

Theology ♦ Epistemology ♦ Apologetics ♦ The Church

SPEAKING
THE TRUTH
IN LOVE

THE THEOLOGY OF
JOHN M. FRAME

Worship ♦ Ethics ♦ Culture ♦ Future Relevance

Edited by

JOHN J. HUGHES

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In Memory of
Professor John Murray
1898–1975

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A NOTE TO THE READER

JOHN J. HUGHES

THIS IS AN UNUSUAL festschrift for several reasons. As John Frame explains in the Preface, he and I have worked together to craft this book so that it will serve as an in-depth introduction to and exploration of all the major categories of his theology.¹ Therefore, we have added a number of features to make the festschrift more informative, user-friendly, and to provide greater access to John's writings. This "Note to the Reader" explains some of these features.

Abbreviations. To avoid endless repetition in footnotes and articles, and to conserve space, we created abbreviations for all of John's major works. These abbreviations are listed in the Abbreviations section below.

Appendices. John created two directory-like appendices. One correlates his major ideas with his key discussions of them; the other does the same thing for the major triads John uses.

Annotated Bibliography. This includes all the books, articles, written sermons, course materials, and audio and video materials John has produced to date. John arranged these publications by topic to make the Bib-

1. John suggested almost all the authors and topics for this festschrift and designed the book's basic structure, which is carried through in the Bibliography, Glossary, and Recommended Resources.

liography more useful, and he annotated many entries. Occasionally, one title will be included under more than one topical designation.²

Glossary. John created this to define terms he has invented, terms to which he has attached unusual definitions, and terms that have a special prominence in his writings. The Glossary uses the same topical headings used in the Bibliography, but omits topics for which there are no distinctive terms to be defined. The Glossary also includes references to places in John's books and articles where he discusses these concepts.

Index of Subjects. As we received contributions to the festschrift, John read each one and created a two-level Index of Subjects. This index will help readers locate discussions of all the major topics in this book.

Recommended Resources. This is a reading program designed for persons who wish to acquaint themselves with John's works. In it, John uses the same topical structure as found in the Bibliography, Glossary, and the festschrift itself. Titles are not listed alphabetically but in John's suggested order for study—most basic to more detailed.

2. For a year-by-year bibliography, see <http://www.frame-poythress.org>. Also see John's chapter "My Books: Their Genesis and Main Ideas" in this festschrift.

FOREWORD

J. I. PACKER

A THOUGHTFUL PERSON might well wonder whether I have enough in common with John Frame to make me a suitable introducer of this very elaborate celebration of his life's work.

For who am I? A Brit by extraction, tall, skinny, and quiet, drawn in midlife to cross the Atlantic and teach at Regent College, a newish, small, and at that time nonstandard evangelical school in western Canada. An Anglican clergyman who nurses both a headache and a heartache regarding his churchly heritage—one who has often looked over the fence to see how his Presbyterian buddies are getting along, yet has never jumped ship denominationally or let himself be drawn into the intensities of Reformed in-house debates. A friendly moth, flitting around the heady and somewhat explosive world of the two Westminster, fiercely intellectualist, combatively confessional, and censorious in its apologetics as that world is. A five-point Calvinist who patently puts his generic evangelical identity ahead of both his specifically Anglican and his specifically Reformed commitment. A historically oriented pietist who seeks to map the flow of the Christian mainstream, who to that end talks to Roman Catholics and Orthodox, and who periodically ends up in hot water with other evangelicals for doing so. A theological generalist, with recognized expertise only in some fields of historical theology. (That was why Alister McGrath proposed calling him a *theologizer* rather than a *theologian*.) An adult catechist, who makes it his main business to teach, first, the truths by which Christians are to live and, second, how Christians are to live by them. A writer of texts not on dogmatics

but on the Christian life, basic books for believers rather than broad-based graduate-level treatises for fellow clergy and academic peers. An embodiment of the dictum that inside a theologian there may well be a Bible teacher struggling to get out. An odd fellow altogether, then—that's me.

Furthermore, it has to be said that over the years John Frame and I have passed and re-passed each other like ships in the night. I can recall only one serious conversation with him, over an IHOP breakfast (and that was not really so very serious, as IHOP patrons will surely understand). Our orbits have not significantly intersected at all.

So anyone pondering my profile might reasonably conclude that it was an eccentric imprudence on the publisher's part to request this Foreword, and an egregious error of judgment on my part to consent to write it.

Yet the proverb that a cat may look at a king precisely illustrates what I am doing here. And I am doing it with more than ordinary delight, for there are few, past or present, whom I would place in the royal class ahead of Professor Frame. The most unassuming of men, he has never sought the limelight and is not at present widely known. But as this volume seems to me to show, he has been privileged to make a strategic and potentially huge contribution to the future well-being not just of the Reformed faith, but of the entire evangelical world. How so? Let me say it as I see it.

Before John Frame, Cornelius Van Til's landmark and surely correct insistence on the presuppositional, revelation-related character of all human reasoning about ultimate things was being maintained in so abstract, anti-theoretical, and arcane a way as to sideline itself. And at the same time the cause of conservative gospel piety, which at surface level was prospering throughout the world, was growing increasingly shaky with regard to its own first principles and mental method: a spectrum of subjectivisms seemed to be jostling for dominance within it, and the outlook was, to say the least, unsettled and unsettling. It was within this double context—this "frame," if we may put it so—that the "Frame-work" of the past forty years has been carried through. (Forgive the puns; they were irresistible.)

John Frame has reaffirmed the essential Van Til positions, ontological, epistemological, methodological, and apologetic, with disarming simplicity, limpid lucidity, and luminous clarity. He has confirmed Van Til's contention that not to make clear at every point the fundamental antithesis between faithful, dependent Christian thinking and the would-be autonomy of its non-Christian counterpart is actually to obscure the gospel. With restraint,

charity, wide learning, and much logical and analytical skill he has remapped the relativizing relationship of the Van Til body of thought to other systems; and he has conceptualized a way of theologizing about anything that combines all the angles of awareness that Van Til sought to bring out with all the space for dialogue and self-criticism that militancy had once excluded. This is the biblically shaped perspectival procedure that in substance always was and always will be the high road to wisdom (living by known truth) for sinful humans who are being reconstructed through the sovereign grace of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Frame's is a spectacular achievement, from which the entire church on earth, in its own authentic transcultural life of obedience and doxology, stands and needs to benefit. I count it a privilege to be the first person in this book to say so.

Whether this benefit will be received, and evangelicalism around the world actually be strengthened and stabilized by it, is of course another matter. The world of the Westminster, of the Reformed Seminary network, and of the smaller Presbyterian denominations is somewhat marginal in relation to the wider evangelical spread, and seems likely to remain so. And John Frame's books are anchored in that world; they were written to sort out, sustain, purge, and redirect aspects of its inner life. P&R Publishing has a fine catalogue, but is not one of the biggest or best known in its field. Globally speaking, communities and organizations of pneumatocentric Pentecostal types make the running these days, and one cannot be confident that a theological writer who will be seen as one of Cornelius Van Til's successors will be listened to as he should be. It is to be hoped, however, that readers of this book will discern John Frame as the forward-looking philosopher, apologist, dogmatician, ethicist, liturgist, and churchman that in fact he is. To his admirers he is already something of a legend; it has long been the case that, as with Oliver Goldsmith's schoolmaster, "still the wonder grew / That one small head could carry all he knew."

The range and breadth of the knowledge and the wisdom of John Frame are indeed remarkable. May the legacy that he is leaving to the evangelical cause and the church at large soon come to be appreciated as its true and abiding worth.

PREFACE

JOHN M. FRAME

THE FESTSCHRIFT IS a pleasant custom of the academic community. The idea is that when a scholar reaches a certain age and gains some recognition for his work, his colleagues and friends get together and present him with a book of essays. The essays are usually not *about* the honoree. The authors write essays in their own specialized fields, essays that they might have published elsewhere, such as in academic journals. But the authors donate their essays to the festschrift instead, believing that the honoree would enjoy reading them and would take these as an expression of his friends' respect and affection.

Usually the festschrift is a surprise to the honoree. They tell a story here at Reformed Theological Seminary about how theologian Roger Nicole, a bibliophile, once read a notice that InterVarsity Press was publishing a book of essays on the atonement, edited by Roger's colleagues Frank James and Charles (Chuck) Hill.¹ Roger approached his colleagues to ask why he had not been asked to contribute an essay to the collection. The atonement had, after all, been Roger's life work. Frank and Chuck hedged a bit. A little later, however, they invited Roger to lunch and informed him that this book of essays was to be a festschrift for Roger. Roger was appropriately surprised, amused, and grateful. But he did not forget what had originally been on his mind: he asked again to be allowed

1. The book was later published as *The Glory of the Atonement* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004).

to include an essay of his own in the volume, a request the editors did not hesitate to grant.

Well, the present volume is different in several ways from the ones I have just described. For one thing, it is not a surprise to me. John Hughes, the editor of this volume, a dear former student and friend of many years, wrote me about his idea a year or so ago, not even trying to hide anything. The reason is that he wanted the volume not only to honor me, but also to be about me.² Because it was to be about me, I would have to be directly involved in its development, suggesting authors and topics, contributing materials,³ and aiding in the publicity.

Now, I hesitated about that proposal. For one thing, I feared that this exercise would be a kind of ego trip, and I wasn't sure that would be spiritually good for me. (A book all about me? Yet I have been telling everybody that life is not about them, but about Jesus.) For another thing, I knew from the beginning it would be a lot of work, at a time when I already had too much to do. At seventy, one wishes to slow down, and one has automatic excuses for turning down assignments.

Nevertheless, I did agree to work with John on the project. The main reason is that I wanted my work to receive some serious scrutiny. God has blessed me in many ways through my career, but one blessing I've largely missed has been that of sympathetic, critical analysis. I have had my fill of the unsympathetic kind—mainly people who tell the world that I am not really Reformed, or really Van Tillian. These are people who seem to think I have never been right about even one thing, and they can't put forth the effort even to describe my positions without serious misrepresentation. But I have wished for someone to come along and give my work a professional going-over, a careful analysis and evaluation. I'm not sure why I haven't had much of that (aside from a very few longer reviews). Perhaps it is because I haven't done much networking; to be honest, I've been just a bit reclusive. Perhaps my views

2. In this respect, we are following somewhat the model of the two festschrifts given to my mentor, Cornelius Van Til: E. R. Geehan, ed., *Jerusalem and Athens* (Nutley, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1970) and Gary North, ed., *Foundations of Christian Scholarship* (Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 1976).

3. In addition to this Preface, I contributed "Reflections of a Lifetime Theologian" (with Andrew Sandlin as interviewer), "Backgrounds to My Thought," "My Major Books," "Recommended Resources," a Bibliography, a Glossary, Appendices, and suggestions for the Index of Subjects. I also wrote publicity material, and I will be participating in a session at the Evangelical Theological Society meeting in November 2009, when the volume will be released.

are too extreme in various areas for many to take them seriously.⁴ Or, it has occurred to me, it may be that my work has not achieved sufficient excellence to be discussed by the most competent thinkers in my profession.

Anyhow, in this project we just went and asked some people I respect and admire to come and tell us what they really think. I find it remarkable that so many agreed to do it. So although my festschrift has not surprised me in the way that Roger Nicole's surprised him, it is in its sheer quantity and quality of writers a surprise that I will long remember.⁵ John tells me this may be the biggest festschrift ever published. That may or may not be good for sales. But it will fulfill for years, maybe the rest of my life, my desire for thoughtful interaction.

So I offer thanks to God for bringing this project to pass, and to every writer who sacrificed his or her time to help us with it. I am especially thankful to our numerous editors, who put the book together with amazing speed and accuracy, to P&R for our continuing excellent working relationship, and to John Hughes, who devised this project, and who put a huge amount of good thought and effort into it. John never seemed to run out of good ideas, and he has promoted my work far more than I have deserved.

4. I'm thinking especially of my proposal, in *ER*, to abolish denominations, but of other things too. By the way, if any think my previous writing has been out of the mainstream, wait until they read my forthcoming *Doctrine of the Word of God*. For better or worse, the book will leave the academic mainstream far to one side.

5. The Personal Words in this volume, except for a few, will also be a surprise to me. I won't see them until the volume is released. But without seeing them, I am already very thankful to those who took the trouble to write.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

JOHN J. HUGHES

IN THE PREFACE, John Frame explains this festschrift's genesis, introduces its purpose, and sketches its development. For over a year, he and I have labored side by side, through many hundreds of e-mails, to shape and hone this volume. Without John's close involvement and hard work, this book would not exist. John never said "No" to a task I asked him to do, and his cheerful, upbeat e-mails encouraged me along the way. In effect, John has served as my coeditor in this undertaking. Thank you, John, for your many labors, creative ideas, and ongoing support as we created this tome.

We have been blessed by the large number of contributors who said "Yes" to our invitation to contribute an article or a personal word. To each one of you I say, "Thank you for honoring John with your contribution." I also wish to thank those several persons who worked on articles but were prevented from contributing them by circumstances beyond their control.

