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Fall 2022

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DENVER SEMINARY®

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

"The B-I-B-L-E,

Yes, that's the book for me!

I stand alone on the Word of God,

the B-I-B-L-E."

Forever etched in my memory, we sang this little ditty just about every week in Sunday School when I was a kid. With millions of views on YouTube, it seems to be enjoying a long shelf life in evangelical churches. That one line, "I stand alone on the Word of God," speaks volumes about one of the most deeply held values in evangelicalism—the authority of the Bible.

We are people of the Book, believing the Bible to be our final authority for faith and practice. That conviction defines us and shapes us. We study the Bible with both reverence and reason. We marvel at its intricacies and revel in its profundity. We read the Bible to find hope and encouragement in a fallen world. We meditate on it and contemplate how profoundly it describes us even though written millennia ago. We read it as both time-stamped and timeless. In the Bible, we find God's solution for our sins and His salve for our wounds. We seek God's wisdom in the Bible and strive to align our behaviors with what we find. We preach and teach the Bible. We sing it, recite it, memorize it, and constantly find ourselves looking to it for truth that endures.

At Denver Seminary, the truth of Scripture frames and imbues everything we do. No matter the academic program or scholarly discipline, Scripture provides the point of reference by which we assess all other truth claims. Isn't that the way we all ought to live our daily lives as well?

In this edition of *Engage*, we've invited two of our younger scholars to reflect on the meaning and importance of biblical authority for us. Spoiler alert! Their articles are rich and deep. Don't read them quickly; digest them slowly and thoughtfully. In fact, let me recommend that you read each one at least twice. I guarantee you'll find something new to chew on each time through.

Grateful for you,



The Holistic Online Seminary Experience

By Matt Evans



For Global MDiv student Jim Woods, studying at Denver Seminary has been a game-changer. Jim is a husband and father of three in Manhattan, Kansas, where he serves at Kansas State University with Christian Challenge. For Jim and his family, the Seminary's robust online academic program and the school's holistic investment in him has made his education at Denver Seminary vital for his development both as a minister and as a person.

Jim initially started his online seminary studies at a Baptist seminary. "I wanted to pursue seminary because I love teaching the Word. I love teaching people to walk with Jesus," he said. But after a few classes, Jim realized he wanted to learn with and from students and faculty with broad denominational experiences, and began seeking out a seminary that would be a better fit for him.

Denver Seminary's emphasis on spiritual formation first captured Jim's attention. "I'm passionate about spiritual formation and discipleship. In my ministry context, that's not always a focus," Jim said. With that in mind, he found Denver Seminary's Global Campus to be a good educational and cultural fit.

ONLINE SEMINARY EDUCATION AND RELATIONSHIPS

Seminary education is a challenge. But for Jim, Denver Seminary's careful attention both to the academics and relational aspect of online education has helped him thrive in the Global program.

"I've done asynchronous courses and Denver Live courses, and Denver Live courses are just like being there," he explains. **"The professors have done a great job of incorporating the online students into the courses and discussions, which has been helpful for building relationships."**

Jim continues, "Something I noticed right out of the gate was the VoiceThread system for the online courses. It's not the same as face-to-face, but seeing people's faces and hearing their voices adds a different dynamic to online discussions. I also appreciate the effort faculty make to put people in smaller groups that remain consistent throughout a course. The ability to build relationships with other students over the course of a term is really helpful."

Jim has also been developing relationships with his professors through online office hours. "I try to get time for one-on-one dialogue with each professor," he said. "I'm making real connections with people who are experts in their fields." His professors are eager and excited to continue interacting, which leads to a level of familiarity and connection that would normally only be found in person, Jim adds.

MINISTRY AND LIFE APPLICATION

In addition to the relationships Jim has built through his program, his concentration in spiritual formation has proven applicable to his professional ministry context. "About half of my workweek is spent investing in college students one-on-one," he says. "I'm applying what I'm

doing in the classroom on a weekly basis by helping them grow in their walks with Jesus, learn spiritual disciplines, and have a theological framework and worldview to think from.”

Denver Seminary is not only impacting Jim’s ministry—it’s also changing his life. Jim recalls a conversation with his wife, Courtney, “She said that she feels like me going to Denver Seminary has been a key part of my personal discipleship to Jesus.” In particular, the Training and Mentoring curriculum, which requires students to commit to one area of personal growth each semester, has been vital for Jim’s development.

“My education at Denver Seminary hasn’t just been intellectual. It’s played itself out in my life in so many ways and has been key in helping me grow in some character traits and formation needs. It’s been so fruitful for my life, my marriage, and my ministry,” Jim said. “Denver Seminary isn’t only concerned with building up academic knowledge but develops the whole person.”

Spiritual formation, accessibility, relationships, and application to his whole life—these are the things that made Denver Seminary the right place for Jim. **“I love that Denver Seminary cares about me growing in character and becoming a better person in my relationships. Denver Seminary cares about me as a husband and a man, as well as a pastor or minister,”** Jim said. **“I can stay in Manhattan with my family and keep doing ministry, while simultaneously getting training, equipping, and education from Denver Seminary. I’m so grateful for that.”**



Celebrating our One Hundredth Episode of *Engage360*

In September, we launched the one hundredth episode of *Engage360*, with the podcast, *Christian Nationalism*, featuring guest David Ritchie, author of *Why Do the Nations Rage? The Demonic Origin of Nationalism*.

Engage360 illustrates the expertise of our faculty, students, and alumni. It provides a platform to discuss some of the most challenging topics with experts from outside the Seminary and allows us to showcase the myriad ways in which our students and alumni are engaging the needs of the world with local, national, and global reach.

Whether you are new to podcasts or are a seasoned listener, we invite you to explore the redemptive power of the gospel and the life-changing truth of Scripture at work in our culture today. Listen at DenverSeminary.edu/podcast.

