

Theology 4.1 – Developing a Theology of Ministry

A personal Theology of Ministry for every Christian leader is developed over time as we learn more from our wondrous Lord [Biblical Literacy], as we experience Him in deeper levels of love and relational commitment [Spiritual Formation], and follow His invitation in advancing the Kingdom of God [Leadership Development]. Theology is not something you get out of a book or in an abstract academic environment. Creeds, doctrine, and such provide a helpful background for our own theological development providing guidelines that keep us centered. However, our personal theology develops as we wrestle with life issues and concepts we don't understand asking the King of Grace to help us make sense of it. This is where Biblical Literacy and Spiritual Formation merge into a flowing lifestyle. The following questions and answers are for the most part very brief, and it is not intended that these responses suffice for all that can be said about each topical question, but rather to form a more basic answer supported by Scripture for the disciple to consider, and then pursue further study as needed.

As with all theology, it begins with contemplating my identity in light of God's Identity... who God is, what He says about Himself, what He says about us, and what we begin to understand at a deeper relational level as we press into God. Along these lines, King David wrote of his own personal experience of God in Psalm 34:8-9 – O taste and see that the Lord [our God] is good! Blessed (happy, fortunate, to be envied) is the man who trusts *and* takes refuge in Him. O fear the Lord, you His saints [revere and worship Him]! For there is no want to those who truly revere *and* worship Him *with* godly fear. The Apostle Peter says this differently in 1 Peter 2:2-6 – Like newborn babies you should crave (thirst for, earnestly desire) the pure (unadulterated) spiritual milk, that by it you may be nurtured *and* grow unto [completed] salvation, since you have [already] tasted the goodness *and* kindness of the Lord. Come to Him [then, to that] Living Stone which men tried *and* threw away, but which is chosen [and] precious in God's sight. [CR: Ps. 118:22; Isa. 28:16] [Come] and, like living stones, be yourselves built [into] a spiritual house, for a holy (dedicated, consecrated) priesthood, to offer up [those] spiritual sacrifices [that are] acceptable *and* pleasing to God through Jesus Christ. For thus it stands in Scripture: Behold, I am laying in Zion a chosen (honored), precious chief Cornerstone, and he who believes in Him [who adheres to, trusts in, and relies on Him] shall never be disappointed *or* put to shame. [CR: Isa. 28:16]... above Biblical references are from the Amplified Bible.

Because our experiences are personal, with our individual relational and Biblical development occurring over time, we should expect that our personal theology will evolve. I was recently asked to express my own Theology of Ministry by answering the following 32 questions with brief Statements accompanied by relevant Scripture that forms my basic theology of ministry:

1. State your beliefs about the inspiration of scripture.

^{2Ti 3:16} All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness

The Bible is the divinely inspired Word of God, and it is the only authoritative resource for finding and knowing God. Although God preserved a witness of Himself through creation (Ps 19:1-4), humanity could not come to know God personally without God's self disclosure. The Bible is this self disclosure in the form of a love letter from God.

The Bible is not a book of science intended to reveal the secrets of creation, though

Theology 4.1 – Developing a Theology of Ministry

science has revealed and confirmed much of the truths revealed in Scripture. The Bible is a lengthy introduction to God, but it does not represent all that God is. It provides a basis for developing intimacy with God, and for maintaining health and intimacy between individuals and within the Christian Church and community. It is the authoritative basis of discipleship and church ministry.

^{2Pe 1:20-21} Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

Speaking to the question of inerrancy (without error of any kind) or infallibility (infallible in all matters of faith and practice), source criticism has demonstrated that there are some very minor inconsistencies with the existing texts we have. Though extremely minor and not affecting translation or theology, they do not meet the rigid rule of "inerrant" - meaning "without error of any kind." We can say that the original texts as written by the original inspired authors were inerrant, but we must acknowledge that those particular texts no longer exist. However, we have so many early source documents that provide great assurance of the integrity and reliability of Scripture as "The Word of God."

In all matters Scripture remains the Living Word of God and the Spirit employs it to convict, inform, edify, and illuminate through revelation God's will to the church. As ministers of the gospel, we need to give Scripture a voice and let the Spirit convict and inform, and resist making claims that we know are not entirely true solely for theological reasons. In summation, I hold to a qualified inerrant position with affirmation of an infallible position (Matt 5:17-18).

2. State your belief about the triune God.

^{Mt 11:27} "All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

^{Mt 28:19} Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

^{Jn 15:26} "When the Counselor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father, he will testify about me.

The OT authors did not have a clear understanding of Trinity, Messiah, or the Parousia [End of Time]. However, they did look forward to a time when God's rule would be established over all of creation. The OT "Shema" of Deut 6:4-5, is reprised in greater clarity in the NT "Great Commandment" of Matthew 22:35-40. The notion of Trinity became clear in the NT revelation of the Living Word, meaning the 2nd Person of the Trinity, Jesus. The OT "Shema" holds that "God is One" and the NT that God as Trinity holds of "One God in three equal Persons who are not merely "different manifestations of God" as the heresy of *Modalism* would avow, but instead is "One co-equal, eternal, and all powerful Unity."

Trinity is a mystery we cannot fully comprehend, nor are we expected to. Franciscan Friar Richard Rohr is a modern Catholic mystic who explains that "God is One as our Jewish ancestors taught... and yet the further more subtle level is that this *Oneness* is in fact, the radical love union between three completely distinct *Persons* of the Trinity." Looking back at

the OT from a NT perspective, we can see that the Trinity is revealed throughout Scripture... even at Creation where “the Spirit is hovering above the water.” Personally, I don’t think we should be surprised that God has an unfathomable richness and depth that reason cannot penetrate. When I conceptualize God as Trinity, it is useful for me to think of Trinity as “Creator, Friend, and Companion”... the latter names being what Jesus revealed to His disciples.

God is the Father of Creation including the angels and humanity (Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7; Luke 3:38). Jesus as Son & Friend is the sole mediator between God and humanity (Matt 11:27; John 5:22; 8:58; 10:30, 38; 14:9; 16:28). The Spirit as ‘Paraclete’ and ‘Comforter’ (John 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:5) is also an expression of God’s power... such as ‘hand of God’ (Ps 19:1; 102:25) and ‘word of God’ (Ps 33:6; 147:15, 18), and ‘wisdom of God’ (Ex 28:3; 1 Kings 3:28; Job 32:8). The Spirit is also known as the ‘Spirit of prophecy’ as all of God’s people are ultimately inspired by God through the Spirit who indwells all believers (John 7:38) guiding them to ‘Truth’ (John 16:18).

<http://www.authenticdiscipleship.org/pdfs/3-leadership-dev/LD%20-%206.1%20-%20Discipleship%20Studies%20-%20Who%20is%20God.pdf>

3. State your beliefs about the deity of Christ.

Jn 1:1-4 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was [and is] the light of men.

Jesus is God incarnate, the Messiah of Israel, the Savior of humanity, and the Lord of Creation. His Deity is hard-wired into the fabric of creation... as the day of His birth and death were written into the stars which gave testimony to Him. Any faith that has any sort of a lesser view of Jesus is not Christian. Jesus came to earth as the “lamb of God” to take away the sin of the world, and He will return as “the Lion of Judah” at the end of time and judge the world. Jesus demonstrated His deity by the witness of creation – His birth written in the Stars (Mat 2:2) and confirmed by the testimony of the Angels (Luke 2:9-14). Messiah Jesus proved His deity in demonstrating through His miraculous occurrences His power over creation, over the realm of the Spirit, and ultimately over sin and death itself.

<http://www.authenticdiscipleship.org/pdfs/3-leadership-dev/LD%20-%206.2%20-%20Discipleship%20Studies%20-%20Jesus'%20Mission%20of%20Redemption.pdf>

4. State your beliefs regarding the virgin birth of Christ and its importance.

Isa 7:14 Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.

Mt 1:23 “The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel”—which means, “God with us.”

Jn 1:29 The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!

The virgin birth of Jesus is not merely a prophecy fulfilled; it is a fundamental theological necessity. Being fathered by the Spirit means that Jesus is of the “same substance” as the Father, and this was a necessary requirement for Him to be God’s accepted

propitiation [sacrifice to eradicate the sin-curse] (John 1:29, 36; Rom 3:21-25) as only God is without sin... a necessary component to enable Him to take away the sin of the world. It is heresy to profess that Jesus was born only man and became God at the baptism of John as some would profess. Mary was a betrothed but unmarried virgin... most likely a young girl not quite of marrying age – age 13-14 was when young women and men were considered “of age” and personally accountable as adults and took their place in the Jewish community. Mary’s young virgin status meant that because she was not the “age of accountability” when Jewish youths took their position as adults within their community, also meant that Jesus was not born with the sin-curse that all humanity from their earthly father.

5. State your beliefs regarding the nature, form, and importance of Christ’s resurrection.

Jn 11:25 Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies;

RO 1:3-5 concerning His Son, who was born of a descendant of David according to the flesh, who was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead, according to the Spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ our Lord, and who through the Spirit of holiness was declared with power to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord. If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection.

AC 2:29-33 “Brethren, I may confidently say to you regarding the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. “And so, because he was a prophet and knew that GOD HAD SWORN TO HIM WITH AN OATH TO SEAT *one* OF HIS DESCENDANTS ON HIS THRONE, he looked ahead and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that HE WAS NEITHER ABANDONED TO HADES, NOR DID His flesh SUFFER DECAY. “This Jesus God raised up again, to which we are all witnesses. “Therefore having been exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured forth this which you both see and hear.”

1CO 15:20-23 But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep. For since by a man *came* death, by a man also *came* the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ’s at His coming

The resurrection of Jesus is a foundational component of Christian theology. If Jesus was not resurrected, then our confidence in Jesus being who He claimed to be and our hope of our own personal bodily resurrection has no basis. Christian faith hinges on 1)the reality of Jesus’ bodily resurrection; 2)His return to heaven as the Victorious Lamb of God; and 3)His 2nd coming at the end of the age as the Lion of Judah. Our hope holds that “as He is, so we shall be also” (1 John 3:2). Jesus is the “first fruit” of the resurrection... we will be the next.

Jesus 1st coming was about the Spiritual redemption of humanity, and the re-establishment of relational intimacy and access with God. His 2nd coming is about the redemption of Creation... and our place in it is secured by faith in Jesus and guaranteed by His resurrection and the indwelling Spirit set free in believers since Pentecost.

6. State your beliefs about who the Holy Spirit is.

Mt 28:19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit....

Jn 15:26 “When the Counselor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father, he will testify about me.

1Co 2:11 For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man’s spirit within him? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.

The Spirit is the 3rd Person of the Trinity... equally eternal and almighty God. The Spirit binds all of creation together, and integrates the Organic unity of believers through the ages into the mystical “Body of Christ” which is the Church. “Church” capitalized refers to the organism that is the Body of Christ, while “church” lowercase is the institutional organization where the Church meets. The attached is a reflection study I included on the Person and ministry of the Spirit:

a. The Spirit helps us speak when we are in precarious situations and need to bear witness.

