

## A MIND FOR THE BODY

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This article adapts my 2020 ETS presidential address, and as such it exhibits a sort of hybrid genre. As a NT scholar, I first explain a biblical passage, in this case Romans 12:1–8, elaborating on the theme there of *a mind for the body*.<sup>1</sup> But insofar as the role of ETS president includes pastoral interests, I develop at some length pastoral applications of one of this passage's points that I believe is very relevant and timely for ETS.

The latter section focuses on our unity as believers, particularly (as emphasized in some other Pauline passages) our cross-cultural and multiracial unity. Beyond direct exegesis of Paul, therefore, I will include contemporary examples as something like case studies. My address might thus sound like two papers: half as a NT scholar on the exegesis of Romans 12:1–8 and half from a pastoral perspective on evangelical unity. Nevertheless, exegesis about Christ's one body should have significant practical implications for how we treat one another.

### I. SERVING CHRIST'S BODY IN ROMANS 12:1–8

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom (Ps 111:10; Prov 1:7; 9:10), and God blesses intellects devoted to his service. As our minds are renewed, we also devote our own individual bodies to serve the purposes of Christ's body. Romans 12:1–8 addresses minds renewed for serving Christ's body. As ETS members, we are among evangelicalism's intellectual mentors, training many of the movement's future leaders. As Christian academicians, we naturally care about developing minds renewed to share the ways of what Paul elsewhere calls the mind of Christ and the mind of the Spirit.<sup>2</sup>

1. *Our rational service (12:1)*. In Romans 12:1, Paul urges us to present our own bodies as sacrifices; in light of verses 4–6, we offer the actions of our bodies for serving *Christ's* body. Paul describes our sacrifice with three adjectives: living, holy,

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<sup>1</sup> For fuller discussion and documentation, see Craig S. Keener, *The Mind of the Spirit: Paul's Approach to Transformed Thinking* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2016), esp. 143–72; idem, "Transformed Thinking in Paul's Letters," *Doon Theological Journal* [Dehradun, India] 13.1–2 (2016): 5–24; idem, "Corrupted versus Renewed Minds in Romans 1, 7, and 12," in *Texts and Contexts: Gospels and Pauline Studies and Sermons in Honor of David E. Garland*, ed. Todd Still (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2017), 97–104; idem, "The Mind of the Spirit in Romans," *Stone-Campbell Journal* 22 (2019): 235–47.

<sup>2</sup> See also further discussion in Craig S. Keener, "A Spirit-Filled Teaching Ministry in Acts 19:9," in *Trajectories in the Book of Acts: Essays in Honor of John Wesley Wyckoff*, ed. Jordan May, Paul Alexander, and Robert G. Reid (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2010), 46–58.

and acceptable—or pleasing—to God. Sacrifices in general had to be holy and acceptable to God;<sup>3</sup> Paul elsewhere describes the Philippians' gift to him as "a sacrifice pleasing to God" (Phil 4:18).

More unusual is his mention of a "living" sacrifice. Unless this description is meant to evoke the scapegoat,<sup>4</sup> it sounds like an oxymoron meant to seize our attention.<sup>5</sup> How do we offer ourselves as a living sacrifice? Especially since we shall die someday anyway, it is a special privilege to do it for the honor of our Lord's name; this is a sacrifice of our lives (cf. Eph 5:2; Phil 2:17; 2 Tim 4:6; Rev 6:9). But we do not have to wait until we die to take up our cross to follow Jesus: we can devote our lives to him daily (Luke 9:23; cf. 1 Cor 15:31–32). This sacrifice is *living* because we presently offer this sacrifice by how we *live*.

But Paul also goes on to describe our sacrifice as λογικός (*logikos*), or "rational." In antiquity, some people, especially Stoic philosophers, would speak of the best sacrifices as λογικός, based on proper attitudes rather than shedding an animal's blood.<sup>6</sup> Most English translations render the term here as "spiritual" (e.g., ESV, NASB, NIV, NRSV). This rendering accurately captures the sense that the sacrifice is not material, but Paul often uses a different term for what relates specifically to God's *Spirit*. Given the context of Romans 12:2–3, Paul probably also highlights that this sacrifice is rational—what the King James Version called "reasonable service."<sup>7</sup> That is, we use our properly informed minds to show us how to use our bodies to serve. By revisiting the theme of intellect in the next two verses, Paul makes this connection more evident.

2. *Romans 12:2, the mind, and the context of Romans.* The mind is not a new subject in Romans 12:2.<sup>8</sup> In 1:21, Paul spoke of worldly minds being darkened because they refused to recognize and be grateful for God's work in creation.<sup>9</sup> God made humanity in his image, but in 1:23 Paul complains that people returned the favor,

<sup>3</sup> See, e.g., Gen 8:21; Exod 29:18, 25, 41; Lev 1:9, 13, 17; Sir 35:8; 45:16; 50:15; Jub. 6:3; 7:5; 21:7, 9; 49:9; 1QS 3.11; 8.10; 9.4; 2Q24 frg. 4.2; 11QT 27.4; Philo, *Spec.* 1.201; Josephus, *Ant.* 4.34, 311; 6.149; 7.334; 10.64; 12.146.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Nobuyoshi Kiuchi, "Living Like the Azazel-Goat in Romans 12:1B," *TynBul* 57.2 (2006): 251–61.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Edgar Krentz, "The Sense of Senseless Oxymora," *CurTM* 28.6 (2001): 577–84. On oxymora, see Galen O. Rowe, "Style," in *Handbook of Classical Rhetoric in the Hellenistic Period, 330 B.C.–A.D. 400*, ed. Stanley E. Porter (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 143; David E. Aune, *The Westminster Dictionary of New Testament and Early Christian Literature and Rhetoric* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2003), 327; in Paul, see Stanley E. Porter, "Paul of Tarsus and His Letters," in *Handbook of Classical Rhetoric*, 582; R. Dean Anderson Jr., *Ancient Rhetorical Theory and Paul*, rev. ed., CBET 18 (Leuven: Peeters, 1999), 227.

<sup>6</sup> See more fully Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 752.

<sup>7</sup> For the rational element, connected with the mind in Rom 12:2, see also, e.g., C. E. B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 2 vols., ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1975), 2:602; Brendan Byrne, *Romans*, SP 6 (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1996), 366; Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 645; Arland J. Hultgren, *Paul's Letter to the Romans: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011), 440; Colin G. Kruse, *Paul's Letter to the Romans*, Pillar (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012), 463.

<sup>8</sup> On the mind in Rom 1:18–32, see more fully Keener, *Mind*, 1–29.

<sup>9</sup> Mediterranean antiquity recognized ingratitude as abominable even on a human level; see, e.g., Xenophon, *Mem.* 2.2–3; Cicero, *Att.* 8.4; Seneca, *Ben.* 1.10.4; *Lucil.* 81.1, 28; Pliny, *Ep.* 8.18.3.

reducing the creator to the level of the created by idols.<sup>10</sup> Claiming to be wise, Paul laments, we became fools (1:22). He continues his critique in the following verses (1:24–27): having twisted God’s image in creation by idolatry, he mourns, we twisted God’s image in ourselves. God made humanity in his image as male and female (Gen 1:26–27; 5:1–2), but we twisted our sexuality contrary to his design (Rom 1:26–27).

Both Jewish and gentile thinkers in Paul’s day emphasized that reason, rational thinking, should overcome physical passions.<sup>11</sup> Paul, however, depicts gentiles as subject to passions. I render Romans 1:28 in awkward English as follows in an attempt to highlight the wordplay in Greek: “Since they did not evaluate it as right to embrace the knowledge of God, God gave them over to a mind that fails his evaluation.”<sup>12</sup> In our later passage, Romans 12:2, Paul reverses that language of “evaluation”: *believers’* minds are renewed so that now they can evaluate and recognize God’s will.

We may readily affirm Paul’s complaint against the pagan mind in Romans 1. After all, the pagan mind was uninformed by God’s Word. Jewish teachers, both in the holy land and the Diaspora, emphasized that knowing the law could free the heart from passion in a way the pagan mind could not.<sup>13</sup> Yet in Romans 7:23–25 Paul critiques also the biblically informed Jewish mind subject to the law.<sup>14</sup> We academicians should take note: God is not satisfied with mere intellectual knowledge alone. Our information should serve the purpose of transformation.<sup>15</sup>

Our identity is already new in Christ; in Romans 6, we died with him and, as Paul points out in 6:11, we now must cognitively reckon ourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ.<sup>16</sup> But while our identity is new, our brains still contain old scripts with their fears and habits. How can they be changed?

<sup>10</sup> For that “image” and “glory” in Paul, restored in Christ as God’s wisdom and the second Adam, see Rom 8:29; 1 Cor 11:7; 2 Cor 3:18; 4:4. Now humanity distorts God to resemble the “image” of creation (Rom 1:23).

<sup>11</sup> E.g., Cicero, *Inv.* 2.54.164; *Off.* 2.5.18; *Leg.* 1.23.60; Sallust, *Bell. Cat.* 51.3; Valerius Maximus 3.3.ext.1; Plutarch, *Lect.* 1, *Mor.* 37E; Maximus of Tyre, *Or.* 33.3; Porphyry, *Marc.* 6.99; 29.453–60; 31.478–83; 34.521–22. For Stoics, see also Richard Sorabji, *Emotion and Peace of Mind: From Stoic Agitation to Christian Temptation*, Gifford Lectures (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 2–4.