Every professionally published book is a team effort. Since May 2008, when I first suggested the idea for this festschrift to Bryce Craig, president of P&R Publishing, and to Marvin Padgett, P&R's vice president-editorial, I have received strong encouragement and outstanding support from the P&R Publishing team. Without their professional expertise, can-do attitude, and concrete help, this festschrift would not exist. So thank you, Aaron, Barb, Bryce, Charles, Dawn, Ian, Kristen, Marvin, and Thom. You are the best!

Much of the brunt of the work for a book of this magnitude rests in the hands of the copyeditors. I have been blessed with three world-class editors who have labored tirelessly, cheerfully, and professionally, under looming

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

deadlines, and who have done a magnificent job. Thank you, Karen Magnuson, Brian W. Kinney, and Rick Matt. Only the four of us really know how exciting and exhausting it is to drive at 100 mph for weeks on end! Thanks also to Allan Sholes and Dana Adams, two fine editors who joined us at the tail end of the project and whose help proved invaluable. Thanks also to my son Ryan D. Hughes for his valuable preliminary help with the graphics.

Producing a useful subject index is a challenging task. John Frame carefully created the entries, and Jeffrey L. Brown, Kendall Cleveland, John Fulginiti III, Lucas Hillman, Jonathan Hutchison, Brian W. Kinney, Justin Richter, and Allen Stanton labored faithfully under a pressing deadline to correlate entries with page numbers. Thank you, one and all. A special thank-you to Brian Kinney, who edited, checked, and proofed the Scripture and subject indices. Without your help, Brian, these indices would not exist.

No one assisting me has devoted more time to making this book a reality than Karen Magnuson, a professional legal editor with an astounding number of books to her credit. In addition to editing a great many festschrift articles, Karen proofread the entire work at least once and some parts multiple times. She labored tirelessly and cheerfully, weekends included! I have constantly been amazed by her eagle-eyed ability to find inconsistencies and mistakes. Thanks also, Karen, for helping with the Index of Names—another do-or-die effort.

Dawn Premako's careful, cheerful, and professional proofing of my typesetting resulted in a much better product. Thank you, Dawn, for your timely help and sound advice. I learned a lot from you!

I also wish to thank Claire, my dear wife of forty years, for her deep enthusiasm and unceasing prayer support for this undertaking. Claire is a big fan of John Frame, having taken courses from him at Westminster Theological Seminary in the early 1970s and having helped me with the editing of John's *DKG* and *ME*.

Last, but not least, though they will never read these words, thanks to my two constant Golden Retriever companions, Charlie and Russell, whose sunny dispositions and ebullient personalities never cease to buoy my spirits. I'm sure they have no idea why I have been glued to the computer, rather than throwing their racquetball, for the past many months!

Along with all named or referenced here, I join you in giving thanks to our Lord, who has graciously raised up in the person of John Frame an extraordinary human being, teacher, theologian, and writer. May God continue to bless and strengthen you, John, and may he grant you many, many more fruitful years of ministry and writing.

ABBREVIATIONS

BOOKS, JOURNALS, SERIES, TRANSLATIONS

<i>ANEP</i>	<i>The Ancient Near East in Pictures Relating to the Old Testament</i> , ed. J. B. Pritchard (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1954)
<i>ANET</i>	<i>Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament</i> , 3rd ed., ed. J. B. Pritchard (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969)
ASV	American Standard Version
BDB	F. Brown, S. R. Driver, and C. A. Briggs, <i>A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> (Oxford: Clarendon, 1907)
<i>Bib</i>	<i>Biblica</i>
CD	Karl Barth, <i>Church Dogmatics</i> , 13 vols., trans. and ed. G. W. Bromiley and T. F. Torrance (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1956–75)
<i>CTJ</i>	<i>Calvin Theological Journal</i>
ESV	English Standard Version
EVV	English Versions
<i>HALOT</i>	L. Koehler, W. Baumgartner, and J. J. Stamm, <i>The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> , 4 vols., trans. and ed. under supervision of M. E. J. Richardson (Leiden: Brill, 1994–99)

ABBREVIATIONS

<i>IBHS</i>	B. K. Waltke and M. O'Connor, <i>Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax</i> (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990)
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JETS</i>	<i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>
KJV	King James Version
LXX	Septuagint
NASB	New American Standard Bible
NIBC	New International Biblical Commentary
NICNT	New International Commentary on the New Testament
NICOT	New International Commentary on the Old Testament
NIV	New International Version
NKJV	New King James Version
NT	New Testament
OT	Old Testament
<i>TLOT</i>	<i>Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> , 3 vols., ed. Ernst Jenni with assistance from Claus Westermann, trans. Mark E. Biddle (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1997)
TNIV	Today's New International Version
<i>TWOT</i>	<i>Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament</i> , 2 vols., ed. R. L. Harris, G. L. Archer, and B. K. Waltke (Chicago: Moody, 1980)
<i>TynBul</i>	<i>Tyndale Bulletin</i>
WBC	World Biblical Commentary
WCF	Westminster Confession of Faith
WLC	Westminster Larger Catechism
WSC	Westminster Shorter Catechism
<i>WTJ</i>	<i>Westminster Theological Journal</i>

 JOHN FRAME'S WORKS¹

AGG	<i>Apologetics to the Glory of God: An Introduction</i>
CVT	<i>Cornelius Van Til: An Analysis of His Thought</i>
CWM	<i>Contemporary Worship Music: A Biblical Defense</i>
CWT	<i>Collected Works of John M. Frame, Volume 1: Theology</i>
DCL	<i>Doctrine of the Christian Life</i>
DG	<i>Doctrine of God</i>
DKG	<i>Doctrine of the Knowledge of God</i>
DWG	<i>Doctrine of the Word of God</i> (forthcoming)
ER	<i>Evangelical Reunion</i>
IDSCB	"In Defense of Something Close to Biblicism"
IRF	<i>Introduction to the Reformed Faith</i>
ME	<i>Medical Ethics: Principles, Persons, and Problems</i>
MWC	"Machen's Warrior Children"
NOG	<i>No Other God: A Response to Open Theism</i>
PP	<i>A Primer on Perspectivalism</i>
PWG	<i>Perspectives on the Word of God: An Introduction to Christian Ethics</i>
RLT	"Reflections of a Lifetime Theologian"
SBL	<i>Salvation Belongs to the Lord: An Introduction to Systematic Theology</i>
TAM	<i>Theology at the Movies</i> (on http://www.frame-poythress.com site only)
TAP	<i>The Amsterdam Philosophy</i>
TRAD	"Traditionalism"
WST	<i>Worship in Spirit and Truth</i>

1. See Bibliography for complete bibliographical information.

A NOTE OF SPECIAL APPRECIATION

ROBERT C. (RIC) CANNADA JR.

THE FAMOUS GANGSTER “Baby Face” Nelson made an impression. On July 23, 1934, after John Dillinger had been killed the previous day, FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover named Nelson as Public Enemy No. 1. Nelson was elevated to the pinnacle of public awareness as an enemy of society.

“Baby Face” John Frame has made an impression, too. Although his name is not as well known in the public sphere of our society, John may well have been labeled by Satan over the years as Enemy No. 1 of Satan’s kingdom of darkness because of John’s defense of the gospel and his preparation of others to spread the gospel around the world. John has certainly been a force for good, as Nelson was a force for evil.

The first time I saw John Frame I noticed his baby face, as others have, but I was also impressed even then by his mature mind that has been so greatly used to bless the kingdom of Christ and by his gracious spirit. I was a senior in my undergraduate program at Vanderbilt University in February 1970 when I decided that the Lord was calling me to seminary. Along with my friend and college mate John Hughes, I decided to visit two well-known seminaries, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in the Chicago area and Westminster Theological Seminary in the Philadelphia area. We left school for a week to drive to and visit Trinity for the first half of the week and Westminster for the second half. This Mississippi boy made the mistake of planning those visits in February; there seemed to be ten feet of snow piled up that week in each place. I later decided to enroll in Reformed Theological

Seminary, a fledgling seminary at the time in Jackson, Mississippi, of which my father was one of the founders. Johnny enrolled at Westminster.

I never forgot my visit to Westminster. The one professor in particular that I remember from that visit was John Frame. Perhaps that was because I was majoring in philosophy at Vanderbilt and John's teaching included an appreciation for philosophy, approaching it within a biblical framework. I thoroughly enjoyed John's class that week in Philadelphia.

While I was a student in those early years of RTS, we all were keenly aware that RTS in many ways was just the baby sister of Westminster Seminary. We owed so much to the faithfulness of the founders and professors at Westminster through the previous years, and we clearly understood that what we were being taught was the blessing of that Westminster heritage. Since I had visited Westminster, I had a clear vision of the campus and of John Frame, among others, holding forth the Reformed truth as our collaborators up north just as we were seeking to spread that truth in the Southeast.

My second encounter with John Frame came in the fall of 1973. I had graduated from RTS in May 1973 with an MDiv degree and had entered the pastoral ministry as the assistant pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in Clinton, South Carolina. I was ordained in the PCUS (the Southern Presbyterian Church). The PCA (Presbyterian Church in America) was formally established in December 1973, and the church where I served stayed in the PCUS. The members of FPC in Clinton included many fine conservative Christians; but the church also included a number of more liberal members, particularly from the local college, Presbyterian College. During my first summer in Clinton as I taught in an adult Bible school, I realized the challenges I would be facing, particularly on the issue of the inerrancy and authority of the Bible.

As I began to work with students from Presbyterian College in the fall of 1973, I realized even more the seriousness of the conflict. The Bible professors at the college and I were members of the same denomination, worshiping in the same congregation, working with the same college students, and teaching them exactly the opposite theology, especially regarding the nature of the Bible. Then I saw a tiny advertisement in *Christianity Today* about a conference on the inerrancy of Scripture at a place and by a group entirely new to me. It turned out that this was the very first Ligonier conference, organized by R. C. Sproul and held at a retreat center in Pennsylvania in October 1973. Every important conservative writer on the authority of

Scripture of whom I had ever heard was invited to speak at the conference that week. Although I had been at the church in Clinton only a few months, my senior pastor agreed to let me attend that conference. I believe I was the only person from the Southeast who was in attendance.

That conference was my first time to hear R. C. Sproul, whom I had not previously known and who was not well known yet, at least in the South. I learned to love and appreciate R. C. then and through the years have attended a number of other Ligonier conferences. I had previously heard other speakers who were there that fall, such as J. I. Packer, John Warwick Montgomery, John Gerstner, and Clark Pinnock, along with new ones I met then, such as Sproul and Peter Jones. As I remember it, there were seven speakers and fewer than a hundred people registered for the conference, so we had a good deal of personal time with the speakers.

One of the speakers at that first Ligonier conference was John Frame. Again I was thoroughly impressed and came away from that conference helped more by John than by anyone else. It was a very interesting conference because all the speakers were conservatives at the time (although one of them shifted greatly in later years) and all of them held to a high view of the authority and inerrancy of the Bible. A book edited by John Warwick Montgomery, *God's Inerrant Word: An International Symposium on the Trustworthiness of Scripture*,¹ was later published as a compilation of the lectures delivered at that conference. All the speakers were defending Scripture against the more liberal views that were prevalent at that time and are still present today. But since the presenters all agreed on the inerrancy of Scripture, the conference became more of a debate among themselves over *how* we should defend Scripture, a debate over apologetics. Some defended Scripture using a traditional evidentialist approach; others defended Scripture using a presuppositional approach. For a young minister like me, the differences in perspectives were fascinating.

Two things impressed me about John Frame at that Ligonier conference. Those same two traits had impressed me at Westminster several years earlier and have continued to impress me through the years. John was very strong in his defense of the authority and inerrancy of Scripture, which he clearly presented in the context of presuppositional apologetics. I still remember in particular his emphasis on the Holy Spirit. At a time when the charismatic movement was on the rise and many Reformed people were hesitant to talk

1. Calgary: Canadian Institute for Law, Theology, and Public Policy, 1974.

about the Holy Spirit, John emphasized that the Spirit is still actively at work today and pointed out from the Westminster Confession of Faith that only the current activity of the Holy Spirit in the hearts and minds of people will convince anyone of the truth of Scripture's inerrancy:

We may be moved and induced by the testimony of the Church to an high and reverent esteem of the holy Scripture. And the heavenliness of the matter, the efficacy of the doctrine, the majesty of the style, the consent of all the parts, the scope of the whole (which is, to give all glory to God), the full discovery it makes of the only way of man's salvation, the many other incomparable excellencies, and the entire perfection thereof, are arguments whereby it does abundantly evidence itself to be the Word of God: yet notwithstanding, our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth and divine authority thereof, is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit bearing witness by and with the Word in our hearts.²

John was clear in his teaching, but he was also winsome in his spirit at the conference. Even when the discussions in the question/answer sessions or in the informal times around the tables became a little heated, John was always the calm one, pouring out kindness even as he presented his position. He was and is a careful scholar, a gracious mediator, a truly kind person, a humble listener, and one who is even able to receive correction with a good heart.

