

## SESSION #1

### MAKING CHRISTIANS: THE SHAPE OF A TYPICAL CONVERSION STORY IN A.D. 213

Thesis: Contemporary evangelicalism has institutionalized a type of Christian initiation, inherited from revivalism, which typically aborts rather than completes conversion to Christ.<sup>1</sup> With the minor addition of immersion, most churches of Christ have tended to mirror the revivalist pattern of aborted conversion.

Two broad phenomena follow.

- First, we have churches filled with half-converted persons.
- Second, the current vogue of ‘spiritual formation’ resources, conferences, gurus, and para-church organizations has risen to fill this need. They are so many attempts to complete what the church has left undone.

Key Problem: Theologically, we have confused profession with belief.

- Belief is a readiness to act as if something were true. Profession is *claiming* to believe something.
- Consequently, in our evangelistic strategies, we have often pressed for profession rather than investing in the teaching, mentoring, and spiritual direction of persons, which is needed to enable true belief.
- Having built our membership with people who profess things, which they are not in a position to truly believe, our secondary pastoral strategies almost inevitably become forms of manipulation.

Proposed Solution: Eschew quick fixes. Do the hard, slow work of conversion on the front end to construct a spiritual foundation from which Christian maturation could better develop. In hopes of finding help, we turn to the ancient Christian model of catechesis.

### CONVERSION IN A.D. 213: CONSIDERING AN ANCIENT MODEL OF CHRISTIAN FORMATION

May I ask you to engage in a little historical fiction with me? Let’s follow a typical early third century convert, Ioánnis Metátropos, as he makes his first acquaintance with the church, hears the gospel, and comes to trusting commitment. In so doing we will gain a basic overview of the early church’s catechetical process.<sup>2</sup>

### STAGE ONE: BASIC FORMATION IN FAITH AND MORAL TRANSFORMATION

---

<sup>1</sup> Several studies on the essential features and moments of conversion are helpful. Nock’s work is seminal, and though not particularly user friendly, a thorough study still must begin with chapters 11-14 of (Nock 1933). For theological reflections and proposals from an  
<sup>2</sup> Thomas Finn (Finn 1992b, 1997, 1992a)) provides very readable overviews of the early Christian catechumenate in its various regional manifestations. A similar service may be found in (Johnson 2007; Dujarier 1979; Spinks 2006; Yarnold 1972, 1994; Kreider 1999, 2001). Yarnold was the first to offer English readers translations of relevant catechetical and mystagogical texts (Yarnold 1972, 1994). The anthology and introductions by Thomas Finn provide a yet broader selection of texts useful for reconstructing early Christian baptism and the catechumenate (Finn 1992b, 1992a).

(TWO-THREE YEARS IN DURATION)<sup>3</sup>

Enrollment in the Catechumenate and Initial Instruction<sup>4</sup>

- Sponsors bring the seeker into contact with the bishop or catechist.
- If a seeker approaches the catechist without a sponsor, a sponsor is soon provided for the seeker.
- Interview to determine motives, moral fault lines, degree of previous knowledge, etc.
- The first instruction is delivered and the seeker indicates his initial assent to the teaching.
- Prayer, Signing and Salting in Jesus' name. *From this point on, the person is considered a Christian, though not yet one of the 'faithful'.*

Sorting into Groups of Catechumens at Similar Moral and Spiritual Developmental States<sup>5</sup>

Basic Instruction, Mentoring<sup>6</sup>, and Exorcism / Prayer Saturation

- Twice-weekly Periods of Formal Instruction with the Twin Focal Points of Biblical History of Salvation<sup>7</sup> and Moral Exhortation<sup>8</sup>
- Exorcism / Prayer Saturation at each session:<sup>9</sup> These consist of focused prayer for specific areas of moral weakness and spiritual failure, in view of the multiple layers of agency at work within any person.<sup>10</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> The first, and longest, stage of the early Christian catechumenate requires the most detective work to reconstruct. Unlike the orations delivered throughout Lent and the weeks preceding and following Easter, we lack full transcriptions of the everyday instruction provided the developing Christian during the first phase of instruction. Fortunately, we do have scattered references in the Fathers and a handful of primary texts, which likely reflect this stage of teaching. For secondary discussions of this process of reconstruction see (Dujarier 1979; Ferguson 1993, 2009; Kreider 1999; Stewart-Sykes 2011; Edwards 1981; Gavrilyuk 2008; Stewart 2012). I will direct you to the primary sources below in connection with the particular elements being reconstructed.

<sup>4</sup> Augustine's *Instructing Beginners in Faith* (Augustine, Canning, and Ramsey 2006) provides explicit instructions for the catechist on this process. For a transcript of Cyril of Jerusalem's speech given on the occasion of the enrollment of those 'to be enlightened' see the *Procatechesis* in (Cyril 1969) or (Cyril and Cross 1986). We also have a wonderful spectator's report of the event in *Egeria's Travels* ch. 45 (Wilkinson 1981).

<sup>5</sup> Consider the testimony of Origen. '[A]s far as they can, Christians previously examine the souls of those who want to hear them, and test them individually beforehand; when before entering the community the hearers seem to have devoted themselves sufficiently to the desire to live a good life, then they introduce them. They privately appoint one class consisting of recent beginners who are receiving elementary instruction and have not yet received the sign that they have been purified, and another class of those who, as far as they are able, make it their set purpose to desire nothing other than those things of which Christians approve.' III.51 in (Origen 1980; Origen and Chadwick 1965).

<sup>6</sup> A moving testimony to Origen's manner of mentoring the catechumen, written by a person he taught and converted is Gregory Thaumaturgus' *Address of Thanksgiving to Origen*. The translation is readily available on pages 91-126 of (Gregory, Slusser, and Gregory 1998).

<sup>7</sup> Two primary texts are especially helpful for reconstructing this dimension of early Christian catechesis. The summary of scriptural meta-narrative found in Irenaeus' *Proof of the Apostolic Preaching* (Irenaeus 1997) provides a window into the sort of doctrinal and narrative instruction delivered during this stage. Augustine's examples of the first catechetical lessons in *Instructing Beginners in Faith* (Augustine, Canning, and Ramsey 2006; Augustine and Christopher 1946) indicates this emphasis continues into the early fifth century.

<sup>8</sup> The content and method of moral exhortation will be subjects of separate lectures below. However, for the moment, I will gesture toward two sets of primary material for reconstructing this dimension of early Christian catechesis. The various manifestations of a 'two ways' tradition of moral exhortation are evident especially in the Sermon on the Mount, the *Didache*, the *Epistle of Barnabas*, and the *Doctrina Apostolorum*. For a handy collation of the relevant texts see (Stewart-Sykes 2011). Likewise, the negative ethic or typical sins spoken against may be studied through an examination of the vice lists in the New Testament and early Christian literature.

<sup>9</sup> We know, for instance, that by the mid-third century there were 52 exorcists active in the church in Rome thanks to Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History VI.43.11* (Eusebius and Oulton 1964).

- Daily interactions with sponsor / mentor in spiritual growth.
- Weekly Attendance of the Songs, Prayers and Homilies of the Church.
- However, catechumens would be dismissed from the service prior to the holy kiss, the recital of the Creed, the communal praying of our Lord's Prayer, and the Lord's Supper (or any Baptism).
- Periodic 'Scrutinies': These were one on one, guided discernment sessions with the catechist's leading designed to provide spiritual direction and determine specific needs for spiritual transformation.

#### STAGE TWO: LENTEN PREPARATION FOR BAPTISM (40 DAYS IN DURATION)

Public Enrollment among the 'Petitioners' or 'Ones to be Enlightened' at Epiphany (6 January)

- Solemn gathering to put one's name into the basket, thus officially enrolling among those seeking baptism on the coming Easter.
- Scrutiny of Candidate and Sponsor
- Warnings of the dire consequence of ill-intentioned initiation, as well as description of the benefits of a fully committed life with God.

Lenten Fast begins the day after enrollment and continues for eight weeks

Daily Prayer, Exorcism, and Instruction (6:00-9:00am)

- First-Fourth weeks focus on the Bible and Moral Exhortation<sup>11</sup>
- Fifth-Sixth weeks center on the 'handing over' (*traditio*)<sup>12</sup>, exposition and 'handing back' (*redditio*) of the Creed and Lord's Prayer.

