bible Reading* (Downers Grove: IVP, 1996), 8.

"Simply stated, [hermeneutics] is nothing more than a systematic process for deriving the Holy Spirit's intended meaning of any given passage of Scripture in order to "find out what pleases the Lord" . . . How can your thoughts and deeds be pleasing to God if they are prompted by serious misinterpretations of his word? . . . Hermeneutics therefore, is not some heady science reserved only for the lettered elite. The ability to accurately interpret

Scripture is essential to every believer's growth in the 'grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ' (2 Pet. 3:18) . . . Skillful biblical interpretation is a life-long commitment."

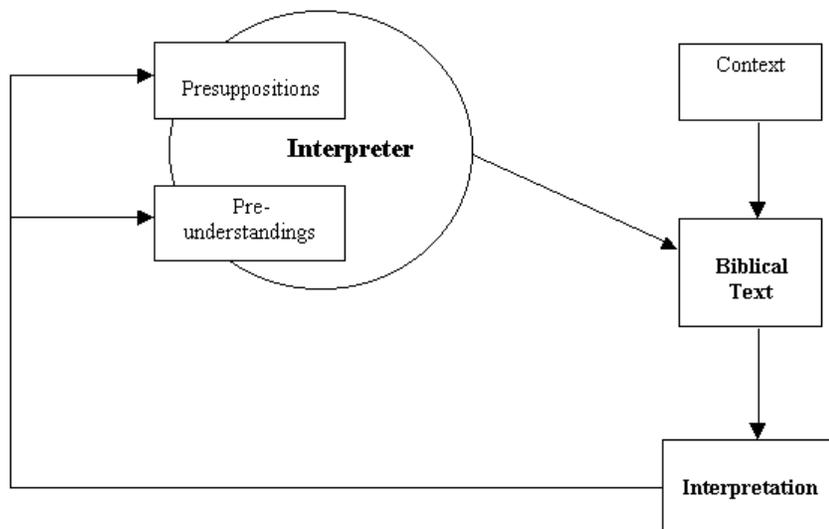
Cliff Bjork, "Hermeneutics: Six Essential Principles of Biblical

Interpretation You Won't Find in the Textbooks", *Searching Together* 22:1-4; 1994.

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## The Interpretive Cycle

by Andrew S. Kulikovsky



## **The Lordship of Christ in Salvation**

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Mike Harding

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### **Philippians 2.5-11**

Introduction: Philippians 2:5-11 has been called the great parabola of Scripture, because this passage of Scripture pictures the descent of the Lord Jesus Christ from the highest position in the universe down to His death on the cross, and then carries the mind of the reader up again to see Him seated once more on the throne of His glory before which every knee shall bow. In these few verses we are admitted to the breathtaking purposes of God in human salvation. More specifically, we understand that this passage teaches that **the Lordship of Christ is an integral part of the object of saving faith**. Furthermore, we learn that the nature of saving faith includes submission to the authority of Christ as one of its significant aspects.

#### **I. The Humiliation of Christ (2.5-8)**

A. Paul's Exhortation of Humility

B. Christ's Example of Humility

1. The Deity of Christ

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2. The Glory of Christ
3. The Humanity of Christ
4. The Death of Christ

### **II. The Exaltation of Christ (2.9-11)**

A. Name Above Every Name

B. Every Knee Shall Bow

Conclusion:

When you exalt yourself or your merits as a means of salvation, or exalt human beings as mediators between yourself and God, as saints who win God's favor for you, or exalt human wisdom as that which is ultimately able to solve the world's problems or place your hopes for the future in psychiatry, science, and systems of world government, you dishonor God. The way to honor God is to honor Jesus Christ.

## How Divine Sovereignty Should Effect Our Philosophy of Ministry

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Steve Thomas

### Introduction:

As we contemplate an appropriate and biblical plan to carry out our mission, there is no more significant doctrine to ponder than the sovereignty of God. Doctrine will always shape our philosophy of ministry. Whether a person has thought through his philosophy of ministry or not, his activities will reveal what he really believes about God and His control of the universe. The purpose of this workshop is to explore the ways ministry is affected by committed belief in the absolute sovereignty of God. We will begin with an explanation of the doctrine of God's sovereignty and then offer a brief survey of the concept of a philosophy of ministry.