After twenty years as a pastor, in 1993 I was asked to join the staff of Reformed Theological Seminary in order to establish the third RTS campus, in Charlotte, North Carolina. At RTS my path would cross that of John Frame once more. In 2000, John Frame joined the faculty of the RTS Orlando campus. I was the executive vice president (chief operating officer) for RTS at the time and had the privilege of being involved in some of John's interviews, especially when he was interviewed by the board's executive committee. The same traits were evident: a clear presentation of his theology in a winsome and gentle manner. Since that time I have had the privilege of working with John in a variety of settings at RTS.

Although his scholarly output is impressive, perhaps even more impressive are some of John's less scholarly works aimed to help theological students and others with practical issues. Two such booklets are *Learning at Jesus'*

2. WCF 1.5.

Feet: A Case for Seminary Training and *Studying Theology as a Servant of Jesus*, both published by RTS for our students and prospective students. These simple but very helpful works make the same impression: clear truth winsomely presented.

Others are much better able than I to analyze and evaluate the depth of John's scholarly work and its impact on theologians around the world. I have seen his personal impact on students and young pastors like me through many years. John still has that baby face, although it has many more lines and wrinkles now. He also still has that mature mind and winsome spirit that drew me to him years ago, and he has made a good, lasting impression for the kingdom of Christ on many, many others as well. Thank you, John.

PERSONAL WORDS

MANY FRIENDS

**JAY ADAMS, PHD,
DEAN, INSTITUTE FOR NOUTHETIC STUDIES,
GREENVILLE, SOUTH CAROLINA**

Doubtless, other contributors to this festschrift will justly praise John for his writing and teaching. Well and good. I want to tell a story about him. It's probably my most vivid remembrance of John at Westminster.

Way back in the Vietnam War days, in order to avoid the draft, a number of students enrolled in seminaries. We had our share in Philadelphia. Among them (many of the professors supposed) were those who adhered to the Dooyeweerdian philosophy of Sphere Sovereignty. They gave us a lot of trouble as a faculty. One once said in class that there was more revelation in the thermometer on the wall than in the Bible.

Eventually, they invited one of their champions to descend on the school from their "headquarters" in Canada. They were all ecstatic at the presence of such a big gun on the campus. He was to lecture and set us all straight.

Well, he gave his presentation, and you could see the elation on their faces. He then settled down to await a response. John got up to give the rebuttal. And what a rebuttal it was! Never before nor since have I ever heard anything to equal it. He thoroughly trounced the erroneous views of his opponent, cutting him off at the knees. Then, not satisfied with that, he systematically sliced and diced him verbally, logically, and scripturally. Thereupon, he buried the remains. When the bigwig was

firmly interred, John jumped up and down on his grave to be certain the task was properly completed.

I'll never forget it. Nor will students who were present. The cause of the dissenting faction of the student body, along with their mentor (who shall remain unnamed), was permanently set back, and we had a large measure of peace again. When I remember the event, I can't help chuckling. Good work, John! Keep on burying the opposition!

**JAMES C. BLAND III, DMIN,
COORDINATOR OF MISSION TO NORTH AMERICA (PCA)**

In the teaching and writings of John Frame, orthodoxy and orthopraxis join together to reveal a scholar's mind and a pastor's heart. In particular, I am indebted to Dr. Frame for his study of the principles and practice of biblical worship. In the early part of this decade, I invited several colleagues together, including John Frame, to help me write a practical guideline for worship among church planters in the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA). John was keenly insightful and of significant help in this project that has served us well in establishing biblically healthy churches.

**RICHARD BLEDSOE, DMIN,
PROFESSOR OF BIBLICAL STUDIES,
RIVENDELL COLLEGE, BOULDER**

What to say about my friend John Frame? He was (and is) my friend, and is still my professor.

He was perhaps the principal reason I showed up at Westminster West in Escondido, California, in August of 1981. I wanted to study under him. To that time, I was an "autodidact," and I was already a preacher. I had read and studied a great deal, and among my theological books were also Herman Dooyeweerd and Cornelius Van Til. I had read Van Til until I was blue in the face. Not easy to understand. And some parts of him remained elusive, no matter how many times one pored over them. I even thought then, "If I were to be able to study under Van Til, I would not want to. It is obvious that Van Til is one of the worst commentators on Van Til that there is."

No, I wanted to study under John Frame, who had the knack and the gift of clarity. So I showed up in 1981 to study under John. And he did have

that gift. He made the very profound but unclear Dutchman comprehensible. He “unpacked” him, as we now say. But clarity was not his only gift.

Human beings are fascinating, just by virtue of being human beings, the image of God. But when human beings are “gifts to the church,” they are even more fascinating. John Frame is a package deal put together by God in most interesting ways.

I remember one day when Van Til’s nemesis showed up at Westminster. That was Dr. John Gerstner, by then one of the great deans of the Calvinistic world. Dr. Gerstner had been known to and by John for years, all the way back to youth, and they were friends. Gerstner was a famous teacher, perhaps the greatest Socratic teacher of his generation, and was legendary in the classroom for his sparring and fencing with students. He was also one of the greatest debaters of his time. I used to say that the ultimate meeting of the unmovable and the unstoppable would be debate between John Gerstner and Greg Bahnsen that was moderated by John Warwick Montgomery. It would be an event that would rival the dropping of the first hydrogen bomb on Bikini.

A debate was staged in our classroom between John and Dr. Gerstner.

Now, John Frame in person is a rather timid man. He is sometimes not particularly comfortable in social settings and is not so good at small talk. And although an unfailingly cheerful man, he is in fact shy, quite shy. He is anything but a personally confrontational person. Except . . .

I would not want to meet John Gerstner in debate, especially public debate. It would be like standing in the street, holding your hand up to meet an oncoming bus. No, thank you. But John Frame stood in the street, and held his hand up, and the bus met an equal force. He not only fought back, and did combat, he was on the offensive and at the very least was the full equal in fearlessly meeting John Gerstner in the joust. He defended our champion, Cornelius Van Til, and his position, and perhaps won. That little story tells you something about John Frame.

He is a shy man in person, but the quality that I most admire in John Frame is his courage. If something is right, he will defend it, and defend it fearlessly. But what makes that quality so interesting, what makes it an “apple of gold in a setting of silver,” is that John is not a combative man, or a warrior “by nature.” He is in fact famously the man who sees the good in every person, in every position. But that is a temperate and a prudent quality in him, not an appeasing one. I do not know of any-

one who has less appeasement in his soul than John Frame. And when that quality of boldness and even fearlessness is offset by a temperament that is in many ways the exact opposite, it is striking, remarkably striking. Like Moses, he will stammer out his disqualifications (I have heard him do so when nominated to be an elder—disqualifications the congregation rejected, I believe unanimously), and like Gideon, go forth to war, fearlessly.

Dauids sometimes come in odd packages, and in this way one really does know it is a gift from God.

**ROBERT J. CARA, PHD,
PROFESSOR OF NEW TESTAMENT AND CHIEF ACADEMIC
OFFICER, REFORMED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY,
CHARLOTTE**

The Bible, Calvin's *Institutes*, and Frame's *The Doctrine of the Knowledge of God (DKG)*—these three are the most important books you will ever read. At least this is what an influential professor at Reformed Theological Seminary Jackson boldly proclaimed to my seminary class in 1987. The professor had us read *DKG* and tested us on its contents. Also, he “made” us each write a personal one-page note to John, commenting on the book's impact upon us. And yes, this professor was known for a bit of hyperbole. Therefore, the students were never completely sure whether he really thought that John's book was actually the third most important book ever written, or not.

What did I think of *DKG* as a seminary student? Since I was a convinced “Van Tillian” coming to seminary, I was predisposed to agree with much in the book. Well, I did love the book with its emphasis on considering the normative, situational, and existential perspectives, which significantly broadened my outlook. My love for the book was not dampened despite having some disagreement with it. In the end, I did not agree with (or understand?) John's multiperspectivalism of normative/situational/existential as a *philosophical* system. I was, however, and am still significantly impacted by these three perspectives *pragmatically*. That is, there are many situations in which I use the three perspectives as a grid to make sure I have covered all the bases, especially in ethics and hermeneutics.

As it turns out, I was the teaching assistant for the above professor who required us to read *DKG*. This professor allowed me to read John's personal correspondence to him related to John's reading of the students' notes. I recall being very impressed by John's humble response. Many years later, as currently John and I are colleagues at Reformed Theological Seminary, I am still impressed by his humbleness.

John, although I think *DKG* is very good, I am not yet willing to put it at number three all time!

**D. A. CARSON, PHD,
RESEARCH PROFESSOR OF NEW TESTAMENT,
TRINITY EVANGELICAL DIVINITY SCHOOL**

All of us in Christian ministry know that we stand on the shoulders of others. Many of these "others" are figures of the past: we know them through their literary remains, through biographies that cover their lives, through responsibly written history. We benefit from Ignatius, Irenaeus, John Chrysostom, Augustine, Bernard de Clairvaux, Wycliffe, Tyndale, Calvin, Turretin, Whitefield, and so on. (I am sure you will not try to infer anything from the myriads of names I have not mentioned!) But we also stand on the shoulders of contemporary "others," whether family and friends and colleagues or contemporary Christian thinkers whose works we read but whom we know (or knew) personally—F. F. Bruce, John Stott, Jim Packer, Doug Moo, John Piper, Dick Lucas, and countless others. They have helped to make us what we are.

But you belong on a shorter list that does not quite fit into either category—a list of major contemporary figures whose works have helped shape me but whom I do not really know. Only twice, I think, have we briefly chatted together. I think I was first impressed with the quality of your reviews. Eventually I became familiar with most of your *oeuvre*, with special thanks to God for particular essays (e.g., "Some Questions about the Regulative Principle," *WTJ* 59 [1992]: 357–66), polemics (e.g., *No Other God: A Response to Open Theism*), apologetics (e.g., *Apologetics to the Glory of God*), and works of constructive theology (e.g., *The Doctrine of the Knowledge of God*). If you write it, I read it, not because I always find myself in perfect agreement, but because you teach me.

So thanks for your shoulders. *Ad multos annos!*

**BRYAN CHAPELL, PHD,
PROFESSOR OF HOMILETICS AND PRESIDENT,
COVENANT THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY**

Any student, colleague, or friend of John Frame can tell you what a delightful combination of giftedness and humility he embodies. Even many of those who consider themselves John's opponents in the world of theological scholarship will attest to this, offering stories of the fair and charitable way he treats those who disagree with him. In this volume, writers, scholars, pastors, and others from a variety of backgrounds and traditions have all come together to pay tribute to a man whose work has inspired both great praise and occasional controversy, but whose winning personality, fine mind, and obvious love for the Lord have made him a popular teacher, speaker, and friend.

A recognized expert on the thought of his mentor, Cornelius Van Til, John has produced his own writings on multiperspectivalism, presuppositionalism, epistemology, apologetics, ethics, and worship that have been widely read and profoundly influential. Again, the contents of the present volume speak to the scope of his work, the depth of his thinking, and the range of his appeal. It is hard to imagine an area of theological study that has not been impacted by John's work in some way. I cherish this opportunity to celebrate the life and work of a man who has such a burning passion for the truth of God's Word, such a deep desire to communicate what that Word teaches, and such an abiding love for the Savior, whose redemptive work on our behalf is the subject of that Word's every chapter.

We praise God for the gift that the Bible is to all who believe. Let us also praise him for the gift that John Frame and his work have been to all who strive to understand and share the message of the Bible for the glory of our Lord.

**BRYCE H. CRAIG, THM,
PRESIDENT OF P&R PUBLISHING**

As a publisher working with Dr. Frame over the years, I have found the experience to be both humbling and rewarding. It has been humbling in that he would choose to work with us, and rewarding as we have seen the wealth of material that has come forth from his pen and continues to minister to

a people hungry for rich, sound biblical teaching. In addition, the honor of accepting a coveted Gold Medallion award for his book *The Doctrine of the Word of God* was one of the highlights of P&R's years of publishing. So on behalf of the staff of P&R, we are truly thankful for his long and faithful service to our Savior and Lord, and we pray for many more years of fruitful service together.

**DANIEL M. DORIANI, PHD,
SENIOR PASTOR, CENTRAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,
ST. LOUIS**

John Frame was my professor at Westminster Seminary during Westminster's season of primacy. In the days before Westminster divided east and west, the youngish Poythress and Godfrey were developing superb lectures with fountains of information. Dillard and Gaffin and Strimple were admirable men and assured lecturers; Strimple was avuncular and learned.

It wasn't obvious where to place Frame, nearing forty but seeming ageless somehow. He was not an enthusiastic lecturer. Some professors lean in as they lecture; Frame seemed to lean back, not out of indifference or timidity but, it seemed, from a desire to stay detached, the better to lead his dispassionate quest for truth.

His foundational courses in apologetics, ethics, and theology were marked by extraordinary depth and clarity. The massive outlines, the innumerable Scripture proofs, the timely, apt citations from great theologians and philosophers past shouted, "This must become a book someday."