<sup>12</sup> All translations in this article are my own except where marked otherwise; because this is not a larger translation project that requires consistency, I have deliberately and sometimes provocatively erred on the side of dynamic equivalents in a way I would not do in a major project.

<sup>13</sup> E.g., 4 Macc. 1:1, 9, 29; 2:15–16, 18, 21–22; 3:17; 6:31, 33; 7:4; 13:1–2, 7; Philo, *Opif.* 81; *Leg.* 3.156.

<sup>14</sup> See fuller discussion in Keener, *Mind*, 55–112.

<sup>15</sup> See fuller discussion in John Piper, *Reading the Bible Supernaturally: Seeing and Savoring the Glory of God in Scripture* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2017); Craig S. Keener, *Spirit Hermeneutics: Reading Scripture in Light of Pentecost* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016).

<sup>16</sup> See more fully Keener, *Mind*, 31–54. Stoics’ present cognitive therapy (Sorabji, *Emotion*, e.g., 1–4, 225–26) bears some resemblance to Rom 6:11, except Paul grounds believers’ ability to live righteously in our solidarity with Christ’s objectively finished work (Rom 6:2–10). In keeping with Jer 3:17; 31:32–34; Ezek 36:26–27, Jewish thinkers expected full divine deliverance from sin eschatologically (e.g., 1QS 3.18–19, 23; 4.19, 23; 5.5; 4Q88 10.9–10; Jub. 50:5; 1 En. 91:8–9, 16–17; 92:3–5; 107:1; 108:3; Pss. Sol. 17:32; T. Mos. 10:1; Sib. Or. 5.430).

In Romans 8:5–7, Paul speaks of the mind of the Spirit.<sup>17</sup> God’s Spirit at work in us in Christ provides the opportunity for transformation. Paul elaborates further on this transformation in Romans 12:2. While Paul affirms that those who are in Christ have the mind of Christ, he recognizes also a process in transformation.

Neuroscientists speak of neuroplasticity: what we put into our brains shapes them.<sup>18</sup> If we put in pornography, our brains become chemically addicted to pornography.<sup>19</sup> If we imbibe the world’s values, that worldview becomes second nature to us. If our mental diet is sitcoms or (worse yet) horror movies, our thinking will adapt accordingly. But God built our brains so that our thinking can also be transformed in *positive* ways. In the language of 2 Corinthians 3:18, as we continue to keep our eyes and thoughts on Jesus, we continue to be transformed into his image, renewed from one level of glory to another.<sup>20</sup> In the context of that passage, we are being glorified internally even more deeply than Moses reflected God’s glory externally (1 Cor 3:7–17).

Albert Mohler’s 2019 ETS devotion helpfully used 2 Corinthians 10:3–5 to underline the importance of bringing thoughts captive to Christ. We should challenge false ideologies rather than let them shape us.<sup>21</sup> Yet the average consumer in the United States spends some four and a half hours per day on entertainment—about thirty-one hours per week.<sup>22</sup> If all Christians immersed ourselves in God’s Word more than entertainment, how would that reshape our thinking? If just thirty million Christians shifted two hours a day to prayer, meeting needs in our communities for the honor of Jesus’s name, or sharing Christ with our neighborhoods, that would be more than twenty billion fresh hours a year devoted to God’s kingdom.

I turn now to three aspects of the renewed mind: First, the Spirit renews our minds for an eschatological perspective. We who believe in an eternal future must weigh our decisions in light of eternity. Second, a renewed mind thinks in light of

<sup>17</sup> I address this pericope in its first-century context more fully in Keener, *Mind*, 113–41.

<sup>18</sup> Cf., e.g., Steven C. Cramer et al., “Harnessing Neuroplasticity for Clinical Applications,” *Brain* 134.6 (June 2011): 1591–1609; Mohe Costandi, *Neuroplasticity* (Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2016); Victor V. Chaban, ed., *Neuroplasticity: Insights of Neural Reorganization* (London: IntechOpen, 2018); Huijun Wu et al., “Occupational Neuroplasticity in the Human Brain: A Critical Review and Meta-Analysis of Neuroimaging Studies,” *Frontiers in Human Neuroscience* 14.215 (6 July 2020): 10.3389/fnhum.2020.00215.

<sup>19</sup> Cf., e.g., Donald L. Hilton Jr., “Pornography Addiction—A Supranormal Stimulus Considered in the Context of Neuroplasticity,” *Brain and Addiction* 3.1 (July 2013): doi.org/10.3402/snp.v3i0.20767; Todd Love et al., “Neuroscience of Internet Pornography Addiction: A Review and Update,” *Behavioral Sciences* 5.3 (2015): 388–433.

<sup>20</sup> I address this passage more fully in Keener, *Mind*, 206–15.

<sup>21</sup> Ancient thinkers often used military language figuratively for argumentation (Cicero, *De or.* 3.14.55; *Brut.* 2.7; Seneca the Elder, *Controv.* 9.pref.4; Tacitus, *Dial.* 32, 34, 37; Philostratus, *Vit. soph.* 2.1.563) and for challenging false ideologies (Lucian, *Demon.* 48; *Nigr.* 36; Ps.-Diogenes, *Ep.* 10; Philo, *Sar.* 130) and passions (Xenophon, *Mem.* 1.2.24; *Oec.* 1.23; Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 8.20; 9.11–12; 49.10; Ps.-Diogenes, *Ep.* 5, 12).

<sup>22</sup> The average rate is higher for men, at some 5.5 hours per day (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 25 June 2020 release; at <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/atus.nr0.htm#:~:text=Leisure%20Activities%20in%202019%20%2D%2D,%2C%20compared%20with%204.9%20hours>).

God's plan in history, revealed most explicitly in Scripture. And third, a renewed mind thinks in light of the body of Christ: how we can serve one another. God wants us to think not just about ourselves. He wants us to see ourselves in the wider framework of his plan in history and in Christ's body. I will elaborate and apply most fully after that third point.

3. *Revelation about the future.* Paul goes on to speak more about the mind in Romans 12:2. We are transformed by the renewing of our minds. Renewing the mind has an eschatological dimension; note that in 12:2 transformation by the renewing of our mind contrasts with being conformed to this *αἰῶν* (*aiōn*), usually translated "this world" but literally meaning "this age."<sup>23</sup> We should not reason according to the temporal values of this age,<sup>24</sup> but in light of how things will look from the standpoint of eternity.

Paul elsewhere envisions our full transformation at Christ's return (Rom 8:29; Phil 3:21); full transformation is an eschatological reality. Here, however, we are already being transformed in the present because our minds are made "new." Paul has already referred to this "newness" earlier in Romans, contrasting what we were in Adam with what we are and are becoming in Christ (Rom 6:4; cf. 7:6). In Paul's theology, Christ has delivered us from the present evil age (Gal 1:4), and the Spirit provides a foretaste of the future age (Rom 8:23; 1 Cor 2:9–10; 2 Cor 1:22; 5:5; Gal 5:5; cf. Heb 6:4–5).

Paul also speaks of a new mind elsewhere, connected with us experiencing a foretaste of the new, promised age in Christ. This includes a new worldview, as in 2 Corinthians 5:16–17: "Thus from now on we do not view anyone by fleshly criteria. Even though we once viewed Christ by fleshly standards, we do not view him that way anymore! Thus if anyone is in Christ, the promised new creation exists. Old things have passed away. Look! New things have come!"

As Paul emphasizes later, in Romans 13:11–14, we should now evaluate how we live in light of eternity. The perspective of eternity should guide how we invest all our time and other resources. Paul explains more about this eternal perspective in another passage, in 1 Corinthians 2:6–16.<sup>25</sup> The preceding section, 1:18–2:5, defines true wisdom in terms of the cross, which is foolishness according to this world's values. The cross is not about how to achieve status or reputation or political power; from the world's standpoint, it was simply the execution of a potentially "subversive" provincial rebel for treason.

But Paul goes on to insist in 2:6–10 that the world miscalculated because the rulers of this age did not understand eternal wisdom. The truest wisdom, Paul emphasizes, is not the wisdom from this age or its rulers, who are becoming nothing.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>23</sup> For the contrast between the two ages, see 1QS 3.23; 4.16–17; 4 Ezra 4:35–37; 6:7–9, 20; 7:31, 47, 50, 113–14; 8:1, 52; 2 Bar. 15:8; t. Ber. 6:21; Pe'ah 1:2–3; Sipre Num. 115.5.7; Sipre Deut. 29.2.3; 31.4.1; 32.5.10; 34.4.3; 48.7.1.

<sup>24</sup> Against the wisdom of this temporal age, see 1 Cor. 1:20; 2:6, 8; 3:18; cf. 7:31.

<sup>25</sup> I address this passage's eschatological perspective further in Keener, *Mind*, 176–95.