#### STAGE THREE: ENLIGHTENMENT IN RITE AND WORD (HOLY WEEK AND EASTER OCTAVE)

Holy Week (May or may not also include explanations of the sacraments, i.e., mystagogical orations. See below for explanation.)

---

<sup>10</sup> To develop a more accurate picture of the typical effects of exorcism, consider this description from the mid-third century. 'We affirm that the whole human world has evidence of the work of Jesus since in it dwell the churches of God which consist of people converted through Jesus from countless evils. Moreover, the name of Jesus still takes away mental distractions from men, and daemons and diseases as well, and implants a wonderful meekness and tranquility of character, and a love for mankind and a kindness and gentleness, in those who ... have genuinely accepted the gospel about God and Christ and the judgment to come.' Origen, *Contra Celsum* 1.67.

<sup>11</sup> For late fourth century examples of these lessons, I recommend the translations provided in (Colish 2005) for Ambrose and in (John and Harkins 1963) for John Chrysostom, respectively.

<sup>12</sup> Alistair Stewart has recently argued for a pre-creedal version of this passing on of a confessional statement in the second century peri-baptismal rites (Stewart 2012). The 'rule of Truth' or 'rule of Faith', which Irenaeus uses as a confessional standard to judge orthodox readings of scripture, was passed on in such a ritual. The earliest form of confessional statement delivered was likely purely Christological, but developed statements fore and aft concerning the Father and the Holy Spirit as need for clarity on such matters arose. For the scriptural development of the confessional statement, see (Hartman 1997).

- Begins on Palm Sunday and consists of special worship services, most lasting about three hours, in which special readings, prayers and songs were given voice.
- Thursday: Break the Fast and Bathe in Honor of Last Supper (and perhaps also to keep the baptistery from reeking badly on Easter).
- Saturday Vigil begins with lamp lighting often in a Martyrium, a series of readings, songs, and sermons punctuate the night long prayer.

### Baptism<sup>13</sup>

- Stripping of Penitential Garb
- Renunciation of Satan (facing West) and Pledge of Allegiance to Christ (facing East)
- Pre-Baptismal Exorcism and Anointing
- Threefold Immersion at confession of belief in Father, Son and Holy Spirit, respectively.
- Post-Baptismal Anointing as Sign of the Gift of the Holy Spirit received in immersion.
- Donning of a New White Garment
- The ‘infants’ pray the Lord’s Prayer together.
- The ‘infants’ celebrate the Lord’s Supper for the first time.

### Mystagogy or Didactic Induction into the Meaning of the Sacraments and the Liturgy<sup>14</sup>

- The timing of the mystagogical orations (explanations of the sacraments) varied from place to place in the ancient church. However, two practices prevailed. Mystagogical orations were delivered either during Holy Week preceding baptism on Easter, or during the Easter Octave on the days immediately following baptism.
- In terms of content, mystagogical orations typically expound upon the significance and symbolism of baptism and the Lord’s Supper as they perform again scriptural images.<sup>15</sup>

### STAGE FOUR: IDENTIFICATION AMONG ‘THE FAITHFUL’, FULL PARTICIPATION IN THE CHURCH’S WORSHIP, AND A LIFE OF ONGOING MATURATION IN FAITH.

---

<sup>13</sup> The definitive examination of all known witnesses to baptism in the first five centuries is (Ferguson 2009). One might also profitably consult (Yarnold 1972; Johnson 2007; Spinks 2006).

<sup>14</sup> For scholarly work on reconstructing or retrieving the practice of mystagogy see (Finn 1992b, 1992a, 1997; Harmless 1995; Johnson 2007, 2012; Mazza and O’Connell 1989; Satterlee 2002; Waaijman 2002; Yarnold 1972; Clarahan 2009; Geest 2010; Jackson 1989; Meconi 2008).

<sup>15</sup> The best secondary accounts are (Satterlee 2002) for Ambrose, (Harmless 1995) for Augustine’s sermons, (Schwartz 2013) for Theodore of Mopsuestia, and (Yarnold 1994; Yarnold and Cyril 2000) for Cyril of Jerusalem.

SUGGESTED RETRIEVAL: I harbor no fantasies about replicating every aspect of the early Church's catechetical process. The 'discipline of secrecy', for instance, is forever a thing of the past. However, a few aspects seem particularly important to retrieve for our own day.

- The extensive mentored process of moral and spiritual formation, on the front end of a person's interaction with the church, would foster a more complete conversion, which in turn would enable normal processes of Christian maturation over time.
- A Lenten period of preparation, including intensive teaching on the basics of Christian faith, moral practice and worship, would be a welcome development and carry the church beyond a mere 'give up something small for Jesus this month' approach.
- A shift in teaching about baptism from a singular focus on the 'necessity' of baptism, to a broader emphasis upon the meaning and significance of baptism would better prepare persons for receiving the transformative blessings baptism was meant to bestow.
- To be truly effective in solidifying conversion, this shift in teaching about baptism, must be mirrored in our manner of bestowing baptism. In other words, baptism should never be a perfunctory add-on to the end of our worship service. Properly developed, a full baptismal service beautifully preaches the gospel in deed and accompanying words. Occasional baptismal services, wherein the whole worship service is devoted first to explaining, elaborating, and performing baptism and then culminates in a corporate sharing of the Lord's Supper should become the norm. This practice would both enrich the church's worship and emphasize the church's care for her new brothers and sisters in Christ.

## SESSION #2

### A NEW WAY FOR A NEW PEOPLE:

#### CLARIFYING THE CONTENT OF EARLY CHRISTIAN CATECHESIS

Let's say a non-believer wanders into your church community this Sunday. He comes to an initial profession of faith and attaches himself to your church. *What, over the course of the next several years, would you expect to happen in this person's life (morally and spiritually)?*

- Most churches today simply do not have any thought-out response to this question.
- There used to be default answers, but they were often shallow and misdirected.

Jesus' people in the first several centuries had an answer at once very specific and quite deep. The first couple years of instruction, mentoring and prayer saturation were designed to guide the new believer to a new way of life as an expression of participation in God's story.

What follows is my retrieval of that process, with an eye toward shaping people in our own day.

#### THE FIRST FOCAL POINT: REFRAMING THE SELF WITHIN THE STORY OF GOD'S DEEDS

A. Irenaeus of Lyon's *Proof of the Apostolic Preaching*<sup>16</sup>, composed in the late second century, provides an early summary of the Apostles' big story as it was passed down in catechetical settings. Some sections of the story are dilated and some constricted in surprising ways.

- Begins with God the Father, origin of all existence, who makes all things by his Word and his Spirit. Thus the three articles of faith are God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
  - The creation of all things, invisible and visible, follows. The invisible creation of angelic orders (9-10) precedes creation of human beings in his image with free will and dominion (11-13). Nonetheless, Adam and Eve were mere children and easily deceived (14).
  - The prohibition of the tree of knowledge was given in order to foster proper humility and temper the frankness / freedom of speech with which God invested human beings as his image bearers and co-regents (15).
  - A certain 'angel' was overcome by jealousy at the position to which God destined the human beings. Thus he employed falsehood to deceive the children into disobedience. In so doing he 'ruined' himself, becoming the Satan, and made human beings sinners (16)
- The body of the story unfolds as a tension between ongoing attempts of the Satan to further possess humanity and redemptive acts of God, by his Word and Spirit,

---

<sup>16</sup> (Irenaeus 1997)

to reclaim humanity. God's way of reclaiming humanity is to bring them back under their proper head, the Word who is the image of God.