We heard the big ideas that have been the cornerstone of his theological influence, but Frame the professor and lecturer offered lessons that Frame the writer couldn't teach. His humility and quest for the truth seemed to be sides of one coin. He never drew attention to himself. Personal comments were extremely rare (he stunned us one day by revealing that his dog had just died and he was grieving). If a student wrote an outstanding paper, he might soon have an invitation to deliver it as a lecture in class. Some students complained, but he noted that they had his full lecture outline, so nothing was lost and something was gained. Beyond the lecture outlines, he also provided—and insisted that we answer—what seemed like vast numbers of study questions. Some baffled us. No one could find the answer to one about Van Til and a black Buick. Someone gathered his nerve to break

custom and ask the professor for the answer. He replied, “I don’t know; I was hoping one of you might figure it out.” Class readings were not burdensome; he explained that he would rather have us read fewer pages well than many poorly. The last two notes I read as keys, not to his *content* but to his approach: he wanted us to think hard, figure things out for ourselves, know a few sources well—above all, Scripture—to find God’s truth and to know, love, and obey the Lord himself.

**CHARLES DUNAHOO, DMIN,
COORDINATOR OF
CHRISTIAN EDUCATION AND PUBLICATIONS (PCA)**

It has been my privilege and honor to know John Frame for a good number of years. Our mutual connection with Westminster Theological Seminary gave us more than simply Reformed theology and presuppositional apologetics in common. John’s careful scholarship, Christian piety, and ability to open deep biblical truth have blessed not only me in my Christian life but so many others as well. I have referred to him many times as one of those few men who I believe is a must-read for anyone wanting to grow in the faith.

John Frame has one of the keenest minds of all the people I know. His gift of discernment and ability to teach and write have certainly contributed to the growth and expansion of God’s kingdom. John is a master of taking complex issues and opening them up in a marvelous way. He can peel back the layers of complicated issues such as open theism, sanctification, apologetics, systematic theology, and epistemology, to name a few topics. I regularly refer to him in my own study, teaching, and writing. One example of his kingdom perspective illustrates my point: “I was amazed to find that the same Bible that presents the message of salvation also presents a distinctive philosophy, including metaphysics, epistemology, and ethics, one of which alone makes sense of human life. Van Til’s work encouraged me to take an offensive, rather than a mere defensive, stance against non-Christian thought.” He further writes, “In the biblical worldview, nothing makes sense apart from the presupposition of God’s reality.” That sums up John Frame’s unique giftedness. God has given gifts and gifted people to his church, and John Frame is one of those special people.

It is my honor and privilege to express my appreciation to John Frame, especially for his desire to think God's thoughts after him and apply them to all of life, and his efforts to encourage us to do the same. I must admit I have been frustrated by John's writings. With each one I have said, this is the one you must read; then another is published and I say the same thing.

May God continue to bless and use you in the building up of his church and the expansion of his kingdom.

**JOHN S. FEINBERG, PHD,
CHAIR, PROFESSOR OF BIBLICAL AND SYSTEMATIC
THEOLOGY, TRINITY EVANGELICAL DIVINITY SCHOOL**

I have never met John Frame. Nor have we ever corresponded or talked by phone. Still, it would be hard to imagine an evangelical theologian working broadly in the Reformed tradition during the latter part of the twentieth century who didn't know of John Frame. I have been privileged to serve with faculty colleagues who were John's former students, and they uniformly and unequivocally speak highly of him in many regards.

First, he has served the cause of Christ with great distinction as a professor of systematic theology and apologetics. Former students speak highly of his skills as a teacher. But even more than his ability as a communicator, they mention two things repeatedly. One is that the content of his lectures, preaching, and everyday conversation is filled with Scripture. This involves not only constant reference to biblical passages as the basis of what he thinks and teaches, but also speech is filled with ideas that reflect the fundamental worldview of Scripture, even when Scripture isn't quoted. Every idea and act must be judged by whether it fits or contradicts biblical thinking. Invariably as well, those who know him emphasize that what he teaches is not just information he presents so as to make a living, but the foundation of his own life and ministry. John Frame teaches evangelical theology both by his lectures and writings, and also by his life!

Second, those who work in the fields of apologetics and philosophy of religion know John Frame as an able proponent of presuppositional apologetics. A student of Cornelius Van Til, another great Reformed theologian and apologist, John Frame is easily the most eloquent and able contemporary spokesman for this method of doing apologetics. Here, as with his theology, his commitment to this way of defending the faith stems from his belief

that it best squares with biblical thinking and gives God greater glory than any other method of apologetics. Although arguably Frame's influence as a theologian is greater than his influence on apologetics, he is still a most important contributor to ongoing discussions about the best way to defend Christianity to nonbelievers.

Then, there are many people who never sat in John Frame's class or heard him preach, who have still been blessed by his ministry. That is so because he is a prolific writer. Not only has he written many pages, but the topics he addresses cover a broad spectrum of evangelical thinking in the fields of systematic theology and apologetics. As with his other ministries, his writings exhibit a careful thinker, grounded in the Word of God, who shows not only a wealth of knowledge but also a heart and mind devoted totally to God himself.

Former colleagues who had him as their teacher uniformly speak of his godly life, his devotion to his family, and his insistence in all things to conform his thinking and action to the Word of God and the God of the Word. For all of these reasons and more, it is right on this festive occasion to celebrate him and his service to the Lord! I am pleased to be among those given the opportunity in this more formal way to offer him my congratulations. May the Lord continue to bless you richly, John, and give you many more years of fruitful service to his glory!

**MARK D. FUTATO SR., PHD,
PROFESSOR OF OLD TESTAMENT,
REFORMED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, ORLANDO**

The Old Testament occasionally speaks of a "worthy man." We occasionally have the privilege of knowing a worthy man. If John Frame had been an Old Testament character, he would have been noted as a worthy man.

I have known John for quite some time. John was my professor at Westminster Theological Seminary in the late 1970s. We taught together at Westminster Theological Seminary in California from 1988 to 1999 and have been teaching together at Reformed Theological Seminary in Orlando since 2000. Throughout these years I have had the privilege of watching John live a life worthy of the high calling that he has received.

Several characteristics come to mind when I think of John as a worthy man. One is his rare combination of brilliance and humility. John is one of

the brightest people and clearest thinkers that I know personally, and at the same time, he exhibits a humility that is not often found in the academy or in the church. A second, related to the first, is his phenomenal ability to listen. By that I mean his ability and willingness to understand another's position. I have read John's reviews and critiques of the thoughts and writings of others over the years. I doubt that many if any have responded to John by saying, "You misunderstood what I said." A third, related to the first and second, is John's graciousness. I cannot think of anyone that I know personally who is more gracious with people with whom he disagrees than John is. John's willingness to grant the benefit of the doubt and to learn from all sides of the argument makes him a man worthy of emulation.

It has been an honor and a delight to know John for some thirty years. I trust that God will bless him with many more fruitful years, until he hears his Master say, "Well done; you are a worthy man."

**RICHARD B. GAFFIN JR., THD, PROFESSOR EMERITUS,
BIBLICAL AND SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY,
WESTMINSTER THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY**

I first met John in the early 1960s when we were students, I a couple of years ahead of him, in the BD program at Westminster Seminary. Among the memories I have of him from that time, in addition to his already evident brilliance, was the way, with his background in philosophy, he did not hesitate to question Dr. Van Til rather aggressively on key aspects of the latter's understanding of philosophy and position on apologetics. An encouragement to me over the years has been to see him, along with criticisms (not all of which I share), embrace that position and emerge, through his teaching and writing, as a premier proponent in recent decades of presuppositional apologetics.

Later in that decade we both began teaching at Westminster, where a few years after me (1965) he replaced me (in 1968) as the "baby" on the faculty, which after several decades of remarkable stability was into a period of transition. John was certainly a key in effecting a transition that maintained the standard of godliness as well as academic and classroom excellence set by our teachers.

When John left around 1980 for the beginning of what is now Westminster Seminary California, I lost a valued colleague. Of so much that

could be said here, I think of his stress that our use of language in theology be clear and careful, an emphasis that included having to observe occasionally, in the face of accents in my own teaching and, as I recall, with a degree of exasperation with certain student enthusiasts, that biblical theology and redemptive-historical are not magic wands that solve every theological problem with a wave!

John, despite the impression you may still have, I don't think biblical theology is more basic than or primary to systematic theology; as distinct disciplines the relationship between them is reciprocal, mutually enriching and correcting. But I do believe that attention to the redemptive-historical context is essential in a crucial and decisive way for sound biblical exegesis, which I'm sure we both believe is the lifeblood of sound systematic theology. Might we agree that biblical theology is the indispensable servant of systematic theology?

John, I thank God for you and your years of distinguished service. May he grant you health and strength for continuing productivity for the good of the church.

**RICHARD C. GAMBLE, PHD,
PROFESSOR OF SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY,
REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY,
PITTSBURGH**

I thank God that our lives have intertwined over the years. When I arrived at WTS Philadelphia, you had just moved to Escondido. The two faculties were about as far away from each other geographically as is possible, but we were united in mission.

Our relationship took a different turn when you joined us in Orlando. We are both early risers, and you were faithfully at work in your office each morning. Your life had a regularity and discipline that included faithfulness to your seminary responsibilities but also faithfulness to your wife, family, and church. That discipline made it possible for you to produce the enormous amount of significant theological research that carries your name.

In other words, you embodied a faithfulness that reminds me of different Old Testament figures. Noah labored day and night for a hundred years in faithfulness to the word that God spoke to him. God blessed that

obedience. Abraham journeyed to an unknown country in faithfulness to God's promise. God blessed that obedience too.

You have modeled Christian faithfulness to our God as you have listened to his word and labored in a quiet way to advance his church and kingdom. May God continue to bless you!

**MICHAEL J. GLODO, THM,
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF BIBLICAL STUDIES,
DEAN OF THE CHAPEL,
REFORMED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, ORLANDO**

John Frame was my professor long before I ever met him. Those Christian minds that influenced me most and that I found most compelling turned out to share in common the mark of John Frame upon their own development. My delight at eventually becoming his colleague has only grown from that time. On the occasion of this festschrift, I am once again reminded of how his reflection of biblical epistemology has permeated so many areas in which I now teach. I pray God's grace to reflect as faithfully John's contribution to my life as he has faithfully reflected our Servant Lord.

**R. J. GORE JR., PHD,
PROFESSOR OF SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY,
ERSKINE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY,
DUE WEST, SOUTH CAROLINA**

I first came across John Frame's writings while at Westminster Seminary Philadelphia in the 1980s. His wide range of interests appealed to me, but it took a few years before it all "clicked." And what a deliciously clarifying moment that was! In an earlier moment of theological clarity I had become a Calvinist; later, the presuppositional apologetics light came on and I embraced Van Til. Then one day "Frame's triangle" clicked—and I began to understand the normative, situational, and existential perspectives in ethics. This simple yet profound approach to ethical issues has helped me and my students for more than a decade.

Let me mention four things I appreciate about John Frame. First, he is biblical. Some criticize him for being "biblicistic," or not sufficiently

“confessional.” However, John understands the meaning of “subordinate” standards and I celebrate his priorities: commitment, first, to Scripture, and then to confessional standards. Second, although some complain about his *sic et non* method, I commend his willingness to see the truth offered by other perspectives, to seek to understand opposing viewpoints. Third, although some are peeved that he occasionally thinks out loud, I applaud his transparent desire to find the best answers for the questions of our day, not just repeating answers that *once* were adequate (e.g., see his books on worship and worship music). Fourth, he graciously wrote the foreword to my book, *Covenantal Worship*, a kindness for which he has been much abused!

Like many others, I have never studied under John Frame, although I have been his student for two decades. He has never been my classroom teacher, although he has instructed me in apologetics, ethics, philosophy, theology, Scripture, pastoral ministry—and Christian charity. Once, while driving from the airport to Erskine Seminary for his lectures on “Christianity and Ethics,” we chatted. In response to one question, he smiled, eyes twinkling, and said, “Well, we’re Reformed, but we’re not angry about it.” Blessed are those who have been taught by John Frame—whether in the classroom or by the printed page. In our contentious day, may his irenic spirit—and his tribe—increase!

**STEVE HAYS, MAR (CANDIDATE),
TEACHER’S ASSISTANT,
REFORMED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY;
CHRISTIAN AUTHOR, BLOGGER (TRIABLOGUE)**

Someone once said the difference between Richard Feynmann and Murray Gell-Mann is that Gell-Mann makes sure you know what an extraordinary person he is although Feynmann is not a person at all but a more advanced life-form pretending to be human to spare your feelings.

In terms of sheer intellect, we’d expect a man like Frame to be teaching at Harvard or Oxford. Beyond his intellectual endowments, Frame also came from a wealthy family, so he could afford to pursue any career he chose. But because of his sense of Christian vocation, he chose to train men for Christian ministry.

Frame is most associated with Cornelius Van Til, but in terms of theological method he was also influenced by the exegetical orientation of John Murray, his other mentor.

Van Til was a revolutionary of sorts in challenging traditional apologetics. As such he was somewhat prone to hyperbole. Frame has scaled back some of the rhetorical overkill. In addition, Frame, with his triperspectivalism, has always had his own way of conceptualizing the issues.

