

Where Should Twenty-First-Century Evangelical Biblical Scholarship Be Heading?

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Recent developments and resulting needs are assessed in a variety of areas: historical Jesus research and issues of OT historicity, Pauline theology and theologies of individual OT books, critical methods for the study of both Testaments and especially historical study, contextualized biblical studies, biblical ethics, the application of the OT in the NT age and the quotation of the Old in the New, Greek and Hebrew grammar, OT textual criticism, and the interaction between church and the academy.

Key Words: Jesus, Paul, biblical theology, biblical criticism, contextualization, ethics, OT in the NT, grammar, textual criticism

I feel a bit like the Ph.D. student ready to submit his or her dissertation, only to discover a definitive work on the identical topic that has just been published. I heartily recommend Markus Bockmuehl's "To Be or Not to Be: The Possible Futures of New Testament Scholarship" as required reading for OT and NT scholars alike.¹ With delightfully crafted prose and allusions to Shakespeare, Bockmuehl traces the fragmentation of our discipline, the inability of scholars even to agree on what questions should be addressed, and the need for historical, theological, literary, and hermeneutical approaches to complement one another. As a possible way forward he proposes that more attention be devoted to the *Wirkungsgeschichte* of biblical texts, freeing us from the tyranny of always interacting in greatest detail with the most recent scholarship, and to the ideal or authorial reader of each part of Scripture, an approach that blends the most valid

Author's note: A previous version of this paper was presented at the IBR's annual national meeting in Boston in November 1999. Since then, I have added footnotes and updated documentation.

1. M. Bockmuehl, "To Be or Not to Be: The Possible Futures of New Testament Scholarship," *SJT* 51 (1998) 271-306.

concerns of author-, text-, and reader-centered hermeneutics. Because Bockmuehl has dealt so well with general trends and overarching methodological issues, I will focus somewhat more narrowly on a few specific, key concerns for evangelical biblical studies. I quickly confess my inability to comment nearly as intelligibly on OT matters, but I am grateful for help from my colleagues Danny Carroll and Rick Hess for several of the points mentioned below.²

I was chosen for this task in part because of my presentation at the 1994 Tyndale Fellowship meetings entitled "Critical Issues in New Testament Studies for Evangelicals Today," published in *A Pathway into the Holy Scripture*, a volume distributed to all IBR members.³ I think it may be useful to comment on the four main issues I identified there and then move us forward to other concerns. To begin with, historical Jesus research continues to play on center stage. N. T. Wright's *Jesus and the Victory of God* deserves pride of place among all recent contributions to the topic;⁴ the collection of largely evangelical responses, edited by Carey C. Newman and entitled *Jesus and the Restoration of Israel*, should advance the discussion further.⁵ Particularly significant is Wright's double dissimilarity and similarity criterion, which should profitably be applied in numerous more-detailed studies of individual passages and themes than Wright has space for in his more wide-ranging work.⁶ The four parts to this criterion closely though not exactly parallel Gerd Theissen's four-part criterion of historical plausibility, which subdivides into "plausible coherence of influence" on the later church, "plausible influence contrary to the tendency" of the redactor, "correspondence" to Jesus' historical context, and "individuality" within that same context.⁷

2. And see now the excellent summary of trends, prospects, and needs in David W. Baker and Bill T. Arnold (eds.), *The Face of Old Testament Studies: A Survey of Contemporary Approaches* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker / Leicester: Apollos, 1999).

3. C. L. Blomberg, "Critical Issues in New Testament Studies for Evangelicals Today," in *A Pathway into the Holy Scripture* (ed. Philip E. Satterthwaite and David E. Wright) (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1994) 51-79.

4. N. T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God* (London: SPCK / Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996).