“*Engage360* has proven to be rich in both biblical insight and practical wisdom. It is a great resource for me, a local church pastor, as I continue to learn and grow. I’ve found in ministry that my role is not always to provide every answer, but to know where to point people to find answers and further help.

This podcast is one of those places I can gladly point others to and know they will benefit. The voices here are trustworthy and wise, bold and winsome.”



FROM HORSEBACK RIDING LESSONS TO LIFE LESSONS

By Teri Elliott-Hart

One of the first things I did when I moved to Colorado was to sign up for beginner horseback riding lessons. Along with admiring the beauty of the animals, I enjoyed learning about communication. For example, my horse could feel the movement of my head and take it as a directive instead of the reigns. She knew how fast to walk and when to change pace when I applied pressure on her flank. So, my curiosity was raised: why do riders wear spurs if a horse will respond to a squeeze or kick? Was it needlessly cruel? I was assured that a skilled rider and a trusting horse can communicate more precisely with spurs used expertly with no harm.

How intriguing that Christians are instructed to “spur one another on”: “Therefore, let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing but encouraging one another” (Hebrews 10:24–25). The verb *spur*, suggested by the Greek *paroxismos*, provides a vivid image for Christian fellowship. More literally translated as provoke or irritate, this word helps us understand the role we play in each other’s perseverance toward doing good. It is humbling that a basic Christian quality such as love may not come easily.



This Hebrews passage describes how Christians are to compel each other, as pressure makes a horse gain momentum, to such a degree that it provokes an active response. I can think of many people who encourage me with kind words, but who takes on the mantle of compelling me forward when I am not moving? I believe it can be a powerful aspect of the mentoring relationship, within which, as with a spur, this provocation is not intended to harm. Instead, it is a push to animate better choices that lead to expressing God’s love and care to the world. I have heard

students reflect that some of their most formative moments have been when they were led to face a persistent bad habit through the gracious but challenging words of a mentor.

Being seen and known sets safe parameters for receiving a challenge, as the mature mentor will first take into consideration how best to motivate their mentee (10:24). Fear of transparency can lead us to avoid such mutual accountability, but let us not “give up meeting together” (10:25). For, how can we know each other well enough to spur one another on if we retreat from relationships? Each time we say yes to the spiritual companionship of a mentoring relationship, we experience a bit more of the interdependent life of discipleship God designed for us.



Dr. Teri Elliott-Hart, Assistant Professor of Training and Mentoring

Dr. Teri Elliott-Hart served as the director of Leadership and Mentored Ministry Initiatives at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary and has taught at several institutions. She holds a PhD in Practical Theology from Boston College, a MEd in Teaching and Curriculum from Harvard University, and a BA in Education Studies from Brown University.

PAUL AND THE "GOLD" TESTAMENT

By Dr. Joseph Dodson

MY SON ONCE HEARD ME TALKING ABOUT THE OLD TESTAMENT. HE LOOKED AT ME FUNNY AND SAID, "OLD TESTAMENT? I THINK YOU MEAN GOLD TESTAMENT, BECAUSE THERE'S TREASURE IN THERE!" HE'S RIGHT. SO MANY PRECIOUS GEMS REMAIN HIDDEN IN PLAIN SIGHT THROUGHOUT THE PAGES OF THE "GOLD" TESTAMENT. NUMEROUS CITATIONS AND ALLUSIONS TO THE HEBREW SCRIPTURES SURROUND OUR FAVORITE NEW TESTAMENT PROCLAMATIONS. THEY SERVE AS A TREASURE MAP INVITING US ON AN ADVENTURE TO DISCOVER THEIR FULLER MEANING IN LIGHT OF THE ORIGINAL CONTEXT.

Few, if any, understood this more than the apostle Paul. In an unprecedented move, Paul claims that the boundless treasure of the Gold Testament belongs to the New Testament Church. He declares: its events occurred, and its words were written "for us," believers in the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 10:1–13).

So also, in letter after letter, the apostle points to the Old Testament as foundational for us in understanding our identity in Christ, our vocation as God's people, and our holy calling to walk according to His Spirit. Although there are several ways Paul uses the Hebrew Bible to do this, he often weaves into his arguments quotes from Scripture, serving as an "X" that marks the spot. Therefore, if we want to collect fully on the Bible's riches, we can begin with the apostle's citations of the Gold Testament in his letters.

In the quest to find this prize, it helps to know that Paul introduces these quotations in three significant ways: with (1) standard and (2) alternative formulae, and with (3) personification citations. Noticing not only that Paul is citing Scripture, but also recognizing how he is citing it has valuable bearings upon our interpretation of a passage. Once we take this into account, old, familiar, threadbare texts often gain renewed life resulting in fresh insights and more pointed applications.

Here, I will discuss the first two formulae together before explaining the third—each of which provides a particular exegetical nugget for the eager explorer.

STANDARD AND ALTERNATIVE CITATIONS

In *Paul and the Hermeneutics of Faith*, Francis Watson delineates the differences between the phrase "it is written," which he refers to as the standard formula, with other citations to Scripture, which he classifies as alternative formulae (43–47). 1 Corinthians 1:31 is an example of the former.

"Therefore, as it is written:

Let the one who boasts boast in the Lord."

According to Watson, the standard formula like we have here in 1:31 is an anonymous citation that does not require the audience to recognize the phrase cited or the person who originally spoke the words. Rather, Watson argues, with this formula, "all that is necessary [for the reader] is an understanding of the concept of a normative body of writings, and an acceptance that the words cited are to be found in it—somewhere" (45). Therefore, from this perspective, the standard formula intends to underline the representative character of Scripture—Scripture as a whole.