- After briefly relating the stories of Cain and Abel, the Watchers and Noah's salvation through the Flood, the storyline lingers over God's division and blessing of the nations that came from Shem, Ham and Japheth (19-24).
- Shem and Japheth's blessing is intertwined. Shem becomes the one through whom Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and ultimately our Lord, will come. Japheth's blessing is dependent upon Shem's. 'May God enlarge Japheth and allow him to dwell in the tent of Shem' (Gen. 9:27; *Demon. 21*). God's blessing here is a prediction both of the Gentile church's inclusion in Israel's benefits under Christ (dwelling in the tent of Shem) and an indication of the Church's destiny to be God's vehicle for the gathering of the nations ('enlarging Japheth').
- In faith, Abraham wanders in search of God, who reveals himself to Abraham and blesses him. So the blessing passes from Shem to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and the Twelve Patriarchs (24).
- Famine sends 75 souls into Egypt, but God multiplies them and four hundred years later redeems them from slavery. The Passover lamb foreshadows the cross, which liberates us.
- By the Spirit, God delivered the Decalogue to Moses and revealed a heavenly and invisible archetype. Israel's tabernacle was a visible image of the invisible archetype, but the archetype was the church pre-existent. Thus the tabernacle foreshadows the church (26).
- Faithless spies and failed entry to the land results in prolonged wanderings (27).
- Second giving of the law (Deuteronomy) including many predictions of the Lord Jesus, promise of the land fulfilled, prophets sent to Israel within this land with more predictions of Jesus (28-30).
- The culmination of the story consists in narrating Jesus' life, burial, resurrection and its fruition in the church in order to show how he sums up or covers all the headings of the story thus far.
  - Incarnates in the same flesh as Adam so 'that He might fight for the fathers and vanquish in Adam that which had struck us in Adam.' (31).
  - As Adam was formed of the will and wisdom of God mixed with 'virgin' earth (the ground had never been rained upon), so Jesus is born from the virgin by the will and wisdom of God (32).
  - As sin enters through the disobedience of a virgin in Eve, so the redemption begins with the obedience of a virgin in Mary (33).
  - The transgression committed through a tree is undone by the obedience of Jesus on a tree (33-34).
  - God's promise to Abraham that his seed would be like stars of the heavens is fulfilled as Christ makes Gentile's 'as lights in the world', and does so through faith just as he justified Abraham through faith (35).

- God's promise to David that his seed would ever sit upon his throne is fulfilled in the resurrection and exaltation of Jesus to God's right hand (36).
- Thus Jesus sends out the apostles to show the nations the 'way of life'. In so embracing the nations in Christ, God fulfills his promise to Shem, Ham, and Japheth and reunites scattered humanity under one head in Christ.

B. Augustine of Hippo's *On Instructing Beginners in Faith*<sup>17</sup> (also available in another translation under the title, *The First Catechetical Instruction*<sup>18</sup>) describes the appropriate way to summarize the big story.

- "What we ought to do, however, is to give a general summary sketch of all the content in such a way that a certain number of quite remarkable events are selected, ones that our listeners find particularly appealing and that constitute the critical historical turning points."<sup>19</sup>
  - From Creation to Noah (18.29-19.32)
  - From Noah to Abraham (19.33)
  - From Abraham to David (20.34-20.36)
  - From David to the Babylonian Captivity (20.37)
  - From the Babylonian Captivity to Christ (21.38)
  - From the First Coming of Christ to His Second Coming (22.39-24.44)
- "In all of this, certainly, it is not enough to fix our own gaze on *the object of the commandment*, which is *love from a pure heart and a good conscience and unfeigned faith* (1 Tm 1:5), and to make all that we say accord with this standard; toward it we should also purposefully turn the glance of the person for whose instruction we are speaking."<sup>20</sup>
- The perfect epitome of the story, as well as its culmination, is found in God's humble love descending to us in Christ. As such, Christ embodies the principle by which God has been approaching, indeed pursuing, us since the very beginning. Therefore, rightly understood in Christ, 'in the Old Testament is the concealing of the New, and in the New Testament is the revealing of the Old' (4.8).

---

<sup>17</sup> (Augustine, Canning, and Ramsey 2006) The original title is *de catechizandis rudibus*.

<sup>18</sup> (Augustine and Christopher 1946)

<sup>19</sup> *Instructing Beginners in Faith* 3.5, p. 64 in (Augustine, Canning, and Ramsey 2006)

<sup>20</sup> *Instructing Beginners in Faith* 3.6, p. 65 in (Augustine, Canning, and Ramsey 2006)



THE SECOND FOCAL POINT:  
MORAL EXHORTATION BEYOND FINGER WAGGING<sup>21</sup>

A. Three Focal Points Organized Moral Exhortation in Early Christian Catechesis: Three vicious states of heart form the primary focus of the early Christians' negative ethic as manifested in their vice lists.<sup>22</sup>

- Growing beyond Anger and Contempt
- Growing beyond Distortions of Desire and Cultivated Lusts
- Growing beyond Verbal Manipulation and Deceit

These three focal points have an exegetical root. They are viewed as condensations of the second tablet of the Torah (Ex. 20:13-17; Dt. 6:17-21).<sup>23</sup> These three principle vices would be dilated or elaborated upon in specific contexts. The resulting expansive lists of 'subordinate' vices could be viewed as 'species' of the three primary distortions of heart.<sup>24</sup>

Exegetical Abstraction of 2<sup>nd</sup> Tablet and Early Christian Vice Lists

- Jesus in the Church's Memory<sup>25</sup>:
  - Matt. 5:21ff: The 'antitheses' are organized around didactic elaborations of three elements of the second tablet (namely the prohibitions against murder, adultery, and false witness). Jesus' elaborations uncover underlying human intentions, which if unchecked would directly lead to the prohibited deeds.
    - 5:21-22 traces a progression from the choice to *retain anger*<sup>26</sup> toward one's brother, to the development of contempt ('*Raca*'), to a fusion of anger and contempt ('Fool!').

<sup>21</sup> The focus on moral growth in early Christianity, with or without explicit connection to the catechetical process, has received important discussion lately. For broad accounts which compare early Christian moral exhortation with the philosophic schools see (Engberg-Pedersen and Starr 2004; Glad 2010; Kolbet 2010; Malherbe 1986, 1989; Sorabji 2000; Thompson 2011a; Engberg-Pedersen 2008, 2000; Lee 2006; Rasimus 2010). For reconstructions of the methods of moral education in the philosophic schools see also (Dillon 2004; Hijmans 1959; Nussbaum 1994; Roskam 2005; Wiens 1970; Hadot 2002; Hadot and Marcus 1998). The Hellenizing neologisms 'psychagogue' and 'psychagogy' have been much used lately to name the role of the moral teacher as a spiritual guide and the pedagogical methods he employed. A few works are particularly important (Fitzgerald 1988, 1996; Glad 2010; Kolbet 2010; Malherbe 1989; Hadot 1986; Rawson 1989).

<sup>22</sup> For brief studies of the early Christian vice lists see (Malherbe 1986; Aune 2006; Charles 2000).

<sup>23</sup> A roughly contemporaneous, non-Christian witness to the conceptual division of the Decalogue into two tablets, one dealing with obligations toward God and the other with obligations toward neighbor, is Philo of Alexandria's *On the Decalogue* (Philo 1937).

<sup>24</sup> A counterpart to this process of grouping expansive vice lists as species under a basic group of primary vices is found in the ancient philosophic schools, albeit under quite different conceptions of what constitutes the primary vices. For instance, the Stoics grouped their expansive vice lists under the four primary vices of 'Pleasure, Distress, Desire, and Fear', see Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 7.111-116, Stobaeus, 2.90,19-91,9 (easily accessible in *SVF* 3.394), Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations* 4.16 in (Armig 1964; Cicero 1927; Diogenes 1931; Stobaeus 1893). While the ordering of vice lists according to dilations of subordinate vices is common, the Christian lists differ substantially in the groupings. For instance, anger is simply a particular subset of desire on the Stoic account. And several of the vices Paul characteristically groups with anger related vices, such as jealousy and envy, are classified by the Stoics as species of 'distress' or 'sorrow'. All that to say, the process of identifying primary vices and analyzing vice lists according to expansive subordinate species is a shared feature of ancient ethics. The specific shape of the primary vices recognized by early Christians, however, is distinctive and derived from an exegetical abstraction of the second tablet of the Torah.

<sup>25</sup> Two texts in prior Jewish literature may anticipate a similar exegetical abstraction as that attributed to Jesus. Hosea 4:1-2 describes the dearth of loyalty and faithfulness in the land by means of the following threefold grouping 'Swearing and lying, murder, stealing and adultery'. Wisdom 14:21-31 traces the ruin of humankind from idolatry as the *arche* (originary font) of evil and includes an account of the extent of moral depravity that follows from this root cause. The depiction of pagan society, which follows in vs. 24-26 contains a good deal of dilation based upon the prohibitions of the second tablet.