5. C. C. Newman (ed.), *Jesus and the Restoration of Israel* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity / Carlisle: Paternoster, 1999). A flurry of helpful studies has continued to appear, esp. Dale C. Allison, *Jesus of Nazareth: Millenarian Prophet* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1998); Scot McKnight, *A New Vision for Israel: The Teachings of Jesus in National Context* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans 1999); Ben Witherington, *Jesus the Seer: The Progress of Prophecy* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1999); and Bruce Chilton, *Rabbi Jesus: An Intimate Biography* (New York: Doubleday, 2000).

6. Wright, *Jesus*, 86.

7. Gerd Theissen and Annette Merz, *The Historical Jesus: A Comprehensive Guide* (London: SCM, 1997; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1998) 117-18. See in detail, Gerd Theissen and Dagmar Winter, *Die Kriterienfrage in der Jesusforschung: Vom Differenzkriterium zum Plausibilitätskriterium* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1997).

I suspect these criteria could help us make some progress in addressing the vexed question of the historicity of John's Gospel, and I have recently written a book trying to do precisely this.⁸ But might we not also envision OT counterparts? Might studies of both the continuities and discontinuities between biblical texts and their environments and between earlier and later portions of the OT or history of Israel illuminate the debates surrounding the historicity of the patriarchs, the existence of the united monarchy, or the origins of monotheism? Several multiauthor Tyndale House projects have addressed some of these issues,⁹ with important additional articles by Rick Hess,¹⁰ but there is not much else from evangelical circles.

The second area that I identified five years ago was the "new look on Paul." Here no recent evangelical work towers above all others; we wait to see what Wright's volume three in his series on Christian origins will do. I understand that a two-volume multiauthor work from J. C. B. Mohr in Tübingen is in the works, trying more comprehensively to assess the state of the question in the post-Sanders era,¹¹ and I eagerly await its contribution. With volumes like those of Westerholm, Thielman, Seifrid, Schreiner, and Kruse now available,¹² I am not sure we need more specialized treatment of "Paul and the Law." And James Dunn's more general Pauline theology admirably

8. Craig L. Blomberg, *The Historical Reliability of John's Gospel: Issues and Commentary* (Leicester and Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2001).

9. For example, A. R. Millard and D. J. Wiseman (eds.), *Essays on the Patriarchal Narratives* (Leicester: InterVarsity, 1980); R. S. Hess, P. E. Satterthwaite, and G. J. Wenham (eds.), *He Swore an Oath: Biblical Themes from Genesis 12-50* (Cambridge: Tyndale House, 1993). See also as the more indirect outgrowth of such projects, Richard S. Hess and David T. Tsumura (eds.), *I Studied Inscriptions from before the Flood: Ancient Near Eastern, Literary, and Linguistic Approaches to Genesis 1-11* (Sources for Biblical and Theological Study 4; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1994). On the monarchy, see Gary N. Knoppers, "The Vanishing Solomon: The Disappearance of the United Monarchy" *JBL* 116 (1997) 19-44; idem, "The Historical Study of the Monarchy: Developments and Detours," in *The Face of Old Testament Studies* (ed. Baker and Arnold; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker / Leicester: Apollos, 1999) 207-35. On the origins of monotheism, see Bill T. Arnold, "Religion in Ancient Israel," in *ibid.*, 391-420.

10. Esp. Richard S. Hess, "Yahweh and His Asherah?: Epigraphic Evidence for Religious Pluralism in Old Testament Times," in *One God, One Lord in a World of Religious Pluralism* (ed. Andrew D. Clarke and Bruce W. Winter; Cambridge: Tyndale House, 1991) 5-33.

11. D. A. Carson, Peter T. O'Brien, and Mark Seifrid (eds.), *Justification and Variegated Nomism* (WUNT; 2 vols.; Tübingen: Mohr, forthcoming).