Mk 13:11 Whenever you are arrested and brought to trial, do not worry beforehand about what to say. Just say whatever is given you at the time, for it is not you speaking, but the Holy Spirit

Lk 12:11-12 “When you are brought before synagogues, rulers and authorities, do not worry about how you will defend yourselves or what you will say, for the Holy Spirit will teach you at that time what you should say.”

b. Reminds us of what we need to know and remember. He is our comforter, our advisor, our encourager, and our strength. He guides us in the way we should go.

Ac 9:31 Then the church throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria enjoyed a time of peace. It was strengthened; and encouraged by the Holy Spirit; it grew in numbers, living in the fear of the Lord.

Ac 13:2 While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.”

Ac 15:28 It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us not to burden you with anything beyond the following requirements:

1Co 2:9 However, as it is written: “No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him” —

1Co 2:10 but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God.

1Co 2:11-12 For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man’s spirit within him? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us.

c. Through the Spirit we receive power to be God’s witnesses to the ends of the earth. It

Theology 4.1 – Developing a Theology of Ministry

is the Spirit who draws people to the Gospel, the Spirit who equips us with the strength we need to accomplish God’s purposes. The Spirit not only initially draws people to God, He also draws believers closer to Jesus.

Ac 1:8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

Ro 8:26-27 In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God’s will.

Eph 3:16-19 I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

- d. By the power of the Spirit we put to death the misdeeds of the body. The Spirit sets us free from the sins we cannot get rid of on our own. This is a lifelong process we entered into in partnership with the Spirit when we first believed.**

Ro 8:1-4 Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man, in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit.

- e. Through the Spirit we have received adoption as children, which leads us into intimacy with God. This has replaced our former state of being based on fear and slavery to sin. The Spirit bears witness to us that we are His children.**

Ro 8:12-17 Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation—but it is not to the sinful nature, to live according to it. For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live, because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, “Abba, Father.” The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

- f. The Spirit convicts people of sin. He does this both before we initially enter into relationship with God and as we journey through this life as believers.**

Jn 16:7-11 But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment: in

Theology 4.1 – Developing a Theology of Ministry

regard to sin, because men do not believe in me; in regard to righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; and in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned.

- g. The Spirit brings life and freedom. Where the Spirit is there is freedom, not bondage or slavery. In our world that is plagued with sin and death, this is a profound truth that points to real hope.**

Ro 8:8-11 Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God. You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ. But if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness. And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you.

2Co 3:17-18 Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

- h. By the power of the Spirit we abound with hope because our God is a God of hope, who fills His children with all peace and joy.**

Ro 15:13 May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

- i. As members of God's Kingdom community, each of us is given a manifestation of the Spirit in our lives for the purpose of the common good. We all have something to offer in advancing the Kingdom of God because the Spirit equips us.**

1Co 12:4-7 There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men. Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.

- j. The fruit of being led by the Spirit includes love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. These attitudes and resultant actions will characterize our lives as we allow ourselves to be grown and molded by the Spirit.**

2Co 3:17-18 Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

Gal 5:22-25 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.

7. State your beliefs about how man came into existence, his original nature and what it means to be created in the image of God.

I was initially a pre-med and later an anthropology major in my undergraduate years. I had an identity crisis that forced me to rethink academics and came to the realization as a non-Christian that evolution as a process is both feasible and reasonable, but as an explanation of how creation and humanity came into being it was completely unsupportable and necessitated a greater leap of faith than believing the creation narrative in Scripture. As you look closely into the laws of science, they do not support the ‘cosmic chance’ approach that evolution purports. A close look into the physical realm demonstrates order, purpose, symmetry and intentional design. The laws governing physics and chemistry demonstrate that molecules always move from complex into their simpler forms. This is the natural progression in nature, and the reverse occurs only when forced under duress and un-natural circumstances. To presume that evolution through chaos and cosmic chance adequately explains reality as we know it is ridiculous and scientifically dishonest.

In regards to the Biblical creation story, I learned in seminary studying hermeneutics that Genesis chapter 1 is written in the genre of poetry, and chapter 2 in narrative. This is particularly interesting because the result is to provide a “stereoscopic view” of the creation story. Poetry of course, communicates by engaging our emotions with imagery. Narrative by allowing us to get caught up into the story development. Thus the Genesis account is radically different from all other creation stories, demonstrating profound insight and creativity well ahead of the time in which it was written.

A dramatic difference between Genesis and other creation stories is how God [YAWEH] “Spoke creation into existence, thereby creating order out of chaos (*bohuw* and *tohuw* – formless and empty).” In all other creation stories, some mythical god formed the cosmos out of the body of another prehistoric god. YAWEH demonstrates His power by creating through the spoken Word... speaking it into existence.

I hold to the position of “intelligent design” which incidentally was formulated by scientists on a retreat at Pajaro Dunes in Monterey Bay, CA. These scientists reasoned that Creation bears the fingerprints of a Creator, but stopped short of naming the Creator. Rather than getting bogged down in an “old earth vs new earth” argument, as a Spiritual scientist I have reasoned that since God is Spirit He doesn’t need creation for His existence. Humanity on the other hand, requires the material world in which to exist. Meaning that God created earth (and creation in general) as a place for humanity to live. The Garden of Eden is the place where Heaven and earth come into juxtaposition... where humanity and God could relationally interact. Hence, the purpose of creation is relational development of humanity with God.

Humanity having been made in the Image of God (*Imago Dei*) is an interesting concept. Most evangelicals would agree that this means we share characteristics and attributes that God possesses. Hence, we are creative because God is creative, and we are relational because God is relational, etc. The same holds for a host of such aspects including mercy, love, kindness, patience, etc. Most evangelicals would also agree that God possesses all of these aspects in perfect completion and expression and perfectly balanced at all times. Thus God’s love and mercy is balanced with His righteousness and justice, etc. While

humanity's expression of each is both incomplete and unbalanced in the best of times. God pronounced that humanity was created "Good" as was all of creation as a material reflection of the Goodness of God.

The contentious part of Imago Dei for Christians has to do with what remains of the original "good" of the created order in humanity. Our fallen state introduced death and relational divides vertically between each of us and God, as well as horizontally with one-another. This prevents us from experiencing reality as we were originally intended. The crucial question is what (if anything) remains of the original created order in humanity, and how well do we now express it? While we retain many aspects of God's attributes, in our fallen state they are truncated, imperfect, and unbalanced. My theology professor Dr Jeff Louie put it this way, "The state of humanity is similar to a car wreck. Imagine that a person has driven off a cliff and crashed at the bottom. They are at a place where we can't get to them. Yet they can see us and respond in some fashion by waving at us. We observe that they are mortally wounded, but they remain responsive yet unable to help themselves. The more delusional say they are OK and will be up in a while. The more honest say they desperately need help."

8. State the result when Adam and Eve sinned in the garden and its effect on the human race.

Ge 3:14-15 So the LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, "Cursed are *you* above all the livestock and all the wild animals! You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life. And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel."

Satan knew what he was doing when he tempted and deceived humanity, and Adam & Eve thought they knew what they were doing when they accepted Satan's challenge and ate the apple. The account shows that Satan's rebellion preceded humanity's disobedience. The harshness of the penalty against Satan is evident in that he was cursed directly, with his demise assured with the "crushing of his head" which is a fatal blow to be delivered by Messiah, while the "strike on the heel" Messiah would receive is merely a wounding.

Ge 3:16 To the woman he said, "I will greatly increase your pains in childbearing; with pain you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you."

Where man and woman were created to complete one another and balance one another in ruling creation, the Fall brought tension between them and the idyllic life on Earth in Eden in the presence of God had come to an end. God is not cruel or capricious... and His judgments of punishment always are accompanied with hope. I believe that the increase of pain the woman would endure reflect the pain that Messiah would endure on the cross in accomplishing the spiritual redemption of humanity. It is also reflective of what creation endures awaiting the Parousia and the material redemption of creation as a reflection of the child birthing process.

Ro 8:22-23 We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit [Spiritual redemption], groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies [material redemption].

Theology 4.1 – Developing a Theology of Ministry

It is not accidental that Paul uses this analogy to explain the painful transition to the new Heaven & earth. As a woman forgets the pain of birth for the joy of the resultant offspring born, so it would be with Jesus' pain on the cross and the wonder of resurrection compared to the redemption of humanity and the wonder of the new creation He will bring about. These are experiential images Scripture employs that draw us into a deeper truth, and we live in the tension of the "now and not yet" – having received the Grace of Spiritual redemption, and awaiting the coming Grace of material redemption.

Ge 3:17-19 To Adam he said, "Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, 'You must not eat of it,' "Cursed is the *ground* because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are made from, and to dust you will return."

There is a direct and an indirect part of God's judgment here – man is directly judged that he will suffer futility and struggle in survival. Where man and creation were intended to exist in an idyllic state of balance and fulfillment, the Fall changed all that. As with the judgment on Eve, the indirect judgment of "struggle and futility" is an experiential image of what God and Messiah would have to suffer to bring humanity back into the idyllic state. Both man and woman in their own way would experience on earth some of what God would experience in remedying the Fallen state.

Where Satan was directly cursed for his sin, Adam and Eve are indirectly cursed... with the ground being cursed instead of humanity. If man were cursed directly, then he would be subject to the same destruction as Satan. God's grace saw Satan as most responsible and humanity as erringly complicit. This is a wondrous aspect of God's grace. God would ultimately solve the problem that Satan despicably caused with humanity's complicity wresting the kingdom of earth from humanity's rightful rule to Satan's rule. God would ultimately win it back and Messiah Jesus rule it with humanity. Hard... but wondrous.

A final thought about this is what would have happened if God allowed Adam and Eve to eat the fruit of the tree of life? Logically, they would have lived forever in their fallen state... a horrible occurrence. Thus in God's economy, it is preferential for man to suffer and die knowing redemption would ultimately be provided, rather than allowing him to live forever in his fallen sinful state. God would Himself bear the brunt of reconciliation. This is a wondrous aspect of grace we don't hear much about.

9. What is the nature of unregenerate man?

Ro 1:18-29 The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness, since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made [general revelation], so that men are without excuse. For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images

Theology 4.1 – Developing a Theology of Ministry

made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles. Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen. Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion. Furthermore, since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, he gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done. They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity.

Humanity is lost and helpless to redeem themselves apart from the Grace of God.

Completing the thought from the question #7 above, the contentious part of Imago Dei comes down to what really remains of the Image of God in humanity in light of the Fall? The most conservative (the far right of conservative theologians) would argue that humanity is so fallen and depraved that nothing representing God’s good remains. Chapters 1-11 of Genesis and chapters 1-3 of Acts are an apt chronicle of the fall of humanity into ever increasing decadence and depravity.