### I. What do we mean by the sovereignty of God?

#### A. Definition

The sovereignty of God is "his absolute right to govern and dispose of all his creatures, simply according to his own good pleasure."<sup>31</sup>

Biblical data:

2 Chronicles 20:6

Psalm 135:6

Daniel 4:35

#### B. Corollary truths

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<sup>31</sup> Hodge, A.A. *Outlines of Theology*, (Electronic ed. based on the 1972 Banner of Truth Trust reproduction of the 1879 ed.), Page 162.

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1. God expresses his sovereignty in a comprehensive plan for history.

Because God is sovereign, he has decreed all that comes to pass in his universe.

*God from all eternity, did, by the most wise and holy counsel of His own will, freely, and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass: yet so, as thereby neither is God the author of sin, nor is violence offered to the will of the creatures; nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established.<sup>32</sup>*

The all-encompassing nature of God's decree is beyond full understanding because of our finitude.

*The decree being the act of an infinite, absolute, eternal, unchangeable, and sovereign Person, comprehending a plan including all his works of all kinds, great and small, from the beginning of creation to an unending eternity; ends as well as means, causes as well as effects, conditions and instrumentalities as well as the events which depend upon them, must be incomprehensible by the finite intellect of man.<sup>33</sup>*

Biblical data:  
Ephesians 1:11  
Proverb 16:33  
Isaiah 45:7, 9-12  
Isaiah 46:9-11

2. God exercises his sovereignty through providence.

<sup>32</sup> Smith, Morton H. *Westminster Confession of Faith*. (Published in electronic form by Christian Classics Foundation, 1996), Page 2.

<sup>33</sup> Easton, M.G. *Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1897; Published in electronic form by Logos Research Systems, 1996).

## Workshop 3

The Heidelberg Catechism defines providence as,

*The almighty and everywhere present power of God; whereby, as it were by His hand, He upholds and governs heaven, earth, and all creatures; so that herbs and grass, rain and drought, fruitful and barren years, meat and drink, health and sickness, riches and poverty, yea, and all things come, not by chance, but by His fatherly hand; that we may be patient in adversity; thankful in prosperity; and that in all things, which may hereafter befall us, we place our firm trust in our faithful God and Father, that nothing shall separate us from His love; since all creatures are so in His hand, that without His will they cannot so much as move.*

Biblical data:

Job 38-41

Matthew 10:29-30

Acts 17:24-28

Romans 8:28

3. God exercises his sovereignty in such a way that he incorporates human responsibility.

A term commonly used to describe this view is “compatibilism.”

*Compatibilism is the view that the following two statements are, despite superficial evidence to the contrary, mutually compatible: (1) God is absolutely sovereign, but his sovereignty does not in any way mitigate human responsibility; (2) human beings are responsible creatures (i.e., they choose, decide, obey,*

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*disobey, believe, rebel, and so forth), but their responsibility never serves to make God absolutely contingent.*<sup>34</sup>

Compatibilists affirm the sovereignty of God. Incompatibilists necessarily deny the sovereignty of God.

Biblical data:  
Genesis 50:20  
Acts 2:23; 4:23-28  
Romans 9:15-23  
Philippians 2:13

4. God exercises his sovereignty in redemption.

Historically, Baptists have upheld the doctrine of God's sovereignty vis-à-vis redemption.

The Philadelphia Baptist Confession declares:

*Those whom God hath predestinated unto life, He is pleased in His appointed and accepted time effectually to call by His Word and Spirit, out of that state of sin and death, in which they are by nature, to grace and salvation by Jesus Christ; enlightening their minds, spiritually and savingly, to understand the things of God taking away their heart of stone, and giving unto them an heart of flesh; renewing their wills, and by His almighty power determining them to that which is good, and effectually drawing them to Jesus Christ; yet so, as they come most freely, being made willing by His grace.*<sup>35</sup>

The New Hampshire Confession declares:

<sup>34</sup> D. A. Carson, "Reflections on Christian Assurance," *Westminster Theological Journal* Philadelphia: (Westminster Theological Seminary, 1998).

<sup>35</sup> William L. Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith*, (Philadelphia: The Judson Press, 1959).