While a small minority in the Corinthian church might be able to recall what biblical writer first said, "Let the one who boasts boast in the Lord," or the original context of it, most in this predominately Gentile church probably had no clue. I suspect few in our churches today could identify these words as coming from Jeremiah 9:24 and even fewer able to detail its context.

Years ago, a former student popped into my university class during a break to introduce her toddler to me. Thrilled to meet the child, I forgot about my undergrads and plopped down on the floor to crawl around with the toddler. One student—uncomfortable seeing his tenured professor on all fours—blurted, "Dr. Dodson, that's not very professional." But I immediately retorted: "As it is written, 'I'll become even more undignified than this!'" A small number of students, mostly Old Testament majors, laughed (or rolled their eyes). They got the joke because they recognized I was citing King David's words after he was rebuked for dancing before the Ark of the Covenant. Since the reference was lost on the rest of the students, they either giggled nervously or stared at me confused. Nevertheless, even though the second group of students failed

to recall the chapter and verse of my quotation, they gathered I was quoting Scripture to justify my actions. Beginning my citation with the authoritative “it is written” was enough to impress upon them that I was claiming to have the Bible on my side.

In contrast to the standard formula, Watson proposes that the alternative formula attributes an Old Testament quotation to a specific author to highlight the individuality and distinctiveness of a text. For example, Paul uses an alternative formula in Romans 10:5 to cite Leviticus 18:5.

Beginning my citation with the authoritative “it is written” was enough to impress upon them that I was claiming to have the Bible on my side.

Moses writes this about the righteousness that is by the law: “The person who does these things will live by them.” According to Watson, in this category, knowledge of the original context and

the author of the citation is important—if not essential—for following Paul’s line of reasoning. Therefore, with the alternative formula, the apostle does not seek to draw on Scripture as “a representative whole,” but expects the audience to consider the narrative and arguments surrounding Leviticus 18:5. Furthermore, rather than the completed “written character of the text,” which the standard formula underscores, Watson asserts that the alternative formula stresses Scripture’s present or spoken character, making the citation more contemporary and immediate to the audience. For example, rather than the authorized-yet-static nature of “it is written,” the alternative formula infers that “in what they wrote, Moses, David, and Isaiah still speak here and now” (45). Whereas the written word confronts us in a definite form handed down from the past, with the alternative formula, these authors address us in the present—right here and now. So, over against the “it is written” reference to Jeremiah 9:24 that Paul uses to cinch his argument and end the debate with the Corinthians, in Romans, Paul introduces Moses as writing Leviticus 18 to place the patriarch



before the audience in a present debate with Righteousness and Scripture, who in response to Moses, also quotes the Bible,

“But the righteousness that is by faith says...” (v. 5)

“As Scripture says...” (v. 11)

PERSONIFICATION CITATION

This introduction of quotations in Romans 10 from Righteousness and from Scripture is a “personification citation.” A personification citation is when Paul has an inanimate object, abstract concept, or impersonal being quote Scripture. At first blush this formula may resemble how we use the phrase, “the Bible says.” Paul’s personification citations, however, are more developed and stirring than our dead metaphor. For instance, in Galatians, when Paul uses Scripture to quote Scripture, he does not just say “Scripture says.” Rather, before Scripture cites the biblical verse, the apostle has “her” foresee God’s plan and prophecy about it.

Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham:

“All nations will be blessed through you” (Galatians 3:8).

What is more, the personification citation seems to blend the characteristics of both standard and alternative formulae. For instance, in Galatians

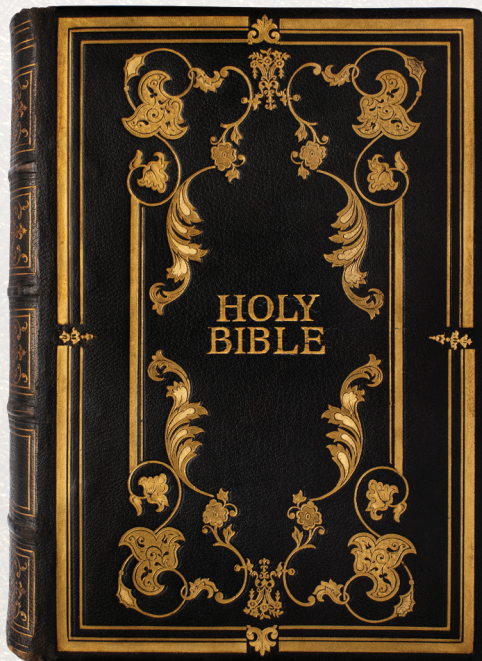
3:8, the speaking personification also stresses the representative character of Scripture—as in the standard formula. Yet, as with the alternative formula, Paul considers it important for the audience to understand the context of the quotation: who Abraham is, along with the surrounding narrative couching this pivotal promise made to the faithful-but-uncircumcised patriarch. As Paul goes on to argue, the fate of the Galatians’ faith depends on it! (See Galatians 3–5.)

Returning to Romans 10, there, Paul has Righteousness cite Scripture amid a conversation about God’s faithfulness and the redemption of Israel. The personification citation underlines for us the way to righteousness and salvation—emphatically by faith, not through the Law. In juxtaposition to what Moses writes in Leviticus 18:5, with the personification citation, Righteousness stands up as the apostle’s witness to up the ante by quoting back Moses’ own words spoken in Deuteronomy 30.

But the righteousness that is by faith says: “Do not say in your heart, ‘Who will ascend into heaven?’” (that is, to bring Christ down) “or ‘Who will descend into the deep?’” (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). But what does it say? “The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart,” that is, the message concerning faith that we proclaim: If you declare with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved. As Scripture says, “Anyone who believes in him will never be put to shame” (Romans 10:6–11).