12. Stephen Westerholm, *Israel's Law and the Church's Faith* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1988); Frank Thielman, *Paul and the Law: A Contextual Approach* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1994); M. A. Seifrid, *Justification by Faith: The Origin and Development of a Central Pauline Theme* (NovTSup 68; Leiden: Brill, 1992); Thomas R. Schreiner, *The Law and Its Fulfillment: A Pauline Theology of Law* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1993); Colin G. Kruse, *Paul, the Law and Justification* (Leicester: Apollos / Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1997).

focuses discussion on broader issues.¹³ Acts too has been marvelously well served by evangelical study in the 1990s; witness the six volumes produced by people related to Tyndale House¹⁴ and the commentary on Acts authored and the collection of essays edited by Ben Witherington.¹⁵ Now perhaps we must follow up Witherington's repeated suggestions and more boldly incorporate information from Acts into our Pauline studies.¹⁶

Again, I wonder if OT projects are not needed that are analogous to the resurgence of Pauline theologies. With so many technical, specialized studies of recent vintage on almost every portion of the OT, might we benefit from sustained evangelical treatments of the theologies of, say, Genesis, Proverbs, or specific Minor Prophets (again acknowledging the existence of isolated works on such topics here and there¹⁷)? Might we envision, then, a slightly more popular series of syntheses of the distinct theologies of each major portion of the OT, analogous to the Cambridge University Press series of paperbacks on each of the primary NT witnesses?¹⁸

And what about larger theological projects? When I teach NT theology, I have nothing more recent to use as a primary text than Ladd,¹⁹ although I understand that three evangelical analogues are all in the works, by I. H. Marshall, G. K. Beale, and F. Thielman. For OT theology, the newest evangelical text is the one by Paul House,²⁰ but because of the widespread biblical illiteracy of our students he

13. James D. G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1998).

14. Bruce W. Winter (ed.), *The Book of Acts in Its First Century Setting* (5 vols.; Carlisle: Paternoster / Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1993-96); I. Howard Marshall and David Peterson (eds.), *Witness to the Gospel: The Theology of Acts* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1998).

15. Ben Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-rhetorical Commentary* (Carlisle: Paternoster / Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1998); idem (ed.), *History, Literature and Society in the Book of Acts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

16. An encouraging recent example, from outside explicitly evangelical circles, is Abraham J. Malherbe, *The Letters to the Thessalonians* (New York: Doubleday, 2000).

17. For example, partial analogies to what I have in mind include J. G. McConville, *Grace in the End: A Study of Deuteronomistic Theology* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1993); Daniel J. Estes, *Hear My Son: Teaching and Learning in Proverbs* (Leicester: InterVarsity, 1997 / Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2001); J. Gary Millar, *Now Choose Life: Theology and Ethics in Deuteronomy* (Leicester: InterVarsity, 1998 / Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2001).

18. The series is entitled New Testament Theology and is under the general editorship of James D. G. Dunn.

19. George E. Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament* (ed. and rev. Donald A. Hagner; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1993). But Hagner's revisions did not change the 1974 text of Ladd's chapters per se.

20. Paul R. House, *Old Testament Theology* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1998). For a survey of recent approaches in the literature more generally, see R. W. L. Moberly,

feels compelled to spend most of his time simply summarizing the contents of each text theologically. On just about every knotty, controversial issue among evangelicals, he surveys the options, takes no stance, and moves on. This may be strategically wise if one wants to create a textbook with broad-based appeal, but I am still searching for more-detailed treatments—perhaps in narrower exegetical studies—of numerous OT cruxes, which the most recent evangelical commentaries on various OT books suggest have not received as much attention as they might.²¹

Third, I would continue to appeal for a reasoned eclecticism in using the vast array of critical methods now available to us. We need more writers (and not just systematic theologians), such as Tony Thiselton and Kevin Vanhoozer, who can lead us through the morass of technical and esoteric postmodern literature, stripping off the useless or anti-Christian husks, while preserving the valid and valuable kernels in each of its methods.²² I think also of Karen Jobes's very helpful interaction, even at an introductory level, with feminist, sociological, and narrative-critical studies in her *New International Version Application Commentary on Esther*,²³ and of Daniel Carroll's more advanced guidance for reading Amos in multiple contexts, particularly in light of Latin American realities.²⁴ But evangelical scholars of both Testaments have only rarely interacted in detail with reader-response or deconstructionist analyses of biblical texts,²⁵ and even the less avant-garde literary and sociological approaches command only slightly greater attention.²⁶ Are we content to let others

"Theology of the Old Testament," in *The Face of Old Testament Studies* (ed. Baker and Arnold; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker / Leicester: Apollos, 1999) 452-78.