In the most conservative Fundamentalist/Calvinist theology, God must initiate all contact, all response, and all progress to move a person toward salvation and sanctification. In this theological camp, humanity adds nothing to the process. The difficulty here is that since God is completely in control of each person’s spiritual life or death, that He is by default essentially relegated to the author of evil as well as life. According to this thought process if humanity has no choice [free will] and God decrees everything including the “footsteps of a caterpillar across a leaf” then we must conclude that God creates some people just to occupy hell. A difficult proposition at best.

The more moderate “middle right” of conservative theologians would argue that something yet remains of humanity being God Breathed that enables us to hear God and respond to Him... as the person in the car crash analogy we discussed in question 7 above. We are unquestionably fallen & lost in sin... resulting in our being damaged, dying, and worthy of condemnation, but something remains that reflects God [Imago Dei] and that quickens to life when we hear the Word taught and which opens our hearts to God as the Spirit calls us.

This issue is important, because although God is certainly free and able to condemn all of humanity, He hasn’t. He is equally free to save all of humanity... essentially electing everyone, but He hasn’t. There is a tension in the unregenerate heart that is disposed toward hell, but there is also a dimension that is inclined toward Heaven. God’s redemptive grace in Jesus is the necessary bridge... but humanity has a necessary responsibility of choice to accept God’s grace on His terms. In other words, the most conservative would argue that humanity lacks free will, and there is nothing we can do to help or hinder God’s sovereign will. The more moderate would argue that humanity has an independent free will function... we are not merely an “automaton” incapable of loving, honoring or serving God volitionally. I believe that God has taken all the initiative in providing Grace and seeking us out, but humanity necessarily must respond in faith to accept it and apply it to our life. In other words, humanity has a role to play... we can help or hinder God’s work in ourselves and in the

world in general. Because we have the right and responsibility to choose, we also bear the responsibility for the choices we have made.

10. What provision has been made for man's redemption?

Ro 2:12-13 All who sin apart from the law will also perish apart from the law, and all who sin under the law will be judged by the law. For it is not those who hear the law who are righteous in God's sight, but it is those who obey the law who will be declared righteous.

God made the provision of the Old Testament [AKA Old Covenant] "Law of Moses" as a custodian for humanity until Messiah came. The Law had its purpose to provide a standard acceptable to God for our character [heart], our thought process [mind], and our actions [works or behavior]. The Law was definitive in being capable to convict humanity when we fell short, but the Law itself offered no power for humanity to live a life pleasing to God. The Gospel of Grace in Jesus was the necessary provision to redeem humanity.

RO 3:21-25a But now apart from the Law *the* righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even *the* righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith.

Jesus is God's Messiah and is the vehicle that God provided to redeem humanity. Jesus is the only sure way to Heaven and peace with God (John 14:6; Rom 14:11; Phil 2:10). God has been very gracious to humanity, knowing that we couldn't find God on our own and certainly would never know how to please God on our own... God presented us with His personal Self-disclosure in the Bible, providing the appropriate remedy for securing salvation in Jesus, and in securing ongoing sanctification in the Spirit. It is compelling that God as Father, Friend and Companion are each completely vested in accomplishing the redemption of humanity, and our progressive sanctification. Wondrous!

11. What are the conditions for receiving salvation?

Ro 10:8b-10 "The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart," that is, the word of faith we are proclaiming: That if you confess 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 confess and are saved.

Phil 2:12-15 Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose. Do everything without complaining or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe

Jesus is Savior and Lord... as Savior he is the propitiation we accept by faith. Saving faith involves 5 components: 1) conviction by the Spirit, 2) remorse for my own failures and offense to God, 3) repentance that I desire to live differently, 4) restoration or restitution for the harm I've committed when appropriate, and 5) being reconciled to God. This is what forgiveness is all about and leads to our desiring in living according to the Spirit. Jesus is Lord

Theology 4.1 – Developing a Theology of Ministry

meaning we submit and obey Him in living out our faith. Saving faith is receiving the Grace God has already provided, accepting it as He has offered it in faith and gratitude, and then applying it by faith in my life. In my theology, saving grace involves knowing and loving God... it comes down to the Great Commandment – loving God and others; and the Great Commission – the going of evangelism and the teaching and training of discipleship.

Receiving and progressing in faith is not a passive matter... God has done the heavy lifting in providing the Way of grace, but humanity has a part to play in both accepting and continuing to respond in obedience to God by faith. In recent years much of modern evangelism has centered on a personal appeal to convince someone emotionally or intellectually they need Jesus, resulting in a formulaic or legal pattern for securing salvation. As my brother-in-law (Bob) once commented “If you can talk someone into being a Christian, someone else can talk them out of it.” Bob is absolutely right. People need to be challenged with the reality of Christianity... the Word needs to be preached. People need to see the truth of Christianity expressed in our individual life; and they need to respond to it when they have been convicted. Many theologians argue that there are 2 aspects involved in genuine faith – an initial introduction and provisional response to Jesus, and a crisis experience where we surrender to Jesus as our Lord. Jesus needs to become both 1) Savior and 2) Lord in our life.

Faith needs to be lived out in our life as a living witness. A mere recitation of a formulaic response without inner conviction and resultant character transformation is fruitless and possibly harmful as we promulgate what Dietrich Bonhoeffer called “Cheap Grace.” For faith to be real it requires the conviction of the Spirit to precede confession of faith. I believe that much of our anemic faith these days is a result of well intentioned believers, preaching cheap grace. Where people are encouraged to accept God as an “insurance policy” to escape the reality of hell, rather than realizing the wonderful restorative truth of Grace in our life now as well as in eternity that is surely coming. Too often people are immunized with enough Christianity to see glimpses of heaven, but not transformed as obedient sons or daughters to live there. My son has spoken of this reality in places such as India where desperate people respond to the call by the thousands, but since there is no one remaining after the revival preachers leave to disciple the new believers, and they fall back into their old pattern of life. Many respond over and over again hoping the follow up will take affect.

For salvation to be real, there must be an honest conviction of our need for Grace leading to remorse and repentance (a desire to do things differently) and obedience to Jesus as Lord. Ultimately, the necessary transformative conditions are a heart convicted of their need laid prostrate before the Savior, leading to a profession of submission and surrender to the Lordship of Jesus, and a life being lived out as a “Living Sacrifice” to God. There may be many paths to get to this point, but I believe this process is a requisite necessity. Then we need mature disciples to continue vesting into the lives of these new believers by discipling them into maturity.

12. Describe what it means to be a fully devoted follower of Christ.

A dedicated follower must come to dependent and obedient trust in Jesus as Savior

Theology 4.1 – Developing a Theology of Ministry

and Lord... no longer living a life for your own benefit, but laying down the right to yourself in dependent humble obedience.

Mt 19:16-26 Now a man came up to Jesus and asked, "Teacher, what good thing must I do to get eternal life?" "Why do you ask me about what is good?" Jesus replied. "There is only One who is good. If you want to enter life, obey the commandments." "Which ones?" the man inquired. Jesus replied, " 'Do not murder, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not give false testimony, honor your father and mother,' and 'love your neighbor as yourself.' " "All these I have kept," the young man said. "What do I still lack?" Jesus answered, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me." When the young man heard this, he went away sad, because he had great wealth. Then Jesus said to his disciples, "I tell you the truth, it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." When the disciples heard this, they were greatly astonished and asked, "Who then can be saved?" Jesus looked at them and said, "With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."

Discipleship is not merely knowing the truth 'about' God, but rather it is transformational relationship with God through the Spirit. This involves coming to the end of reliance upon yourself, and coming upon reliance in Jesus. The story of the rich young ruler above indicates that he realized there was something more than what he had and that Jesus could offer it. This man had relied on the Law which had no power to transform. Jesus knew what held the man back and offered an amazing solution. The man was invited but not compelled by inner conviction sufficiently to overcome his desire of material blessings. Intriguingly the disposition of the man is left open with the possibility that all things are possible with God. Where the rich young ruler represents the difficulty coming to faith with abundance of material wealth, the story of the thief on the cross is the opposite... the simplicity of coming to the end of yourself and submitting unconditionally to Jesus.

Lk 23:39-43 One of the criminals who hung there [crucified along with Jesus] hurled insults at him: "Aren't you the Christ? Save yourself and us!" But the other criminal [also crucified with them] rebuked him. "Don't you fear God," he said, "since you are under the same sentence? We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong." Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." Jesus answered him, "I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise."

The Great Commission sums up our efforts as evangelism [the going and preaching], and discipleship [the training up of followers] as the necessary work of Jesus disciples. A true follower is a disciple of Jesus. My own working definition of Christian Discipleship:

"Christian Discipleship is a quest fueled by a hunger to know God more intimately, a desire for Spiritual Holiness, and a thirst for Spiritual Water. It is an individual being progressively transformed into the character and likeness of Jesus. This transformation is a process that involves both mind and heart, and results in a profound love of God, the desire to live a life pleasing to God, and the desire to serve God and advance His purposes. It is the deliberate submersion of the self in Christ with living evidence of spiritual fruit developing in my life [Gal 5:19-23].

In this context, disciples are Spirit dependent, intentionally growing, consciously reproducing, and fully committed followers of Jesus Christ who live life in community

Theology 4.1 – Developing a Theology of Ministry

where expectations, responsibilities, and hope are defined and experienced. Discipleship contains components of vertical relational interaction [between the disciple and God], and horizontal relational interaction [between disciples within community]. Discipleship is the deliberate and purposeful discipline of the mind and heart in dependent cooperation with the Spirit, where spiritual formation and personal transformation occurs. It is a process where Jesus is being formed in the inner being where our life increasingly demonstrates His presence and priorities. It is not mere knowledge or wisdom. It is an integrated lifestyle based on a disciplined mind equipped with Biblical Truth [Biblical Literacy], coupled with a tender heart that loves God that longs to be with Him [Spiritual formation], and then purposefully and willingly does what pleases Him [leadership development].”

Christian discipleship is a very high calling. While we cannot expect immature believers to live completely and consistently accordingly, I believe we do a disservice to these young believers and our Lord when we dumb down the process, lower the threshold so any can step over it, and fail to keep our eyes on the whole process of sanctification providing a discipling standard worth reaching and living for. In other words, Scripture has a great expansive view of God and Grace... we need to teach it and challenge each other to live it accordingly.

Phil 2:1-8 If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross!

13. State your view regarding the assurance of salvation for the believer.

Phil 1:6 being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

Phil 2:12-13 Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.

Once one has genuinely responded and committed themselves by faith to Jesus, God takes the initiative and guarantees the work He began will be completed. As we work out our faith responding in obedience, we cooperate with God who continues His work of sanctification within each believer in a way personal to them. Perseverance in faith believing is cooperating with what God is already at work doing. I believe such genuine faith is secured by God’s promise. Those who fall away and cease to follow Jesus fall into one of two camps – either they never really genuinely committed to Jesus, or they have fallen away only for a time. I do not believe that God will allow a true believer to continue always in ongoing sin,

but will bring them back to faith or will call them home. I believe that what is begun by God and received by faith will necessarily be completed by the Spirit.