Not only does Righteousness one-up Moses by having the last word, Paul uses the personification to show that while Moses writes, Righteousness speaks. Moreover, instead of the apostle just citing Scripture, he has Righteousness quote Scripture so that—to borrow from Richard Hays—the text’s “latent sense is alleged to be identical with the manifest claims of his own proclamation.”¹ Such is the nature of Paul’s appeal to the authority of Scripture: to reject his gospel is to disagree with divine Righteousness herself, who correctly interprets the text and proclaims God’s truth.

Once again, in comparison to the alternative formula in 10:5, the personification citation



chanticha wet/iStock

¹Richard Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (London: Yale University Press, 1989), 82–83.



here in 10:6 is anonymous (as with the standard formula). That is, it does not cite the original author (i.e., Moses) or the context of the quote (i.e., Moses' address to Israel about their continuous failure to keep the Law). In this case, the citation is even placed over against the original author and radically applied to a new context. But, as with the alternative formula,

the word is being spoken in the present. For a person unfamiliar with Deuteronomy, there is little to indicate Righteousness is quoting from it.² But those familiar with the Torah would have observed that what Righteousness now speaks to the Church through this citation outshines the original setting, making the original text and context a pregnant foreshadowing of the Law's ultimate goal—to point to the future salvation for Jews and Gentiles through the incarnation and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

FOLLOW THE TREASURE MAPS

Growing up, I heard an axiom about how when you rake, all you get is leaves, but when you dig, you might find gold. When it comes to Bible study, most people (and maybe many pastors' sermons) end up with the same stale pile of leaves instead of the life-changing gems that come from digging deep. For those interested in the latter, following the treasure maps Paul provides with standard and alternative quotations and personification citations is a good place to begin.

Dr. Joseph Dodson

DR. CRAIG L. BLOMBERG
ENDOWED CHAIR OF NEW TESTAMENT

Dr. Joseph Dodson is the Dr. Craig L. Blomberg Endowed Chair of New Testament. Dr. Dodson received his PhD in New Testament from the University of Aberdeen.



²Stanley, Christopher D. *Arguing with Scripture: The Rhetoric of Quotations in the Letters of Paul*, T & T Clark International, New York Etc., 2004, pp. 38–61.

The DR. CRAIG L. BLOMBERG Endowed Chair of New Testament

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MAKES YOU THINK

THE FAITHFUL READING OF SCRIPTURE

Dr. Ryan Taflowski



WHEN I WAS YOUNG, I WAS AN OBSESSIVE BASEBALL FAN. I FOLLOWED MY FAVORITE TEAM, BUT I WAS ALSO A STUDENT OF THE GAME'S HISTORY. I CAME OF AGE DURING THE STEROID ERA, SO YOU CAN IMAGINE MY DELIGHT AS BASEBALL'S BIGGEST STARS SMASHED RECORD AFTER RECORD: "I'M WATCHING HISTORY IN THE MAKING!" I THOUGHT TO MYSELF.

And you can also imagine my disappointment when I learned that they had done it by artificial means. Perhaps the most absurd chapter of the ordeal was the congressional hearings, which ensued after a federal investigation into the scandal. The accused players made a farce of the proceedings above all through their suspiciously spotty memories. Suddenly, these otherwise healthy and normal adults "couldn't remember" if they had ever discussed steroids with teammates and "had no recollection" of whether they or anyone they knew had doped. Selective amnesia, let's call it.

These self-serving evasions infuriated baseball fans because they betrayed a glaring lack of integrity. There is a parable here for us. Like those players, Protestants—and perhaps especially evangelicals—have a bad habit of applying our doctrines selectively as suits our needs and preferences when debating controversial ethical or societal topics. The doctrine applied most inconsistently is arguably perspicuity—roughly, the notion that Scripture is clear. We distort this concept in many ways, but supremely through a common interpretive fallacy: appeals to the clarity of Scripture made in bad faith, which often offer theological conclusions with unwarranted certainty. Selective perspicuity, let's call it.

AN EXPLOSIVE (AND NON-NEGOTIABLE) EVANGELICAL DOCTRINE

What do we mean when we refer to the perspicuity of Scripture? Perspicuity is the conviction that the Bible, although it originates in an ancient culture and is written in ancient languages, is in some meaningful sense accessible to those who read it today, even without formal training. The concept was central to the theology of the Protestant reformers of the sixteenth century, who believed that the simple, arresting truths of Scripture had been overgrown by a thicket of hermeneutical principles deriving from medieval scholastic theology. Martin Luther aimed to show ordinary Germans that they could read the Bible for themselves, precisely on account of

its perspicuity. "The Holy Scripture," he wrote, "itself on its own, to the greatest extent possible, is easy to understand, clearly and plainly, being its own interpreter, in that it puts all statements of human beings to the test, judging and enlightening."¹

Here we can see many of the hallmarks of the evangelical doctrine of Scripture: the Bible is clear, approachable for laypeople, and authoritative on all matters to which it speaks. But, as the German Peasants' War of 1524–25, in which farmers and serfs used the teachings of the early Reformation to justify violent attacks on lords and clergymen, revealed, this doctrine has a shadow side. Explosive things can happen when Christians start reading the Bible for themselves, as Luther learned the hard way. As Alister McGrath has pointed out, perspicuity has always been a double-edged sword; unfiltered access to the Bible is one of the crowning achievements of the Reformation, yet it has caused no end of trouble, chiefly in the form of denominational fragmentation. Perspicuity, in the final analysis, is a "radical, liberating, yet dangerous idea."²



¹Martin Luther, *Assertio omnium articulorum M. Lutheri per bullam Leonis X. novissimam damnatorum* (1520), WA 7:97.

²Alister McGrath, *Christianity's Dangerous Idea: The Protestant Revolution—A History from the Sixteenth Century to the Twenty-First* (New York, NY: HarperOne, 2007), 208.