- 5:27-28 locates the roots of adultery in the intentional gaze designed to inflame sexual desire.<sup>27</sup>
- 5:33-37 finds the intentional import of the commandment against false witness in the manipulative impulse exhibited in the wily wording of oaths by many in Jesus' day (cf. also Mt. 23:16-22 for the Pharisee's way of dealing with this trend).
- Matt. 15:17-20<sup>28</sup>: In his summary of 'what proceeds from the heart', Jesus abstracts from and agglutinates vices around three states of heart underlying the second tablet.
  - Notice 'from the heart come evil thoughts, murders' (springing from anger and contempt), 'adulteries, fornications, thefts' (springing from following distortions of desire), 'false witness, slander' (springing from distortions of speech).
  - In this list Jesus adds, in the appropriate order, other subordinate vices springing from the same underlying state of heart. So fornication is grouped with adultery and slander is grouped with false witness.
  - A similar agglutination of vice occurs in the Marcan summary of the law (Mk. 10:19), but not in the synoptic parallels.<sup>29</sup> There Mark's account attaches 'you shall not defraud' (i.e., to cheat or trick a person out of something) to the command not to bear false witness.
- Pauline vice lists often follow the same threefold schema, however, with one marked difference. Whereas Jesus' typical ordering is anger, distorted desire and verbal wrongdoing, Paul's invariably places distortions of desire before anger.<sup>30</sup> Though appearing puzzling and anomalous at first, Paul's order matches the alternative order of the second tablet found in the LXX B manuscript tradition, which places adultery before murder. Whenever Paul quotes the second tablet, he follows the LXX B order (see Rom. 13:8-10). The fact that Paul's vice lists follow this alternate order, even when no mention is made of the second tablet itself, seems a strong indication that the exegetical substructure was both intentional and assumed.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Notice the present tense of the participle *orgizomenos* implies a durative aspect. Anger is ongoing at the point where Jesus begins imputing moral blame.

<sup>27</sup> Again, notice Jesus' words employ *pros* with an articular infinitive. This is a basic construction for expressing intentionality. Jesus is pointing toward the underlying motivation in looking upon a woman for the sake of intensifying sexual desire.

<sup>28</sup> Note the diffuseness of the vices in the Marcan parallel (Mk. 7:20-23). Depending on the compositional theory one follows, this could be explained either as a loss of original order through editorial work (on the Matthean priority hypothesis) or as a case of Matthew rendering a clear order to an otherwise diffuse original (on the Marcan priority hypothesis of scholarly orthodoxy).

<sup>29</sup> Matt. 19:16-22 // Mark 10:17-22 // Luke 18:18-23: In response to the question, 'What must I do to inherit eternal life?' Jesus summarizes the second tablet. Notice the Lucan version, like Paul, transposes murder and adultery in keeping with the LXX B ordering.

<sup>30</sup> The exception would be 1 Tim. 1:8-11. Here we find a summary of the law in terms of who the law is meant to address, namely, 'patricides and matricides, murderers' followed without separation by 'fornicators, sodomites, kidnappers' again followed without separation by 'liars and false-witnesses / perjurers'. Notice the ordering is not the order typical of Paul. Paul usually follows the order found in the LXX B order of the second tablet, but here the text follows the order preserved in the LXX A tradition and the Masoretic text.

<sup>31</sup> (Thompson 2011b), chapter 4, divides the Pauline vice lists into two sections: 'sexual offenses' and 'offenses against community'. I think greater nuance is possible. The first category seems broader than mere sexual offense to my reading (consider how greed and idolatry routinely occur within this first section, e.g. Rom. 1:24-29a, Gal. 5:19, 1 Cor. 5:9-11, Col. 3:5). Likewise, 'offenses against community' are certainly susceptible of further analysis into vices arising from anger and speech violations.

- Col. 3:5-9, contained within a letter that functions as an epistolary catechism, provides the clearest case in the Pauline corpus. Paul bids those who have died with Christ and been raised with Christ to put the following vices to death.
  - ‘Therefore, put to death those limbs yet upon earth, namely, sexual immorality, impurity, passion, vicious desire, and greed, which is idolatry’ (3:5).
  - This section is manifestly focused on species of vices arises from following distorted desire. After warning of the wrath to come and reminding of their past life, Paul continues with species of vices arising from anger and contempt, ‘but now put away from yourself these things, anger, bad temper, vice’ (3:8).
  - The manifestations of anger, as often do, bleed into various species of speech vices, ‘slander, obscene language from your mouth. Do not lie to each other for you have been disrobed on the old man with his practices and put on the new man who is being renewed in knowledge ...’ (3:8-10).
- Gal. 5:19-20, Paul’s account of the ‘deeds of the flesh’, follows the typical Pauline order.
  - ‘Sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry’ all dilate upon vices arises from distortions of desire.
  - Vices stemming from anger and contempt follow ‘sorcery, hatreds, strife, jealousy, hot tempers’ and bleed into those which also are manifested verbally ‘selfish disputes, dissensions, breaking into opposing parties, envy’.
  - ‘Drunkenness and sleeping around’, certainly species of desire run amok, appear at the end of the list.
- 2 Cor. 12:20-21 groups ‘quarreling, jealousy, anger, strife’ (subordinate forms of anger and contempt) followed without separation by ‘slander, malicious whispering, conceit and confusions/disorder’ (subordinate violations of speech ethic) and in the next sentence groups together ‘impurity, sexual immorality, and licentiousness/acting out’ (subordinate vices arising from distortions of desire or lust).
- Romans 1:18-30a fits the schema of the threefold abstraction well.
  - Paul begins with distortions of desire (1:24-29a) ranging from unnatural sexual activity to ‘injustice, sexual immorality, greed’. Then he proceeds to dilate vices stemming from anger and contempt including ‘evil, stuffed with envy, murder, strife’ (1:29). Finally, in turn he dilates various vices of speech ‘deceit, bad tempered, gossips, slanders’ (1:29b-1:30a).<sup>32</sup>
- Dilations of Subordinate Vices within a Single Vice Group
  - Notice the abstraction from ‘sexually immoral persons’ in 1 Cor. 5:9-11 to include a wide variety of distortions of desire. So ‘immoral, greedy, robbers, idolaters... sexually immoral, greedy,

<sup>32</sup> Romans 1:30-31 seems to move beyond the underlying structure suggested, but it also shifts from naming vices to naming types of vicious persons.

idolater, reviler, drunkard, robber' all fall within Paul's rhetorical dilation of 'sexually immoral'. A similar dilation is repeated in 1 Cor. 6:9-10.

- The threefold schema continues into the second century in catechetical contexts as witnessed by Didache, 2-3, 5. An echo of this catechetical usage is also observable in Justin Martyr's description of the typical Christian life in 1 Apol. 14-16

B. If one seeks to move beyond specific vices to a general conception of the essence of sin, the Pauline account remains fundamental. On Paul's account, moral degeneration follows from self-centeredness as the root of sin. Faith in Christ as what enables a return to God-centeredness forms the positive counterpart to his negative description of sin.<sup>33</sup>

In Rom. 1:18-2:29, Paul Analyzes the Pattern of Human Spiral into Sin:

- Rom. 1:18-20: Innate Knowledge of God as Backdrop to Perversion
  - Paul observes that there are certain things, which human beings cannot help but know about God (eternity, power, invisibility) simply as a result of living in this creation (1:18-20).
  - Paul is right. We have yet to find a person or a culture completely lacking a concept of divinity. One may certainly cite persons, and even entire cultures and religions (e.g. Theravada Buddhism) that argue one should expunge that underlying concept. But such an argument tacitly affirms the prior existence of a God-concept.
- Rom. 1:21-23: Willful Ignorance and Motivated Pretending:
  - Paul begins his analysis of sin, in verse 21, by pointing to a human capacity to choose that is somewhat separable from acts of knowing.
    - You may have noticed this. We have a strange capacity to simultaneously know, yet choose to not know. We are able to put something out of mind simply because we *don't want it to be true*.
    - Sin originates with this choice to put God out of mind. Although humans know God should rightfully be the center of our honor and gratitude, we choose to suppress knowledge of God and imagine ourselves in his place (1:21).
    - Rom. 1:28 = Did not see fit to have God in their knowledge.
    - Basic choice = 'I'd rather run things myself... I'd rather not think of myself as dependent on God. I'd rather not be beholden to God for the good I accomplish. I'd rather be the center of my own world'.