<sup>26</sup> Note the downfall of the world's rulers who valued power over God's wisdom in Bar. 3:14–19; cf. Ps. 104:22 LXX (105:22 ET); Isa 19:11; Ezek 27:8; Dan 1:20; 2:48; 4:18; Pss. Sol. 8:20. Although Paul

Instead, Paul declares, we speak God's *eternal* wisdom, concealed from *this age's* rulers—and we might add, often from this age's scholars too. That does not mean that one must be a believer or be holy to parse verbs or analyze data. But there is a relational sort of understanding and knowing that is true only for those who really *know* the Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>27</sup>

Eternal wisdom comes by the Spirit and in the good news of the cross. First Corinthians 2:9 echoes Isaiah in announcing, “Things that eyes haven’t seen and ears haven’t heard, nor have people ever imagined—such are the things that God has prepared for those who love him.” Paul is echoing here Isaiah 64:4, a passage that emphasizes that mortals are unable to fathom God’s ways.<sup>28</sup> But Paul then qualifies Isaiah’s statement by adding that God, by his Spirit, has now revealed these hidden things to us (1 Cor 2:10). Paul elsewhere speaks of the Spirit as the down payment of our future inheritance (2 Cor 1:22; 5:5; Eph 1:13–14).<sup>29</sup> Paul communicates the same point in other language in Romans 8:23<sup>30</sup> and Galatians 3:14 and 5:5.<sup>31</sup> In other words, even though we do not yet know as we are known, the Spirit gives us a *foretaste* of the coming world.

Thus Paul continues in 1 Corinthians 2:10 that the Spirit reveals to us the depths of God’s heart. Only your own heart knows everything within it, Paul says; in the same way, he explains, only God’s Spirit knows God’s heart and can share it with us. Paul elsewhere shows what that looks like, when he says, “God’s love is poured out in our hearts by the Spirit” (Rom 5:5) or that the Spirit makes us cry, “Abba,” and testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children (Rom 8:15–16; cf. Gal 4:6).

In 1 Corinthians 2:12–13, Paul contrasts understanding and evaluating by God’s Spirit with doing so by the world’s spirit. Corinth had a pervasive culture of

can refer to cosmic rulers (Rom 8:38–39), as in some other early Jewish sources (Dan 10:13, 20; Jub. 15:31–32; 35:17; 1 En. 61:10; 75:1), he thinks of earthly ones here (1 Cor 1:26–28).

<sup>27</sup> I address this theme somewhat more fully in discussing John’s Gospel, where it is pervasive and rooted especially in the OT, in *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*, 2 vols. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 234–47, and on a less academic level in *Gift and Giver: The Holy Spirit for Today* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001), 17–50. I attempted to grapple with its implications for hermeneutics in *Spirit Hermeneutics*, and in “Pentecostal Biblical Interpretation/Spirit Hermeneutics,” in *Scripture and Its Interpretation: A Global, Ecumenical Introduction to the Bible*, ed. Michael J. Gorman (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017), 270–83.

<sup>28</sup> His most significant adaptation in wording might incorporate a phrase from Sirach 1:10, given both “wisdom” and “reveal” in Sirach 1:6–9 (as I argued in *1–2 Corinthians* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005], 38–29), but the new phrase was admittedly common in many Jewish sources.

<sup>29</sup> See, e.g., Oscar Cullmann, *The Early Church*, ed. A. J. B. Higgins (London: SCM, 1956), 117; George Eldon Ladd, *The New Testament and Criticism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1967), 91.

<sup>30</sup> Cf., e.g., Cranfield, *Romans*, 1:417; Leon Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 323; George Eldon Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 370.

<sup>31</sup> I address these texts more fully (citing other sources) in *Galatians* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 142–43, 234–35; and especially in *Galatians: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2019), 257–59, 456–58.

evaluation, hosting public speaking competitions and rival teachers.<sup>32</sup> Unfortunately, Corinthian Christians were evaluating Paul and Apollos by the same kinds of criteria, with a sort of ancient version of Christian celebrity cults. In the next two verses, then, Paul tells the Corinthians to drop their worldly evaluation criteria (though we sometimes need these for our accreditation assessments!) and to evaluate spiritual matters by spiritual standards.

In Christ, Paul concludes in 1 Corinthians 2:16, we have a new mind: “the mind of Christ.” Earlier in this paragraph he evoked and then qualified Isaiah; he does the same here. Paul quotes Isaiah 40:13, which in the Greek version asks, “Who has known the mind of the Lord?” This verse, like the other Paul has just evoked (Isa 64:4), shows that mortals cannot fathom God’s ways. As Isaiah says elsewhere, God’s thoughts are as high above ours as the heavens are above the earth (Isa 55:8–9). But Paul again qualifies Isaiah here: *we have the mind of Christ*. The Hebrew text of Isaiah asks, “Who can fathom the Lord’s Spirit?” The Greek says, “Who has known the Lord’s mind?” Paul, who has been insisting that we have the gift of the Spirit, now declares that the Spirit helps us to hear something of God’s mind. Implying Christ’s deity,<sup>33</sup> Paul speaks of God’s mind as the mind of Christ. As academics who are Christians, we have a unique opportunity to contribute a divinely informed perspective to learning, a perspective from the standpoint of *faith*.

Missions leader C. T. Studd expressed well the importance of an eternal perspective: “Only one life, ‘twill soon be past, Only what’s done for Christ will last.”<sup>34</sup> Insofar as we are able, may we devote *all* our time and other resources to the kingdom.

4. *God’s larger purposes in history*. The context of Romans 12:2 tells us a second way that our minds can be renewed to be more like Christ’s. The term that Paul uses for “mind” in 12:2 (νοῦς) appears in two mind passages I mentioned earlier, Romans 1:28 and 7:23–25, but Paul does not use it again in Romans until just a few verses before our passage, in 11:34. There Paul quotes the Greek version of Isaiah 40:13–14, just as he did in 1 Corinthians. “Who has known the Lord’s mind?” In Romans 11, he is speaking of God’s sovereign wisdom in arranging history according to his purposes, so that salvation becomes available to Jew and gentile alike. Paul’s use of “therefore” and his mention of God’s mercies in 12:1 refers back to this preceding context (9:15–16, 18, 23 and 11:30–32).<sup>35</sup>

<sup>32</sup> For rival schools in Corinth, see, e.g., Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 8.9; Bruce W. Winter, *After Paul Left Corinth: The Influence of Secular Ethics and Social Change* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 37, 39–40; for such division in the Corinthian church, see 1 Cor 1:12–13; 3:4–5; for the Greco-Roman culture of evaluation generally, see, e.g., Cicero, *Amic.* 22.85; Pliny, *Ep.* 6.26.2; see further Timothy B. Savage, *Power through Weakness: Paul’s Understanding of the Christian Ministry in 2 Corinthians*, SNTSMS 86 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 19–53 *passim*.

<sup>33</sup> As he does with some of his other LXX allusions, as in Rom 10:9–10, 13; 1 Cor 1:8; Phil 2:10–11; 1 Thess 3:13.

<sup>34</sup> Cited in, e.g., Randy C. Alcorn, *Heaven* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale, 2004), 453.

<sup>35</sup> With Schreiner, *Romans*, 639; somewhat more broadly, Victor Paul Furnish, “Living to God, Walking in Love: Theology and Ethics in Romans,” in *Reading Paul’s Letter to the Romans*, ed. Jerry L. Sumney, SBLRBS 73 (Atlanta: SBL, 2012), 194. For further detail, see Nijay K. Gupta, “What ‘Mercies of God?’ *Oiktirmos* in Romans 12:1 against Its Septuagintal Background,” *BBR* 22.1 (2012): 81–96.

But Paul will again qualify Isaiah's question, just as he did in 1 Corinthians. Yes, God's wisdom is beyond human ability to fathom. Yet our minds can be renewed according to his perspective precisely because he has *revealed* some of that wisdom. In Romans 11, Paul traces God's plan in history, based on God's revelation of his salvific wisdom in Scripture. By knowing and actively *trusting* Scripture—hearing God's word in faith—we can begin to renew our minds. In light of eternity, we should be immersing ourselves in God's Word rather (or at the very least far more) than squandering precious time on worldly entertainment. (After all, the psalmist does invite us to meditate on God's Word day and night [Ps 1:2].) In Paul's words, we should not be conformed to this age, but instead be transformed by the renewing of our minds.

It takes a renewed mind still to trust God's love and larger plan when we face hardship. It takes a renewed mind to remain confident in God's plan when judgment is falling around us, even such judgment as Scripture leads us to expect in a brutal world like ours. Because human nature remains the same and current events have many analogies with past ones, Scripture provides us perspective and teaches us to trust the God who is in ultimate control. A Scripture-shaped mind will focus more on how we can fit into God's larger plan than how he might fit into ours.

5. *Christ's larger body.* Context also suggests a third way that our thinking is renewed. In Romans 12:2, Paul invites us to think in new ways that please God. In this same verse, Paul explains that renewed minds can discern God's will, which he then defines as that which “is good, and pleasing, and perfect.” Just as Paul describes our sacrifice in 12:1 with three adjectives, one of them being “pleasing” or “acceptable,” so here he defines God's will for us with three adjectives, one of them being “pleasing” or “acceptable.”

This means that “good, pleasing, and perfect” are not three levels of God's will. They are three ways of *describing* God's will. Philosophers and orators often used evaluative criteria such as “good”<sup>36</sup> and “perfect,”<sup>37</sup> so Paul's first audience should have readily grasped his point. How do we evaluate what is God's will? If we discern what pleases God, what God deems good, we know his will. That is not the only way that God leads believers, but it is one important way: through renewed minds we recognize what pleases him. Again, this language recalls and inverts Romans 1 (esp. 1:28) and suggests that, although sin corrupted human thinking, in Christ our perspectives can be renewed.