We might well ask whether this liberating-yet-dangerous democratization of Scripture was a pyrrhic victory. When my reading of Scripture doesn't line up with your reading of Scripture, we're left in a precarious position, with no higher authority to which to appeal. All of this means that, from its inception and by virtue of its hermeneutical method, Protestantism by nature should be prepared to tolerate a high degree of theological diversity, which is both a strength and a weakness. But the doctrine of perspicuity really is dangerous, and it can be difficult to handle it judiciously. The solution is not to jettison it. It is a non-negotiable evangelical doctrine. The solution is to exercise it with integrity. However, that, as it turns out, is easier said than done.

THE ABUSE OF PERSPICUITY: BAD FAITH AND UNWARRANTED CERTAINTY

When we appeal to the clarity of Scripture in bad faith, we abuse the doctrine of perspicuity. Appeals made in bad faith usually look something like this: "The Bible doesn't say anything explicitly, so we can make no comment on it." I will give you two examples, each remark made in the context of a debate over a hotly-contested societal issue. For example, here is James Henley Thornwell, arguably the most influential Presbyterian in the American South in the nineteenth century, summing up his findings on slavery in a report prepared for the Synod of South Carolina in 1852:

The Bible, and the Bible alone, is [the Church's] rule of faith and practice. Beyond the Bible she can never go, and apart from the Bible she can never speak In conformity with this principle, has the Church any authority to declare slavery to be sinful? Or, in other words, has the Bible, anywhere, either directly or indirectly, condemned the relation of master and servant as incompatible with the will of God?³

This is both a self-serving (Thornwell owned slaves) and a uniquely sinister application of a dubiously-formulated understanding of sola scriptura, and a willfully unsophisticated appeal to perspective.

Chattel slavery is now universally condemned in the Western world, obviously, so what if we took another example from closer to home and from the other side of the political spectrum? In a media interview given in the aftermath of the recent *Roe v. Wade* decision, Laura Ellis, a progressive Baptist, justified her pro-choice position like this: "The Bible is an incredibly complicated book written by multiple people over different historical and social contexts. It could be irresponsible to just pull out a sentence or two and relate them to twenty-first-century America. The Bible does not talk explicitly about abortion, pro or con, in any kind of way. It's just not there."⁴

These comments reflect two radically different ideologies, but they share the same flawed logic. In the first place, is it really the case that these vital issues—slavery and abortion—are "just not there" in the Bible? Only with a spectacularly thin account of perspicuity could one make that argument with a straight face. To Thornwell, we might point out that there is an entire book of the Bible, Philemon, whose central argument undermines the whole notion that one man should own another. Similarly, if we were to apply Ellis's same hermeneutical logic to other issues, the Bible doesn't say anything about illegal immigration or nuclear disarmament or social media, either, although I'm sure she would offer strong, biblically-informed opinions on those topics.

But the doctrine of perspicuity really is dangerous, and it can be difficult to handle it judiciously. The solution is not to jettison it. It is a non-negotiable evangelical doctrine. The solution is to exercise it with integrity. However, that, as it turns out, is easier said than done.

Both Thornwell and Ellis fail to engage the intent of perspicuity, which is to express that the Bible's authority must somehow entail the ability to speak to issues not addressed explicitly by its human authors. The result of such a failure is an unwarranted certainty regarding their own respective positions. Ironically, it is clear to Thornwell that slavery is acceptable because the Bible isn't clear on it, just as it is clear to Ellis that abortion should be legal because the Bible doesn't use the word "abortion." These examples

³James Henley Thornwell, "Report on Slavery," *Southern Presbyterian Review* V (1852), 382–83.

⁴John Blake, "They cite the same Bible and evoke the same Jesus. But these two Christians are on opposite sides of the abortion debate," CNN.com, June 25, 2022, accessed July 22, 2022, https://www.cnn.com/2022/06/25/us/abortion-christian-debate-blake-cec/index.html?utm_medium=social&utm_source=twCNN&utm_content=2022-06-26T20%3A00%3A08&utm_term=link.

illustrate just how easy it is to use the (alleged) silence of Scripture to confirm our already-formed convictions.

What we need here is a broader and more robust understanding of perspicuity, rooted in a strong account of the authority of God as mediated through the Bible. As Jaroslav Pelikan has argued so powerfully, to say that the Bible is normative means that “it can be applied to any and all of the radically changed situations of later times, many of which the writers who originally framed it could not themselves conceivably have foreseen.”⁵ To acknowledge the limited scope of its human authors’ knowledge and historical perspective does not in any regard call the authority of Scripture into question. On the contrary, it is to affirm the inspiration of Scripture in the strongest possible terms. Unless this text can speak with authority and power to every new situation and context, it is not meaningfully “living and active.” No, in that case it would be something else—a dead letter. In what sense is Scripture authoritative if it can only be taken to speak to topics that are literally listed in a concordance?

A PLEA FOR HERMENEUTICAL INTEGRITY

Where might we look for a more workable understanding of perspicuity? Simple as it sounds, how about the Reformation? When Luther



or Calvin or Zwingli talked about perspicuity, as Timothy George explains, they had in mind a willingness to be interrogated by Scripture: “The Bible is its own interpreter in the sense that it does its own interpreting: it interprets its readers.”⁶ In other words, if we are serious about being evangelical in the best sense of that word, then we must be prepared to, as Luther put it, let Scripture put all our opinions to the test—and this takes integrity.

Integrity, understood as coherence or consistency, has long been considered an intellectual virtue. But for our purposes, we also ought to adopt it as one of the criteria we use in the faithful reading and application of Scripture. If the Bible speaks



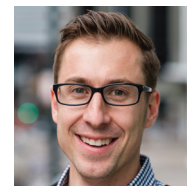
to an issue, whether explicitly or in its overall trajectory of argument, integrity demands that we try to discover what the text would have us do, even if its teaching is not in our interests or will complicate our beliefs. And if the Bible genuinely does not speak unequivocally to an issue, integrity demands that we conduct ourselves with a posture of openness to challenge, intellectual humility, and epistemic honesty. To be truly “evangelical”—to be gospel people—we must resist the temptation to apply perspicuity, a prized Protestant doctrine, selectively.