---

<sup>33</sup> The most insightful reading of Paul's account of 'self-directedness' as sin, though flawed in other important ways, remains (Engberg-Pedersen 2000). The perceptive reader will find Engberg-Pedersen often correct in what he affirms, mistaken in what he denies, yet unfailingly stimulating in his reconstructions.

- Though Paul does not use the specific word ‘self-centered’ in Rom. 1:18-32, the following chapter contains a brief characterization of the person who stands under God’s wrath (the subject of Rom. 1:18ff). In 2:8, the characterization encapsulates in a few phrases the description produced in 1:18-32. A single new term introduces the phrase ‘disobedient to the truth but obeying injustice’, which recapitulate the descriptions of 1:18-23 and 1:24-32, respectively. The new term? ‘Selfishness’ (*eritheia*). Self-centeredness names the condition one chooses by displacing God from one’s mind.
- Motivated Pretending: The immediate result of self-centering, through suppression of truth, is to pretend in two ways.
  - Rom. 1:22 = We pretend things about ourselves. We pretend we are ‘wise’. In other words, we are quite competent to order our own world, thank you very much. I’m pretty good at running things myself. Who really needs a god to run things?
  - Rom. 1:23 = We pretend things about God, namely, that he is not fit for the job of ordering this world. So divinity is incompetent, or at best no more competent than we are. God is like men at best. At worst, divinity resembles something further down the chain of being – something like a bird or a four-footed beast or a reptile.
  - Motivated pretending creates intentional blind spots that ruin the human mind’s capacity to think well.
  - Rom. 1:28 = ‘dysfunctional mind’ or ‘undiscerning mind’.
  - Think about it this way: Humans are wired with a need to make sense of things. We impulsively explain what we see, even if only to ourselves. So what if I had to give a satisfactory explanation to every event I experience, but the one, unbreakable game rule was I could never admit wrongdoing, ignorance or incompetence? What if I had to explain things without acknowledging the truth of God’s greatness and my sin? That pressure warps the human mind and results in its degeneration.
- Two Long term Results of Self-Absorption and Mental Disfunction:<sup>34</sup>
  - Humans either turn toward their bodies in order to satisfy desires and attain feelings (Rom. 1:24-32).
  - Or, humans test their capacity to control their bodies as part of a subtler, yet perverse, social game of competition to demonstrate moral superiority

---

<sup>34</sup> Among the ancient Stoic philosophers, the primary distinction between persons was that between the fool and the sage. The sage did all things right for all the right reasons. In other words, not only were his actions correct, his motives were also perfect. Fools however came in two forms: the weak willed (*akratēs* or ‘morally powerless’ person) and the self-controlled (*enkratēs* or ‘morally powerful’ person). The dissolute person is easy to pick out, because he does all the wrong things. The self-controlled person, however, is harder to diagnose. He has a mixture of impulses vying within himself, yet typically manages to do the right thing externally. In doing the right thing, he nonetheless fails morally because he performs externally just deeds for reasons that are often not good. My suggestion is that Paul too has a distinction between the morally weak (1:24-32) and the morally self-controlled (2:1-29) within his account of self-centered humanity. Paul’s *enkratēs* is further described both in characteristically Hellenistic (2:1-16) and characteristically Jewish (2:17-29) manifestations.

vis-à-vis others (2:1-29).

- The Sensuality Option (Rom. 1:24-32): Having rejected a place within God’s project, most humans find the impulses within their own bodily experience to be stronger than they can control alone.
  - Without God at the center and his goodness as the primary focal point, humans lack a sufficient basis for willing or choosing. So increasingly people find they cannot come up with a better reason for action or restraint than, ‘Well, because I feel like it.’
  - I end up stuck inside my bodily self. My hungry belly, my sexual impulses, and my sense of disgust or desire, of boredom or tiredness – all these feelings become too strong for me to manage without God at the center. Elsewhere, Paul uses a rather graphic name for this condition, belly worship (Phil. 3:17-21; Rom. 16:18). This is life governed by feelings.
  - God ‘hands over’ to this condition those who have suppressed knowledge of him.
  - The dissolute option for self-absorbed life results in a perversion of social relations. Specifically, the sensual person fosters a perverse form of social inclusion based on a shared celebration or mutual approval of moral rebellion (1:32).
  
- The Superiority through Self-Control Option: Another type of self-centered human engages in a game of moral competition to demonstrate superiority. In so doing, they pervert the intention of moral norms, whether rooted in nature or Torah, and use them as scorecards for the ‘Who’s Better? Game?’ (Rom. 2:1-29).
  - In Rom. 2, Paul employs ‘speech in character’ to develop a parallel account of this perversion among the pagan moral philosophers and the Jew who boasts in Torah.
  - Paul has three parallel phases of argument in both accounts.
    - First, the character’s underlying condition of self-centeredness is seen in the hypocrisy or double standard employed in moral judgment (Rom. 2:1-3 // 2:17-24).
      - Moral standards or laws seem to apply more to you than to me. If you break one, you are clearly evil. If I do, ‘Well, there were special circumstances.’
      - Self-centeredness results in preaching better than one practices.
    - Second, Paul warns each character that God is impartial in judging according to deeds, not according to claims to superiority (Rom. 2:4-13 // 2:25-27).
    - Third, Paul concludes that true moral goodness is marked by the inner shape of heart / conscience / spirit (Rom. 2:14-16 // 2:28-29).<sup>35</sup>

---

<sup>35</sup> The much worried over passage in Rom. 2:14-16, far from declaring that some will be saved without knowing God, characterizes the pagan moralist as an *enkratēs* and thus still morally flawed. For the inner motives of his person are characterized as precisely *divided and conflicted*. Paul again picks up the theme of internal division in Rom. 7:7-25 before describing, among other things, a transformation of moral purpose by the Spirit’s work in Rom. 8:1ff.

- On Paul's account, the underlying human condition is essentially the same. Pagans play the superiority game with moral rules. Jews play it with the Mosaic Law. But the basic condition of self-absorption means that competition for superiority becomes the self-evident relation between oneself and others.
- So to summarize Paul's account: Sin is self-centeredness, the choice to put oneself at the center in place of God. The primary strategy employed is duplicity of mind (denying what we can't help knowing) and an ensuing motivated form of pretending about God and self. Two broad approaches to life emerge as a result. Either I will become dissolute – living to get what pleasures I can from my body and using people to that end. Or, I will use self-control over my body to pretend I am morally superior to others.

C. *Coram Deo* Theme as Essence of Moral Development (Origen): If the underlying act in all sin is a choice to put God out of mind, then the basic strategy for spiritual transformation will be to live every aspect of life as if in the presence of God. Intentionally realigning one's thoughts so as to consciously call to mind God's presence throughout the day in the midst of every sort of activity, provides the underlying stimulus for moral and spiritual renovation.

- In the second and early third century, Jesus' moral teaching is summarized as 'persuad[ing] every man to do every action as before God who judges each man for all his works, and [instilling] this conviction in his disciples'.<sup>36</sup> Or, again, 'Jesus [showed himself as an example of the best life] in order that his disciples might give themselves up to teaching men according to the will of God and the others, who have been taught ... the right way to live, might do every action by referring to the pleasure of the supreme God.'<sup>37</sup>
- 'We are convinced that for the divine Logos to change evil which has become second nature is not only not impossible, but is not even very difficult, if only a man admits that he must trust himself to the supreme God and do every action by reference to His good pleasure.'<sup>38</sup>
- It is 'the source and origin of every benefit to have believed in the God of the universe and to do every action with the object of pleasing Him, whatever it may be, and not even to desire anything displeasing to Him, since not only words and works but even thoughts will be open to His judgment. And what other teaching would be more effective in converting mankind to live a good life than the belief or the conviction that the supreme God sees everything that we say and do, and even what we think? I challenge anyone to produce any comparable method which both converts and improves not merely one or two but a very large number of people, so that by comparing both the methods one may understand exactly which doctrine disposes men towards goodness.'<sup>39</sup>

---

<sup>36</sup> Origen, *Contra Celsum* 1.38. The same account of Jesus' sort of life as lived out always in the presence of God may be found in *Contra Celsum* 3.57, 3.69, 4.26, 4.53, 5.58, 6.19, 7.35, 7.51, 8.57.