21. For example, I am not satisfied with the existing options discussed in the literature on the interpretation of the bitter water test of Numbers 5, Samuel's rebuke of Saul in 1 Samuel 13, or the miracles caused by Elisha's bones in 2 Kgs 13:20-21.

22. Cf. Anthony C. Thiselton, *New Horizons in Hermeneutics* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1992); Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *Is There a Meaning in This Text?* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1998).

23. Karen H. Jobes, *Esther* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1999).

24. M. Daniel Carroll R., *Contexts for Amos: Prophetic Poetics in Latin American Perspective* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992).

25. Three important exceptions include John Goldingay, "How Far Do Readers Make Sense? Interpreting Biblical Narrative," *Themelios* 18 (1993) 5-10; Stanley E. Porter, "Reader-Response Criticism and New Testament Studies?" *Journal of Literature and Theology* 8 (1994) 94-102; Craig G. Bartholomew, "Babel and Derrida: Postmodernism, Language and Biblical Interpretation," *TynBul* 49 (1998) 305-28.

26. Here see esp. the numerous works of Leland Ryken, most recently with Tremper Longman III (eds.), *A Complete Literary Guide to the Bible* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1993); and surveyed in R. A. Weathers, "Leland Ryken's Literary Approach to Biblical Interpretation: An Evangelical Model," *JETS* 37 (1994) 115-24; for

treat books such as Job, Ecclesiastes, and Ezekiel as contradictory to more central swaths of OT thought?²⁷ And how is it possible that after a full generation of intense exposure to feminist approaches,²⁸ the number of women involved in either IBR or the Tyndale Fellowship remains miniscule?

But perhaps today there is an even greater urgency than there was at the beginning of this decade to champion good, old-fashioned historical study. It could be argued that, as modernism increasingly gives way to postmodernism, it will be primarily left to evangelicals to trumpet the cause that there are limits to valid readings of texts imposed by historical constraints.²⁹ If this proves true, then I fully endorse Martin Hengel's repeated appeals that we must do better than anyone else at knowing the biblical and cognate languages and mastering the relevant ancient extracanonical literature.³⁰ Because few of us can ever hope to do it with Hengel's brilliance and mastery, we must work with each other, finding ways to fund collaborative projects, as our colleagues in nontheological disciplines in state universities are able to do, so that definitive translations and commentaries are available from distinctively evangelical perspectives on a broad range of ancient Near Eastern, Second Temple Jewish, and Classical and Hellenistic Greek and Roman sources, complete with reflections on their value for interpreting OT and NT texts. I wait with anticipation for Chilton's, Evans's, and Neusner's updated

sociological criticism, D. A. de Silva, *The Hope of Glory: Honor Discourse and New Testament Interpretation* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical, 1999); and M. Daniel Carroll R. (ed.), *Rethinking Contexts, Reading Texts: Contributions from the Social Sciences to Biblical Interpretation* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000). For detailed bibliographies, see M. Minor, *Literary-Critical Approaches to the Bible: An Annotated Bibliography* (West Cornwall, Conn.: Locust Hill, 1992); idem, *Literary-Critical Approaches to the Bible: A Bibliographical Supplement* (West Cornwall, Conn.: Locust Hill, 1996); K. C. Hanson, "Greco-Roman Studies and the Social-Scientific Study of the Bible: A Classified Periodical Bibliography (1970-1994)," *Forum* 9 (1993) 63-119.

27. See especially Walter A. Brueggeman, *Theology of the Old Testament: Testimony, Dispute, Advocacy* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1997) ad loc., and the literature cited there.