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Dr. Ryan Tafilowski

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Dr. Ryan Tafilowski holds a PhD in systematic theology and a master’s in theology in church history from the University of Edinburgh, and a bachelor’s degree in biblical studies from Colorado Christian University. He serves as the lead pastor at Foothills Fellowship Church in Denver and as theologian-in-residence at the Denver Institute for Faith and Work.



⁵Jaroslav Pelikan, *Interpreting the Bible and the Constitution* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004), 5.

⁶Timothy George, *Reading Scripture with the Reformers* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2011), 127.



Tse Ernest Chai/Stock

LETTING GOD LEAD INTO WHOLENESS

By Abby Perry

Liz Stinard was used to being the resilient one.

Having served overseas in the mission field with Wycliffe Bible Translators since 2000, Stinard had developed strong adaptability and coping skills that she'd called upon throughout her work and personal life. Not everything required those skills, of course. As an educator of missionary kids in Cameroon, Stinard adored her work. She taught, mentored, and coached, spending years in love with what she got to do on a daily basis.

But then, everything started to change. Stinard, who saw herself as able to roll with the punches, began to realize that repressed grief was interfering with her love for her work. Since 2016, she'd felt disconnected from God, from her passion for her work, and from her desire to call Cameroon home. As the dissonance and confusion raged inside her, Stinard pressed on. In 2019, a friend noticed Stinard's change, observing that

she hadn't seemed like herself for three years. Only then did Stinard realize she hadn't been able to keep her discomfort inside herself.

Stinard needed to start looking at her pain—to dig down to the roots of why she no longer liked the country she used to love, why the tasks that used to bring her joy and energy now reeked of burnout. One pain point she identified was that her workplace had instituted major changes that affected Stinard's role without consulting her, despite her expertise and experience teaching the class for ten years. She felt undervalued, which was compounded by feelings of inadequacy and failure as Stinard struggled to implement the mandated changes.

Reflecting on that experience was not easy.

"I was not in a good place," Stinard recalls. "I felt like I was bad at my job for three years . . . I think the Lord really used it to undercut my

false self and things I didn't realize I had my identity so deeply sunk into. When they were taken away, I kind of fell apart."

At the bottom of it all, Stinard found herself left with a question: Who am I?

Stinard felt that she had reached the end of her rope. For her first twelve years on the mission field, there hadn't been counselors available. Add to that the generational stigma she'd grown up around—where you only get therapy if you were "really messed up"—and it took a lot for Stinard to make her first counseling appointment.

"I felt like the whole meeting was the counselor saying, 'Wow, that's really a lot,'" Stinard recalls. The counselor gave her a checklist that could help her determine if she was facing burnout. "It was so weird how many of those things I found in myself. I wondered what I would have to do to fix this."

Stinard requested permission from her mission agency to attend a retreat specifically designed to care for missionaries. As Stinard researched where to go, the Lord impressed upon her that not only was receiving missionary care for herself a valuable step to take, but that offering that same care to others was going to be the next chapter of her ministry. Suddenly, her life seemed to have a bit more clarity.

A CLEAR PATH FORWARD BEGINS TO TAKE SHAPE

For example, it seemed to Stinard like God kept bringing people to her who were struggling so that she could walk through their issues with them. She had no training as a counselor, and shepherding these people was not her job. But the Lord continued sending them to her.

As Stinard researched where to go, the Lord impressed upon her that not only was receiving missionary care for herself a valuable step to take, but that offering that same care to others was going to be the next chapter of her ministry. Suddenly, her life seemed to have a bit more clarity.

"So, it made sense when the Lord told me that [missionary care] was what I'm supposed to do," Stinard says. A friend asked Stinard to reflect on what she loved to do outside of teaching, and the concept of missionary care as a ministry path for her was reinforced again. "I love organizing and hosting retreats and creating spaces for people to meet God," Stinard realized. "I love walking with people to help them be more free."



It was clear to Stinard that member care for Wycliffe would be the next chapter of her ministry, and she wanted to prepare for it. She'd become a Christian at the age of twenty-five and was on the mission field less than three years later, never having attended Bible college or seminary. But she always loved learning and had said for years that if she were ever going to earn a master's degree, it would be in spiritual formation. And now, the time had come.

Stinard began researching spiritual formation programs and was drawn to Denver Seminary. She had planned to attend a retreat in Beaver Creek, Colorado, so she went a day early to tour the campus. At the retreat, Stinard says God confirmed that attending Denver Seminary was the right choice.

At the first table she approached, two women struck up a conversation with her. She told them about Cameroon and that she was leaving, and possibly starting a program at Denver Seminary. The women looked at each other and started laughing. "I'm on the board at Denver Seminary," one of them explained. "And we have a woman here, a volunteer, who just graduated from your program. We'll connect you with her."

That alumna was Yvonne Biel, now the Formations Pastor at South Fellowship Church in Littleton, Colorado, having completed her MA in Christian Formation and Soul Care at Denver Seminary. But the board member and Biel wouldn't be Stinard's only connection to Denver Seminary at the retreat. The counselor she met with as part of the retreat programming was also a graduate of Denver Seminary. And not only had she received her Counseling degree there, but she had stayed enrolled for an extra year to take spiritual formation courses—a year she described as the best year of her life.



After a season of confusion and turmoil, the path for Stinard became clear. She enrolled in the Denver Seminary Christian Formation Master's and Spiritual Direction Certificate programs. If there is one word that describes Stinard's experience and what she's learning that she hopes to bring into the lives of the missionaries she will serve when she relocates to Senegal, it's integration.