<sup>37</sup> *Contra Celsum* 1.68

<sup>38</sup> Origen, *Contra Celsum* 3.69

<sup>39</sup> Origen, *Contra Celsum* 4.53





### SESSION #3

#### CHEERFUL GIVERS, CHASTENED ORACLES:

#### RETRIEVING THE SPIRIT AND METHOD OF EARLY CHRISTIAN CATECHESIS

Start with the spirit of early Christian catechesis. That means talking about the person who preaches and teaches – about you and me.

Truth: The only deficit that will cripple my capacity to lead others into the life of God is a lack of love for God and for the persons I would lead.

So we need to begin with the spiritual psychology of the preacher. A primary manifestation of self-centeredness and a lack of love, within the one called to ministry, is boredom with the task of leading people into simple truths. Boredom is not a new problem. Catechists in the early church struggled with it. They also developed healthy strategies to overcome it.

#### CONTEMPLATING GOD’S DESCENT IN CHRIST:

#### A PREPARATORY SPIRITUAL EXERCISE FOR THE CATECHIST

- Augustine suggests this meditation as preparation for preaching on the basics.
  - Reflect upon and mull over, Augustine says, that ‘however far removed our spoken words are from the liveliness of our understanding, much greater still is the distance between our mortal flesh and his equality with God. And yet, even when he was in that state of equality, *he emptied himself, taking on the form of a slave, and the words that follow, down to even to death on a cross* (Phil. 2:6-8).<sup>40</sup>
  - So if your mind delights in plumbing the depths and grasping deep truths, ‘let it also delight in the following insight into the ways of love: the more love goes down in a spirit of service into the ranks of the lowliest people, the more surely it rediscovers the quiet that is within when its good conscience testifies that it seeks nothing of those to whom it goes down but their eternal salvation.’<sup>41</sup>
- Meditating on God’s humble love for us in Christ is not just a religious form of ‘psyching up’ for a speaking event. Rather, attuning oneself to God’s love is an essential element in the *method* of early Christian catechesis. The preacher must inhabit or rather be suffused and compelled by God’s love (for oneself and for others) in order to properly embody that love for others in the act of preaching.
  - Consider Paul’s explanation of this ministerial strategy in 2 Cor. 5:11-6:2. God’s love in Christ sets Paul in motion to speak with a risky transparency quite foreign to the rhetor’s practice. By personally identifying with Christ’s love, Paul speaks as Christ’s agent begging people to be reconciled to God.<sup>42</sup>

---

<sup>40</sup> Augustine, *Instructing Beginners in Faith* 10.15, p. 92 (Augustine, Canning, and Ramsey 2006).

<sup>41</sup> Augustine, *Instructing Beginners* 10.15, p. 93.

<sup>42</sup> For an accessible secondary discussion focusing on departure from rhetorical convention, see pp. 392-397 in (Witherington 1995). For an eccentric but stimulating account of the how this might mesh with Paul’s understanding of the Holy Spirit, see pp. 198-207 in (Engberg-Pedersen 2010). Thompson’s discussion brings this motivation directly into conversation with ‘pastoral theology’ on pp. 139-145 (Thompson 2006).

- Also note Paul's account of affections for those he has recently catechized in 1 Thess. 2:4-12 and Phil. 1:6-11.
- As so often, Augustine has a theory of how this works.
  - Inhabiting God's love in Christ does not just enable me to speak better. Embodying love actually affects a mystical union between the love-compelled speaker and those whose ears register his speech as love.<sup>43</sup>
  - 'For this feeling of compassion is so strong that, when our listeners are touched by us as we speak and we are touched by them as they learn, *each of us comes to dwell in the other*, and so they as it were speak in us what they hear, while we in some way learn in them what we teach.'<sup>44</sup>

#### POWER PERFECTED IN WEAKNESS:

#### ON GIVING UP PERFORMANCE AND LEAVING THE SPIRIT THE LAST WORD

Ministers often live under an incredible pressure to perform. Paul understood that pressure and took specific, theologically motivated steps to free himself and his churches from the impulse to perform.

The Key Passages are 1 Cor. 2:1-5 and 1 Thess. 2:1-12. Therein, Paul reflects upon his entrance (*eisodos*) to Corinth and Thessalonica, respectively, in light of the scripted expectations of rhetorical performance in the Hellenistic world.

- Public speaking was big business. Looking and sounding powerful were the keys to leadership and renown in Paul's world. Rhetorical entrances were highly scripted in order to foreground personal power, and secure a following.<sup>45</sup>
  - Planned venue, invitations, preparatory propaganda by disciples to ensure the minimal number of 17 persons would be present.
  - The preliminary speech (*dialexis*), according to professional standards, has to include two elements: an oration about one's own renown and an *encomium* (speech of praise) about the host city and her citizens.
  - Topics were then nominated for an original declamation, which the orator could deliver either impromptu on the spot, or the next day.
  - Following the declamation, the audience voted on whether to accept the orator as teacher of the city and upon any rewards to follow. These could include sizeable stipends, public honors, and citizenship in the city.
- That was the recipe for performing well in Paul's world. Paul broke all the rules.
- Paul intentionally stepped out of the power and polish game in order to center everything on God.
  - Paul foregrounded his personal weaknesses and approached with trembling not effusive self-confidence (1 Cor. 2:3).
  - He worked with his hands and thus humiliated himself socially (1 Thess. 2:9).

---

<sup>43</sup> (Cameron 2012) ch. 7 provides a valuable commentary on this element of Augustine's catechetical method.

<sup>44</sup> Augustine, *Instructing Beginners in Faith* 12.17, pp. 97-98 (emphasis added).

<sup>45</sup> The work of Ralph Winter is helpfully delineates the expectations from the ancient sources and reads Paul's entrance accounts in light of them (Winter 2002, 1993, 2003).

- He refused to appear omniscient, and determined to know nothing but Christ and him crucified (1 Cor. 2:2).
- He eschewed the use of rhetorical tricks and verbal flourish in his preaching, because he wanted nothing to obscure his single message of God's work in Christ (1 Cor. 2:1, 4).
- Both texts ends with an explanation of purpose (an 'in order that'). Paul says his choice to not perform was a theologically motivated strategy for transforming lives.
  - 1 Cor. 2:4-5 says 'my speech and my preaching were not in the persuasiveness rhetoric of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and power in order that (*hina*) your confidence should not be in men's wisdom but in God's power'.
    - The issue is what one finds compelling and ultimately reliable.
    - Paul is concerned that his converts trust should be built on nothing but God's twin activities in overcoming the powers through Christ crucified (2:1, 6ff) and corroborating Paul's gospel through the work of the Holy Spirit (2:4-5).
  - 1 Thess. 2:12 says Paul adopted his strategy 'in order that (*eis* + articular infinitive) you might walk worthily of the God who calls you into his kingdom and glory'.
    - The issue is whether the life delivered through a threefold congruence of message content, speaking method, and life example would transform one's daily conduct.

Here's what this means for us as catechists.

- We can build our churches on strong human beings, robust budgets, and visionary leadership. We can tweak everything toward foregrounding our competencies and maneuver to hide our weaknesses. But if we do, our churches will never show forth the glory of the crucified God.
- I can approach those I would convert acting strong, with all my best traits out front and all my weakness hidden. And I might make some church recruits. But I won't make converts to Jesus. And I'll never become a conduit for God's power in this place.

Paul discovered something about God's strategy in shaping people and communities, and he wagered everything on evangelizing in a way that embodied this truth.

- Here's the truth: 2 Cor. 12:7-10 = Weakness is the soil and fertilizer within which God's power grows to maturity in a person.
- It's not that God's power replaces weakness or illness. But that God's power blossoms and bears fruit within the context of human weakness.
- To catechize well, one must be ready to assume a position of weakness and humble love vis-à-vis the persons one teaches. Only then will one truly inhabit the perspective to which Christ calls us to lead others.