Ro 5:1-5 Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.

14. State your view regarding apostasy and the possibility of a believer forfeiting salvation.

Completing the thought started above, I believe that a true believer may willfully ignore the Spirit for a time living in apostasy, but I do not believe they can remain there. Once the Spirit has indwelt a true believer, He will pressure the individual mercifully to return them to walking in faith. Thus, those who seemingly fail or fall away either never truly became part of the covenant community of faith, or turn their backs on God for a time. The last alternative for one who has made an honest profession of faith and has been sealed by the Spirit, is that God will let them continue only so far in sinning until either the Spirit convicts them and they change, or they are called home.

1Co 5:9-13 I have written you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people— not at all meaning the people of this world who are immoral, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters. In that case you would have to leave this world. But now I am writing you that you must not associate with anyone who calls himself a brother but is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or a slanderer, a drunkard or a swindler. With such a man do not even eat. What business is it of mine to judge those outside the church? Are you not to judge those inside? God will judge those outside. “Expel the wicked man from among you.”

While this may sound harsh, it is a form of tough love. By expelling the affirmed deviant we call attention to the standard of faith. Being so expelled is hopefully a wakeup call, and those who have been genuinely saved will be convicted by the Spirit and will return to the community of faith... or be called home. The standards of faith, trust, and character in the community of faith are high, and we do a disservice when we punitively judge those who are trying but failing and floundering, and a disservice when we forgive without consequence deliberate wrong doing. As a form of “tough love” this takes much prayer, wisdom, and discernment... but needs to be done and expressed in love. The intent should always be exercised with an intent on restoration.

15. State your understanding of Scriptural Sanctification both positionally and experientially.

Ro 12:1-2 Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

EPH 3:14-19 For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on

Theology 4.1 – Developing a Theology of Ministry

earth derives its name, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; *and* that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God.

EPH 4:11-13 And He gave some *as* apostles, and some *as* prophets, and some *as* evangelists, and some *as* pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.

The notion of sanctification that Paul expresses is not passive, rather it is active. Each believer shoulders their responsibility to submit to God and walk with Jesus' in submission and dependence, and to submit to each other for the purpose of mutual edification and transformation. I see this as a threefold process: 1) the first aspect involves "Biblical Literacy" where the mind of Christ is being developed within the believer. Strengthening the mind by grounding it in Scriptural truth is a foundational discipleship requirement. 2) The second involves "Spiritual Formation" where the heart of Christ is being developed within the believer. Knowing the truth is a great help, but Satan and the demons knew this, but they didn't love and submit to God. Spiritual Formation is transformational precisely because it is accomplished by loving God and experiencing His great love for me. 3) The third involves being committed to "Leadership Development" where one is engaged in the Mission of Christ as stated in the Great Commandment and the Great Commission. Discipleship is therefore and integrated combination of knowing, loving, and serving God... this is the basis of "Authentic Discipleship" and is the crux of my ministry.

Sanctification begins with the indwelling of the Spirit who leads us into truth and knowledge and love. It is however a process that continues throughout our life and will not be completed this side of Heaven. Only then when we're kneeling before Jesus in eternity will we truly know and understand being known. In the meantime, we have a choice to cooperate with what the Spirit is doing in sanctifying us, or ignoring Him or even frustrating Him. The good news is that He does not give up on us, but will complete what He has begun (Phil 1:6). I have experienced God's sanctifying grace throughout my Christian walk, but God has really done a new work in me through my seminary experience. I have discovered a depth of God's love far greater than any I knew before as I have seen His pursuing humanity in love in spite of the depths of our unloveliness. Experiencing greater depths of God's mercy and grace makes loving Him easier. Realizing how much greater God is makes obedience and dependence upon Him easier. As our vision of the greatness of God and the depth of His love grows, it relationally draws us "further up and further in" in the words of Aslan from C.S. Lewis' Chronicles of Narnia The Last Battle.

16. State your understanding of the ministry of the Holy Spirit in relation to the believer.

Jn 16:7-16 But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt

Theology 4.1 – Developing a Theology of Ministry

in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment: in regard to sin, because men do not believe in me; in regard to righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; and in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned. “I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you. All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you. “In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me.”

^{Gal 5:22-25} But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.

The ministry of the Spirit is a wondrous mystery... the John 16:7-16 passage above speaks loudest about what the Spirit will accomplish, and the Galatians 5:22-25 speaks to what will be observable of His presence in committed disciples. I think we do a disservice to believers by not teaching and preaching the balanced investment of Father [literally “Daddy”], Friend and Companion in each believer’s life. The encouragement of spiritual formation exploration of the relationship with God is a very healthy thing. Spiritual coaching (I prefer coaching to direction) helps disciples look for evidence of the Spirit and hearing His voice in our walk with God. This is critical to ameliorate the anemic Christian experience which results from a moralistic Christian legalism that is so prevalent in the church. The Spirit’s ministry in us is not merely behavioral modification, or moralistic conformance. The Spirit’s ministry is nothing short of a radical transformation, where Jesus’ nature, character, and values emerge in our life. We need a higher calling and expectation of our personal encounter with God.

17. State your understanding of the gifts the Holy Spirit bestows and how He distributes them.

^{1CO 12:1-11} Now concerning spiritual *gifts*, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware. You know that when you were pagans, *you were* led astray to the mute idols, however you were led. Therefore I make known to you that no one speaking by the Spirit of God says, “Jesus is accursed”; and no one can say, “Jesus is Lord,” except by the Holy Spirit. Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are varieties of ministries, and the same Lord. There are varieties of effects, but the same God who works all things in all *persons*. But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. For to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, and to another the word of knowledge according to the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit, and to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, and to another the effecting of miracles, and to another prophecy, and to another the distinguishing of spirits, to another *various* kinds of tongues, and to another the interpretation of tongues. But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as He wills.

^{1CO 12:28-31} And God has appointed in the church, first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, *various* kinds of tongues. All are not apostles, are

Theology 4.1 – Developing a Theology of Ministry

they? All are not prophets, are they? All are not teachers, are they? All are not *workers of miracles*, are they? All do not have gifts of healings, do they? All do not speak with tongues, do they? All do not interpret, do they? But earnestly desire the greater gifts.

1CO 13:13-14:4 But now faith, hope, love, abide... these three; but the greatest of these is love. Pursue love, yet desire earnestly spiritual *gifts*, but especially that you may prophesy. For one who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God; for no one [else] understands, but in *his* spirit he speaks mysteries. But one who prophesies speaks to men for edification and exhortation and consolation. One who speaks in a tongue edifies himself; but one who prophesies edifies the church.

When each person comes to transformational faith in Jesus, with the indwelling of the Spirit comes gifts to enable the disciple to carry on with the mission of Christ. I think that those who come to faith young are blessed by having their hearts and minds formed in Christ from a young age, but they often aren't as aware of the change that the Spirit makes in those He indwells. I was 24 when I came to transformational faith, and I am very aware of gifts I did not possess before. Before I met Jesus, I was not a leader or a teacher. Nor did I have any particular administrative or organizational giftedness. I did not possess the gifts of strategic organizational thinking and planning. In addition to these giftings, before I met Jesus I had also lacked intuitive perception and spiritual discernment. All of these giftings came after I met Jesus and my life was changed. While the awareness of gifting is such a blessing, I am also aware that I have had experiences before coming to Christ that have created stumbling blocks for me... they are excess baggage I now carry that I could probably have been freed from. The question is... which is better? In reality they are both grace... and my experiences have produced in me the person that I am that God can uniquely use. Gifts are useful... but transformational grace is everything.

Because it is often difficult to know what is going on in the heart of others, when it comes to faith and gifts I think we try to force everyone through the same theological or experiential pattern, when in reality our calling and gifting is as unique as our DNA. I believe effective discipleship engages the mind and heart of the disciple... grounding them in spirit-truth and relational-dependency upon God, and the Spirit moves us accordingly to complete the work He began in us and intends to complete through us. Grace is not a one-size-fits-all programmatic process, but rather a wondrous personal experience of discovery and adventure.

18. What other ways does the Holy Spirit reveal Himself in a believer?

Joel 2:28 “And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions.”

Ac 2:17 “ ‘In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams.’ “

Heb 4:12-13 For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

Theology 4.1 – Developing a Theology of Ministry

Another aspect of the Spirit's activity in disciples in addition to the gifts, the conviction, discernment, revelation and illumination the Spirit brings, is to become caught up into the heart of God in accomplishing His purpose. In preparing and equipping us, God often employs visions and dreams to stretch our minds and sensitize our hearts. And one of the coolest things is when we start discussing what we are hearing from God with other disciples and they affirm they are hearing something similar. It is such a blessing and a joy to find ourselves caught up with what God is doing in His Kingdom. It is fundamentally important to be grounded with "normative revelation" which is Scripture... the only authoritative revelation we can all agree upon, knowing what is true and reliable in Biblical doctrine keeps us from going off in tangents and doing that which God has not called us into. It is important to be in God's Word through which He can shape our minds and hearts in preparation for His "non-normative" revelations.

What can be known about God? It is limited to what He has revealed about Himself. It is limited also to our ability to properly hear, understand, and apply what He has revealed. Perception is foundational for believing – misperception inevitably equates with misunderstanding. It is limited to our personal knowledge and experience of His revelation. The principal element in all revelation – is God Himself. God engages us through the revelations He has provided – General Revelation [creation] and Special Revelation [Scripture]. The point of revelation is in initiating relational intimacy with God, not merely providing knowledge about Him.

What do we accept as "approved knowledge" about God? Only what His authoritative revelation [Scripture] has clearly revealed about Himself. What have the scriptures revealed? Attributes of God – are those perfect qualities or characteristics revealed about God, and the names of God – attest to these aspects of His Nature. The Spirit's ministry is to reveal God, convict us of sin, lead us into God's Truth, and maturing us in the life-long process of Sanctification where Jesus is being formed in my "inner-life." The Spirit and the Word reveal:

- a. Incommunicable Attributes of God: these are attributes that are true only of God, and there are no analogies we can relate to from a common experience.
 - i. God is Spirit – He has no material body. The word spirit means 'wind'. [John 3:6-8; 4:24]
 - ii. God is One – Unity of God – there is only One God, and there is no other like Him [Isa 44:8]
 - iii. God is Eternal – He has no beginning or end [Ps 102:25-27]
 - iv. God is Independent – God does not owe His existence upon anyone or anything else.
 - v. God is Infinite – There are no limits to His existence.
 - vi. God is Immutable – He does not change Ps 102:27]
 - vii. God has Sovereign Will, which be done – God desires certain things to occur and not others; He requires certain actions to occur and not others. These are

Theology 4.1 – Developing a Theology of Ministry

expressions of His Will.