*We believe that Election is the gracious purpose of God, according to which he graciously regenerates, sanctifies, and saves sinners; that being perfectly consistent with the free agency of man, it comprehends all the means in connection with the end; that it is a most glorious display of God's sovereign goodness, being infinitely free, wise, holy, and unchangeable. .*

.<sup>36</sup>

Biblical data:  
John 6:37, 44, 65  
Acts 13:48  
Romans 8:29-30  
Philippians 1:29

## II. What is a philosophy of ministry?

The term *philosophy* simply means “the love of wisdom.” A philosophy is a statement of the principles that guide someone in the wise accomplishment of a task. Everyone *has* a philosophy of ministry whether he has carefully thought it through or not. It is vital to think it through from a biblical perspective rather than to absorb it from other sources.

A clear and complete philosophy of ministry must answer three basic questions.

A. *Why* are we doing what we do?

Or, what is our *purpose*?

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

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A statement of purpose must be *doxalogical* in character (it must focus on the glory of God), cf. Ephesians 3:21. It must also take into account the specific means by which the church is to bring glory to God, namely the ministry of the Word.

### B. *What* are we to do?

Or, what are our *objectives*?

The objectives of the ministry must clearly articulate the details of the Great Commission as found in Matthew 28:19-20. Both from the words of Christ and the New Testament account of the early church's obedience to the His commission, we may deduce that the objectives of the church include: edification of believers, evangelization of the lost, and expansion of ministry.

### C. *How* are we to do what we do?

Or, what are our *goals*?

The specific goals that the early church utilized to accomplish their objectives must be identified. These biblical goals include such basic ministry concepts as teaching, worship, fellowship, missions, church polity, etc.

## **III. How does an understanding of the sovereignty of God affect one's philosophy of ministry?**

### A. In relation to pragmatism

Those who believe in the sovereignty of God protect the church from the destructive influence of pragmatism.

1. Those who believe in the sovereignty of God reject pragmatic measurements for success.

## *Workshop 3*

- a. Pragmatic measurements of success:
    - 1) Successful ministry always grows numerically.
    - 2) Successful ministry always produces professions of faith.
  - b. Biblical measurements of success:
    - 1) Successful ministry is always faithful to God's word.
    - 2) Successful ministry always promotes God's glory.
2. Those who believe in the sovereignty of God reject pragmatic tools for success.
- a. Pragmatic tools for success:
    - 1) Marketing techniques
      - Appeal to "felt needs"
      - Depend on entertainment
      - Modify the message
    - 2) Professionalism in leadership

Contra:  
1 Corinthians 2:1-5  
1 Thessalonians 1:4-5  
1 Thessalonians 2:1-6a
  - b. Biblical tools for success:
    - 1) Utter dependence on prayer

2 Thessalonians 3:1-5
    - 2) Uncompromising ministry of the Word of God
-

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- Accurately
- Clearly
- Comprehensively

Acts 20:20-21, 27

### 3) Unquestionable character in leadership

- Holy
- Loving
- Humble

1 Thessalonians 2:1-12

### 4) Unmistakable testimony of transformed lives

2 Corinthians 4:1-7

## B. In relation to traditionalism

Those who believe in the sovereignty of God protect the church from the ineffective complacency of traditionalism.

1. Those who believe in the sovereignty of God reject the objectives of traditionalism.
    - a. Traditionalism is driven by institutional interests.
    - b. Biblical ministry is mission-driven.
  2. Those who believe in the sovereignty of God reject the methods of traditionalism.
    - a. Traditionalism values form over function.
    - b. Biblical ministry values function over form.
-



## **Ekklesia Consortium Information Session**

First Baptist Church would like to introduce you to the Ekklesia Consortium (EC). The Conference on the Church for God's glory is being held along side the EC. Steve Thomas, president of the EC, will provide an information session prior to dinner.

### **The Beginning of the Ekklesia Consortium**

For some time a number of Fundamental Baptist pastors and educators have discussed the need for an organization committed to planting and strengthening theologically sound, separatistic Baptist churches. As a result, in late 1998 a handful of committed fundamental Baptist leaders met to discuss needs within fundamentalism and specifically the need for church planting. In June of 1999 this same group met again officially to plan their first church plant. At that meeting the Ekklesia Consortium was born.

### **The Purpose of the Ekklesia Consortium**

The Ekklesia Consortium was established to glorify God by producing and perpetuating independent fundamental Baptist churches.