ENABLING THE LEAP:

PAULINE 'PERSPECTIVE SWITCHING' TO FACILITATE THE LIMB VIEWPOINT

- Compare and contrast is the standard method for catechesis in matters of morality. The 'two ways' tradition uses this method to great effect.
- Paul develops a yet more nuanced method, which I will call 'perspective switching', to enable a person to imagine life God's way.
  - Perspective switching is a form of comparison that moves beyond depictions of good and bad behavior to descriptions of how one thinks and appraises options within self-centered and God-centered perspectives on life, respectively.
  - On Paul's account, the fundamental alternative to self-centeredness is life as a limb of Christ.
- Problem: Describing life without oneself at the center is kind of like explaining what it would look and feel like to live on Jupiter.
  - The God-centered life is so radically different from our default perspectives that often the self-centered person cannot even imagine, let alone desire, what it might be like to live as a limb of Christ.
  - How could one lead an aspiring convert to understand what the fully Christ-devoted life would look like?
- Didactic Solution: By switching back and forth between the two perspectives, while describing the same issue, the catechist may enable an imaginative leap. For a moment, the convert may at least catch a glimpse of a new way of thinking and living. This is an essential step in the direction of a full transformation of mind and thus of actions.
- A few examples of this 'perspective switching' method in Paul:
  - Phil. 1:12-18: Herein Paul is describing his situation in prison as he looks out at others operative from various motives in the church.
    - He begins with the limb perspective (1:12-14). As a limb of Christ, his primary concern is that his physical imprisonment nonetheless is working out very well for the cause of Christ.
    - Paul then switches back and forth between limb and flesh perspectives as he recounts the motives in other workers. Some preach from self-centered motives (1:15, 17), others preach from Christ-centered motives (1:15b-16).
    - Finally, Paul situates himself at a point of decision between these two perspectives and chooses the limb perspective (1:18).
- The perspective switching can also involve describing the Christ-centered mind-set's actions from a self-centered perspective, or the self-centered person's actions from a Christ-centered perspective. When Paul does this, he often drops in verbal cues to alert his hearer (e.g., 'I speak in human terms', 'I speak as insane', or alternatively, 'I speak as to the wise').
  - Rm. 6:15-23: Paul describes the freedom from sin, which is the goal of incorporation into Christ as symbolized in baptism, from the perspective of how it might look to one who is in many ways still self-centered. Since this person cannot yet imagine the freedom to live justly as freedom (cf. Rm. 8), he suggests this person start by thinking about this life as

becoming ‘slaves to righteousness’ (6:18). But he immediately drops in a verbal cue to show he is describing this from something other than a fully Christ-centered perspective (6:19, ‘I am speaking in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh’).

- 1 Cor. 1:22-25: Paul switches back and forth in his description of the message of the cross as God’s victory between Jewish and Greek unbelieving perspectives (1:23), the believers perspective (1:24), and then the believers description of the unbelievers objections (1:25).
- 1 Cor. 3:3-7, 3:21-4:1 provides a similar sort of perspective switching between fleshy, self-centered ways of regarding teachers and a proper, ‘limb’ perspective of Christian teachers.
- I find this perspective switching method serviceable for teaching on contemporary problems as well.

## Bibliography

- Arnim, Hans Friedrich August von Zeno Chrysippus Cleanthes. 1964. *Stoicorum veterum fragmenta*. Dubuque, Iowa: W.C. Brown Reprint Library.
- Augustine, Raymond F. Canning, and Boniface Ramsey. 2006. *Instructing beginners in faith, The Augustine series*. Hyde Park, N.Y.: New City Press.
- Augustine, and Joseph Patrick Christopher. 1946. *The first catechetical instruction*. Westminster, Md.: The Newman bookshop.
- Aune, David. 2006. "Lists, Ethical." In *The New Interpreter's dictionary of the Bible*, 670-672. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press.
- Cameron, Michael. 2012. *Christ meets me everywhere : Augustine's early figurative exegesis, Oxford studies in historical theology*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Chan, Simon. 2006. *Liturgical theology : the church as worshiping community*. Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP Academic.
- Charles, J.D. 2000. "Vice and Virtue Lists." In *Dictionary of New Testament background*, edited by Craig A. Evans and Stanley E. Porter, xxxiv, 1328 p. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press.
- Cicero, Marcus Tullius. 1927. *Tusculanae disputationes*. Translated by J. E. King. 28 vols. Vol. 18, *LCL - Loeb classical library*. London  
New York: W. Heinemann  
G.P. Putnam's Sons.
- Clarahan, Mary Ann. 2009. "Mystagogy and mystery." *Worship* no. 83 (6):502-523.
- Colish, Marcia L. 2005. *Ambrose's patriarchs : ethics for the common man*. Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press.
- Cyril. 1969. *The works of Saint Cyril of Jerusalem*. 2 vols, *The Fathers of the church, a new translation*, v 61, 64. Washington,: Catholic University of America Press.
- Cyril, and F. L. Cross. 1986. *St. Cyril of Jerusalem's lectures on the Christian sacraments : the Procatechesis and the five mystagogical Catecheses*. Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press.
- Dillon, J. T. 2004. *Musonius Rufus and education in the good life : a model of teaching and living virtue*. Dallas: University Press of America.
- Diogenes, Laertius. 1931. *Vitae philosophorum*. Translated by Robert Drew Hicks. 2 vols, *LCL - Loeb classical library*. London  
Cambridge, Mass.: W. Heinemann;  
Harvard University Press.
- Dujarier, Michel. 1979. *A history of the catechumenate : the first six centuries*. New York: Sadlier.
- Edwards, O. C. 1981. "From Jesus to the Apologists." In *A Faithful church : issues in the history of catechesis*, edited by John H. Westerhoff and O. C. Edwards, 10-48. Wilton, Conn.: Morehouse-Barlow Co.
- Engberg-Pedersen, Troels. 2000. *Paul and the Stoics*. Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press.

- . 2008. "The logic of action in Paul: how does he differ from the moral philosophers on spiritual and moral progression and regression?" In *Passions and moral progress in Greco-Roman thought*, 238-266. New York  
London: Routledge.
- . 2010. *Cosmology and self in the Apostle Paul : the material spirit*. Oxford;  
New York: Oxford University Press.
- Engberg-Pedersen, Troels, and James M. Starr. 2004. *Early Christian paraenesis in context, Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche*. Berlin ; New York: Walter de Gruyter.
- Eusebius, and John Ernest Leonard Oulton. 1964. *The ecclesiastical history Vol. 2 / With an English transl. by J.E.L. Oulton*. London.
- Ferguson, Everett. 1993. *Conversion, catechumenate, and baptism in the early church, Studies in early Christianity*. New York: Garland.
- . 2009. *Baptism in the early church : history, theology, and liturgy in the first five centuries*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.
- Finn, Thomas M. 1992a. *Early Christian Baptism and the Catechumenate : Italy, North Africa, and Egypt, Message of the fathers of the church*. Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press.
- . 1992b. *Early Christian baptism and the catechumenate : west and east Syria, Message of the fathers of the church*. Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press.
- . 1997. *From death to rebirth : ritual and conversion in antiquity*. New York ; Mahwah, N.J.: Paulist Press.
- Fitzgerald, John T. 1988. *Cracks in an earthen vessel : an examination of the catalogues of hardships in the Corinthian correspondence*. Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars Press.
- . 1996. *Friendship, flattery, and frankness of speech : studies on friendship in the New Testament world*. Leiden; New York: E.J. Brill.
- Gavrilyuk, Paul L. 2008. "The Healing Process of Initiation: Toward the Retrieval of Patristic Catechumenate." In *Immersed in the life of God : the healing resources of the Christian faith : essays in honor of William J. Abraham*, edited by Paul L. Gavrilyuk, Douglas M. Koskela and Jason E. Vickers, 21-40. Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.
- Geest, Paul van. 2010. "'...seeing that for monks the life of Antony is a sufficient pattern of discipline': Athanasius as mystagogue in his Vita Antonii." *Church History and Religious Culture* no. 90 (2-3):199-221.
- Glad, Clarence E. 2010. *Paul and Philodemus : adaptability in Epicurean and early Christian psychagogy*. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature.
- Gregory, Michael Slusser, and Gregory. 1998. *St. Gregory Thaumaturgus : life and works, The Fathers of the church*. Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press.
- Hadot, Ilsetraut. 1986. "The Spiritual Guide." In *Classical Mediterranean spirituality : Egyptian, Greek, Roman*, edited by A. H. Armstrong. New York: Crossroad.
- Hadot, Pierre. 2002. *What is ancient philosophy?* Cambridge, Mass. ; London: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.
- Hadot, Pierre, and Aurelius Marcus. 1998. *The inner citadel : the Meditations of Marcus Aurelius*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