Frame is controversial in some circles. That's partly because, like Feynmann, he simply operates at a higher level than most of his critics. He sails over their heads.

It's also because Frame, like Murray, takes *sola Scriptura* quite seriously. For him, Scripture takes precedence over tradition. And he puts that into practice. It's a way of life, not a slogan on the wall.

Van Til had the kind of charismatic personality and divisive rhetoric that inspired passionate supporters and passionate opponents. Frame, with his more irenic style and temperament, hasn't had the same polarizing effect. At the same time, his influence is likely to be more enduring because it is less driven by personal dynamics—which inevitably fade over time with the demise of the principals.

Always the consummate Christian gentleman, Frame has been a wise, patient, and attentive mentor to many students over his long teaching career. A man of keen intellect with a pastor's heart, he sets an example, not merely of how to think, but how to speak and how to be.

**ANDREW HOFFECKER, PHD,
PROFESSOR OF CHURCH HISTORY,
REFORMED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, JACKSON**

John Frame has contributed masterfully to theological reflection in general and Reformed theology in particular for over forty years. Consistent with the greats who preceded him in mining the depths of Christian thought, John has gracefully and humbly added immeasurably to our rich heritage. Whether writing on theology, ethics, apologetics, or cultural themes, what is most notable is the breadth of his vision and the soundness of his insights. His *Theology of Lordship* series demonstrates his facility in restating in fresh ways the great biblical truths that have sustained Christians for almost five hundred years.

Repeatedly I have found that whether I went to his volumes to research a point about which I knew little or to recalibrate my thinking on matters I have held for years, I would inevitably realize how much time slipped by simply because I kept reading beyond my original intent. The clarity of his expression and the way that he led me to consider additional points seized my attention. Students who read John's books because they were assigned in my syllabi commented on how he made complex ideas accessible and articulated biblical themes with such striking illustrations.

Although John and I teach on separate campuses of Reformed Theological Seminary, we meet biannually at our faculty retreats. John unselfishly contributes to those gatherings by his musicianship. How many times I have walked into the meeting room to be greeted by his rendition of familiar hymns and choruses on the piano. He plays seamlessly from one favorite to another, thereby setting the tone for our corporate worship. How appropriate that I remember John in this way, for Reformed theology, which he expounds so profoundly, not only challenges our intellect but also drives us to worship.

John Calvin said that it is easier to reform theology than to reform piety. His struggles to achieve those goals in sixteenth-century Geneva are well documented. John's labors in theology and ethics in the twenty-first century have made that task clearer by his writings. May God continue to bless John's works to take minds and hearts captive to Christ.

**JOEL C. HUNTER, DMIN,
SENIOR PASTOR, NORTHLAND, A CHURCH DISTRIBUTED,
ORLANDO**

As I delight in reading the voluminous works of John Frame, part of my pleasure comes from knowing that they are written "from the fields." John is not ordinarily hidden in the stacks of a library; he is with students or at churches available to serve.

When Paul wrote the Epistles, he wrote "from the fields." Whether in prison or on the way to encourage another group of struggling Christians, his presence in person shaped his needed message to the churches. It is no stretch for me to compare John to Paul.

Here is a superior intellect that is an unassuming congregant, usually sitting with his wife, sometimes with one of his sons, worshipping along with

others. He is a regular part of our family at Northland Church, although a member of a PCA church (and who knows how many other ministries he serves). Whenever I see him, I know that he is not there to ask anything of me. He is there to worship, to serve when called upon, and to be a part of the extended body of Christ. He has no hidden agenda, other than to glorify God and support the saints in service.

As I speak a word to him, and Mary too, in the hallways, he is always gracious but conscious that a pastor has many to talk with during that time in addition to him. So he will say as much or as little as I like, answering my questions in cordial and personal terms but not presuming to conduct evaluations or counsel on the spot. Although I could use the latter, I am impressed with the former. His humility is so much a part of his personality that he would never notice it.

I am a great fan of John Frame, and I am a student of his also. He has taught me much about the Word written and in person and for that I am forever thankful.

**FRANK A. JAMES III, DPHIL, PHD,
PROVOST, PROFESSOR OF HISTORICAL THEOLOGY,
GORDON-CONWELL THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY**

I will never forget the day nearly thirty years ago when I walked into Professor Frame’s class in Philadelphia and saw three marvelous words scrawled on the chalkboard—“Theology is life.” Something clicked inside me; somehow I knew wisdom when I saw it. As soon as class was over, I sped home to tell Carolyn what Frame had said. I understood in my bones that true theology and life are so deeply intertwined that we can distinguish them only theoretically. I have embraced this wisdom, and it has become formative in my life both as a professor and as a follower of Jesus. For me this was revolutionary stuff. If I may say so, our Reformed heritage has inculcated the tendency to live in our heads, that is, to detach doctrine from life. But John Frame has always known that the founders of Reformed tradition (John Calvin, Peter Martyr Vermigli, Martin Bucer, and Heinrich Bullinger) never separated doctrine from piety or piety from doctrine. Bucer perhaps said it best when he defined *theology* as the “art of living a virtuous . . . life.”

John Frame is not just an award-winning theologian; he walks the talk. Over dinner one evening, I recall being stunned to hear that he and his

beloved Mary had ministered to the outcasts of society by inviting them to live in their home in California. “Were you not afraid?” I asked. John simply replied: “They needed help.” I discovered that John actually believes in the power of the gospel.

From my vantage point, both as John’s student at Westminster Seminary in Philadelphia and as his colleague and friend at Reformed Theological Seminary in Orlando, I view him as a quiet radical. Always unassuming, yet he was never afraid to speak the radical truth of Jesus Christ or to befriend a theological outcast. Of course he has been criticized for these associations, but the gospel compels John to be a friend even if he does not share someone’s particular viewpoint. I guess John really believes what Jesus said when he called his followers to “love one another even as I have loved you” (John 13:34).

One of John’s most famous articles is “Machen’s Warrior Children,” in which he recounts all the theological carnage that followed Machen’s death in 1937. He asked me to read it before sending it to the publisher. When I put it down, I could not help but lament all the infighting among those who share the same fundamental theological commitments. I am pretty sure John intended that we, the theological descendants of Machen, stop and take stock; that we stop employing theology as a weapon; that we stop behaving as if “theology is death” and again turn to the gospel truth that theology is life.

**JAMES B. (JIM) JORDAN, DLITT,
DIRECTOR, BIBLICAL HORIZONS**

It is with great pleasure that I write this note of congratulations to John Frame on the occasion of his seventieth birthday. Although I had read the occasional piece by John in the 1970s, it was not until I began finishing up my theological studies by moving to Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia that I met him. Over the next year and a half I happily availed myself of every course he offered, and was privileged to serve as one of his teaching assistants. I also found myself singing in the classical music ensemble at which John was pianist and organist.

We became friends, and I recall when a few of us older students took John out to lunch on his fortieth birthday. At that time he lamented that he would probably never get married. It was only a couple of years later that

the secretary at Westminster Theological Seminary in California informed me, when I called to speak with John, that he had just gotten married and was already the father of two children!

I was privileged to have John as my ThM adviser, and also to have him write the introduction to my first book, *The Law of the Covenant* (1984). Over the years from time to time we have glanced through one another's manuscripts. I don't believe, however, that John sent me a preview of *Contemporary Worship Music: A Biblical Defense*, although he did send me a signed copy inscribed "Dear Jim, Read it and weep!" Those who know my own liturgical labors will know that John and I differ over the best ways to reform liturgical music—although, perhaps oddly for Reformed/Presbyterian people, neither of us has felt the need to anathematize the other!

I was happy when director of Geneva Ministries to publish serially John's outline studies on ethics in the pages of *The Geneva Review*, and later on, before the days of Amazon.com, to sell John's books through my Biblical Horizons book catalogue.

Although I have learned much from John's work over the years, and hold him in high esteem as one of the best theologians of our time, I have also admired his combination of flexibility and boldness. John is a model for reading other thinkers on their own terms, and he is intolerant of intolerance. John paid a price for standing up for his beliefs in the face of increasing gnostic Klinean quackodoxy (my terms, not his) at what is now called Westminster Seminary. Our Lord was gracious, however, and John was immediately hired by Reformed Theological Seminary in Orlando, a place appreciative of his many gifts, and a friendly environment for him to complete his labors.

Finally, for a while John was present in an online discussion group where, in honor of his middle name, he became affectionately known as The Ancient MacElphatrick. Well, John, at the age of seventy, you are now TAM indeed!

**BOB KAUFMAN, BA IN PIANO PERFORMANCE,
DIRECTOR OF WORSHIP DEVELOPMENT, SOVEREIGN GRACE
MINISTRIES, GAITHERSBURG, MARYLAND**

I first came across John Frame's writings when I was studying the topic of worship. His book *Worship in Spirit and Truth* helped me realize

that approaching worship in a biblically informed way helps us avoid the errors of passionless orthodoxy or mindless enthusiasm. His *Contemporary Worship Music: A Biblical Defense* strengthened my conviction that God can use music of all types to bring glory to his name. As I read more of John's writings, certain themes began to emerge. A commitment to biblical authority. An ability to make theologically complex concepts understandable. A humility and generosity toward those who disagree with him. A love for Scripture and the church. A passion for the gospel. A desire to serve others. As I've had the privilege of spending time with John, I've found his life to be the mirror image of his writings. He is a humble, gracious man who truly desires to help the church know and worship God more biblically and passionately. I thank God for the many years he has used John Frame to proclaim his Word and exalt the glories of Christ. I pray there are many more.

**RICHARD P. KAUFMANN, MD,
ASSOCIATE PASTOR,
HARBOR PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, SAN DIEGO**

Congratulations! Happy Birthday! And especially, Thanks! Thanks for shaping the way I think. Each day I find myself walking around triangles as I study, problem-solve, and reflect on life. Our pastoral team often sits around playing "Triangle Frisbee," as we work on issues together. I am so grateful for the fourteen years we had together at New Life Presbyterian Church, in Escondido. Thanks for being my mentor, friend, and associate pastor.

One thing stands out during our time at New Life: you were a servant of Jesus' bride. You taught and modeled what it means to love and serve the local church. The apostle Paul evaluates churches not on the basis of size, programs, or facilities, but on the basis of faith, hope, and love. It follows that a servant of the church should give himself to growing the local church in faith, hope, and love. John, your teaching, writing, and life have done that in churches throughout the world. The impact is beyond anything I can get my mind around, so let me focus on one local church—New Life—1980–1994.

You grew us in our faith!

DOUGLAS F. KELLY, PHD,
RICHARD JORDAN PROFESSOR OF THEOLOGY,
REFORMED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, CHARLOTTE

I admired Professor John Frame long before I started teaching at RTS Jackson (in 1983); I appreciated his explanations of Van Til, and his engagement in an orthodox way with our contemporary culture. Once I got to RTS, I ordered his theology syllabi from Westminster West, and these were very helpful. John Frame beautifully holds together biblical fidelity and Reformed orthodoxy with a heart for our lost society, and a penetrating critique of it, a critique that is incisive, but never lacking in compassion and mercy. His classroom teaching has marked generations for the Lord, and his ever-increasing writings will continue to be a sound and uplifting guide for the Christian church for a long time to come. May this faithful servant of the Master be encouraged in every way; may his influence for the Risen Jesus increase!

You specifically grew us in our faith in the Lord Jesus (Eph. 1:15).

Of course, you did this in your teaching and preaching! But I am especially thinking of how you led us every Sunday in worship. You called us to worship with the gospel! For me it was always a highlight of the service. You drew us afresh and anew into the simple, unfathomable wonder of God's reckless love for us in Jesus! And it was not just what you said, but how you said it! It was clear that beneath your brilliance was a heart filled with love for our Savior. For those who knew you personally, it was especially meaningful because we knew that Jesus' love made a difference in how you lived each day. And as you played and sang, you enabled us not only to understand the content, but to experience the range of emotions expressed in the music. John, you taught me to love worship! You grew us in our faith in the Lord Jesus!

You grew us in our hope!

You specifically grew us in the hope that springs from two realities: our glorious inheritance in Jesus and his great power at work in us (Eph. 1:18–19)! John, you especially helped us understand God's power at work in us as the Spirit of God and the Word of God, for "where the Word is the Spirit is" (Eph. 5:18b; Col. 3:16)! This led to two results: hope in the world and hope for the world!

You grew us in our hope in the world! You enabled us to see that whatever suffering or struggles we face, there are no hopeless situations! With God's Word, God's Spirit, and God's people, we can respond to the most difficult hardships with wisdom, courage, and grace! We faced some very difficult issues during those fourteen years. The hardest were matters of life and death. The first one was Michael D., a young boy, who in a matter of one or two days went from vibrant health, to life support, to the unthinkable: when do we remove life support? John, you helped me and the parents think it through biblically, which enabled them to make the hardest decision they ever made, but with a sense that God's Word was giving them light in the darkest darkness.