What does this renewed perspective look like? In 12:2, Paul invites us to a new way of thinking, a transformed worldview, a renewed perspective. Paul continues this theme in 12:3 by instructing us how *not* to think. In 12:3, Paul urges us not to think of ourselves more highly than we ought, but to think soundly, by recognizing that God has assigned to each a measure of faith. In 12:4–6, he shows that God

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<sup>36</sup> E.g., *Rhet. Alex.* 1, 1421b.16–22; Cicero, *Fam.* 15.17.3; Musonius Rufus 4, p. 46.36–37; 7, p. 58.25 (Lutz); Arius Didymus 2.7.11h, p. 74.15–17; Let. Aris. 225.

<sup>37</sup> E.g., Arius Didymus 2.7.5b4, p. 16.29–31; 2.7.8, p. 52.7, 11.



has measured faith to each of us to exercise our different gifts to build up Christ's body.<sup>38</sup>

The mind of Christ looks out for the body of Christ. It does not exalt our favorite scholar against our colleague's favorite (resembling the divisions at Corinth). Its larger focus is not about ourselves or our smaller group but about us together as Christ's body, which serves the purposes of Christ the head. How do we discern what is pleasing in God's sight? First, as we have seen, we must consider what our present actions would look like in light of eternity. Second, we see God's heart and plan in Scripture.

But third, we also have one another. When we see a need and God has gifted us to meet that need, we do not need to pray for special guidance. I do believe, based on other biblical passages, that God guides us in various ways, including the Spirit prompting our hearts. But one form of knowing God's will is explicit here: it is pleasing to God that we work to build up Christ's body.

We should not despise each other's gifts, including those gifts that Paul lists in 12:6–8, such as prophesying (12:6), teaching (12:7), comforting/counseling, or financial support (12:8). Elsewhere in Romans, Paul may illustrate some gifts from the list, including himself (11:13) and Phoebe (16:1) in terms of *διακονία*, himself as involved in *παράκλησις* (12:1; 15:30; 16:17), and perhaps Phoebe as involved in *προιστάμενος*, whatever these debated terms mean.<sup>39</sup>

Each gift is necessary for the optimum function of the body (12:4–8). When we amputate certain member-gifts as inferior, unnecessary, or even bad, what we have remaining might survive, but not at optimum strength. It is not a whole body. When some other churches just collect all the amputated members in a pile, that is not a whole body either. As Paul says in 1 Corinthians 12, none of us can say we do not need the other members of the body.

I am a continuationist regarding all the gifts,<sup>40</sup> but for the sake of staying on the main point, we all agree about *most* of the gifts that Paul lists. Hopefully, many of us in ETS have the gift of teaching. But we would not have anyone to teach if

<sup>38</sup> I see *μέτρον πίστεως* in 12:3 as equivalent to *ἀναλογία τῆς πίστεως* in 12:6 (Craig S. Keener, *Romans* [Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2009], 144–46, with James D. G. Dunn, *Romans*, 2 vols., WBC 38A–38B [Dallas: Word, 1988], 727; Schreiner, *Romans*, 652, 656; Robert Jewett, *Romans: A Commentary*, Hermeneia [Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007], 738–41, 747; cf. Gerald Bray, ed., *Romans*, ACCS-NT 6 [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1998], 309–12). Some, however, view both or the latter as the standard of faith (C. E. B. Cranfield, “METPON ΠΙΣΤΕΩΣ in Romans XII.3,” *NTS* 8.4 [1962]: 351; Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Romans: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 33 [New York: Doubleday, 1993], 647).

<sup>39</sup> The cognate *προστάτις* in 16:2 may involve benefaction, such as hosting a house congregation, but the sense is debated.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. my comments in *Acts: An Exegetical Commentary*, 4 vols. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012–2015), 1:539–41, 780–83, 880–82; more focused in *Gift & Giver*, 89–112, and (in the 2020 Afterword), 212–14; reiterated in “Are Spiritual Gifts for Today?,” in *Strangers to Fire: When Tradition Trumps Scripture*, ed. Robert W. Graves (Tulsa, OK: Empowered Life, 2014), 135–62. See also others recently: Gregg R. Allison and Andreas J. Köstenberger, *The Holy Spirit* (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2020), 427–34; Sam Storms, *Understanding Spiritual Gifts: A Comprehensive Guide* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2020); for a different position, see recently Thomas R. Schreiner, *Spiritual Gifts: What They Are and Why They Matter* (Nashville: B&H, 2018).

some people did not have the gift of evangelism (Eph 4:11). Nor would many of us have a *place* to teach if some did not have the gift of giving (Rom 12:8). We must not look down on those who lack what we have, nor must we set them on a pedestal because they have what we lack. Instead, we must serve them, as fellow members of the same body. They are also more likely to welcome our genuine gifts, and heed our better counsels, when we are more apt to welcome theirs.

It is a great privilege to be teachers. But James warns that teachers also incur stricter judgment (Jas 3:1).<sup>41</sup> What we have, we have by God's grace; may we serve humbly our brothers and sisters who do not have the same resources or calling we have. Scripture often reminds us that God is near the humble and the lowly, but far from the proud (Isa 2:12, 17; 5:15–16; Ezek 21:26; Matt 23:12; Luke 1:52; 14:11; 18:14; Jas 4:10; 1 Pet 5:5–6).<sup>42</sup> When God sends us students and colleagues from the Majority World, where at the moment fewer have had the opportunities most of us in the West have had, may we invest in them and their ministries, especially where the need is far more plentiful than the laborers. I return to this subject more fully later.

Being a continuationist, I do not think we yet know as we are known or yet see face to face (1 Cor 13:12). But even if we did have perfect knowledge, it should entail humility: Paul insists here that the renewed mind does not think of itself more highly than it ought to think (Rom 12:3). Instead, it considers: How can I contribute most fruitfully to Christ's body? (12:4–6).

## II. THE UNITY OF CHRIST'S BODY

Paul addresses the need for believers' unity in many letters. So now I move to practical, pastoral applications of what a mind for Christ's body can look like in the context of ETS. Though ETS is not a church, as believers we belong to churches and to Christ's wider body.

1. *Theological differences.* In Romans 12, Paul expresses his emphasis on unity in diversity in relation to spiritual gifts (12:4–8). ETS is not the ideal cross section of Christ's body for me to focus on the diversity of gifts, since, as noted earlier, most of us tend toward the gift of teaching. But the larger context of Romans, Paul's theology as a whole, and even how Paul continues in the rest of Romans 12, all shows that he would urge unity in some other ways as well. I will focus, as Paul

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<sup>41</sup> The thought would have been readily intelligible in James's Jewish setting; cf. m. Abot 4:7, 11; t. Yoma 4:10–11; Ab. R. Nat. 40 A; Ephraim E. Urbach, *The Sages: Their Concepts and Beliefs*, trans. Israel Abrahams, 2nd ed., 2 vols. (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1979), 1:465, 615 (citing, e.g., b. Sanh. 7a); E. P. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985), 190. It should also have been intelligible to gentiles (cf. Philostratus, *Vit. soph.* 1.16.501; M. Cary and T. J. Haarhoff, *Life and Thought in the Greek and Roman World*, 4th ed. [London: Methuen, 1946], 285).

<sup>42</sup> Again, such ideas were widely recognized in antiquity, though often neglected in practice; cf. Sir. 11:5–6; m. Abot 6:4; b. Erub. 13b; Gen. Rab. 1:5; Ab. R. Nat. 11 A; 22 B; George Foot Moore, *Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era*, 2 vols. (New York: Schocken, 1971), 2:274; Joachim Jeremias, *The Parables of Jesus*, rev. ed. (New York: Scribner's, 1972), 107; Samuel Tobias Lachs, *A Rabbinic Commentary on the New Testament: The Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke* (Hoboken, NJ: KTAV, 1987), 368.

does in some of his letters, on matters of cultural and ethnic diversity, but first I offer a few comments about theological differences.

Various believers or churches contribute various valuable emphases, for example, on Scripture exposition, evangelism, intimacy with God, or caring for the homeless. But while some doctrinal *emphases* may be different gifts to the body, we would not see full-fledged doctrinal disagreements the same way Paul presents us needing one another's gifts. My analogy regarding unity here is therefore less precise than it will be in later paragraphs. Nevertheless, whether one is a cessationist or a continuationist regarding certain *gifts* of the Spirit, hopefully we are *all* continuationists regarding the *fruit* of the Spirit. How we treat one another is an essential expression of our identity as Jesus's followers (12:9–10, 16; cf. 1 John 4:7–12).

As both an academic and an *interdenominational* society, we inevitably hold a range of opinions, regarding, for example, spiritual gifts, modes of baptism, gender roles, eschatology, and the age of the earth. In his 2016 presidential address, Dan Wallace described himself as a complementarian, cessationist dispensationalist. At his 2017 presidential address, Sam Storms described himself as a complementarian, charismatic amillennialist. I am typically classified as an egalitarian, charismatic posttribulationist. Yet Christ's lordship unites us more than any of these other labels would divide us.

As academics, we naturally engage our differences; but as Christians we also engage them as brothers and sisters in Christ. We work especially for unity in trusting and knowing Jesus, God's Son (Eph 4:13). While we dialogue over differences, the strongest foundation—the good news that we are saved by Jesus's death and resurrection—already unites us in faith and mission. In expounding Scripture, I do my best to interpret as accurately as I can, but I also want to keep central things central. Since teachers will be judged more strictly, I want to make certain that the matters on which I am judged most are the matters about which I am most certain, the most central points of the faith.