28. Many feminist approaches are now crystalized in A. Brenner and C. Fontaine (eds.), *A Feminist Companion to Reading the Bible* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997); and Carol A. Newsom and Sharon H. Ringe (eds.), *The Women's Bible Commentary* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1992). Compare earlier, Letty M. Russell (ed.), *Feminist Interpretation of the Bible* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1985).

29. See already Donald A. Hagner, "The New Testament, History, and the Historical-Critical Method," in *New Testament Criticism and Interpretation* (ed. David A. Black and David S. Dockery; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1991) 73-96.

30. See esp. Martin Hengel, 'Aufgabe der neutestamentlichen Wissenschaft,' *NTS* 40 (1994) 321-57; ET: "Tasks of New Testament Scholarship," *BBR* 6 (1996) 67-86.

Strack-Billerbeck to appear,³¹ but they tell me it may be a while, and I am unaware of ventures elsewhere producing comparable reference works. Perhaps Craig Keener will someday publish the findings of his tens of thousands of notecards!³²

The final major topic I addressed a half-decade ago involved contextualized biblical studies in light of international realities. Small forays into this arena appear periodically; Denver Seminary sponsored a conference on the topic in February 2000.³³ But I am not aware of any noticeable increase in evangelical work in this area; indeed, even the evangelical journals that are produced (including some very new ones) in the Two-Thirds World have little addressing the unique questions of their distinctive cultures. Non-English-language journals continue to rely too heavily on translations from English of works by American writers that have nothing to do with these distinctive issues.³⁴ Thus, my appeal needs to be repeated. And it needs to be broadened. Biblical scholarship needs to confront more often the crucial social, ethical, and economic dilemmas of our age.

I have tried to make a modest contribution in this respect, with my biblical theology of material possessions in the New Studies in Biblical Theology series with InterVarsity Press.³⁵ But surely we need comparable if not even more-detailed studies, with a view to contemporary application, of Scripture's teaching on or contribution toward theologies of warfare and tribalism (Longman and Reid have made a good start),³⁶ the new elitism that access to technology has created, environmental issues, and matters of health and illness (Wilkinson and Thomas, respectively, stand almost alone here),³⁷

31. B. Chilton, C. A. Evans, and J. Neusner, *A Judaic Commentary on the New Testament* (5 vols.; The New Billerbeck; Leiden: Brill, forthcoming).

32. A sampling of these findings appears in Craig S. Keener, *The InterVarsity Bible Background Commentary: New Testament* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1993). See also his other published works, esp. *A Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1999); and *A Commentary on the Gospel of John* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, forthcoming).

33. The conference was called *The Bible: From Ancient Book to Modern Needs*, Denver Seminary, Feb. 4-5, 2000.

34. For example, *Jian Dao* or *Stulos Theological Journal* (of recent vintage) or *Kairos* and *Vox Scripturae* (among more-established examples).

35. Craig L. Blomberg, *Neither Poverty nor Riches: A Biblical Theology of Possessions* (Leicester: InterVarsity, 1999 / Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2001).

36. Tremper Longman III and Daniel Reid, *God Is a Warrior* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1995).

37. Loren Wilkinson, *Earthkeeping: Christian Stewardship of Natural Resources* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1980); John C. Thomas, *The Devil, Disease and Deliverance: Origins of Illness in New Testament Thought* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998).

responses to suffering and spiritual warfare (especially now with the seemingly heterodox challenges posed by Greg Boyd),³⁸ Christian participation in and responsibility to varying types of government and international economic systems, and so on. It could be argued that one of the biggest weaknesses of contemporary evangelical biblical studies is the captivity of the scholars engaged in these studies to Western middle-class and upper-middle-class lifestyles, which are aberrant, minority perspectives by global standards, and I include myself within this captivity. Richard Bauckham's discussion in the final fourth of his recently released volume on James in the New Testament Readings series from Routledge has some pointed remarks to this effect that we all ought to take seriously.³⁹