A FUTURE OF INTEGRATION AND FORMATION UNFOLDS AT THE SEMINARY

Stinard learned that what she experienced during those three years when she felt separated from herself was the result of too strong of a focus on the cognitive and a divorce of that from what was going on in her heart and body. The formation program, she says, helped her integrate her head and heart, and grow in self-awareness, which can be elusive in the rigorous pace of ministry.

Stinard has found contemplative practices that integrate the head and the heart to be vital to her for slowing down. She found the homework process of practice and then reflection to be particularly helpful, as she normally goes straight from one thing to the next. Stinard said that this process has helped her find a level of depth of inner life that she didn't used to have the space, time, or tools to reach.

Stinard also pursued other practices that she'd felt were lacking, such as how to read the Bible and pray, silence and solitude, and learning to lament, practices that have been woven throughout Church history that will benefit the missionaries she serves.

If there is one word that describes Stinard's experience and what she's learning that she hopes to bring into the lives of the missionaries she will serve when she relocates to Senegal, it's integration.

Stinard believes that engaging those practices is essential to living as a whole person, and it's

that integration and wholeness that she hopes to help others find as she cares for them in West Africa. Rather than approaching member care as crisis care, Stinard is discovering through her Denver Seminary courses how to build Christian practices and spiritual direction into everyday life so that the support system is in place before someone reaches their lowest point. She envisions instituting soul care retreats where missionaries are given the time and space to engage spiritual formation practices alone, and where they can also participate in group settings that engage topics like belovedness, the true and false selves, and what the Sabbath can look like in their daily lives.

As much as she's excited about these ideas and possibilities, the thing that sticks out to Stinard most of all is the thing she has been learning to do for herself—paying attention. She wants to observe the people in her care and discern what types of support could be most beneficial and meaningful for them given their unique circumstances on the mission field.

Rather than prescribing a permanent plan going in, she'll watch, develop, and invite missionaries into moments specifically suited for them—whether those moments are shaped by a practice like prayer or simply walking through a flower garden. The goal is not to work everyone through a list of spiritual behaviors. It's to help them live as the whole people God created them to be. Stinard knows what it feels like to be fragmented, and she knows she's not the only missionary to have felt that way. And now, she gets to be part of guiding others.





Josh Barrett/Ignite Photography

THE CAMPUS OF THE FUTURE

How does the campus of the future look different than the campus of today? In many ways, it looks the same: a vibrant student experience, faculty and students building relationships that last a lifetime, education built on the foundation of biblical authority.

The campus of the future is accessible, agile, and innovative. It meets all students where they are and educates them in the way that best meets their needs.

Through strategic investment into the Seminary's educational technology, we are creating a campus that lets us reach more audiences, educate students who need or desire virtual educational opportunities, and prepare more men and women to engage the needs of the world with the redemptive power of the gospel and the life-changing truth of Scripture. After several months of renovation, Denver Seminary has opened our new Educational Technology recording studios, where our team will have the capacity to create professional, leading-edge resources, produce higher-quality academic courses with more creative and personalized content, and increase accessibility for more students.



Josh Barrett/Ignite Photography



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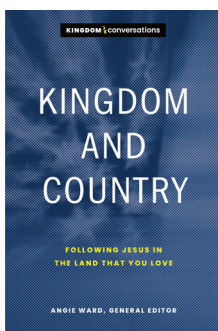
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News from the
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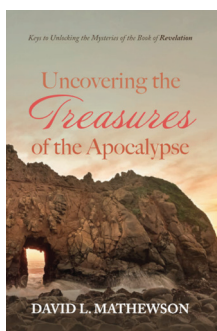


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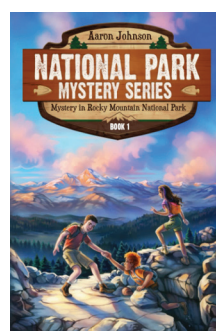
Kingdom and Country: Following Jesus in the Land that You Love

Through this collection, leading Christian thinkers and practitioners take a holistic approach to considering the questions of patriotism, nationalism, and where our ultimate loyalties must lie.



Dr. David Mathewson
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF NEW TESTAMENT
Uncovering the Treasures of the Apocalypse

This book offers, explains, and illustrates five of the most crucial keys for unlocking the message of the Apocalypse, leading the reader to take Revelation seriously as a message first addressed to seven historical churches in the first century before reading it as the Word of God for today.



Aaron Johnson
ASSOCIATE DEAN OF EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY
Mystery in Rocky Mountain National Park

This first book in Johnson's *National Parks Mystery Series* takes young readers on a fast-paced adventure set in the heart of the Rocky Mountains of Colorado.

Denver Seminary's Lay Ministry Program

Denver Seminary's Urban Initiative, led by John Moreland, introduced eighteen ministry leaders to higher learning in theological education through the Lay Ministry Program in DC and Denver during the 2021–22 academic year. Though designed for students of color and those who do not hold an undergraduate degree, the program provides a foundation for anyone who desires to know God better and deepen their understanding of Scripture. Topics range from research and writing to sermon preparation and delivery to Christian ethics. Several students who went through the Lay Ministry Program subsequently enrolled in Denver Seminary's graduate program.

"Students became increasingly engaged with the content they were learning and became a family (not just classmates) as God worked in and through them over the two semesters. They encouraged and prayed for each other and became brothers and sisters in Christ."

- Iantha Brown, Lay Ministry Program Coordinator

Denver Seminary Welcomes New Faculty



Dr. Elizabeth (Liz) Meier Thornton
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR
OF COUNSELING

Dr. Elizabeth (Liz) Meier Thornton holds a PhD in Counselor Education and Supervision from the University of the Cumberlands, a master's degree in School Counseling and Clinical Mental Health from Denver Seminary, and a bachelor's degree in Family Counseling from Moody Bible Institute. She is also a National Certified Counselor and a Licensed Professional Counselor.