When one's back is up against a wall, one quickly discovers who one's allies are. When I was beaten or had my life threatened for sharing Christ on the streets, or when one professor at my doctoral institution told me I might not be allowed to graduate because I was too religious, I was not thinking in terms of denominational affiliations or theological fine points. In an SBL session a few years ago, a member of the Jesus Seminar responded to works by myself and Darrell Bock by saying that evangelical scholars should not even be allowed in the same room with genuine critical scholars.<sup>43</sup> (Happily, such treatment has been the exception far more than the rule, both in my doctoral program and at SBL.)

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<sup>43</sup> The respective projects to which he was responding were Darrell L. Bock and Robert L. Webb, *Key Events in the Life of the Historical Jesus: A Collaborative Exploration of Context and Coherence* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010); Craig S. Keener, *The Historical Jesus of the Gospels* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009). More recently and more fully developed, cf. Darrell L. Bock and J. Ed Komoszewski, eds., *Jesus, Skepticism, and the Problem of History: Criteria and Context in the Study of Christian Origins* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2019); Craig S. Keener, *Christobiography: Memories, History, and the Reliability of the Gospels* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2019).

When one is defending the gospel or honoring Jesus, differences over dispensationalism or women's ordination or prophetic gifts are not the hill one first chooses to die on. In various ways, those topics all make a difference on the ground, and we may contend passionately for our respective views. But they do not make *the* difference in where someone—maybe some of our students or the people to whom they preach—will spend eternity.

Yet not only in some secular circles, but in some of my early years at ETS, I myself had some experiences that made me feel unwelcome enough to have recurrent nightmares over the following year. Those experiences do not reflect ETS as a whole, but not all who have had such experiences have stayed long enough to have better ones. For one more recent but prominent example, an outside survey a few years ago suggested that some evangelical women scholars and graduate students felt uncomfortable here—even though they, too, are members of Christ's body and share our foundational commitments.<sup>44</sup>

So as outgoing ETS president, let me urge that we who feel at home here be sensitive to others who are just getting to know us. Sometimes we are just preoccupied, invested in our old friendships, or, in my case, both introverted and near-sighted; but may we be as intentional as possible in making fresh faces feel welcome. And to those members who have had bad experiences, please forgive us and know that we value your presence and participation.

2. *Cultural and ethnic unity.* Paul uses the image of Christ's body especially to address diversity of gifts, but in the larger context of Romans, he also addresses issues of cultural and ethnic unity. In his day, the Jewish/gentile division dominated among believers, a division strongly addressed in Romans, Galatians, and Ephesians.<sup>45</sup>

Paul lived in a world where ethnic prejudice often boiled under the surface. In his day the basis for conflict was not skin color but often less visible marks of ethnic difference.<sup>46</sup> Probably within a decade of when Paul composed Romans, Syrians massacred thousands of Jews in Caesarea.<sup>47</sup> Judean revolutionaries slaughtered the

<sup>44</sup> Emily Zimbrick Rogers, "A Question Mark over My Head": Experiences of Women ETS Members at the 2014 ETS Annual Meeting," in *A Question Mark over My Head* (special issue; Minneapolis: Christians for Biblical Equality, 2015): 4–13. <https://www.cbeinternational.org/resource/article/question-mark-over-my-head-experiences-women-ets-members-2014-ets-annual-meeting>.

<sup>45</sup> I address this subject more fully in "The Gospel and Racial Reconciliation," 117–30, 181–90, in *The Gospel in Black and White: Theological Resources for Racial Reconciliation*, ed. Dennis L. Ockholm (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1997); "Some New Testament Invitations to Ethnic Reconciliation," *EvQ* 75.3 (2003): 195–213; "The Gospel and Racial Reconciliation," in *The Holy Spirit and Social Justice: Interdisciplinary Global Perspectives: Scripture and Theology*, ed. Antipas Harris and Michael D. Palmer (Lanham, MD: Seymour, 2019), 104–27; "Some New Testament Invitations to Ethnic Reconciliation: John 4:42; Luke 10:29–37; Romans; Ephesians 2:11–22," in *Forgiveness, Peacemaking, and Reconciliation*, ed. David K. Ngaruiya and Rodney L. Reed (Carlisle, UK: Africa Society of Evangelical Theology, Langham Global Library, 2020), 207–30; Craig Keener with Médine Moussounga Keener, *Reconciliation for Africa* (Bukuru, Nigeria: Africa Christian Textbooks/Oasis, 2007).

<sup>46</sup> I adapt some wording in this paragraph and the next one from Craig Keener, "The Gospel's Hope for Racial Unity," on the NIV website.

<sup>47</sup> Josephus, *War* 2.457.

Roman garrison in Jerusalem, and a few years afterward, Jerusalem lay in shambles, its survivors enslaved by Rome.

Some passages in the NT address the Jewish-Samaritan divide (Luke 9:51–55; 10:29–37; 17:16; John 4:1–42)<sup>48</sup> or other cultural gaps (Col 3:11;<sup>49</sup> Rev 5:9; 7:9). But the biggest ethnic division in the mid-first-century church was the division between Jew and gentile. It was only in Acts 15, around the year 48, that most of the Jerusalem church agreed that gentiles could become Christians without being circumcised; and various passages (such as Acts 21:21; Phil 3:2–3) suggest that even after Paul wrote Romans some detractors remained.

Against this division, Paul in Romans preaches a gospel in which everyone must come to God on the same terms. The good news about Jesus's death and resurrection for us is God's power for salvation for the Jewish people first and also for gentiles (Rom 1:16; 3:22–24; 10:12–13; cf. Gal 3:28). Paul's argument to this effect, climaxing in Romans 9–11, also informs how we should read 12:4–5 about all believers being one body in Christ (cf. also 1 Cor 12:12–13; Eph 4:4; Col 3:15). Shortly before addressing the gifts of diverse individuals in Christ's body, Paul applies the same term *χάρισμα* for the gifts God gave to Israel distinct from gentiles (Rom 11:29).

We need the strengths that different peoples and cultures characteristically bring—African, Asian, European, Latino, and so forth. Some estimate that by 2025 close to 70 percent of Christians will be in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.<sup>50</sup> In the past half-century, evangelicals on these continents have multiplied roughly twelve times over, and already represent more than 80 percent of evangelicals in the world, far outnumbering those in the West.<sup>51</sup>

A recent evangelical statement against the sin of racism, signed by all the members of the ETS executive committee, briefly traces the importance of cross-cultural Christian unity in various NT passages.<sup>52</sup> Since the cross-cultural unity of Christ's body matters so much to our Lord (it is his *body*, after all),<sup>53</sup> then we should

<sup>48</sup> For animosity toward each others' holy sites, see 4Q372 f1.12; Josephus, *War* 1.63–66; *Ant.* 13.255–56; 18.30; 20.118–22; t. Abod. Zar. 3:13; y. Abod. Zar. 5:4, §3; Gen. Rab. 32:10; 64:10; 81:3; cf. Antony Tharekadavil, "Samaritans' Mount Gerizim and Pentateuch," *BiBb* 32.1 (2006): 42–64; Joseph Naveh and Yitzhak Magen, "Aramaic and Hebrew Inscriptions of the Second Century BCE at Mount Gerizim," *Atiqot* 32 (1997): 9–17.

<sup>49</sup> Note anti-Scythian stereotypes in Josephus, *Ag. Ap.* 2.269; Thucydides 2.97.6; Apollodorus, *Epitome* 6.26; Cicero,  *Pis.* 8.18; Lucian, *Pseudol.* 2; *Dial. meretr.* 10 (*Chelidonium and Drosis*; ¶4), 307; Aristaenetus, *Erotic Letters* 2.20.5; for comedy, cf. Denise Eileen McCoskey, *Race: Antiquity and Its Legacy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 152; for their supposed cannibalism or human sacrifices, see Pliny, *Nat.* 6.20.53; 7.2.9; Lucian, *Sacr.*13; Philostratus *Hrk.* 57.9. Some, however, deemed them virtuous; cf. Justinus *Epit.* 2.2.15.

<sup>50</sup> Jason Mandryk, *Operation World*, 7th ed. (Colorado Springs: Biblica, 2010), 3, 5.

<sup>51</sup> I discuss the hermeneutical and pedagogical implications of this shift further in Craig S. Keener, "Scripture and Context: An Evangelical Exploration," *Asbury Journal* 70.1 (2015): 17–62 (here 29–30).

<sup>52</sup> <https://www.evangelicalstatement.com/>.

<sup>53</sup> Although I believe Paul borrows the image partly from widespread analogies for the state (Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Ant. rom.* 6.86.1–5; Cicero, *De Re Publica* 3.25.37; Sallust, *Letter to Caesar* 10.6; Livy 2.32.9–12) and cosmos (Diod. Sic. 1.11.6; Epictetus, *Diatr.* 1.12.26; Marc. Aur. 7.13), for Paul the unity also seems organic, related to the mutual indwelling of Christ and his church (Peter Stuhlmacher, *Paul's*

make whatever costly sacrifices necessary, humbling ourselves and bending beyond our personal comfort, to maintain that unity (Eph 4:2–3).