1. **Determinative Sense** – God causes things to happen out of His Sovereign Right. [Eph 1:11]
 2. **Permissive Sense** – God allows something's to happen that are not in conflict with His will [Acts 2:23]
 3. **Prescriptive Sense** – in which He expresses His desire for specific response from His creatures which is not forced or coerced [Ps 143:10]
- b. **Communicable Attributes of God:** these are attributes of God that humanity has in some lesser measure as a reflection of having been created in the Image of God – Imago Dei... thus we can relate to these. Only God has these in perfect measure; we express these attributes inconsistently, incompletely, and unbalanced.
- i. **God is Powerful** – He has a Will and the complete Capacity to exercise it. [Ps 115:3; Rev 1:8]
 - ii. **God is Just** – He acts in accordance with His own sense of justice and His own standard of Perfection. In regards to humanity, He punishes sin and disobedience, and rewards faithfulness and obedience.
 - iii. **God is Good** – God is the highest expression of good and always acts beneficially toward His creation [Acts 14:17, and especially toward His own people [Ps 73:1].
 - iv. **God is Love** – God Loved the world because He created it, He continues to act out of love even when the world does not respond in a loving manner. [John 3:16; Eph 5:25]
 - v. **God is Grace** – God's unmerited love for humanity is an expression of His Goodness.
 - vi. **God is Mercy** – God's response to the pitiful human condition, the affect of humanities rebellion against God, is to provide help and comfort we could not provide ourselves.
 - vii. **God has Dominion [rule over everything]** – He is the Lord and King of kings – He rules heaven and earth, and will do what He deems to be good and right, and is not answerable to anyone. [1 Sam 3:8; Acts 17:25]
 - viii. **God is Knowledge** – He knows the past, present and future, and nothing is hidden from Him.
 - ix. **God is what He is because He is.** His revealed name – “I Am that I Am” – He always was and always will be God. [Gen 21:33]. To a lesser degree – we are who we are before Him, which is distinct from other created beings.
 - x. **Omnipresent** – He is everywhere at once; while we are in one place at a time.
 - xi. **Omniscient** – He knows everything and sees everything at all times; nothing is hidden from Him; we can know things and see things, but we are limited.
 - xii. **Omnipotent** – He is powerful and capable of doing anything, except that which conflicts with His other basic attributes [e.g. He is Good so He cannot be evil].
 - xiii. **God is Sovereign** – He is in control and is free to do anything He Wills – restrained only His Character and Nature, and such that He voluntarily imposes upon Himself. [Gen 9:13-16]
 - xiv. **God is Revelation** – God wants to be known and desires to be found... thus He

has revealed Himself both in nature [general revelation] and Scripture [The Word of God – special revelation]. “Personal Revelations” including dreams and visions must always be secondary revelations, and tested by the accepted authoritative standard of Scripture... which is our only authoritative revelation.

1. The Word is alive and active and capable of causing transformational change in humanity.
2. Personal revelations will never be in disagreement with scriptural revelations.
3. Personal revelations will often challenge individuals into a deeper commitment or relationship with God – supported by scripture [specific revelation].

xv. God is Supernatural – There are ‘supernatural manifestations’ that continue in the modern world – though not all that is spiritual is from or of God. We are required to ‘test’ such manifestations to understand them and from whom they come. Humanity has some aspect of supernatural perception through the Spirit.

19. Describe your view on the relationship of the gift of tongues and the filling of the Holy Spirit.

^{1CO 12:8-12} For to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, and to another the word of knowledge according to the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit, and to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, and to another the effecting of miracles, and to another prophecy, and to another the distinguishing of spirits, to another *various* kinds of tongues, and to another the interpretation of tongues. But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as He wills. For even as the body is one and *yet* has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ.

^{1CO 12:28-31} And God has appointed in the church, first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, *various* kinds of tongues. All are not apostles, are they? All are not prophets, are they? All are not teachers, are they? All are not *workers of* miracles, are they? All do not have gifts of healings, do they? All do not speak with tongues, do they? All do not interpret, do they? But earnestly desire the greater gifts.

I love that God consistently demonstrates an orderly and integrated organizational mindset... this is one of the ways in which the heavens declare the Glory of God, for in creation we see order, purpose, symmetry, symbiotic integration, etc. Things may not always be clear in creation or in Scripture, but they are usually orderly and consistent. Scripture designates tongues as a valid but the least of the gifts of the Spirit. While Scripture affirms the gift of tongues, it is also clear that not all will receive it and that we are to “desire the greater gifts.” I find it shameful that we have allowed certain theological differences to so divide the “Church” as the Body of Christ, rather than seeing the various Spiritual gifting’s and

church traditions as different flavors of faith expressed.

I believe that when one comes to trust Jesus as Savior and Lord that they are then filled with the Spirit... the down payment of our inheritance as children of God. At the moment the Spirit indwells us, we have all the Spirit we'll ever need, but we learn to listen to Him, and accept His promptings and guidance which leads to an ever deepening relationship with God.

EPH 1:13-14 In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of *God's own* possession, to the praise of His glory. (CR – 2Cor 1; 22; 5:5)

When we come to faith and commit ourself to Christ, are filled by His Spirit... God sees us as the Son [and daughter] who He loves, and this secures our status as children of God for eternity. We are as a result of the Spirit's Presence perfected in the Spirit, though our body remains part of the fallen material world. Spiritually, being born again provides us with all we need to enter eternity as children of God. As we mature we "work out our faith in fear and trembling" as the life-long sanctification process in discipleship renders us more useful for God's Kingdom purposes. Every child of God is an "Ambassador for Christ" and are rightfully involved in the ministry of Grace through the Gospel.

The speaking in tongues does not necessarily demonstrate the presence of the Spirit or the disciple's faithful fulfilling their calling as ministry partners with the Spirit. A life well lived reflecting God's values and personal dependence upon the Spirit in the fulfillment of ministry calling is a much better marker of a disciple's Spirit life.

20. State your position on divine healing.

Rev 22:1-5 Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign forever and ever.

Healing and restoration are major themes throughout Scripture. Restoration began in the Garden and continues until the Kingdom of God is perfected in the new heaven and earth. It is not accidental that God states that the leaves of the Tree of Life are for the healing of the nations. The heart of God is all about restoration. The problem for Christians is how the healing ministry of Jesus and the Apostles continues throughout the Church age.

Jn 14:10-14 Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the

Theology 4.1 – Developing a Theology of Ministry

evidence of the miracles themselves. I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.

The issue here involves what Jesus is speaking about as to the expected faith of His disciples... and that includes all believers as we are all called to discipleship. Not everyone is healed of their physical infirmities. Jesus healed many who came to Him, but not all. The works He performed justified His claim as Messiah and demonstrated His being in control of the Spiritual and material realms, and attesting to the Kingdom of God on earth. Many Christians believe that health and wealth are our birthright as children of the Kingdom, but that is not what Scripture teaches. For many Christians with this “Prosperity Gospel” theology, the reality of infirmity or poverty speaks to a deficiency in their faith... they reason if only I had sufficient faith all my problems will be solved. Again, this is not what Scripture teaches. The abundant life that Jesus promised His disciples is in the Kingdom of God, not necessarily the material world where Jesus warned us we will have trouble, tribulations, and where each must die and face God at the appointed time.

A dear friend of mine is critically ill... and his prognosis is terminal. What comfort can I as a Christian leader bring to one such as this? He is a believer, and I felt led to pray for him... asking God for physical healing if that was His will, for nothing is too hard for God to accomplish. I prayed also for peace, for a sense of God’s presence, for perseverance of faith for the Hope we share as children of God. I prayed for his family as they deal with illness and potential loss. That they would be comforted and at peace and sense God’s love through their ordeal. In conclusion, I pray often for God’s supernatural intervention... for help and healing, but mostly for peace and the powerful experience of God’s presence; and for reliance on God’s eternal hope for His children. God does sometimes heal, but those times are only a reprieve... sooner or later we all follow Jesus into physical death and to the eternal life beyond. I believe in such a situation and under these conditions of an active faith already responded to God that if we can move their focus from fear to hope, we have ministered well.

21. In relation to the return of Christ, what is your belief concerning the manner, the purpose and the timing of the following: (a) Rapture, (b) Revelation (Second Coming), (c) Tribulation, (d) Resurrection of believers, (e) Judgment Seat of Christ, (f) Millennium (g) Resurrection of unbelievers, (h) Great White Throne Judgment?

I wrote the following paper as my final on end time’s eschatology in my Theology 3 class. This paper is long, but really gets into the concepts of millennialism and the tribulation, and this paper is a complete response to this series of questions. The following link takes you to my website where this paper can be read in its entirety:

<http://www.authenticdiscipleship.org/pdfs/1-biblical-literacy/Bible%20Survey%20-%20Apocalyptic%201.3%20-%20Eschatology,%20Millenianism%20&%20the%20Rapture.pdf>

For the purposes of this present discussion, I included only the following abbreviated

conclusion:

As posited in the individual eschatology portion of this paper, all people will enter eternity either at the end of their natural life, or as a result of the playing out of the end time's event of the Eschaton. It seems intuitively obvious to me that most of us will enter eternity before the Parousia. So what happens to these believers? Do they enter an intermediate Shadowland state as the ancients believed? Or do they enter directly into the Rapture in the air with Jesus? I believe that Scripture provides a few clues. First, Jesus' teaching of the "Rich man and Lazarus" had each entering directly into their reward or punishment (Luke 16:19-26), with the added reality of a chasm separating Paradise from Hell. Second, Jesus said to the criminal crucified with Him, "Today you will be with Me in paradise" (Luke 23:43). Third, the teaching of Jesus to Martha is also helpful in John 11:23-27: Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." Martha answered, "I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day." Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" "Yes, Lord," she told him, "I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who was to come into the world."

Jesus demonstrated His power of Life over death prior to His resurrection, and spoke to the immediacy of life in spite of death. In 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, Paul writes to encourage the church:

Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope. We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. According to the Lord's own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord [Parousia], will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep [intermediate state]. For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore encourage each other with these words.

In our class sessions we discussed the concept of time passage in eternity. C.S. Lewis held to the notion that time and eternity moved to a different rhythm. Thus, he concluded that there would be some awareness of time, but not necessarily a lineal concept of time. Peter said that time would pass differently in eternity based on God's perception of time: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare. Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness. (2Pet 3:8b-13)

My own concept of eschatology holds that I will most likely enter eternity at my death, rather than at the Eschaton in the end of days. I do believe the end of days is coming because the Bible clearly teaches it. I believe the Eschaton is an unfolding integrated event, not merely a series of linked circumstances we can identify. I believe it will come suddenly and unexpectedly. I do not believe that we can hasten the arrival, or delay the arrival. It will come at the fullness of time according to God's plan. In terms of the Eschaton, I believe that a Premillennial and Pretribulation Theology best fits my understanding of the Scripture, but in the final analysis I believe we will all be surprised... some delighted, and others terrified.