This last topic forms a bridge to enable us to cross over to other issues. Biblical ethics needs to form a much more intentional focus for at least some of our research than it currently does. Chris Wright's numerous works on OT ethics are particularly helpful,⁴⁰ but I am unaware of anyone else on either side of the Atlantic doing anything on the same scale, and my understanding of the continuity and discontinuity between the Testaments suggests that we need something comparable that is slightly more sensitive to the changed situation between old and new ages.⁴¹ We should all be indebted to Richard Hays for his magisterial study of broad approaches and selected topics in NT ethics,⁴² but a thoroughgoing evangelical study would undoubtedly come to several different conclusions on certain specifics.

Scholars, students, and laypeople alike also need considerably more help on how to apply the OT in the NT age. The initial volumes in the New International Version Application Commentary series on the OT prove quite promising; if the entire series can maintain the quality of the initial volumes that have appeared,⁴³ they will fill a

38. Gregory Boyd, *God at War: The Bible and Spiritual Conflict* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1997); idem, *God of the Possible: A Biblical Introduction to the Open View of God* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 2000).

39. Richard Bauckham, *James* (London: Routledge, 1999) 158-208.

40. See esp. Christopher J. H. Wright, *Walking in the Ways of the Lord: The Ethical Authority of the Old Testament* (Leicester: InterVarsity, 1995).

41. An understanding that is closely approximated by Douglas J. Moo, "The Law of Christ as the Fulfillment of the Law of Moses: A Modified Lutheran View," in *The Law, the Gospel, and the Modern Christian: Five Views* (ed. Wayne G. Strickland; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1993) 319-76.

42. Richard B. Hays, *The Moral Vision of the New Testament: Community, Cross, New Creation* (New York: HarperCollins, 1996 / Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1997).

43. Tremper Longman III, *Daniel* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1999); Jobes, *Esther*; Iain M. Duguid, *Ezekiel* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1999); Peter Enns, *Exodus* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2000).

major gap. But multiauthor series more often than not take a variety of approaches to various biblical books that prevent one from understanding how one given hermeneutic would consistently work itself out over numerous biblical genres. I would greatly appreciate a series of studies on the way that Christians might apply each successive OT book today in light of a fairly centrist approach to the classic dispensationalist–covenant theology debate, which I find consistently supported by NT writers, and which I have elsewhere attempted to summarize with the formula "All of the Old Testament applies to Christians, but none of it applies apart from its fulfillment in Christ."⁴⁴ Peter Stuhlmacher has worked out something along these lines in his biblical theology of both Testaments,⁴⁵ but no one to my knowledge has taken the next step of focusing on contemporary application or significance across the whole canon.

Speaking of the relationship between OT and NT leads me to long for further guidance on how the NT quotes, alludes to, and reinterprets the OT, with special reference to the question of to what extent we can replicate NT hermeneutics today. Moises Silva and Darrell Bock published several helpful taxonomic studies in the mid-1980s along the lines I have in mind,⁴⁶ but no one has really done anything similar since, and detailed application to the texts, passage by passage, has never been worked out. Perhaps the volume edited by Carson and Beale, forthcoming from Baker, will meet some of these needs⁴⁷ though, again, I wonder if the cross-section of authors contributing will prevent a uniform approach from being traced throughout.

Numerous other, more-specialized concerns could occupy our attention at length but my space is limited. I would be remiss not at least to mention the continuing gap between the state of our understanding of Greek grammar and its appropriation in the exegetical literature. Porter, Fanning, McKay, Young, Wallace, and Black, despite disagreement on subordinate points, have all generated a new consensus in their intermediate and advanced grammars that a

44. William W. Klein, Craig L. Blomberg, and Robert L. Hubbard Jr., *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation* (Dallas: Word, 1993) 280.

45. Peter Stuhlmacher, *Biblische Theologie des Neuen Testaments* (2 vols.; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1992-99).