Yet our ETS membership does not reflect such diversity. For geographic reasons, it is understandable that the ETS in the United States does not culturally or ethnically reflect the entire global church.<sup>54</sup> But less understandably, it does not even reflect the church in North America. That is not deliberate on our part, but if we are to serve the wider church we need to become deliberate in working to change that.

Nearly 80 percent of African Americans in the United States identify as Christian, and more than 70 percent as Protestant. Seventy-five percent identify religion as very important in their lives, with a further 16 percent identifying it as somewhat important.<sup>55</sup> Roughly three-quarters of African Americans affirm the Bible as God's Word.<sup>56</sup> Since African Americans constitute some 13 percent of the United States population, Bible-affirming African Americans may be nearly 10 percent of the United States population. By comparison, surveys often place evangelical Protestants (by which some surveyors mean white evangelicals) at about a quarter of the United States population.<sup>57</sup>

Published statistics show that the Black Church is very close to white evangelicals theologically and in devotional practices, with African-American Christians tending to pray, read, and affirm the authority of the Bible as much or *more* than white evangelicals.<sup>58</sup> In a 2008 survey, slightly more “Black Protestants” affirmed

*Letter to the Romans: A Commentary*, trans. Scott J. Hafemann [Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1994], 191; cf. 1 Cor 6:15–17; Eph 4:12–13; 5:30–31; Stig Hanson, *The Unity of the Church in the New Testament: Colossians and Ephesians* [Lexington, KY: American Theological Library Association, 1963], 115).

<sup>54</sup> Jehu J. Hanciles, *Beyond Christendom: Globalization, African Migration, and the Transformation of the West* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2008), 121, estimates that by 2050 “only about one-fifth of the world's Christians will be white.” For global Christian statistics, see further Todd M. Johnson and Kenneth R. Ross, eds., *Atlas of Global Christianity, 1910–2010* (Edinburgh: Center for the Study of Global Christianity, 2009); David B. Barrett, *World Christian Encyclopedia*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001); Patrick Johnstone, *The Future of the Global Church: History, Trends and Possibilities* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2011).

<sup>55</sup> <https://www.pewforum.org/religious-landscape-study/racial-and-ethnic-composition/black/>. Black millennials also tend to be more religious than other millennials (<https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/07/20/black-millennials-are-more-religious-than-other-millennials/>). These surveys were accessed on Feb. 24, 2021 but depend on reports from 2014–2021.

<sup>56</sup> See <https://www.pewforum.org/religious-landscape-study/racial-and-ethnic-composition/black/>; <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/05/07/blacks-more-likely-than-others-in-u-s-to-read-the-bible-regularly-see-it-as-gods-word/>. For one recent survey of historic, positive African-American readings of Scripture, see Lisa M. Bowens, *African American Readings of Paul: Reception, Resistance, and Transformation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2020).

<sup>57</sup> Corwin E. Smidt, *American Evangelicals Today* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2013), 69; <https://www.pewforum.org/religious-landscape-study/>. By self-identification as “born-again” or “evangelical,” Gallup suggests 41 percent (<https://news.gallup.com/opinion/polling-matters/235208/things-know-evangelicals-america.aspx>). Other polls suggest that white Christians altogether are only 42 percent of the United States population (<https://www.nbcnews.com/think/opinion/2010s-spelled-end-white-christian-america-ncna1106936>).

<sup>58</sup> See Smidt, *American Evangelicals Today*, 103–105; cf. 111, 116, 189, 194, 196, 199. Some 73 percent of African Americans pray at least daily, and 54 percent read Scripture at least once a week, and some 75

“Jesus as the only way to salvation” than “Evangelical Protestants”—but only about one-third accepted the “evangelical” label.<sup>59</sup> By theological as opposed to subcultural definitions, however, most of the Black Church would thus count as evangelical.

If Martin Luther King Jr. was right to complain in 1963 that 11 a.m. on Sunday morning was the most segregated hour in America, what might the limits of some aspects of our diversity as a Society say to us in 2020, especially in light of the events of the past year?<sup>60</sup> As someone theologically evangelical who was ordained about three decades ago in a black Baptist denomination,<sup>61</sup> I speak as one who belongs to both evangelicalism and the Black Church and often finds the public tensions painful.<sup>62</sup> Yet even if we count only those members of United States ethnic minorities who identify with evangelical denominations, their proportion is rising. A Pew survey suggests, “As of 2014, 11% of adults who identify with evangelical denominations are Hispanic, 6% are black, 2% are Asian, and 5% identify with another race or as mixed race,” with their proportion quickly rising and the white proportion gradually shrinking.<sup>63</sup>

We are grateful for our current African-American members, and, although I am focusing here on white and black relationships, biblical passages about working together apply much more broadly. We are grateful for the voices of our Asian/Asian-American Theology program unit, recent sessions from Hispanic/Latino ETS scholars, and for our other members who are ethnically or culturally different from the majority. But while we have African-American members, there are historic reasons that *many* of our other African-American brothers and sisters, who are as evangelical by any theological definition as any ETS member, have not felt comfortable in ETS. These reasons are generally rooted in how white evangelical subculture, at least sometimes including white evangelical academic subculture, has acted. Our generation did not initiate those problems, but it is incumbent on our generation to address them.

percent view Scripture as God’s Word (<https://www.pewforum.org/religious-landscape-study/racial-and-ethnic-composition/black/>).

<sup>59</sup> Smidt, *American Evangelicals Today*, 67; though compare also the earlier survey, more ambiguous on this point, noted on page 97.

<sup>60</sup> I have added this line in the print version of my address, but the message as a whole reflects what I began preparing in 2017 and recorded in September 2020 for presentation at ETS in November 2020.

<sup>61</sup> See, e.g., Gayle White, “Colorblind Calling,” *Atlanta Journal & Constitution* (3 November 1991): M1, 4; Flo Johnston, “Ordination Will Cross Racial Lines,” *The Chicago Tribune* (Aug. 9, 1991): NS 2, p. 9. Cf. Glenn J. Usry and Craig S. Keener, *Black Man’s Religion: Can Christianity be Afrocentric?* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1996); Craig S. Keener and Glenn J. Usry, *Defending Black Faith: Answers to Tough Questions about African-American Christianity* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1997).

<sup>62</sup> I have been present as a renowned African-American preacher friend denounced (white) evangelicals as racist in a sermon that culminated in an explanation of the gospel and call to Christian conversion that would have been appropriate in any evangelical church. I have also listened to some white evangelicals minimize the reality of a racism with which they lacked any personal acquaintance.

<sup>63</sup> <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/03/01/5-facts-about-u-s-evangelical-protestants/>; cf. also <https://www.pewforum.org/2015/05/12/chapter-3-demographic-profiles-of-religious-groups/#race-and-ethnicity-of-religious-groups>.

There was a time, though before most of us were adults, when some evangelical institutions did not admit African-American students—even well after the Supreme Court struck down all state segregation requirements in 1954.<sup>64</sup> (All this despite the fact that a then-radical evangelical institution was the first school in the United States to enroll blacks and whites together.)<sup>65</sup> There was a time when some white-dominated evangelical missions would not send African-American missionaries. Although most of us today appreciate what the civil rights movement accomplished, most white evangelicals at the time did not openly support it.<sup>66</sup> Admittedly, that was true also of some of the old guard in some traditional black churches,<sup>67</sup> but unlike them, some large conservative white Protestant churches of that generation even supported segregation of public facilities, a system that in one state during seven decades funded supposedly “separate but equal” black public schools with twenty-five billion dollars less than white public schools, as well as suppressing black votes.<sup>68</sup> Some even had members who beat and sometimes killed African

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<sup>64</sup> For example, a quick internet survey suggests that Dallas Seminary accepted its first African-American student in 1966 (<https://www.firmfoundation.org.nz/blog/post/60921/dallas-theological-seminarys-first-black-student/>); Bob Jones University began admitting African Americans only in 1971. Despite Southern Seminary’s geographic location and its earlier nineteenth-century connections with slaveholders, it began enrolling African Americans in 1940 (Gregory A. Wills, *Southern Baptist Theological Seminary 1859–2009* [New York: Oxford University Press, 2009], 414); Asbury Seminary, in the same state, integrated in 1951 (Kenneth Cain Kinghorn, *The Story of Asbury Theological Seminary* [Lexington, KY: Emeth, 2010], 149–50; cf. 328–31). Lacking much restrictive legislation or reticent constituencies, schools in some other regions integrated earlier; an African-American student graduated from Northern Seminary, for example, in 1922.

<sup>65</sup> Oberlin College in Gilbert Hobbs Barnes, *The Antislavery Impulse, 1830–1844* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1964), 74–78; Louis Filler, *The Crusade Against Slavery, 1830–1860* (New York: Harper & Row, 1960), 69–70. Wheaton College’s first African-American student enrolled in 1857.

<sup>66</sup> Curtis J. Evans, “White Evangelical Protestant Responses to the Civil Rights Movement,” *HTR* 102.2 (2009): 245–73. This was also true of many less conservative Southern white churches; see Haig Bosmajian, “The Letter from the Birmingham Jail,” in *Martin Luther King, Jr.: A Profile*, ed. C. Eric Lincoln, rev. ed. (New York: Hill and Wang, 1984), 138–40; Taylor Branch, *Parting the Waters: America in the King Years 1954–63* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1988), 737–40. By contrast, some smaller “sectarian” churches in the South integrated well before the civil rights movement (David Edwin Harrell Jr., *White Sects and Black Men in the Recent South* [Nashville: Vanderbilt University, 1971], 78–106).