- Harmless, William. 1995. *Augustine and the Catechumenate*. Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press.
- Hartman, Lars. 1997. *'Into the Name of the Lord Jesus' Baptism in the Early Church*. Edited by Joel Marcus and John Riches John Barclay, *Studies of the New Testament and Its World*. Edinburgh: T&T Clark.
- Hijmans, B. L. 1959. *Askesis; notes on Epictetus' educational system*. Assen: Van Gorcum.
- Irenaeus. 1997. *On the apostolic preaching*. Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press.
- Jackson, Pamela. 1989. "Ambrose of Milan as Mystagogue." *Augustinian Studies* no. 20 (0094-5323/0094-5323):93-107.
- James, William. 1929. *The varieties of religious experience; a study in human nature. Being the Gifford lectures on natural religion delivered at Edinburgh in 1901-1902*. London; New York [etc.: Longmans, Green, and Co.
- John, Chrysostom, and Paul W. Harkins. 1963. *Baptismal instructions, Ancient Christian writers the works of the Fathers in translation*. Westminster, Md.,: Newman Press.
- Johnson, Maxwell E. 2007. *The rites of Christian initiation : their evolution and interpretation*. Rev. and expanded ed. Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press.
- . 2012. *Sacraments and worship : the sources of Christian Theology*. 1st ed, *The sources of Christian theology*. Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press.
- Kolbet, Paul R. 2010. *Augustine and the cure of souls : revising a classical ideal*. Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press.
- Kreider, Alan. 1999. *The change of conversion and the origin of Christendom, Christian mission and modern culture*. Harrisburg, Pa.: Trinity Press International.
- . 2001. *The origins of Christendom in the West*. Edinburgh ; New York: T&T Clark.
- Lee, Michelle V. 2006. *Paul, the Stoics, and the body of Christ*. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Loder, James E. 1989. *The transforming moment*. Colorado Springs: Helmers & Howard.
- . 1998. *The logic of the spirit : human development in theological perspective*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Malherbe, Abraham J. 1986. *Moral exhortation : a Greco-Roman sourcebook*. 1st ed, *Library of early Christianity*. Philadelphia: Westminster Press.
- . 1989. *Paul and the popular philosophers*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press.
- Mazza, Enrico, and Matthew J. O'Connell. 1989. *Mystagogy : a theology of liturgy in the patristic age*. New York: Pueblo.
- Meconi, David Vincent. 2008. "Becoming Gods by Becoming God's: Augustine's Mystagogy of Identification." *Augustinian Studies* no. 39 (0094-5323/0094-5323):61-74.
- Morrison, Karl Frederick, and Karl Frederick Morrison. 1992a. *Conversion and text : the cases of Augustine of Hippo, Herman-Judah, and Constantine Tsatsos*. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia.



- . 1992b. *Understanding conversion*. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia.
- Newbigin, Lesslie. 1989. *The Gospel in a pluralist society*. Grand Rapids, Mich.; Geneva [SZ]: W.B. Eerdmans ; WCC Publications.
- . 1995. *The open secret : an introduction to the theology of mission*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: W.B. Eerdmans.
- Nock, Arthur Darby. 1933. *Conversion; the old and the new in religion from Alexander the Great to Augustine of Hippo*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Nussbaum, Martha Craven. 1994. *The therapy of desire : theory and practice in Hellenistic ethics, Martin classical lectures*. Princeton, N.J. ; Chichester: Princeton University Press.
- Origen. 1980. *Contra Celsum*. Cambridge Eng. ; New York ;: Cambridge University Press.
- Origen, and Henry Chadwick. 1965. *Contra Celsum*. Cambridge Eng.: University Press.
- Philo, Colson F. H. 1937. *Philo : in ten volumes. 7 7*. London; Cambridge, Mass.: Heinemann ; Harvard University Press.
- Rahner, Karl. 1967. "On Conversions to the Church." In *Theological investigations. Vol. 3, The theology of the spiritual life, 373-384*. Baltimore; London: Helicon ; Darton, Longman & Todd.
- . 1968. "Conversion." In *Sacramentum mundi; an encyclopedia of theology*, edited by Karl Rahner, 4-8. New York: Herder and Herder.
- Rambo, Lewis R. 1993. *Understanding religious conversion*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Rasmus, Tuomas Engberg-Pedersen Troels Dunderberg Ismo. 2010. *Stoicism in early Christianity*. Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers.
- Rawson, Elizabeth. 1989. "Roman Rulers and the Philosophic Advisor." In *Philosophia togata. I, I*, edited by Miriam T. Barnes Jonathan Griffin. Oxford; New York: Clarendon Press ; Oxford University Press.
- Roskam, Geert. 2005. *On the path to virtue : the Stoic doctrine of moral progress and its reception in (middle-)Platonism, Ancient and medieval philosophy. Series 1*. Leuven: Leuven University Press.
- Satterlee, Craig Alan. 2002. *Ambrose of Milan's method of mystagogical preaching*. Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press.
- Schwartz, Daniel Louis. 2013. *Paideia and cult : Christian initiation in Theodore of Mopsuestia*. Washington, D.C.; Cambridge, Mass.: Center for Hellenic Studies ; Distributed by Harvard University Press.
- Smith, Gordon T. 2010. *Transforming conversion : rethinking the language and contours of Christian initiation*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic.
- Sorabji, Richard. 2000. *Emotion and peace of mind : from Stoic agitation to Christian temptation, Gifford lectures*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Spinks, Bryan D. 2006. *Early and medieval rituals and theologies of baptism : from the new testament to the council of trent, Liturgy, worship and society series*. Aldershot, Hants, England ; Burlington, VT: Ashgate Pub. Ltd.
- Stewart, Alistair. 2012. ""The Rule of Truth ... which He Received through Baptism" (Haer. I.9.4) Catechesis, Ritual, and Exegesis in Irenaeus's Gaul." In *Irenaeus :*

- life, scripture, legacy*, edited by Sara; Foster Parvis, Paul, 151-158. Minneapolis: Fortress Press.
- Stewart-Sykes, Alistair. 2011. *On the two ways : life or death, light or darkness : foundational texts in the tradition, St Vladimir's Seminary Press's Popular Patristics series*. Yonkers, N.Y.: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press.
- Stobaeus. 1893. "Florilegium." In *Ioannis Stobaei Florilegium*, edited by Stobaeus. Leipzig: Holtze.
- Taylor, Charles. 2002. *Varieties of religion today : William James revisited*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
- Thompson, James. 2006. *Pastoral ministry according to Paul : a biblical vision*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic.
- . 2011a. *Moral formation according to Paul : the context and coherence of Pauline ethics*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic.
- . 2011b. *Moral formation according to Paul : the context and coherence of Pauline ethics*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic.
- Waaijman, Kees. 2002. *Spirituality : forms, foundations, methods*. Leuven; Dudley, MA: Peeters.
- Walls, Andrew F. 1996. *The missionary movement in Christian history : studies in the transmission of faith*. Maryknoll, N.Y.; Edinburgh: Orbis Books ; T&T Clark.
- Wiens, Delbert L. 1970. *Musonius Rufus and genuine education*. Ph. D., University of Chicago.
- Wilkinson, John. 1981. *Egeria's travels to the Holy Land*. Rev. ed. Jerusalem Warminster, England: Ariel Pub. House ; Aris & Phillips.
- Winter, Bruce W. 1993. "The entries and ethics of orators and Paul (1 Thessalonians 2:1-12)." *Tyndale Bulletin* no. 44 (1):55-74.
- . 2002. *Philo and Paul among the Sophists : Alexandrian and Corinthian responses to a Julio-Claudian movement*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: W.B. Eerdmans.
- . 2003. "Philodemus and Paul on rhetorical delivery." *Philodemus and the New Testament world*.
- Witherington, Ben. 1995. *Conflict and community in Corinth : a socio-rhetorical commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians*. Grand Rapids, Mich.; Carlisle: W.B. Eerdmans ; Paternoster Press.
- Yarnold, Edward. 1972. *The awe-inspiring rites of initiation: baptismal homilies of the fourth century*. Slough,: St. Paul Publications.
- . 1994. *The awe-inspiring rites of initiation : the origins of the RCIA*. 2nd ed. Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press.
- Yarnold, Edward, and Cyril. 2000. *Cyril of Jerusalem, The early church fathers*. London ; New York: Routledge.