The Good News of the Gospel, it that those sealed in Christ by faith are secure:

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death.... But if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness. And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you.... The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ (Romans 8:1-2, 10-11, 16-17)

22. Describe the place and state of the souls of believers between death and the resurrection.

Based on the foregoing discussion in question 21 above, it seems clear to me that the indwelling Spirit resides in the Temple of the human heart in every Spiritually consecrated disciple. Scripture says the Spirit will not leave us, and will never forsake us. Since the Spirit is God He cannot die. If we are joined with the Spirit, we will live even though we die. I believe as a consequence, that we as Christians have one foot in our physical reality [material world] and one foot in eternity [Supernatural world], which is why we can now approach the Throne of Grace with confidence (Heb 4:16). When we leave this world we immediately enter the next. This seems affirmed by Jesus in His declaration to the thief on the cross beside Him

Lk 23:39-43 One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him: "Aren't you the Christ? Save yourself and us!" But the other criminal rebuked him. "Don't you fear God," he said, "since you are under the same sentence? We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong." Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." Jesus answered him, "I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise."

As such, there I believe there is no intermediate state. When we leave our present Fallen earthly condition, we enter directly into the perfect eternal condition. The Apostle Paul says:

Phil 1:3-6 I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

Phil 1:9-11 And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and

Theology 4.1 – Developing a Theology of Ministry

blameless until the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God.

Phil 1:20-27 I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body. Convinced of this, I know that I will remain, and I will continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith, so that through my being with you again your joy in Christ Jesus will overflow on account of me. Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ.

Paul's priorities are balanced between the immediacy of life on earth and the immediacy of eternal life with Jesus. Though Scripture doesn't try to answer all these questions, it seems to me the strong inference is that there is no intermediate state.

23. What is the significance of baptism?

Ac 2:37-39 When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call."

Ac 22:14-16 "Then he said: 'The God of our fathers has chosen you to know his will and to see the Righteous One and to hear words from his mouth. You will be his witness to all men of what you have seen and heard. And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name.'

1PE 3:20b-22a who once were disobedient, when the patience of God kept waiting in the days of Noah, during the construction of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through *the* water. Corresponding to that, baptism now saves you— not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience—through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who is at the right hand of God, having gone into heaven

The process of forgiveness involves five aspects – conviction, remorse, repentance, restitution, and reconciliation. [See the following link to my website: <http://www.authenticdiscipleship.org/pdfs/2-spiritual-formation/Spiritual%20Disciplines/SF%201.11%20Prayer%20Practicum%209%20-%20Forgiveness%20Study.pdf>]. Repentance is the proper response to conviction brought by the Spirit... repentance is the decision to change, to live differently because of the call of the Gospel. The rite or sacrament of Baptism is performed in obedience to Scripture as the external affirmation of the internal change brought about by faith in Jesus, and thereby confirms our entry into the covenant community of faith in the Blood of Messiah. The church has accepted baptism as an important rite of passage into the covenant community of faith in Jesus from the very beginning. However, there may well be additional supernatural ramifications of the rite. Each progression of God's redemptive revelation in covenant relationship has signs testifying to the event. For example, the Noachian sign is the rainbow,

the Abrahamic sign is circumcision, the Mosaic sign is the Passover, and the Messianic sign is Baptism and Communion. There has been considerable debate as to whether these signs have sanctifying significance on their own right, though the Scripture does not necessarily confirm this interpretation. At minimum, participation in the covenant community is publically witnessed by these signs, and at the other extreme they have spiritually beneficial results in themselves. For me it is sufficient that Scripture commands us to honor these rites, and we should be obedient in the public ministry of the church.

MT 28:18-20 And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. “ Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

24. What is the scriptural mode of baptism?

AC 19:1-6 It happened that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul passed through the upper country and came to Ephesus, and found some disciples. He said to them, “ Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?” And they *said* to him, “No, we have not even heard whether there is a Holy Spirit.” And he said, “Into what then were you baptized?” And they said, “ Into John’s baptism.” Paul said, “ John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in Him who was coming after him, that is, in Jesus.” When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they *began* speaking with tongues and prophesying.

Jn 3:22-23 After this, Jesus and his disciples went out into the Judean countryside, where he spent some time with them, and baptized. Now John also was baptizing at Aenon near Salim, because there was plenty of water, and people were constantly coming to be baptized.

Baptism as we understand it began with John the Baptist, who in paving the Way for Jesus was calling the people to repent and turn to God. The affirmation of there being “plenty of water” would add substance to emersion as the Scriptural norm of baptism. Certainly, this was also the practice of the early church. Though sprinkling, dousing, and other means of baptism have been employed throughout the church age, emersion is richest in symbolism with the “*plunge in*” denoting entry into death and “*rising up*” denoting entry into new life in the community of the Church.

There are certainly parallels with Moses name meaning “drawn out of the water” as an early reflection of Christian baptism and the movement from slavery to freedom, and from death to life. It is clear that John’s baptism was for the forgiveness of sins... essentially washing away the stain of sin; while Jesus’ baptism [actually His disciples performed the rite] was for temporal death and resurrection into eternal life with our Lord Jesus. The former form was an Old Covenant act of penance, while the latter is the New Covenant initiation into the Kingdom of God mediated by Messiah.

The name “Anabaptist” during the reformation actually means “re-baptism,” because of their insistence that baptism must mean “Believer’s Baptism” affirming the statement of faith in Christ by an informed adult and entry into the community of the local church. In the pre-reformation Catholic Church, infant baptism meant validation of citizenship and census enrolment into the community of the state. I think it is clear from the Scripture above that

“Believer’s Baptism” is what the early church community had in mind.

25. Who is eligible to be baptized?

In the verses noted above especially Acts 2:37-39 declares that all who profess Christ as *Savior and Lord* thus entering into the Kingdom of God revealed in the New Covenant mediated by Messiah are eligible for baptism. In accordance with Jewish tradition, the *age of accountability* was 13 years old when young men and women entered into the life of the community. This tradition continues in the Jewish rites of Bar-Mitzvah and Bat-Mitzvah for 13 year old Jewish children coming of age in their community of faith, and I see Confirmation in the Catholic community as having a similar meaning and purpose.

There are of course, different Christian traditions as to what the rite of baptism means, as well as how and when it should be administered. In the Catholic tradition the rite is believed to wash away the sin curse inherited from the Fall. The administration of the rite to infants insured that they would not be doomed to hell. This was an important issue of the times with the high mortality rates of infants and children especially in the middle ages. With the reformed theology of Luther and Calvin they continued the practice of infant baptism though they disagreed with the underlying theology of it. The “Anabaptists” [or Radical Reformers] who emerged during the reformation, believed in “Believer’s Baptism” meaning those of age who came to believe that Jesus was both Savior and Lord were baptized in His name and became part of the community of faith. In the modern church era, many non-denominational churches perform baptism for young and old alike when they make a knowledgeable confession of faith. Also, infants and toddlers are dedicated publically before the congregation demonstrating their parent’s commitment to raise them in the faith. Baptism in the modern reformed church has essentially come to mean the validation of a personal decision in personally appropriating Grace and entry into the local community of faith.

Personally, I believe conviction, remorse, and repentance are important precursors for restitution in the New Covenant mediated by the blood of Messiah and validated by His resurrection. While I concede that young believers may certainly have sufficient understanding to make a profession of faith and it certainly conveys a sense of community identity. However, the forgiveness cycle involves: 1) conviction, 2) remorse, 3) repentance, 4) restitution, and 5) reconciliation... and this cycle is more appropriate for an older child coming of age and accountability as an adult.

Ideally, I would have all three community markers performed... 1) Infant/toddler dedication, where parents commit to raising their child in the faith. 2) Age of accountability belief in Jesus as their personal savior. 3) An adult celebration when a believer has declared that Jesus has become Lord of their life. I think the dedication of youngsters should be public with an oil or water cross marked onto the forehead. I think emersion baptism should be employed when a person professes Jesus as their personal savior. I think the third celebration of Jesus as Lord should occur with the congregation laying hands upon and praying for those professing Jesus as Lord, essentially as a public convocation formalizing the importance of this event. [Rededications ought to be performed occasionally as appropriate.] I think the public form of commitment is a powerful force of encouragement in the life of the

believer as well as the congregation.

26. What is the significance of the Lord's Supper?

^{EX 13:3-10} Moses said to the people, "Remember this day in which you went out from Egypt, from the house of slavery; for by a powerful hand the LORD brought you out from this place. And nothing leavened shall be eaten. "On this day in the month of Abib, you are about to go forth. "It shall be when the LORD brings you to the land of the Canaanite, the Hittite, the Amorite, the Hivite and the Jebusite, which He swore to your fathers to give you, a land flowing with milk and honey, that you shall observe this rite in this month. "For seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, and on the seventh day there shall be a feast to the LORD. "Unleavened bread shall be eaten throughout the seven days; and nothing leavened shall be seen among you, nor shall any leaven be seen among you in all your borders. "You shall tell your son on that day, saying, 'It is because of what the LORD did for me when I came out of Egypt.' "And it shall serve as a sign to you on your hand, and as a reminder on your forehead, that the law of the LORD may be in your mouth; for with a powerful hand the LORD brought you out of Egypt. "Therefore, you shall keep this ordinance at its appointed time from year to year.

^{Lk 22:14-20} When the hour came, Jesus and his apostles reclined at the table. And he said to them, "I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it finds fulfillment in the kingdom of God." After taking the cup, he gave thanks and said, "Take this and divide it among you. For I tell you I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes." And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me." In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.

Communion is a covenant sign and Sacramental ritual for the New Covenant of Messiah not unlike the Passover was a sign and remembrance for the Old Covenant of Moses. The fact that Jesus is the Passover sacrifice meant that He had to die on the Passover. The curtain separating the Holy from the Holy of Holies being torn from top to bottom is a witness that the Old Covenant has been replaced by a new and superior covenant as a result of Jesus death, and confirmed by His resurrection.

Communion is affirmed as a sacrament in all Christian communities of faith, though there is disagreement as to what it signifies. Examples of differences include the Catholic community where the elements are believed to be transformed into the actual body and blood of Christ (Transubstantiation), which is necessary for the Catholic community as "Spirit-food" to support the Spirit Life within. Lutherans hold to the concept of "Consubstantiation" where the elements are "real bread and real wine, in which Christ's real flesh and real blood are present." The Reformed Evangelicals holds that the sacrament is a more of a remembrance of the self-sacrifice of our Lord.

In all cases, communion is a time of thoughtful reflection of the penitent believer of what Jesus has accomplished on our behalf. As a "Sacrament" communion is a mystical experience where the supernatural is encountered by faith rather than in the elements

themselves. Personally, I have enjoyed partaking the Sacrament in each of the three contexts above and find renewed life and meaning in what otherwise may be reduced to a ritual with little personal impact.