<sup>67</sup> Ida Rousseau Mukenge, *The Black Church in Urban America: A Case Study in Political Economy* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1983), 2–3; C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya, *The Black Church in the African American Experience* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1990), 31. Nevertheless, the Black Church in the 1960s demonstrably provided most of the moral purpose and the strongest participation in the Civil Rights Movement (Hart M. Nelsen and Anne Kusener Nelsen, *Black Church in the Sixties* [Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1975]).

<sup>68</sup> For segregated education, see Charles C. Bolton, “Mississippi’s School Equalization Program, 1945–1954: ‘A Last Gasp to Try to Maintain a Segregated Educational System,’” *Journal of Southern History* 66.4 (2000): 781–814; Sonya Ramsey, “The Troubled History of American Education after the Brown Decision,” *The American Historian* (<https://www.oah.org/tah/issues/2017/february/the-troubled-history-of-american-education-after-the-brown-decision/>); on school funding, see <https://www.clarionledger.com/story/news/politics/2019/02/22/public-education-ms-underfunded-centuries-brown-v-board-of-education-segregation-school-funding/2910282002/>. For the potential of churches to make a difference, see the report of Lawrence Guyot, regarding a heavily Catholic city on Mississippi’s Gulf Coast: “The Catholic Church in 1957 or ‘58 made a decision that they were going to desegregate the schools. They did it this way. The announcement was we have two programs. We have excommunication and we have integration. Make your choice by Friday. Now there was violence going on in Loui-



Americans, while their pastors ignored or opposed the civil rights movement.<sup>69</sup> For the sake of so-called evangelical unity, some other white evangelicals who disagreed muted any criticisms.<sup>70</sup>

For understandable reasons, most of that generation of seminary-trained black clergy and many future academicians ended up in more theologically liberal institutions. These institutions were usually more vocally committed to racial justice than were their theologically conservative counterparts, and some of them stereotyped evangelicals as a whole as racist. In some cases, white liberals presumed to speak for the Black Church;<sup>71</sup> nevertheless, they offered a friendlier environment than schools where more overt racism was tolerated.<sup>72</sup> One solidly evangelical African-American professor (whose name does not appear elsewhere in this article) complained to me that liberal schools do not honor Scripture as they should, but she will not recommend evangelical schools to students because she feels they are racist. I learned some of this history from books, but also directly from African-American colleagues during my early years teaching in an African-American institution.

Billy Graham challenged segregation in the face of significant resistance;<sup>73</sup> yet he later regretted that he did not accept Martin Luther King's invitation to work more publicly for justice and ethnic reconciliation.<sup>74</sup> In retrospect, Graham viewed it as a missed opportunity for Christian unity in this country. His example challeng-

siana. Nothing happened on the Gulf Coast. I learned firsthand that institutions can really have an impact on social policy" (<https://www.loc.gov/collections/civil-rights-history-project/articles-and-essays/school-segregation-and-integration/>). Where were most evangelicals?

<sup>69</sup> See Charles Marsh, *God's Long Summer: Stories of Faith and Civil Rights* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997), 82–115, giving the example of the apolitical but pro-segregation Douglas Hudgins.

<sup>70</sup> This contrasts with frequent evangelical opposition to slavery in the early nineteenth century; see Usry and Keener, *Black Man's Religion*, 98–109; cf. Albert J. Raboteau, *Slave Religion: The "Invisible Institution" in the Antebellum South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 132; Monroe Fordham, *Major Themes in Northern Black Religious Thought, 1800–1860* (Hicksville, NY: Exposition, 1975), 111; Gayraud S. Wilmore, *Black Religion and Black Radicalism: An Interpretation of the Religious History of Afro-American People*, rev. ed. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1983), 34; Alice Dana Adams, *The Neglected Period of Anti-Slavery in America (1808–1831)*, Radcliffe College Monographs 14 (Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1964), 96–101; Filler, *Crusade against Slavery*, 68–70. Nevertheless, regional economic interests eventually engendered more ecclesiastical divisions (Milton C. Sernett, *Black Religion and American Evangelicalism: White Protestants, Plantation Missions, and the Flowering of Negro Christianity, 1787–1865* [Metuchen: Scarecrow, 1975], 47–51). Even then, however, a majority of white male abolitionists (contrary to the Tappans and many black abolitionists) considered "amalgamation" too radical, risking miscegenation and consequent backlash.

<sup>71</sup> For white paternalism, see William D. Green, *White Paternalism and the Limits of Black Opportunity in Minnesota, 1860–1876* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2018); Robert Coles, "Children of the American Ghetto," 132–37, in *Teaching in the Inner City: A Book of Readings*, ed. James C. Stone and Frederick W. Schneider (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1970), 136–37.

<sup>72</sup> Conflicts between socially conscious white liberals and Bible-affirming white fundamentalists have long posed tensions for the Black Church, which could afford to dispense neither with Scripture nor social realities; see, e.g., Esau McCaulley, *Reading While Black: African American Biblical Interpretation as an Exercise in Hope* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2020), 8–13.

<sup>73</sup> Edward Gilbreath, "Billy Graham Had a Dream," *Christian History* 14.3 (1995): 44–46.

<sup>74</sup> Cf. [https://www.tampabay.com/news/religion/Billy-Graham-had-pride-and-regret-on-civil-rights-issues\\_165837186/](https://www.tampabay.com/news/religion/Billy-Graham-had-pride-and-regret-on-civil-rights-issues_165837186/); <https://billygrahamlibrary.org/billy-graham-on-martin-luther-king-jr/>.

es us not to miss today's opportunity to build bridges with fellow believers across racial and ethnic lines. Listening to one another does not mean we will always agree with one another on every point; it does mean that we love enough to listen, learn, stay committed, and find common ground for working together effectively.

Some people we suppose are racist may just be indiscriminately mean to *everybody*. But racism remains a reality. For example, Donna Covington, our dean of formation at Asbury Seminary, was previously vice president of a major corporation. On September 16, 2010, her son Daniel had just finished college and was in the process of trying out for the NFL, when a couple of intoxicated young white men started calling him racial epithets. He was unarmed but when he stepped out of his car to confront them, one shot him dead. The killer, whose father is a well-connected lawyer in the city in question, received probation for the drugs in the car but never served a day in jail for the murder.<sup>75</sup>

Although it is easy for us now to see the errors of slavery and Jim Crow, racism is not just a matter of the past. I once thought it was, because I did not notice it—because it was not happening to me. One African-American evangelical scholar who studied at a premiere evangelical seminary shared with me how a teacher mocked him in front of the class with a stereotyped “black” dialect. An ethics professor at the same institution got frustrated with his questioning why an ethics class would not discuss racism as an ethical issue.<sup>76</sup> I have wonderful friends who teach at this institution who clearly are not racist—but how many bad experiences do students need to have before one institution feels less welcoming than another? Aside from regional demographics, this is an important factor regarding who enrolls at our institutions.

I could once live my life as if racism never happened—until I spent more time with dear brothers and sisters in Christ who experienced it.<sup>77</sup> Today I am interracially married,<sup>78</sup> but in case that counts as a bias, the following illustration comes from my earlier, single days. When I was doing my Ph.D. at a secular university, I was part of an African-American Christian fellowship group there. Some undergraduate friends were chatting casually with each other about racist names they had been called that day. Appalled, I privately asked one of them, Arthur Williams, if this was common. He patiently shared with me that on his first day of an English class the professor called him aside after class and warned him to drop the class, because as an African American he would not pass—and if he told anybody she had told him this, it would be his word against hers.<sup>79</sup> (Arthur is now a physician.) After that conversation I more often found myself in settings where I witnessed racism firsthand.

<sup>75</sup> Zoom interview, 29 June 2020; see also <https://thrive.asburyseminary.edu/rev-donna-covington/>.

<sup>76</sup> Personal correspondence, 1 August 2020.

<sup>77</sup> I borrow some comments here from Craig S. Keener, “Serving the Church in Black and White,” *Didaktikos* (April 2020): 42.

<sup>78</sup> The story appears in Craig Keener and Médine Moussounga Keener, *Impossible Love: The True Story of an African Civil War, Miracles, and Love against All Odds* (Minneapolis: Chosen Books, 2016).

<sup>79</sup> For more detail, see *Impossible Love*, 66–67.

White Christians often never hear these stories except in the context of close friendships where those who experience these hurts can share them openly. Once we recognize the continuing reality of the sin of racism, we can make places feel safer by providing support, challenging inappropriate behaviors, and helping facilitate understanding.

But we can learn from our African-American brothers and sisters about more than racism. At the time of my own deepest brokenness, the Black Church nursed me toward wholeness.<sup>80</sup> From centuries of experience, they developed spiritual resources for dealing with pain from which white churches could learn much. Likewise, white churches have other resources once withheld from most black Christians. In a range of ways, we need each other.

Believers from different parts of Christ's body do not have to agree on everything, but we have to at least love one another enough to listen before speaking. There is much that we can share, and perhaps even more that we can learn.