EC projects may be direct or indirect church plants. A direct church plant is accomplished when an EC affiliated church “gives birth” to a new congregation. An indirect church plant is a pioneer work, domestic or foreign.

The purpose of EC is an expression of our affirmation of the primacy of the local church – that it is the exclusive institution commissioned to carry out God’s agenda for this age. Therefore, His people must uphold the reproduction of local churches as a priority responsibility.

### **The Distinctives of the Ekklesia Consortium**

#### **Historic Baptist Doctrine**

The EC is committed to establishing churches that are not only *Baptist* in name, but also in doctrine. Therefore, we chose a modified version of the *London Baptist Confession* (LBC) of 1689 to articulate the doctrinal position of the EC. The LBC is a superb document for two reasons. First, it is well known as a bold and accurate expression of theological orthodoxy. Second, it embodies the faith embraced by the

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majority of Baptists, from the beginning of the formal Baptist movement in the early seventeenth until the early nineteenth century.

It is unfortunate that the Baptist movement suffered the erosion of doctrinal standards in the nineteenth century giving rise to the man-centered theology and practices that are prevalent today. We long to see Baptist fundamentalism return to the strong theological base found in its historical roots.

Among the many strengths of the LBC is its clear emphasis on:

- ☞ The absolute authority and sufficiency of God's Word
- ☞ The uncompromising proclamation of man's complete depravity and inability, and God's absolute sovereignty
- ☞ The clear exposition of the marvelous doctrines of God's sovereign grace

### Fundamental

The EC is an organization born of and committed to fundamentalism. The cornerstone of fundamentalism is the practice of biblical separation. We are concerned about the inconsistent application of separation in some quarters of fundamentalism. Too often, personal and ecclesiastical separation are applied to practical matters while significant matters of doctrine are ignored. We believe that the doctrine of separation must be applied to matters of *both* faith and practice and that priority must be given to the preservation of pure doctrine because "belief precedes behavior."

### Other Distinctives

We are committed to establishing churches:

- ◆ That utilize a traditional dispensational hermeneutic
- ◆ That are committed to expository preaching.
- ◆ That are passionately evangelistic

This overview does not exhaust the distinctives of the EC. For further information, please request the following EC publication:

*The Second London Baptist Confession – In Modern English & Modified by the Ekklesia Consortium to Reflect Its Theological and Philosophical Distinctives.*

## **The Church Planting Strategy of the Ekklesia Consortium**

### **Leadership Selection**

The first requirement for a successful church plant is the selection of a qualified church planter. Potential church planters must be commissioned by a church of like faith and practice. They must also adhere to the EC statement of faith and undergo an examination by the EC executive board or its designates. Qualified candidates will be recommended to EC members for priority consideration in their respective churches.

### **Team Approach**

EC encourages the development of a leadership team for each church plant. Ideally, the team will consist of one experienced church planter and at least one associate. The church planter will be one who has displayed faithfulness, ministry skill, and is spiritually equipped for such a work. When an associate serves on the team, he will function as an apprentice with the possible goal of assuming the pastorate of the church or launching a future plant.

### **EC Participation**

All EC members commit to encouraging their churches to support EC church planting projects. Supporting churches contribute to the church planting process in at least three ways:

1. **Financial Resources**

Although the EC will consider support for any qualified candidate, priority consideration will be given to those candidates coming from EC affiliated churches.

2. **Leadership Development**

EC members seek to develop potential church planters within their own ministries. In those cases, the sponsoring church will aid the church planter in selecting a field and providing personnel for the church plant.

3. **Human Resources**

For domestic church planting, EC involvement will often go beyond financial support. The consortium will seek to provide personnel to serve alongside the leadership team. This means that a new church plant often will begin with a nucleus of commit-

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ted members. In addition, supporting churches will also organize task forces to help establish the fledgling churches.

### Church Planting Goals

The EC desires to perpetuate church planting by establishing at least one new church every two years. This cycle can be maintained if new churches achieve self-supporting status within two years. We believe that in most instances, if a church has been planted in a strategic location with a solid nucleus and leadership team, this is a reasonable expectation.