There also were the criticisms we received for our worship style! Thanks for helping us process the input biblically. Thanks for being willing to answer those letters, especially the ones I never saw! And thank you for the two books on worship that flowed out of writing those letters. Those books are a blessing to the church at large and have quieted the worship wars! Thanks for growing us in our hope in the world.

You also grew us in our hope for the world! You lived a life that showed us that no matter how far from God people are, there are no hopeless people. You have a great heart for the lost and a great zeal for evangelism. So much so, that you willingly set aside your own preference in music and adopted a style that would more effectively resonate with the hearts of people in Escondido who did not know Jesus. And through Jesus' pursuing love, we had the joy of welcoming many into his family.

And you and Mary and your kids modeled your hope for the world, as you opened your hearts and your home to some very needy and in some cases some very difficult people! I vividly remember some late-night visits at your home from both the pastor and the police. And yet, the amazing thing is that lives were changed by the power of God's Spirit and Word. You grew us in our hope in and for the world.

You grew us in our love!

You specifically grew us in our love for all the saints (Eph. 1:15)!

Your love for Jesus' bride was especially evident in your teaching on the necessity of the visible unity of the church. When the New Life session struggled with the question whether we could/should leave the denomination in order to better fulfill our calling as a church, you led us to the Scriptures to draw out principles that would inform us as to when a church

can leave a denomination. You focused us on God's Word, convinced that Scripture would lead us to do the right thing, in the right way, out of love for God's church. It was a hard process, and yet in the process you helped us grow in valuing the unity of the church and love for each of our brothers and sisters. And out of this experience came your book *Evangelical Reunion*, which is the clearest call to unity I have ever read.

You also grew us in our love for God's people by the way you debated. In the classroom, in session and presbytery meetings, and in personal discussions, you graciously expressed your appreciation for the other person's position. Most often you presented the argument for their position even more clearly than they had. You were able to do that with all sincerity, for you were convinced that even heresies were truths taken to a wrong extreme. But you didn't just do it out of an intellectual commitment, you did it out of love for your brother in the Lord. You did not want to win an argument at the expense of one who was purchased by the blood of Jesus. John, this is one of your greatest legacies to the church: you grew us in our love for one another.

John, I will forever be grateful for the impact you have had on my life, especially during those fourteen years at New Life, in Escondido. Your teaching, modeling, and friendship continue to grow me in faith, hope, and love. To whatever extent that I am a servant of Jesus' bride, it is to a large extent due to your gentle, powerful influence! And there is a great army of those who would say the same!

John, you asked me to exhort you as a pastor. Well, here it goes: Keep serving the bride of Christ! Keep teaching, writing, and modeling to us what it means to be a servant of the church, so together we will all grow in faith, hope, and love! And one day stand before Jesus and hear him say: "Well done, my good and faithful servant!"

**SIMON J. KISTEMAKER, THD,
PROFESSOR EMERITUS OF NEW TESTAMENT,
REFORMED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, ORLANDO**

Characterized by quietness and unassuming discretion, John has served the church and kingdom of Jesus Christ in exemplary ways. He is a person who knows the Scriptures to such an extent that in his teaching and writing he is a veritable walking concordance. This knowledge of God's Word enables him to set forth sound doctrine, to expose teaching that conflicts with the Scriptures,

and to be wise in the ways of the Lord. By way of his publications he has a proven record as a scholar who steadfastly promotes the truth of God.

In the classroom, John Frame has excelled as a teacher of the Reformed faith at the seminary campuses of Westminster and Reformed. At these schools he has devoted forty years in a teaching ministry that has drawn students from this country and all parts of the world. He has a personal interest in his students, knows their strengths and weaknesses, and meets with them to pass on counsel and advice. Students appreciate his teaching ministry and take his instruction into the churches they serve, so that Frame's effectiveness is passed on from the classroom to pulpits throughout the nation and abroad.

Frame has distinguished himself as an author of numerous volumes, among which his trilogy of *The Doctrine of God*, *The Doctrine of the Knowledge of God*, and *The Doctrine of the Christian Life* are outstanding examples. As a disciple of Cornelius Van Til, he demonstrates his expertise in theology and apologetics. He meets his opponents with gentleness, fairness, and grace, but he is unwilling to compromise the teachings of God's Word. He is a true defender of the faith.

John Frame's contributions to the church and to scholarship are many, which he shows in his publications by reaching out to elders and deacons, to the person in the pew, and to pastors and professors. His books address issues that relate to contemporary worship music, evangelical reunion, open theism, theonomy, the lordship of Christ, and the inerrancy of the Scriptures.

I express my personal thanks and appreciation to my friend, fellow teacher, and author who has served the Lord well in both church and kingdom.

**PAUL D. KOOISTRA, PHD,
COORDINATOR OF MISSION TO THE WORLD (PCA)**

What a privilege it is to be included with those who bring glory to our Savior by honoring his rich grace, which we have observed in the life and ministry of Dr. John Frame. John mentored me in ways that he has not even been aware of. When I was the president of Covenant Theological Seminary, I advocated holding the Reformed faith in a warm and winsome way. John taught me how to contend for the faith, in which we believe so strongly, but to do so in a way that also mirrors the gentleness and love of Christ. His way of practicing theology always seemed to reflect Paul's admonition to the church in Philippians chapter 2, "Have this mind in you which is also in Christ Jesus."

As a churchman, John has on a number of occasions encouraged me and others to embrace the Reformed church as a “larger tent,” rather than a “small tent.” He always seemed to believe that we need each other and that our church is far richer because of the diversity that we find within the Reformed faith and within the church that God has given us. This is no small matter, and I believe we need prophetic voices like his to continually call us away from our tendency toward sectarianism to a church that reflects the fact that they shall know us by our love for one another.

Most importantly, John’s life and ministry have encouraged me to exercise the grace that I have received from Christ toward others—to avoid focusing on the foibles of others and to embrace the work of the Holy Spirit that I find within the body of Christ. I’m very thankful that Christ has given us examples such as John, who look like the Lord Jesus Christ.

**PETER J. LEITHART, PHD,
SENIOR FELLOW OF THEOLOGY AND LITERATURE,
NEW ST. ANDREWS COLLEGE, MOSCOW, IDAHO**

I still vividly remember John Frame’s Van Til lectures delivered at Westminster, Philadelphia, when I was a student. It was the only time I regretted my decision to attend seminary in the east rather than the west. I have met John Frame a handful of times since, but in the main, I have known him through his books. I return to them often, and *The Doctrine of the Knowledge of God* is one of the anchors for a theology course I’ve taught to sophomore undergraduates for the past decade.

Why do I keep going back? Three reasons—of course, *three*.

First, Frame is a model of biblical faithfulness. A biblicist in the best sense, he doesn’t let tradition, or trendiness, muzzle God’s own words. Whatever the issue, he cuts through clutter and confusion and pushes me back to what the text of Scripture actually says. Second, Frame’s “revisionist” presuppositionalism provides a way for theologians to absorb and build from the brilliant insights of Van Til’s work without becoming ideologues or groupies. He has penetrated Van Til’s potent creativity more deeply than anyone else, and in doing so has shown that creativity is a theological virtue. Finally, Frame is a model of academic clarity and, more importantly, of academic charity. Perspectivalism is Christian love made into theological method. I always insist that my students carefully study the appendices to

DKG about writing theological papers and critiquing others' work. I only wish I could demand the same of some of Frame's critics.

**PETER A. LILLBACK, PHD,
PRESIDENT AND PROFESSOR OF HISTORICAL THEOLOGY,
WESTMINSTER THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, PHILADELPHIA**

It is a joy and an honor to write a word of congratulations in celebration of the long and fruitful career of John Frame.

To my own disappointment, I've never had the privilege to have John as one of my classroom teachers. Nevertheless, his life and thought have made a deep impression on me.

I was a young, impressionable newcomer to the Reformed faith and its form of government when I met Dr. Frame, a distinguished teacher, elder, and leader in the courts of the church.

I first saw John in action as a presbyter when I was coming under care of presbytery at one of the meetings of the OPC's Philadelphia Presbytery. I can still remember John speaking on the floor with upraised arms. His words were persuasive, to be sure, but what I remember most was his blue shirt with both sleeves torn loose under his arms! This was, to be sure, a most remarkable first impression of a renowned theological leader. As I recall, John was still a bachelor at the time.

But the greatest impressions of Professor Frame have come through the years when I heard "Frame's views" reported by church leaders and seminary students in various contexts. His views of the OPC's and the PCA's joining and receiving, his views of worship, his views of the Old School/New School and Old Side/New Side debates, his engagement with Clark and Van Til, and on and on, always captured my interest and made me think more deeply.

Personally, I think I've most benefited from what was, in my time, his unpublished cogent syllabus on ethics, and his magisterial work on the knowledge of God.

So let me simply conclude—from shirtsleeves to sovereign grace, from apologetics to Presbyterian polity and politics, from churchman to seminary colleague—I thank God for the privilege of ministering in Christ's kingdom with John Frame, a theologian of the highest order.

May his writings—in print and on disk—ever enrich the people of God, even as they have enriched my labors for Christ and his church.

**SAM T. LOGAN JR., PHD,
INTERNATIONAL DIRECTOR,
WORLD REFORMED FELLOWSHIP**

I am a devoted follower of John Frame! I followed him to Princeton and I followed him to the Princeton Evangelical Fellowship and I followed him to Westminster!

And I continue following John Frame—what he writes is extraordinarily helpful to evangelical Reformed Christians who genuinely desire to engage the culture in which we live (both the Christian culture and the secular culture) from the perspective of Reformed orthodoxy. John demonstrates that it is not our exclusive task to be “safe” in our faith. It is, rather, our mission to interact with our world in ways that call the world, on the basis of the inerrant, infallible Word of God, into full obedience to and faithful worship of our sovereign Creator and Savior. John shows well all that it can mean to “invest” the “talents” that the Lord has given us in the work of extending his kingdom, even while some seek to bury their light lest it be endangered by the inevitable winds that blow when significant kingdom-extending activities are pursued.

Of all John’s works, the most helpful to me has been his essay on “Machen’s Warrior Children.” It has been helpful because of the way in which it shows and chastises our/my frequent tendency (I would call it our/my “sinful” tendency) to treat as enemies precisely those who are closest to us theologically. Maintaining rigorous Reformed orthodoxy, even rigorously Reformed Van Tillian and Vosian orthodoxy, John has still reached out in winsome and effective ways to those who are not “orthodox” in those particular ways. This is the primary reason why I have followed John Frame and why I intend to continue to follow John Frame.

**ROD MAYS, DMIN,
NATIONAL COORDINATOR, REFORMED UNIVERSITY MIN-
ISTRIES, VISITING PROFESSOR OF PRACTICAL THEOLOGY,
REFORMED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, CHARLOTTE**

Some people age with such grace and wit that they are forever young, both in their physical presence and in their writing. John Frame is such a person: a man who seems always able to provide a special gift for the church when it is needed most. Many would probably say he has been—

and continues to be—a progressive thinker, a man way ahead of his time. In an obvious wordplay, we could say that he has given the Reformed world an engaging new Frame-work for discerning the times, as well as a helpful thinking process for dealing with critical issues facing the church in postmodern culture. Whether challenging the church to rediscover “the knowledge of God when He is a stranger in the land,” or calling her to affirm “the reason to believe in a pluralistic culture,” or, perhaps, to get a grasp on “medical ethics in light of advancing medical technology and a low view of man,” John has attempted to be a peacemaker. He has issued the plea, “let us reason together,” in the worship wars and in denominational divisions. When many have called for evangelical separatism, John has advocated an “evangelical reunion.” He has helped many campus ministers to grow in their formative years and to come to an understanding that the real aim of apologetics is to connect people with the truth and to love them, not to win arguments and crush the opposition. We all owe a great debt of gratitude to John Frame for his intellectual and academic gravitas. Many of us who do not speak or write with that kind of gifted authority and clarity have been able to reach to our bookshelves and find immediate help from John Frame. Thank you, John, for your timely responses to church controversies. Your measured words and wisdom have helped us to be better pastors and more thoughtful leaders as we have attempted to shepherd people wounded by the words and actions of those who hold strong opinions as to their own preferences. You have truly pastored pastors.

**DAVID K. NAUGLE, PHD,
PROFESSOR OF PHILOSOPHY,
DALLAS BAPTIST UNIVERSITY**

“Such is, each one, as is his love.” So said St. Augustine, and John Frame’s love—for the triune God and for his Word, world, and people—tells us all we need to know about this man. Frame is a man of God: a man of faith, of hope, and most of all a man of Christian love. Over the years, this greatest of the theological virtues has animated John Frame and his fruitful labors of which we are all beneficiaries. His life and work have been for the glory of God and our good. Praise God from whom all blessings flow, and one of those God-given blessings to the church and the world is John Frame. And we are grateful.

**THOM NOTARO, ThM,
P&R PUBLISHING, 1978–2009**

Authors distinguish themselves in many different ways. Some are voracious researchers. Others do incisive analysis or offer creative perspectives. A few capture bulky concepts in simple language. Some are marked by boldness while challenging flawed ideas. Winsomeness and an irenic spirit set others apart.