27. Who is eligible to participate in the Lord's Supper?

Mt 26:26-29 While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body." Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it anew with you in my Father's kingdom."

1Co 11:23-29 For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me." For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself.

Communion is a proclamation of the Gospel in Jesus as well as a celebration of the life we share through Him. When we partake of it in dependent faith and with a submissive mind and heart, we proclaim the death of Messiah and the Hope of eternal life for which we wait expectantly. Because it is a proclamation of faith it may be practiced by all believers of all ages and levels of spiritual maturity. Obviously when our hearts are broken like the bread representing Jesus' broken body, Communion has more relevance and significance. Because the sacrament is performed in remembrance of Jesus sacrifice and the reception of the gift of Grace in the Gospel, it should be performed in a reverent and contemplative manner. The bread represents the staple of life and the wine represents the forgiveness of sins, therefore all faithful believers ought to examine their motives and their actions and repent of any wrongdoing.

Self-examination and confession before God are necessary aspects of the Communion experience and proclamation. Scripture says that those who partake knowing they are living in sin partake in an unworthy manner and drink judgment on themselves. Prayer and confession should always be a practical part of Communion. Therefore I believe that individuals of the age of maturity who have professed Christ as their personal Savior should participate.

28. Is divorce ever permissible? If so, under what conditions?

Mt 19:3-11 Some Pharisees came to him to test him. They asked, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any and every reason?" "Haven't you read," he replied, "that at the beginning the Creator

Theology 4.1 – Developing a Theology of Ministry

‘made them male and female,’ and said, ‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh’? So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate.” “Why then,” they asked, “did Moses command that a man give his wife a certificate of divorce and send her away?” Jesus replied, “Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard. But it was not this way from the beginning. I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, and marries another woman commits adultery.” The disciples said to him, “If this is the situation between a husband and wife, it is better not to marry.” Jesus replied, “Not everyone can accept this word, but only those to whom it has been given.

“*Porneia*” is the word translated as “adultery”, but in the broader context it refers to marital unfaithfulness and a variety of relational/sexual problems and perversions. God considers the “*Marriage Covenant*” to be Holy, and as a consequence so is the marriage bed meaning the sexual union of a man and a woman in the context of marriage is Holy. Also, by extension this would include other aspects that would subvert or pervert transformational relational unity. God is all about relational intimacy and unity, for which sexual union is certainly one of the highest examples. Physical union being an obvious representative part of the emotional/relational union expected between a man and woman; and a spiritual reflection of the Unity within the Trinity. Any physical abuse or unworthy experience that benefits one at the expense of the other is sin. Any acts performed with another that should rightly be reserved for the marriage relationship is sin. Any sexual act that does not promote intimacy and pleasure within the marriage relationship is sin.

The only circumstance stated in Scripture that specifically allows for divorce and remarriage is marital unfaithfulness, which is seen as a dysfunction that breaks the covenant vow... especially when the offending individual refuses to change their behavior, and/or refuses help to restore the covenant relationship. Certainly, restoration of a dysfunctional marriage relationship is the first priority, but if that fails and reconciliation is not possible one marriage partner refuses to give up their adulterous liaison, divorce is an understandable solution.

Zondervan’s Expository Encyclopedia renders the following explanation regarding adultery and divorce:

On the question of the lawfulness of divorce, there was general unanimity among the Jews: divorce was allowed. The real difference of opinion centered in the grounds for divorce as cited in Dt 24:1. The crucial words are "something indecent" (GK G6872). What did that include? The school of Shammai, the stricter of the schools, understood these words to mean something morally indecent, in particular, adultery. The school of Hillel interpreted the words much more freely. Just about anything in a wife that a husband did not find to his liking was suitable grounds for divorce--even if she burned his food! So where did Jesus stand in this? That was their question.

Mark records no response of the Pharisees to Jesus' teaching about divorce. Instead he moves directly to Jesus' private teaching of the Twelve, who wanted a clarification of the teaching Jesus had just given. Jesus gave them a straightforward answer: divorce and remarriage by husband or wife is adultery. Jesus did what the rabbis refused to do: he recognized that a man could commit adultery against his wife. In rabbinic Judaism a woman by infidelity could commit adultery against

Theology 4.1 – Developing a Theology of Ministry

her husband; and a man, by having sexual relations with another man's wife, could commit adultery against that other man. But a man could never commit adultery against his wife. Jesus, by putting the husband under the same moral obligation as the wife, raised the status and dignity of women.

Furthermore, Jesus went on to recognize the right of a woman to divorce her husband (v.12), a right not recognized in Judaism. Matthew, writing for Jews, omits v.12; but Mark, writing for Romans, includes it. This brief excerpt from Jesus' teaching on divorce and remarriage is included as an example of one aspect of the law that the Pharisees tended to minimize. The teaching is essentially the same as in Mt 5:32 (see comments), except that Luke (1) omits the phrase "except for marital unfaithfulness," (2) says that the remarried man commits adultery rather than that he causes his first wife to do so, and (3) includes a comment about a man who marries a divorced woman.

RO 8:20-23 For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now. And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for *our* adoption as sons, the redemption of our body.

Fallen humanity lives in a fallen and broken world order where God's perfect established order has been subverted. We as Christians live in the tension of the "now, and not yet" – being Spiritually perfected in relationship with God now, but fallen and broken in terms of our relationship with one another in a world that longs to be redeemed. God's perfect order is that none would sin... yet as Christians we know we are all sinners saved by Grace and alternatively saints who sometimes sin. God's perfect order is that no marriage would fail, and that each married couple would experience the joy, unity and fullness of intimacy in marriage as a reflection of the intimacy of God as Trinity. While humanity distinguishes between degrees of sin and wrongdoing, all is sin and reprehensible to God. Without the provision of Grace we are all lost in sin. The difficulty for us as Christian leaders is to hold a known ideal out in such a manner as it provides a standard that we ascribe to, while accepting the reality that all have fallen short of the Glory of God. As the Spirit is strengthened within, we become progressively transformed in our thought and actions to reflect Jesus... but we do so imperfectly as we live between the 1st and 2nd advent of Christ. As Christian leaders, we often need to make distinctions that are not completely clear in Scripture.

[See my website link below for what the marriage relationship is all about:

<http://www.authenticdiscipleship.org/pdfs/2-spiritual-formation/Spiritual%20Maturity/SF%202.3%20-%20Marriage%20and%20Transformation.pdf>]

29. Is it permissible for a divorced person to remarry during the lifetime of the former mate? Explain:

LK 16:18 "Everyone who divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery, and he who marries

Theology 4.1 – Developing a Theology of Ministry

one who is divorced from a husband commits adultery.

Scripture makes clear that there is a standard of perfection to be ascribed to in marriage. There are also conditions under which divorce and remarriage are appropriate. As seen above, adultery breaks the exclusive covenant intended in marriage. Marriages can be restored, but that takes both to be willing parties to mutually submit to each other under God. If one party is willing and the other is not, restoration is a remote possibility. Scripture also makes it clear that Grace in Jesus surmounts all obstacles and counters sin in all its permutations, though there may yet be temporal ramifications and accountability.

One of the thorny theological questions for evangelical leaders is what aspects of the Old Covenant Law pertains for us living under the New Covenant of Grace. Paul taught that the Law was superseded by Grace as well that Grace is infinitely superior. But Jesus said that He came to fulfill the Law and that not one of the smallest aspects would fail. Some dispensational theologians argue that Law and Grace live side by side both being relevant and applicable, rather than the former supplanted by the latter. Into this controversy, I offer some personal opinions on divorce and remarriage:

- I don't think it wise to remain unequally yoked with an abusive or repressive spouse that has a deleterious impact upon you or your children. Separation may not only be prudent, it may be requisite depending on the persons involved. The finality of divorce may yet result from such separation, but a more balanced viewpoint usually emerges with special distance. This is like hitting the "pause and refresh buttons" in a relationship.
- God has entrusted us with a mind for reasoning and a heart for relating, and He expects us to use both. We should not abandon reason or logic in blind preference to an unguided faith and hope. We know there are faith decisions that can't be broached by reason or logic alone, and knowing Scripture provides an authoritative basis for what is right, and where a heart deeply connected to God allows hope plays a pivotal role in transformation. These things aren't always black and white.
- God gives wisdom and insight as a birthright to all people, as a result of Imago Dei... being created in the image of God. God gives additional wisdom and guidance through the Spirit as a result of Imago Christi... being the image of Christ in the world. While we need to help keep people responsible for their own choices and decisions, we need to recognize that some are emotionally or intellectually compromised and less able to make responsible decisions. Often, in the interest of sparing a person from a hard decision we deny them to mature and grow as a result of the process. On the other hand, requiring a person or a family to endure a punitive or dangerous relationship for the sake of keeping the Law seems cruel at best.
- The God who does not allow us to be tempted beyond our capacity to endure and who provides along with the temptation the means for escape... also works supernaturally in

Theology 4.1 – Developing a Theology of Ministry

the mind and hearts of people in distress.

- As a Christian matures and learns to trust and hear God's truth in Scripture and His Spirit within, they are more capable to discern God's will and purpose, and stand in hope and faith.
- Some things God prescribes... like Paul on the road to Emmaus. Other things are choices God allows... whether we should turn right or left, go to one church in favor of another, or spend time with one person rather than another. God did not want us to be automatons acting out a part in a play He scripted. He prefers sons and daughters who deliberately act out of love and dependent faith upon Him as living sacrifices. God desires sons and daughters who volitionally conscript themselves by faith in love, not as indentured servants.
- Because of these and numerous other factors, God expects us to live dependently in faith. Some marriages are easier than others, some way more difficult. While we are all equally loved, we are not necessarily created equally... we each have differences and distinctions that are ours alone... not necessarily better or worse, just different. Too often we try to push people through the same square hole... God does not do that. Grace is far more radical than that. As Christian leaders we need to resist a one-size-fits-all spirituality that God never intended.
- Marriage is a serious commitment, and should never be treated lightly. We need to listen to God and to trusted mature friends and leaders about all important decisions we make. Because they have made mistakes in the past doesn't necessarily mean they will make the same mistakes in the future... but we darn well ought to be asking hard questions about ourselves and others we care about.

For example, in my own circumstance, my wife had been married and divorced with a young daughter before we met and decided to marry. I had not married previously. Her previous husband had been unfaithful and refused to give up his girlfriend. He refused to be reconciled with an exclusive relationship to his wife. My betrothed said that was a deal breaker... and our pastor and I agreed. We've been married 34 years and have 2 great young adult children (there is no "step" in children) and 5 grandchildren. Her ex-husband ultimately married his girlfriend and together we helped raise a daughter from their previous marriage. We have become friends. Not a perfect situation, but a healthy one. In another example, I have 2 middle-aged friends who were married and divorced who decided to live as single women... they have grown children with their own families. One of these friends was married once and the other twice previously, both have decided to wait on God rather than remarry. One is going into vocational ministry as a missionary. These are all choices... perhaps not perfect ones, but good ones made in faith believing.