For more information about the  
Ekklesia Consortium contact:

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## The Pastor's Mandate: Broadcast the Word

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### 2 Timothy 4.1-4

Introcution: The overriding command of this passage is "Preach the Word" found in verse 2. This word, "preach," was commonly used of a herald making a public proclamation on behalf of another. This word stresses the idea of borrowed authority. The herald is nothing more than a mouthpiece. That is exactly how the word, "preach," is used here. Paul commands Timothy to publicly broadcast the Word of God. He is not to declare his own message. He is a mouthpiece for God. That is our task as shepherds as well. **Our job is to extract from the biblical text God's message and then accurately, clearly, and passionately broadcast it to our people.**

Evangelicals mothered the church growth movement which leaves the body swaying but the soul empty. Preaching is largely replaced by whatever those who hate God want. Sometimes Fundamental Baptist churches are not much better. In our circles we may not replace the Bible with drama and rock music, but instead we sometimes replace the Bible with the preacher. The preacher's life and experiences become the source of truth. Experiences replace Scripture, illustrations replace exegesis, and emotional manipulatin replaces Spirit conviction. In some of our pulpits the preacher should begin and end his sermons with the words, "Thus saith me." It is in this religious climate that we are commanded to *Preach the Word*.

**Proposition: Broadcast The Word.**

#### I. Broadcast the Word Because It Is Your Job (4.1-2).

A. Broadcast the Word whatever the situation.

*Conference on the Church for God's Glory*

B. Broadcast the Word to confront and expose sin.

C. Broadcast the Word to encourage godliness.

**II. Broadcast the Word Because God, the All-Seeing Eye, Is Watching (4.1).**

A. Christ will judge us based on our faithfulness to the preaching task.

B. Christ may judge sooner than we think.

**III. Broadcast the Word Because You Minister In a World in Which Man Hungers More For Novelty Than For Truth (4.3-4).**

A. Man's hunger for novelty flows from his depravity (4.3b).

B. Man's hunger for novelty will drive him to exchange truth for error.

1. Man will disregard God's truth (4.3b).

2. Man will openly reject God's truth (4.4a).

3. Man will exchange the truth of God's Word for myths (4.4b).

C. Man's hunger for novelty will cause him to flock to false teachers (4.3c).



First Baptist Church exists to **GLORIFY GOD**

*by expounding the truths of His Word;*

*by establishing mature followers of Christ who*

*declare God's excellencies*

*corporately in worship and individually in life;*

*by passionately spreading Christ's saving gospel;*

*and by perpetuating God's work by*

*reproducing itself in Rockford, Illinois,*

*the United States, and the world.*



## Conference Feedback Form

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Please fill out the following form and leave it at the information center in the lobby. This will help us improve future conferences.

1. How would you rate the quality of the sessions/workshops?

Poor    Good    Very Good    Excellent

2. How would you rate the topics covered?

Poor    Good    Very Good    Excellent

3. What topics would you like to see covered?

4. How would you rate the overall structure of the day?

Poor    Good    Very Good    Excellent

6. In what ways could the structure be improved?

7. Would you like to see similar conferences in the future?

Yes    No    Unimportant to me

8. What other comments/suggestions do you have?

Please describe yourself:

Pastor    Deacon    Church Leader    Layman

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

# Session Order Form

Please fill out this form to order all or any of the preaching and workshop sessions from the conference. They will be mailed to you within the week.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Complete mp3 Conference CD (with PDF notes) . . . . . \$5.00

Includes all special music and pictures from the conference!                      Quantity: \_\_\_\_\_

Individual Sessions (audio CD) . . . . . \$2.00

"Christ, The Whole Counsel of God" (Ken Brown)  
Quantity: \_\_\_\_\_

"Open Theism in Fundamental Baptist Pews and Pulpits?" (Steve Thomas)  
Quantity: \_\_\_\_\_

"Learning Hermeneutics from *The Prayer of Jabez*?" (Ed Williams)  
Quantity: \_\_\_\_\_

"The Lordship of Christ in Salvation" (Mike Harding)  
Quantity: \_\_\_\_\_

"How Divine Sovereignty Should Effect Our Philosophy" (Steve Thomas)  
Quantity: \_\_\_\_\_

Ekklesia Consortium Information Session (Steve Thomas)  
Quantity: \_\_\_\_\_

"The Pastor's Mandate: Broadcast the Word" (Scott Williquette)  
Quantity: \_\_\_\_\_

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Initials: _____

TOTAL: \_\_\_\_\_

Please take this form to the information center in the lobby.