John Frame is among a small number of writers who combine all these traits. Yet what has long impressed me as much is his willingness to listen to people far less astute than he is and rework a paragraph in light of their concerns or questions. Usually that's a matter of heading off confusion, but John figures that if a reviewer or editor is struggling with a passage, others might struggle too.

Authors worthy of publication are authorities in their disciplines. John is an authority who, in an important sense, submits to his readers (plural, and at different places in their understandings) by listening to them and responding with care, although not compromise. Upholding biblical norms while uplifting people in their situations, he has been one of the most gracious, patient, and pleasant authors this former student has worked with through the years, and one most deserving of his readers' attention.

**K. SCOTT OLIPHINT, PHD,
PROFESSOR OF APOLOGETICS AND SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY,
WESTMINSTER THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY**

In 1983–84, I was a ThM student at Westminster Seminary in Philadelphia. On the advice of my ThM thesis adviser, I decided to write my thesis on a comparison of Cornelius Van Til and Herman Dooyeweerd. Because Professor Frame was one of the few I knew who could evaluate such a thesis, I asked my adviser whether he would allow me to ask Professor Frame, who was then teaching at Westminster in California, if he would serve as the second reader on my thesis. I will never forget my adviser's response to that question: "You can ask him, but be aware that he is a very tough grader and you may regret your choice."

Professor Frame and I had never met. He had moved to California in 1980 and I had come to Westminster Philadelphia in 1981. So I called him—although neither of us knew the other—and asked whether he would

agree to serve as the second reader on my thesis. His response was typically gracious. He did, however, inform me that this time in his life, for various reasons, was particularly intense and busy, and he expressed his hope that the thesis would not be too lengthy and would not take too much of his time.

As I moved through the thesis, it was apparent to me that Professor Frame's hope for a shorter piece was not going to materialize. It was going to be lengthy. Even worse, however, were the events that transpired soon after Professor Frame agreed to be my second reader.

I was asked by my thesis adviser to submit to him each chapter upon its completion. Chapter 1 was an overview of the methods of Van Til and Dooyeweerd, which, according to my adviser, was right on target. Chapter 2 was a provisional critique of some of Dooyeweerd's main tenets. As soon as my adviser received and read that chapter, he called me into his office. He told me, in no uncertain terms, that Chapter 2 was without merit, that it was of inferior quality for a ThM thesis, and that he had decided that he could not sign the thesis. This decision of his meant that I could not graduate from Westminster, and that I would have to return home without a ThM, having wasted a year of study.

After receiving my adviser's evaluation, I immediately called Professor Frame and told him what had happened. He responded by saying he would read the chapter as soon as it came in the mail and let me know his conclusions. I'll never forget the phone call I received one evening, and where I was when it came. My wife and I had just put our children to bed. I answered the phone: "Scott, this is John Frame. I'm willing to go to bat for you on this thesis." I was overwhelmed.

There is much more to tell but no space to tell it. Professor Frame did go to bat for me; I still have the letter that he sent (April 7, 1984), supporting my work. There were plenty of negative criticisms, but his bottom-line analysis was this: "Scott has wrestled with Dooyeweerdian concepts in great detail. The thesis (despite its great length) is enormously concise, so that there is a mountain of meaning on each page. Thus the sheer *quantity* of ideas is itself impressive. But the quantity is also qualitatively excellent."

Although he had never met me, although he was inundated with personal matters, although the thesis was much too long, although he had hoped that being second reader would not take up much of his time—Professor

Frame, in God's providence, is the reason that I was able to graduate with my ThM, and later to pursue further studies in apologetics.

I thanked him then, but I am not sure he has ever understood how centrally important his self-sacrifice to me in those days has been in my life. Humanly speaking, I never would have been able to pursue the discipline of apologetics had Professor Frame not taken the time—and it took much time—to defend my work. He took some personal “hits” because of that defense, but his evaluation was vindicated by others in the end, and thus my thesis adviser was constrained to sign the thesis. As it turned out, contrary to my adviser's warning, I did not in the least regret the choice I had made (although I am sure Professor Frame regretted it many times). The “tough grader” turned out to be the one who saw to it that my thesis was accepted.

Again, humanly speaking, I owe my calling as an apologist and a professor to John Frame, and to his selfless actions toward an unknown student in the mid-1980s. For that I will be forever grateful and thankful to the Lord.

**MILLER PECK, MS,
PROFESSOR EMERITUS, MATHEMATICS AND COMPUTER
SCIENCE, WESTMINSTER COLLEGE, NEW WILMINGTON,
PENNSYLVANIA**

John was a student at Princeton when we met. We attended sister Presbyterian churches in Mt. Lebanon (south hills of Pittsburgh). Sunday in his Virginia Manor home was a time for delightful conversations, often about Murray, Van Til, Gerstner, Leitch.

I lost contact with him during the years he was teaching at Westminster Seminary, and I at Westminster College. But now through e-mail we communicate often, especially when students and friends ask me hard questions. Like Francis Schaeffer, we try to give “honest answers to honest questions.”

Recently our conversations turn on the loss of civility in our circles. Why can't we discuss our differences and questions like human beings? Is perfect doctrine the basis for friendship? Shibboleths test our loyalty, with brothers slaughtering brothers. Thankfully, John is a healing presence. We thank God for him and his ministry.

**ANDREW J. PETERSON, PHD,
PRESIDENT, REFORMED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY,
VIRTUAL CAMPUS**

Remembering the theme of his revival series in my local Methodist church, Dr. E. Stanley Jones would repeat the phrase, “Jesus is Lord.” A commitment to Christ as a youngster was to respect this fact. Yet, years later, graduate training in social science and psychology would deny this fact and rephrase it as, if anything, “Jesus is Lord . . . in my opinion.” Actually, the question might not even come up, since the education was lacking in a philosophy, let alone a theology, of science. A “theology of lordship” was desperately needed.

Fast-forward to the mid-1980s and a volume titled *The Doctrine of the Knowledge of God*. The proposition was that epistemology is a subarea of ethics . . . and “Jesus is Lord.” With a lot of ink, John Frame provided a diagnosis and treatment for the myth of neutrality in the various modern disciplines of knowledge and learning. I remember the warning at the beginning of his course, *The Christian Mind*: “Seminary education can be very dangerous. With its regular teaching of the Bible, it can either soften or harden the heart.” No neutrality personally, professionally, or academically.

Over the past few years, we have worked together on course development at the Virtual Campus. There is now a triad(!) of courses running 24/7 for online graduate students in the RTSV master’s program, which hosts hundreds of students and runs at a significant profit for the seminary. Our students can listen to the lectures on Apple iTunes U, read the texts on DVD or Kindle e-book, and learn deeper with the interactive video social simulations written by the professor and our team with NexLearn. They also interact in online discussion forums with John, who writes e-notes, publication-ready! History of philosophy, Christian apologetics, and pastoral and social ethics make kingdom advances in the history of intellectual ideas . . . 24/7.

May God bless John and Mary Frame as they continue to assert the theology of lordship in all areas of life and culture. Love is the most important thing, but no neutrality, please.

**ROBERT A. PETERSON, PHD,
PROFESSOR OF SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY,
COVENANT THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, ST. LOUIS**

It is an honor to write a word of appreciation for your festschrift. Although I have never sat in your classroom, you have been one of my teachers for years. When I think of your books that have helped me, these immediately come to mind: *The Doctrine of the Knowledge of God*, *The Doctrine of God*, and *No Other God: A Response to Open Theism*. Because my training is exegetical and historical and not philosophical, I rely on theologians who are trained in philosophy. But I am frequently displeased with the place the Bible occupies in their work. You, however, please me, brother, because you seek to deliberately and consistently subordinate your own ideas to the Word of God. That places you in the company of a few philosophically competent theologians whose work I really trust. Your work is characterized by a capable handling of Holy Scripture, historical awareness, and astute theological thinking in the Reformed tradition. All in all, I give you this high commendation: your writings have helped me to love God with my mind.

**JOHN PIPER, THD,
PASTOR FOR PREACHING AND VISION,
BETHLEHEM BAPTIST CHURCH, MINNEAPOLIS;
CHANCELLOR/PROFESSOR OF PRACTICAL THEOLOGY,
BETHLEHEM COLLEGE/SEMINARY**

John Frame loves the church and serves her well. From the power of great theological volumes, to the practicalities of denominational tensions, he is a helpful guide. From the rarefied air of Van Til, to the mists of rock music, to the morning light of creative theological education, Frame deals with us in a fatherly way. He is not bombastic. The imperfections of the church are his burden, not his whipping boy.

So when he takes up arms against doctrinal declination, as with feminism or open theism, we do not hear a strident voice. What is refreshing is his ability to model a firm stance on truth with a heartfelt affection for people. Razor-sharp reason is used to carve error away from truth, not skin off adversaries.

The witness of those who have taken classes with him is that he is personable, friendly, winsome, remarkably humble, and unassuming—the down-to-earth neighbor next door as much as the world-class theologian.

I thank God for raising up John Frame in our day. We are the wiser, the more biblical, and the healthier because of it. And because he has written so deeply and so well about such great truths about a great God, this will, I believe, be the testimony of generations to come.

**VERNON E. RAINWATER, MA, MSW,
PASTOR, NORTHLAND CHURCH, LONGWOOD, FLORIDA**

A biblically balanced view of worship must take into account both God's transcendence and his immanence, his exaltation and his nearness, his majestic holiness and his unmeasurable love. This balance is not always easy to maintain. Churches that focus on divine transcendence are in danger of making God appear distant, aloof, unfriendly, unloving, devoid of grace. Churches that focus on God's immanence sometimes lose sight of his majesty and purity, his hatred of sin, and the consequent seriousness of any divine-human encounter. To maintain this balance, we must go back again and again to the Scriptures themselves so that we may please God in worship rather than merely acting on our own intuitions.¹

Reading the words above (in their context) was a formative moment in my work as a worship pastor. Having been in the role of a pastor, a "lead worshiper," a student of worship, I was caught up in the "worship wars" going on at the time. I longed to find the balance of sharing the heritage of the theologians, poets, preachers, and musicians the church has shared for millennia. But I believed the church should speak the language of the culture. Often these positions seemed in conflict. And then I read John Frame.

Through his writing and teaching, Dr. Frame has helped us find that balance of the transcendent and immanent God.

Furthermore, even when we think we get it "right" or balanced, Dr. Frame's work keeps my focus in the right direction. I offer this example:

1. *CWM*, 14.

It often surprises people to learn that God is not always pleased when people worship him. We might be inclined to think that God should be thankful for any attention we give him out of our busy schedules. But worship is not about God's thanking us; it is about our thanking him. And God is not pleased with just anything we choose to do in his presence. The mighty Lord of heaven and earth demands that our worship, indeed, all of life be governed by his word.²

Lastly, because Dr. Frame has written so widely and deeply on the nature and doctrine of God, he has helped me/us take God very seriously and ourselves . . . well, not so much. I love John Frame. He has changed how we worship God.

**HARRY L. REEDER, III, DD,
SENIOR PASTOR, BRIARWOOD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,
BIRMINGHAM**

Festschrift is not a word that many of us encounter on a regular basis. This is because a *festschrift* is not a regular occurrence. Its etymology is Germanic, meaning “a book of celebration.” A *festschrift* allows students as well as fellow scholars the opportunity to honor a mentor, colleague, and friend. It is my privilege to celebrate and honor Dr. John Frame in each of these relationships as one who epitomizes faithful biblical scholarship, passionate teaching, and a heart for the majesty of God as well as the expansion of the kingdom of God.

Dr. Frame's impact in my life was profound yet unexpected. I want to focus on three areas that I hope will encourage the readers of this book as well as John himself.

When I enrolled in Westminster Seminary I longed to benefit from the legacy of presuppositional apologetics established by Dr. Cornelius Van Til, but in God's providence he had retired. Subsequently, I would not only benefit from Dr. Van Til's legacy but be challenged by Dr. Frame in unexpected ways. Through his teaching, which was done with biblical precision and personal passion, my desire to make the majesty of God known through an effective apologetic was suddenly enlarged through a life-altering chal-

2. *WST*, 37.

lenge. A mighty God does mighty acts, and if I desired to make him known then I needed to know the mighty acts of God intimately.

Secondly this challenge was taken to another level when Dr. Frame's book *The Doctrine of the Knowledge of God*, appropriately subtitled *A Theology of Lordship*, was placed in my hands. This yet-unmatched treatment of evangelical epistemology was not only faithful but innovative. Its creativity was stimulating and staunchly orthodox without wavering or ambiguous uses of clichés so prevalent in many contemporary treatments of theological issues.

Thirdly the publications and personal ministry of Dr. John Frame in the arena of doxology (the praise of God "in Spirit and in truth") have manifested the motivation of his commitment to theological clarity and his passion for stretching the lives and ministries of his students and colleagues.

John's scholarship, penmanship, and leadership have been exposed as the simple yet profound manifestation of a heart that passionately embraces the worship of the triune God. In all of life "let every thing that hath breath praise the LORD" (Ps. 150:6 KJV). I gladly praise the Lord for the "breath of life" manifested through the life and ministry of Dr. John Frame—a friend, a teacher, and a fellow servant in the majesty and lordship of Jesus Christ.