Dr. Darlene Seal
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR
OF NEW TESTAMENT

Dr. Darlene Seal holds a PhD in Christian Theology and Biblical Studies: New Testament from McMaster Divinity College, a master's degree in New Testament from Denver Seminary, and a bachelor's degree in Christian Studies from Ouachita Baptist University.



Dr. Ryan Tafilowski
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF THEOLOGY

Dr. Ryan Tafilowski holds a PhD in Systematic Theology and a master's in theology in Church History from the University of Edinburgh and a bachelor's degree in Biblical Studies from Colorado Christian University. He serves as the lead pastor at Foothills Fellowship Church in Denver and as Theologian-in-Residence at the Denver Institute for Faith and Work.

Retirements

Denver Seminary recently celebrated the retirement of two long-time faculty members: Dr. Howard Baker and Dr. Craig Blomberg.

Dr. Howard Baker joined the faculty of Denver Seminary in 2006 after serving as an adjunct faculty member since 1995. Together with Dr. Bruce Demarest in 1999, he began the Seminary's certificate program in evangelical spiritual guidance.

Dr. Craig Blomberg joined the faculty of Denver Seminary in 1986. Dr. Blomberg completed his PhD in New Testament, specializing in the parables and the writings of Luke-Acts, at Aberdeen University in Scotland. In addition to writing numerous articles in professional journals, multi-author works and dictionaries or encyclopedias, he has authored or edited over twenty books.

Both Baker and Blomberg are faithful servants of Christ and have served His kingdom through their commitment to the Seminary's students and mission. They both hold emeritus status at Denver Seminary.



The Junction Project

Initiated and led by Dr. Wilmer Ramirez, associate dean of Diversity and Programming with Ethnic Communities and director of Hispanic Initiatives, the Junction Project is an intercultural meeting space designed to go beyond a cognitive approach to diversity and inclusion growth. In this space, students, staff, and faculty from different cultural and ethnic groups meet, interact, and reflect on the Seminary experience and how to transform it into a nurturing space for diverse groups.

During the 2021–22 academic year, the project hosted twenty-three lunch meetings in which students of color, faculty, and staff members shared their faith journeys and their individual perspectives of their Seminary experience. The Junction Project will continue to host lunch meetings throughout the 2022–23 academic year.

For more information, contact Dr. Ramirez,
Wilmer.Ramirez@DenverSeminary.edu.

Alumni Referrals Support the Transformation of Students

Alumni referrals are one of our most effective means of recruitment and enrollment. Know someone interested in theological training or getting the necessary education to become a world-class counselor? Refer an interested student or let them know about our upcoming visits, which include both personal and group options on campus or over video.

Learn more at
DenverSeminary.edu/refer.

Employment Opportunities

Denver Seminary is looking for individuals to assist in our mission of preparing men and women to engage the needs of the world with the redemptive power of the gospel and the life-changing truth of Scripture. Both faculty and staff positions are available and can be found at DenverSeminary.edu/employment.

Debora Barr, Washington DC Extension Campus Site Director

Debora Barr is passionate. She's passionate about Christ, about learning, and about the students she serves at the Washington DC Extension Campus. And over the years, Debora's fervor has continued to move her forward personally and professionally.

Debora holds an undergraduate degree in geology, a master's degree in aeronautical science from Embry-Riddle, a JD from the University of the District of Columbia, and a MDiv from Denver Seminary. She served as a helicopter pilot in the US Army, where she flew generals in the Middle East during Desert Storm and, after which, she flew medevac helicopters for those in need in the States. Following her time in the Army, she worked for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

Debora left the Church in high school. When she was forty, she found herself returning to Christ and was determined to go to seminary. Today, with her MDiv in hand, she runs the DC Extension Campus and DBarr Ministries (DBarrMinistries.org) where she is a preacher, teacher, and testament of "what is possible when one dares to apply the Word of God to their daily lives in this generation." Her passion for Christ and for students continues to run strong—and she's not finished learning yet—as she considers pursuing her DMin.

Learn more about the Washington DC Extension Campus at
DenverSeminary.edu/DC.

SNAPSHOT

Debora Barr

* **SERVE**



Answered Prayers

Denver Seminary's commitment to its students is borne out not only by the education they receive and the relationships they form, but also in our commitment to ensuring students are able to afford to attend seminary. We know that for many would-be seminarians, the financial constraints make furthering their education difficult or even impossible. For many students, scholarships make seminary education possible.



Meet Engaging Hope Scholarship Recipient Jamie Gutierrez

Born and raised in San Antonio, Texas, Denver Seminary Global student Jamie Gutierrez is one of the many Denver Seminary students pursuing a degree from a distance with the financial support of a scholarship.

Jamie, a nurse, works for a Christian nonprofit pregnancy support center part time. A seminary degree is not a requirement for Jamie's career, but for her, attending seminary and growing her understanding of God's work seemed like the right next step for her. "We care for women in all kinds of situations, but specifically unplanned pregnancies. As a nurse, I was caring for their medical needs, but as a Christian, it was important for me to grow my understanding of

Christ and apply that to my work as a nurse," Jamie says. "Attending seminary has been an answer to my prayers."

Jamie discovered Denver Seminary via an internet search. The Seminary's online program coupled with the financial support from the Engaging Hope Scholarship she received was key for her. "Receiving the Engaging Hope Scholarship has enabled me not only to go to school but to continue to work part-

time while pursuing my degree The scholarship benefits me financially but also shows me that God is really taking care of me."

To learn more about how you can support Denver Seminary's students, visit [DenverSeminary.edu/giving](https://denverseminary.edu/giving).



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