46. Moises Silva, "The New Testament Use of the Old Testament: Text Form and Authority," in *Scripture and Truth* (ed. D. A. Carson and John D. Woodbridge; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1983) 147-65; Darrell L. Bock, "Evangelicals and the Use of the Old Testament in the New," *BSac* 142 (1985) 209-23, 306-19.

47. G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson (eds.), *Commentary on the Use of the Old Testament in the New* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, forthcoming).

much more nuanced understanding of tense and mood in light of verbal aspect theory is needed.⁴⁸ But only rarely are their works acknowledged, much less applied in the commentaries; Bob Gundry's massive work on Mark and Silva's on Philippians are, I believe, the most detailed exceptions to this generalization.⁴⁹ And who will write the first evangelical intermediate or advanced Hebrew grammar that contains as many exegetical discussions of theologically crucial texts as Wallace's Greek work does, in order both to illustrate the grammatical categories at hand and to convince skeptical students that learning the languages really does make a difference?⁵⁰

Lest I be accused of commenting only on OT topics with NT analogues, let me add that it seems to me that major issues surrounding the formation of the OT canon and the practice of OT textual criticism still cry out for additional evangelical treatment. At the beginning of the 1990s, Randall Buth argued that new uncertainties over portions of the OT autographs raised by the Dead Sea Scrolls remained the single biggest obstacle to evangelical theories of inspiration and inerrancy,⁵¹ and I have not seen much to address these concerns in the decade since then.

I conclude with two more-general observations. In an article in a recent volume commemorating 25 years of the journal *Themelios*, Carl Trueman reflects on the future of British evangelical scholarship. I certainly endorse Trueman's "big idea," that evangelical scholarship must increasingly, self-consciously serve the most crucial needs of

48. Stanley E. Porter, *Verbal Aspect in the Greek of the New Testament, with Reference to Tense and Mood* (New York: Peter Lang, 1989); Buist M. Fanning, *Verbal Aspect in New Testament Greek* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1990); K. L. McKay, *A New Syntax of the Verb in New Testament Greek: An Aspectual Approach* (New York: Peter Lang, 1994); Richard A. Young, *Intermediate New Testament Greek: A Linguistic and Exegetical Approach* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1994); Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar beyond the Basics* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1996); David A. Black, *It's Still Greek to Me* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1998).

49. Robert H. Gundry, *Mark: A Commentary on His Apology for the Cross* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1993); Moises Silva, *Philippians* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1993). Gundry appeals to verbal aspect for exegetical insights, at times perhaps more frequently than is justified; Silva, while thoroughly abreast of this theory, perhaps underestimates its value at several points.

50. Wallace, *Greek Grammar*.

51. In a public lecture in what was then the American Institute of Holy Land Studies (now Jerusalem University College), Jerusalem, March 1992. See also scattered remarks in several of his articles published in *Bible Translator*. This impression is reinforced by the state-of-the-art surveys by Al Wolters ("The Text of the Old Testament," in *The Face of Old Testament Studies* [ed. Baker and Arnold; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker / Leicester: Apollos, 1999] 19-37) and Karen H. Jobes and Moises Silva (*Invitation to the Septuagint* [Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 2000]).

the church of Jesus Christ at home and abroad.⁵² In some ways, I think American evangelical biblical scholars have done a better job of this, not least because a larger percentage of us teach in institutions still closely tied to the church.⁵³ But alongside all of our technical work, there still remains a crying need to be better partners with the church, not only in more often addressing its felt needs but also in helping it better to address what we believe are additional real needs.