30. What is your belief concerning a Christian’s participation in and attitude toward civil government?

HEB 13:15-17 Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name. And do not neglect doing good and sharing, for with such sacrifices God is pleased. Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you.

EST 4:13-14 Then Mordecai told them to reply to Esther, “Do not imagine that you in the king’s palace can escape any more than all the Jews. “For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place and you and your father’s house will perish. And who knows whether you have not attained royalty for such a time as this?”

MT 5:13 “You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men.

MK 9:50 “Salt is good; but if the salt becomes unsalty, with what will you make it salty again? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another.”

Joseph, Esther, and Daniel were OT examples of governmental leadership and influence who God supernaturally placed and supported to accomplish His purposes in a particular time and place. God has repeatedly shaped history through His people providentially placed in leadership in such circumstances. Some are chosen for leadership. Others find themselves there in spite of themselves. Where God has given some of us a voice of opportunity, we should use it in Grace to be a blessing to our communities.

The proscription to be “salty” is a different matter... I believe it is normal and expected for all Christians to be salt and light to impact their environment in a positive way. Salt does try to be salty, and light doesn’t try to illuminate... it is their inherent nature to be so. For Christians, whether we engage in local politics deliberately or exercise influence indirectly, we allow God to work through us where our life can be a positive influence those around you. One thing I think almost all evangelicals can agree upon deals with the opportunity for evangelism in our fallen world.

One of my favorite politicians is Mike Huckabee who had worked for a time with a television evangelist who commented of Huckabee, "His convictions shape his character and his character will shape his policies. His whole life has been shaped by moral absolutes." Huckabee has stated that, "Politics are totally directed by worldview. That's why when people say, 'We ought to separate politics from religion,' I say to separate the two is absolutely impossible". Prior to his political career, Huckabee served as pastor at Immanuel Baptist Church in Pine Bluff, Arkansas. A conservative pastor turned politician... one who has walked the walk as well as talked the talk... who would believe that? In keeping with the complexity of the Body of Christ, each one of us has been given a voice and a place from which we may speak... whether it is business, the classroom, the pulpit, the grocery store, or congress. Our problem is that we don’t often speak with

Theology 4.1 – Developing a Theology of Ministry

confidence of the hope we live for.

So, to the question of the appropriateness of serving the public trust in some elected capacity – God provides in some sort of combination interests, passions, opportunities, talents, and calling. At some point, we find our self moving toward something that caught our attention in a good way. Also, as seasons of life change, we may find other opportunities that arise. I guarantee you I didn't expect at age 53 at the height of my earning potential to be called to seminary, then to the vocational calling of starting a non-profit discipling ministry. God has a great sense of humor! And He is so creative! We often limit our self because we can't believe He wants to use us in some creative fashion. I think it would be great to see Christians more involved in local politics... but with the new territory comes new scrutiny. Don't put yourself out there if you are undisciplined or have some sin you're harboring. You will embarrass yourself and our faith. But for the mature and disciplined disciple, I think public service can be a wonderful witness for Christ.

We are called to "Be Separate" from the social/cultural norms in which we live and work, but this means that we should live by a different value structure than the cultural paradigm we're surrounded in. I think the link below to the Billy Graham article entitled "Be Separate" is most insightful:

<http://billygraham.org/decision-magazine/march-2011/be-separate/>

31. What do you believe concerning the spiritual and eternal state of those who have never heard the gospel? Explain how God can be merciful and just at the same time.

Ro 2:6-16 God "will give to each person according to what he has done." To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honor and immortality, he will give eternal life. But for those who are self-seeking and who reject the truth and follow evil, there will be wrath and anger. There will be trouble and distress for every human being who does evil: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile; but glory, honor and peace for everyone who does good: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. For God does not show favoritism. All who sin apart from the law will also perish apart from the law, and all who sin under the law will be judged by the law. For it is not those who hear the law who are righteous in God's sight, but it is those who obey the law who will be declared righteous. (Indeed, when Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law, since they show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts now accusing, now even defending them.) This will take place on the day when God will judge men's secrets through Jesus Christ, as my gospel declares.

Jas 1:19-25 My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, for man's anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires.

Theology 4.1 – Developing a Theology of Ministry

Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you. Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it—he will be blessed in what he does.

Ro 3:21-28 But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished—he did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus. Where, then, is boasting? It is excluded. On what principle? On that of observing the law? No, but on that of faith. For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from observing the law.

This is an interesting and rather thorny theological question. How do we deal with those who never heard the Gospel? Or who were born under a different dispensational period of redemptive history in God’s progressive revelation of Grace? Does it matter that one never heard the truth rather than failed to respond to it? The knowing unrepentant sinner is certainly easier to handle as guilty as opposed to the unknowing but honorable & kindly conscientious individual. What about young children or the mentally developmentally challenged? Do they fall under the same criteria as the mature or healthy and competent? Obviously, it is not an easy question... but we know that God is faithful and trustworthy, and His Grace is far richer and I believe more radical than we know.

I believe that when we stand before God and look into perfection, we will know immediately our own failures and our weaknesses. Just like Isaiah who saw God in a vision and proclaimed: Isa 6:5 “Woe to me!” I cried. “I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty.” **It is noteworthy that God didn’t disagree with him, but rather accepted Isaiah’s self judgment. The remedy God provided solved Isaiah’s problem. The text doesn’t say it, but it makes sense that Isaiah had to accept the remedy God provided... as it makes sense that there was pain and discomfort involved with the application of the coal.**

I believe that God will hold people accountable for what they know and what they have experienced about God’s Truth and Grace. Salvation isn’t merely an insurance policy that we take out by confessing the four-spiritual-laws type of evangelism, but it necessarily moves into the context of how one lives their life and most importantly how they relate to God. My Old

Theology 4.1 – Developing a Theology of Ministry

Testament professor Brian Morgan interned and was mentored under Pastor Ray Stedman and Professor Bruce Waltke. Brian pointed out an interesting fact about King David in Psalm 51. The Old Covenant does not wash away sin as David is asking. For a New Testament thinker you see Grace in this Psalm that sounds like Jesus. In essence, David anticipated Grace that was unavailable under the Law... a thousand years before Jesus was revealed. That David's contemporaries couldn't go there is evidenced by the addition of verses 18 & 19 that sound out of context to the scope of David's thought. In fact, they were added by a later redactor to tie it into their concept of the Law.

Christian anthropologist and missionary Don Richardson wrote the book Eternity in their Hearts, which postulates that God prepared the world for the Gospel through revelations throughout the world's folk religions. God's provision in General Revelation paved the way for the Gospel to be preached and received. But it necessarily had to be preached and received to be effective.

In the meantime, all outside of Grace are under the yoke of sin and subject to death and condemnation. We hold that the Mosaic Law was a custodian until the atonement of Jesus revealed the Gospel of Grace. Those under the Law are judged by the Law; those outside of the Law are a law to themselves [Rom 2 & 3]. Melchizedek was a priest of the "High God" which, interestingly refers to an older established order that Abraham recognized and paid tribute to and that we understand that was representative of Jesus.

Heb 7:11 If perfection could have been attained through the Levitical priesthood (for on the basis of it the law was given to the people), why was there still need for another priest to come—one in the order of Melchizedek, not in the order of Aaron?

Heb 7:17 For it is declared: "You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek."

Scripture says unequivocally that Jesus will judge all of humanity, and that those sealed by the Spirit by faith in Jesus pass out of judgment and into life.

1JN 4:14-19 We have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son to be the Savior of the world. Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. We have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us. God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. By this, love is perfected with us, so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment; because as He is, so also are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love. We love, because He first loved us.

Scripture also makes it clear that justification... the atonement basis of forgiveness empowered by the blood sacrifice of Jesus... is as simple as the affirmation of the thief on the cross "remember me when you come in Your Kingdom" [Luke 23:42]; and as "difficult as a camel going through the eye of a needle" in the case of the rich young ruler [Mat 19:23-26]. The Gospel is hearing and responding to Grace in transformational faith believing, resulting in a changed nature and evidenced by a changed life and priorities. We do not know what is going on in the

heart and mind of a person, but God does.

I trust God to be faithful and fair in His judgment of humanity... both those who have heard the Gospel and those who have not, but we know that everything must be sanctified [1 Tim 4:4-5] as God's Holiness demands it. Justification and sanctification are not separate in time [1 Cor 6:11]. Sanctification is not merely moral transformation or legal transaction, but rather the spiritual renewal which transforms human nature based on the sacrifice of Christ [Heb 10:10]. Christians have the obligation of evangelism and discipleship as commissioned by Jesus [Mat 28:18-20].

Seeing the redemptive plan of God revealed "Diachronically" [throughout redemptive history] raises many questions as to the eternal status of those under the previous dispensation. I know those who have responded to Jesus Gospel in faith believing are saved, but I am unwilling to conclude that those who never heard the Gospel preached are necessarily damned. Somehow, God will work out this mystery... it is neither liberal universalism nor conservative fundamentalism that I advocate. Rather, I hold to God being faithful and true and that none will be able to accuse God of being unfair when judged.

Jer 32:17 "Ah, Sovereign LORD, you have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and outstretched arm. Nothing is too hard for you."

HEB 12:1-3 Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

EPH 2:1-8 And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest. But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.

32. What is the purpose of the local church?

After my long-winded and meandering response to the previous question, this one is fairly straightforward. The purpose of the local church flows out of the Great Commandment... to love God and others, and the Great Commission... to engage in evangelism and discipleship. The

Theology 4.1 – Developing a Theology of Ministry

church when gathered is to worship and equip the faithful for their ministry. The church scattered is to evangelize and bear witness to the truth we know and to demonstrate the faith we live by through living out counter-cultural Gospel Centered lives. Preaching and teaching are Biblical Literacy [Word] ministry, including the prophetic call to make straight the path for the Lord. Worship and Spiritual Formation ministry foster a vital personal relational experience with God. Outreach and social justice ministry are necessarily evangelistic in nature as leaders are purposefully developed, trained and released into their community and their world to impact people's lives with the Gospel.

For too long the local church has focused on engaging and attracting people to attend church. This is not a bad thing, but to do so without the expectation of developing an Authentic Discipleship experience in them. And then sending them out as commissioned ministers of the Gospel is to fall short of our calling. The "Church"... with a capital "C" meaning the integrated Body of Christ united by the Spirit needs to be separate from yet vital to the cultures in which we live. The "church"... with a lowercase "c" meaning the organization in which we gather together as a congregation, should be focused on engaging and equipping the saints, not merely entertaining or serving their disparate needs or wants. The Church needs to recover our calling and engage in developing authentic disciples. See the link below for more on what discipleship is all about:

<http://www.authenticdiscipleship.org/pdfs/3-leadership-dev/LD%20-%202.2%20-%20New%20Testament%20Discipleship.pdf>