Those of us who have faced discrimination or neglect because of our faith should recognize the pain of feeling marginal, ignored, or even targeted. We should be ready to comfort and stand up for others who have this experience—loving our neighbors as ourselves and loving our brothers and sisters in Christ as Christ loved us.

3. *A missed opportunity in ETS.* Years ago, I brought my young teaching assistant Emmanuel to ETS and AAR/SBL. Emmanuel was from Nigeria, where he had pastored a leading evangelical church of a thousand members. In Nigeria, of course, nearly all evangelicals are black. The seminary where I then taught was forty to fifty percent African-American, and Emmanuel sometimes thought his African-American student friends were too sensitive about race.

At ETS, however, apart from two groups we participated in, almost everyone he saw, and everyone he saw in leadership, was a white man. (The latter situation has not yet changed.)<sup>81</sup> Happily, Emmanuel did not experience overt racism over those few days, but in our Christian context, he experienced for the first time the overwhelming sense of being part of an invisible minority. At AAR/SBL, conversely, he witnessed not just the religious diversity he expected but also a healthy cultural diversity. Shaken by the disparity, he would not let me finish the SBL conference; he insisted on us checking out of the hotel and driving back to our seminary. There, he grabbed the first African-American student he saw and shouted, "I'm black! I'm black!"

<sup>80</sup> For more detail, see *Impossible Love*, 48–52.

<sup>81</sup> For the value of a diverse leadership team, see Acts 13:1, with comments in Keener, *Acts*, 2:1983–91; Rudolf Pesch, *Die Apostelgeschichte*, 2 vols., EKKNT 5 (Zurich: Benziger, 1986), 2:17; Curtiss Paul DeYoung, Michael O. Emerson, George Yancey, and Karen Chai Kim, *United by Faith: The Multiracial Congregation as an Answer to the Problem of Race* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 27–28; Detlev Dormeyer and Florencio Galindo, *Die Apostelgeschichte: Ein Kommentar für die Praxis* (Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 2003), 198; Norman E. Thomas, "The Church at Antioch: Crossing Racial, Cultural, and Class Barriers, Acts 11:19–30; 13:1–3," in *Mission in Acts: Ancient Narratives in Contemporary Context*, ed. Robert L. Gallagher and Paul Hertig, American Society of Missiology Series 34 (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2004), 152.

This was a turning point in his life. He did get his Ph.D. and his faith remains solidly evangelical. He later became my teaching colleague and the best man in my wedding. But he tells me that he is sometimes embarrassed to use the evangelical label in the United States because of what it seems to represent.<sup>82</sup> Some of the way the label has become a caricature in many circles may stem from media stereotypes and quotes taken out of context, but some of it also reflects strident evangelical voices that have played into those stereotypes. We have to do more than cringe when we hear the stereotypes or the sound bites. We have a history to surmount, and we need to be proactive.

Certainly, AAR had a head start on ETS in this regard. But even when Emmanuel visited, the Adventist Theological Society, which meets in conjunction with ETS, was far more integrated than ETS. The Institute for Biblical Research has grown far more diverse in the past decade, including quite visibly in its leadership.<sup>83</sup> The Society for Pentecostal Studies today is significantly integrated, deliberately highlighting voices from multiple ethnicities and both genders.<sup>84</sup> I taught for fifteen years in an urban seminary that over the course of a decade or two moved beyond a racist past to a fairly proportionate representation of local demographics.<sup>85</sup>

These are merely examples, but if we act deliberately and sensitively, more of our institutions, and ETS as a whole, can also move forward. May we not end conversations that become uncomfortable over social issues.<sup>86</sup> May we invest our resources in the future. Most importantly, may we do whatever we can to make our brothers and sisters feel welcome and feel heard. This does not mean assimilating everyone into the same subculture; true embrace requires welcoming the distinctive contributions of these culturally diverse evangelical voices. We should welcome members of underrepresented groups already among us to advise us on how to better achieve that outcome.

4. *Serving the wider church.* In Acts 13, leaders in the church in cosmopolitan Antioch reflected diverse geographic origins. More recently, Robert Yarbrough's 2013 presidential address praised the trend of many seminaries toward increasingly globally diverse faculty. Among many institutions committed to multicultural resourcing, one prominent example is Dallas Seminary's effective Spanish DMin program with SETECA in Guatemala. Hopefully we in our respective schools, communities, and here in ETS will continue to work to cultivate a larger generation of leaders among

<sup>82</sup> Additional correspondence to confirm details, 2 September 2020. Emmanuel's concern is not unique (see Ramesh Richard, "Should We Still Be Called 'Evangelicals?'," *CT* online, 22 February 2021).

<sup>83</sup> Indeed, nearly one-third of its board members belong to IBR's ethnic minorities, and nearly one-half are women; specialties are roughly evenly divided between OT and NT.

<sup>84</sup> As an example, I take a recent issue of the globally oriented journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies. In *Pneuma* 42.2 (2020), of the nine article authors listed, only one-third are U.S. Anglos; book review authors seem similarly integrated.

<sup>85</sup> Palmer Theological Seminary, now part of Eastern University. Local demographics vary, of course; the seminary's location on the edge of Philadelphia provided a special opportunity for ethnic diversity.

<sup>86</sup> Among recent helpful books about such dialogue is LaTasha Morrison, *Be the Bridge: Pursuing God's Heart for Racial Reconciliation* (Colorado Springs: WaterBrook, 2019).

us who will more fully represent the ethnic and cultural diversity of those who share our evangelical faith.

It is not likely that each of our own schools will retain all those leaders for ourselves, but again, our greater mission is to serve Christ's larger body. We sow, trusting in God's purposes, starting where we can. Spanish scholar Armand Puig i Tàrrach, in his 2011 presidential address to the Society for New Testament Studies, suggested that perhaps a generation from now the major theological languages will no longer be English, German, and French but Korean and Chinese. At Southeastern Seminary's 2019 ETS banquet,<sup>87</sup> Elizabeth Mburu gave a rousing lecture on partnership between the African church and the Western church, pointing out that more Christians today live in Africa than in any other continent in the world.

Globally, of course, white Western evangelicals are a minority of the evangelical movement, though we currently continue to hold a majority of the academic and economic resources. *Operation World* estimates that in 1900 only 16.7 percent of Christians lived in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.<sup>88</sup> By 2010, however, that figure was 63.2 percent, and it is projected to reach 70 percent by 2025.<sup>89</sup> There are now more than 600 million evangelicals in these regions!

This rapid expansion of Christian movements, however, has far outpaced the availability of theological education. The need is great, but some estimate that only one tenth of one percent of the income of Christians in the U.S. is shared with the rest of the global church.<sup>90</sup> Still, there are many global contexts where theological education is expanding rapidly.<sup>91</sup>

Obviously, North American evangelicals cannot uproot North American theological institutions and transplant them into other cultures; indeed, investing in trustworthy indigenous institutions already engaging those languages and cultures is far more cost-effective. Most Majority World seminaries have many professors from their own cultures. In this time of global transition, however, many of the Majority World's future professors are still studying here, and we have great opportunity to serve them. Naturally our respective institutions will offer our distinctive contributions, but hopefully not in a way that simply exports and extends Western divisions.

<sup>87</sup> San Diego, 20 November 2019.

<sup>88</sup> Mandryk, *Operation World*, 3, 5; followed in Craig S. Keener and M. Daniel Carroll R., "Introduction," in *Global Voices: Reading the Bible in the Majority World*, ed. Craig Keener and M. Daniel Carroll R. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2013), 1.

<sup>89</sup> I am adapting material here from Craig S. Keener, "A Worldwide Vision," *Didaktikos* 3.1 (2019): 46. See also <https://www.pewforum.org/2011/12/19/global-christianity-exec/>.

<sup>90</sup> Eugene Bach, *Jesus in Iran* (Lumberton, MS: Back to Jerusalem, 2015), 6.

<sup>91</sup> Too many to name here, even of those I have visited personally, but a few examples among the many (without duplicating regions) include Africa International University (Nairobi, Kenya); Chongshin Theological Seminary (Yongin, South Korea); EGST (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia); Evangel Seminary (Hong Kong); JETS (Jos, Nigeria); NTC (Dehradun, India); ProMETA (San Jose, Costa Rica); SAAT (Malang, Indonesia); SAIACS (Bangalore, India); SBA Ecuador; SETECA (Guatemala City); Singapore Bible College; SITB (Buenos Aires, Argentina); Unibautista de Cali (Colombia); and West Africa Theological Seminary (Lagos, Nigeria). My thanks to Octavio Esqueda for his help on part of this list.

Even as we seek to serve our international students, however, we also need to learn from them. Some who humbly sit in our classes have planted churches on the front lines of the gospel, have endured persecution or poverty, have pastored megachurches, or have themselves taught more students than we have. In many parts of the West, they bring a vibrant faith and experiences that can enrich our own service for Christ.

### III. CONCLUSION

How does the renewed mind think? It knows enough about God to discern what he considers good and right. It makes decisions in light of what counts forever—what matters in God's sight. It places our individual lives in the larger context of salvation history and the body of Christ. The basis of our unity as Christ's body is the good news of our Lord, Jesus Christ, loyalty to whom must transcend denomination, gender, race, or culture. As we work for the renewing of our minds, may we devote those minds to service for Christ's body. Jesus gave his life to form that body; may we also sacrifice for its health and unity across all boundaries. May we cultivate the mind of Christ for the body of Christ.