To take just one example, I regularly teach the book of Revelation as an elective in seminary and have often taught extended series on the book for local churches. In presenting an approach that largely involves the best of Mounce, Ladd, and Beasley-Murray mixed together,⁵⁴ I rarely experience resistance, regularly receive appreciation, and always hear comments such as, "Why isn't there a popular-level work that presents all of this to balance the more-sensationalist but better-marketed books that dominate the prophecy shelves of our Christian bookstores?" One of my answers from time to time has been, "There is," at which point I recommend Robert Mounce's *What Are We Waiting For?*⁵⁵ But, sadly, its publishers have let it go out of print for the third time, at the same time that evangelical publishers are continuing to accept for publication and market hermeneutically unsound works by popular writers such as Lindsey, LaHaye, North, and their kind.⁵⁶

Despite all of this, we dare not lose sight of the academy. Here I am not sure we have done as well overall as our British counterparts in building bridges to the scholarly world in general. Again, there are numerous factors involved, but at least one of them remains the presence of a far greater percentage of seeming fundamentalists (in

52. Carl R. Trueman, "The Future of Evangelical Scholarship: A British Perspective," in *Solid Ground: Twenty-Five Years of Evangelical Theology* (ed. Carl R. Trueman, Tony W Gray, and Craig L. Blomberg; Leicester: Apollos, 2000) 291-309.

53. As I point out in "The Past, Present and Future of American Evangelical Theological Scholarship," in *ibid.*, 310-19.

54. Robert H. Mounce, *The Book of Revelation* (rev. ed.; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1997); George E. Ladd, *A Commentary on the Revelation of John* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1972); George R. Beasley-Murray, *The Book of Revelation* (London: Oliphants, 1974). To which I now must add David E. Aune's comprehensive three-volume *Revelation* (WBC 52; Dallas: Word / Nashville: Nelson, 1997-98) and Craig S. Keener's excellent NIVAC volume on *Revelation* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2000).

55. Robert Mounce, *What Are We Waiting For?* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1992).

56. Among recent works, see esp. Hal Lindsey, *Planet Earth-2000 A.D.: Will Mankind Survive?* (Palos Verdes, Calif.: Western Front, 1994); Tim F. LaHaye, *How to Study Bible Prophecy for Yourself* (Eugene, Oreg.: Harvest House, 1990); Gary North, *Millennialism and Social Theory* (Tyler, Tex.: Institute for Christian Economics, 1990).

the sense of commitment to sociological separatism) among those who attach to themselves the evangelical label in the U.S.⁵⁷ This is a problem that afflicts the ETS far more than the IBR but, given the partial overlap between the two societies, it is worth stating here, as well. To take one extreme example, it is hard to imagine a book such as Thomas and Farnell's *The Jesus Crisis* ever appearing in Britain, much less being commended by evangelical scholars as it has been by a surprising number in this country.⁵⁸ Avoiding Thomas's and Farnell's misguided separatism and regular misrepresentation of others' works, a high percentage of us need to remain committed to engaging the larger, scholarly world in contextually sensitive ways that applaud as much as possible perspectives that we do not adopt while nevertheless preserving evangelical distinctives. It still distresses me, as I speak on university campuses and receive a large volume of mail from Christian students on these campuses, how many religious studies departments in the U.S. (or their libraries) are unaware of the breadth and depth of evangelical biblical scholarship. This situation need not remain this way, as witnessed by the fact that this is an area in which our British counterparts have made considerably more progress in, at times, even less-promising contexts.

I trust that there is at least a little within these brief remarks to occupy us profitably according to our unique gifts and callings for some time to come. We can each address only a few issues in detail. However, if we each choose research projects based on what is most needed rather than merely on what we are invited to write or what will sell the best, we can make substantial progress.

57. Cf. Mark A. Noll, *Between Faith and Criticism* (rev. ed.; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1991). Most of the book deals with American culture, but pp. 62-90 focus specifically on the United Kingdom.

58. Robert L. Thomas and F. David Farnell (eds.), *The Jesus Crisis: The Inroads of Historical Criticism into Evangelical Scholarship* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Kregel, 1998). Surprising commendation included no less than the presidential address at the ETS during its annual conference in 1998, published as Norman L. Geisler, "Beware of Philosophy: A Warning to Biblical Scholars," *JETS* 42 (1999) 319.