**ANDRÉE SEU,
SENIOR WRITER, WORLD MAGAZINE**

Just as no two people in the world have the same mother, I'm quite sure I have a different John Frame from the rest of you. I knew him first as professor in the late 1970s, and was riveted by his ability to look at many sides of a question, but always with Scripture as the plumb line. A decade and a half later, in great distress of soul, I knew him as a counselor. Gradually, I knew him as a friend. That is to say, I know John Frame's story mainly as it intersects with mine. This is way too self-referential, but it's the same way I know God. There are whole continents of Frame's thought that are beyond my passport, but what I can understand continues to shine light on my walk with God. In a kind of de facto (and non remunerative) continuing-education course, I am one of legions who clutter his e-mail box daily with every kind of theological query. If this is tiresome for the professor, he doesn't show it,

replying, as is his habit, with many pages of considerations where a lesser man might have offered a paragraph.

I confess a prejudice toward theologians who accord their opponents, even the vitriolic ones, respect and love. I have seen this over the years with John. And I have figured, with obstinate simplicity, that erudition must be accompanied by godliness to be genuine. John once told me, when I asked for advice on my own career, that we as followers of Christ should always be conscious of exhibiting the fruit of the Spirit in our writing. There is not a jotting I make that is not restrained from its worst impulses by the echo of these words in my brain.

John also told me that 1 Timothy 1:5 was his favorite verse about theology: “The goal of our instruction is love.” Charity is often the casualty of theological debate. It is from John that I learned that love is theology at the point of perfection.

**NORMAN SHEPHERD, THM,
PASTOR, COTTAGE GROVE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH,
SOUTH HOLLAND, ILLINOIS**

I appreciate this opportunity to congratulate John M. Frame on completing seven decades of service in the kingdom of God. They have been enormously fruitful years, and my prayer is that his next two decades may be even more of a blessing to the church of Jesus Christ. He has performed valuable service mainly in the academic world, preparing men for ministry, but also in the organized church, and among the many who have sought his counsel on a personal and private level. The Lord did not give him the opportunity to serve as the pastor of a church, but his pastoral heart has been evident wherever he has gone. His understanding of issues under discussion, his wisdom and balance in their evaluation, and his deep desire “to live in peace with all men” (Heb. 12:14), even when the terms of debate called for sharp differences with others, has served as a model for a whole generation of students.

Our paths crossed for the first time in January 1963, on the second floor of Machen Hall at Westminster Seminary Philadelphia. It was my very first day as a teacher there. Meredith G. Kline was coming out of the classroom, and he offered encouragement by reminding me of Machen’s words to his faculty colleagues: “Gentlemen, our strength lies in the ignorance of the

students.” One of the students in that class of seniors was John M. Frame. He was by no means ignorant, and I knew that because his reputation had preceded him. But he tolerated with characteristic grace this stand-in for Ned B. Stonehouse, who had died unexpectedly just a few months earlier.

I had the privilege a few years later of driving to New Haven, where he was studying at Yale University, to invite him to return to Westminster as a member of the faculty in my department. It would mean delaying his doctoral work, but when the call came he was willing to join with us in the great cause the seminary represented. Since that day he has done enough, and more than enough, to earn the doctorate he deserves.

Actually, we were related long before we met at Westminster because we both grew up in the old United Presbyterian Church of North America. The old UP Church was like *The Wonderful One-Hoss Shay* of Oliver Wendell Holmes in that “It ran a hundred years to a day [1858–1958], / And then, of a sudden it—” was gone, “All at once, and nothing first, / Just as bubbles do when they burst.” The poet was, of course, beating on Calvinism as a marvelous machine with every proposition in place, and every proposition just as strong as every other one, so that nothing could go wrong at any one point without dooming the whole machine “all at once.” There are people today who still think of Calvinism that way, but thankfully John Frame is not one of them. His first and ultimate commitment has always been to the truth of God’s Word by which every theological and confessional proposition must be tested. That is why his work has been so constructive and so fruitful.

N. T. Wright wrote recently of telling his students that 20 percent of what he taught them was probably wrong, but he didn’t know which 20 percent. I can hear John Frame making the same sort of confession because that is the humble kind of servant of Jesus Christ he is. Thank you, John, for all that you have taught us. May the Lord grant you many happy retirement years to enjoy your wife and children.

**JOHN SOWELL, MDiv,
PRESIDENT, REFORMED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, ATLANTA**

Too often, those whose ideas and writings are destined to outlive them unwittingly bequeath to subsequent generations an unintentional consequence. After these great thinkers impart the fruit of their fertile reflection upon those who will follow, intimate knowledge of their personalities

becomes clouded. Although interest in their intellectual and spiritual contributions increases, perceptions of the individuals themselves either erode or else take on mythical proportions.

Knowing Professor Frame first as his student, and subsequently as a colleague for more than two decades in two seminaries, I have witnessed his character from his mid-years on to maturity, through exaltation and trials, from singleness, to his marriage, to fatherhood. In reflecting upon one who has been my friend for more than a quarter of a century, I hope a vibrant aspect of his persona will be preserved for those who will read about but will not have had the privilege of knowing this gifted man.

Generations who will ponder the giftedness of John Frame need to be introduced to the man whom his contemporaries know and love—a theological giant not only in intellect, but in Christlike example. One who displays a joyful countenance equally during seasons of adulation and of criticism. A pious gentleman whose writings, sermons, and musical performances consistently exalt the living God. A man whose passion, sincerity, and convictions lead to doxology, as he pauses his lectures to exclaim, “Our God is *so powerful!*”

Dr. Frame’s legacy will be as a writer and teacher of lasting import and of unswerving faithfulness to the Holy Scriptures. Those who call this dear man their friend know him as a joyful, tenderhearted Christian with eyes that sharpen with intensity, yet twinkle with childlike joy when he speaks of his Lord and Savior.

The Scriptures teach that “the builder of a house has greater honor than the house itself.” For generations, Dr. Frame’s works will be edifying and provocative. Greater richness, however, will come from understanding that the author of those volumes is a man of humility and contagious joy, based on the confident conviction of a living faith.

R. C. SPROUL, DRS, PHD

**FOUNDER AND CHAIRMAN, LIGONIER MINISTRIES;
SENIOR MINISTER OF PREACHING AND TEACHING,
ST. ANDREW’S CHAPEL, SANFORD, FLORIDA**

For over four decades, John Frame has served the church both nationally and around the world as a teacher par excellence. John is something of a Renaissance man in that he has distinguished himself in the fields of

theology, apologetics, philosophy, and Christian ethics (in which he has given us a masterful treatment of the difficult problems of biomedical ethics that we face at this stage of history), and crowns all these gifts with the gift of being a superb musician. It doesn't seem fair that one man could be the recipient of so many gifts and so many talents. But these gifts and talents are a testimony not only to the gracious God, who is the gift-giver, but also to the diligence and discipline that John has brought to the task of ministry for so many decades. He is clearly the most able defender and expositor of Cornelius Van Til's presuppositional apologetics. He has given great expression to the doctrine of God or theology proper, as well as insights concerning the difficulties that Christian theology faced in the twentieth century in the God-talk controversy, wherein John gave a brilliant defense of the adequacy of human language as a medium for God's self-revelation in Scripture. To top all these things, one of the most significant factors that few people know about John Frame is that he is a Pittsburgh boy. That says it all.

**ROBERT B. STRIMPLE, PHD,
PRESIDENT EMERITUS AND
PROFESSOR EMERITUS OF SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY,
WESTMINSTER SEMINARY CALIFORNIA**

I am grateful to have this opportunity to express my personal appreciation to Professor Frame for all he has meant to me and my family over the past forty years. It was in 1969 that I returned to my alma mater, Westminster Seminary in Philadelphia, and joined Professor Frame in the department of systematic theology and apologetics. I first heard of John when President Ed Clowney phoned me in Toronto (where I had been teaching for eight years at what is now Tyndale University College) to invite me to return to the States. As part of his inducement, Ed reported with great enthusiasm: "We added a new man to the department last year—a young Westminster grad who has been doing graduate studies at Yale—and he's really brilliant!" And Ed's assessment was clearly correct.

A decade later, when President Clowney asked me to "go west" to lead in the planting of a Westminster Seminary California, and I had the wonderful opportunity, given to very few, to choose whomever I wanted to form the new faculty (as long as they were approved by the trustees, of course), John Frame was the first man with whom I spoke and tried to "sell"

on the idea of pulling up stakes and moving to California. It was a most interesting lunchtime discussion that day in a classy little restaurant in Fort Washington. Anticipating a very “hard sell,” given the fact that John was a lifetime Easterner, born and bred in western Pennsylvania and educated at Princeton and Yale, I wanted the most conducive setting I could find. But soon I discovered that, in God’s providence, the circumstances in which John found himself right at that time were such that he turned out to be a very easy sell. Three circumstances in particular had made John quite ready for something totally new in his life.

First, a new pastor in John’s Orthodox Presbyterian congregation in Blue Bell, Pennsylvania, was beginning to move things in such a radically new direction that eventually the congregation left the OPC and joined the Canadian Reformed Churches. Leaving that church he loved was a most painful time for John. Second, John, like me, had been a longtime lover of Pembroke Welsh Corgis—an interesting bias we discovered we had in common when our family moved to Philadelphia from Toronto with our Corgi in tow, and soon introduced her to John’s faithful Corgi companion. But John’s dog was about to succumb to old age, and this would also be a very sad experience for John. And third, John was still a bachelor at that time.

And so, as John summed up his life with a sigh: “Here I am, almost forty, and I have no church, no wife, and soon I won’t even have a dog! It’s time for a change. I think I’ll go to California.” And then he added a line that I will never forget: “Who knows? Maybe I’ll become a real *tiger* out there!”

In California our loving God graciously answered John’s prayers and blessed him “exceeding abundantly above all that” he had asked or imagined (Eph. 3:20 κτν). In California John found a new Corgi, Pebbles, his loyal friend for many years. He found a new church, or at least the beginnings of one. An Orthodox Presbyterian mission work was meeting in a Seventh-Day Adventist building south of Escondido, with twenty or so in attendance—oh, maybe twenty-five on a very good Sunday. And it was elder and pianist John Frame, along with Pastor Dick Kaufmann, whom the Lord used to see that congregation grow to become New Life Presbyterian Church in America in Escondido.

And as the *most* “exceeding abundantly above” what John could have asked or imagined, the Lord gave him a most wonderful wife and family. Mary’s father was a longtime OPC pastor in Pittsburgh, and John interned

in that church when Mary was in high school. Pastor Calvin Cummings, Mary's dad, also had the distinction of serving on the board of trustees of Westminster in Philadelphia for some fifty years! And Mary's three brothers are all lifetime OPC ministers.

And not only was John himself so abundantly blessed during his twenty years at Westminster Seminary California, he was also such a rich blessing to so many others, both as a theologian and as a churchman. It would be hard to measure all he meant to New Life Church as elder, teacher, and worship leader. John has always been a professor who not only *talks about* the significance of the church as the body of Christ, but lives out that truth in terms of his own priorities and dedication. In that he has always been a most excellent model for his students.

As professor, John was one of the three full-time faculty members who taught classes in that very first year of Westminster Seminary California, along with Al Mawhinney and me. And through his teaching, and especially through his publications, he helped put our fledgling seminary on the Presbyterian and Reformed map. Our director of admissions told me several times that as he looked over the responses of new students to the question, "What attracted you to apply to WSC?" John Frame's name was mentioned more than any other. My own son, Steve, who graduated from WSC after studying at Gordon College and graduating cum laude from the University of California in San Diego, who has taught Bible for many years at Santa Fe Christian High School, and whom I consider to be an excellent judge of teaching talent, names Professor Frame as the best teacher he ever had (a rating that duly humbles me, since Steve had me as a teacher also). And my wife, Alice, who audited each of John's required courses at WSC, has him in her top five best teachers ever. (Happily, she has the good judgment to include me in her list.)

To my mind, what stands out in John's teaching is his ability to get students to actually *think!*—which is not as easy as it might sound. I've often said that what future ministers of the gospel so often seem to need is a course in Common Sense 101, or simply in the ability to think through an issue logically, reasonably, step by step. But the difficulty, of course, lies in knowing how one would teach such a course. It may be that John himself isn't always sure how much success he has had in teaching thinking, but I would put him at the first rank of teachers in this most important skill.

John's moving from Westminster Seminary California to Reformed Seminary in Orlando almost a decade ago now has been a great loss for WSC, but it has been a tremendous gain for RTS. And just as the move from Philadelphia to California proved to be such a blessing for John and Mary, so the move from California to Florida has proved to be such a joyous new chapter in their lives, and in the lives of all those touched by their faithful ministries. Thank you, John, for all you have meant to WSC, and to the Strimple family, by God's grace. We love you in the Lord.

**DOUGLASS E. SWAGERTY, MDiv,
SENIOR PASTOR, NORTH COAST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,
ENCINITAS, CALIFORNIA**

What a privilege to be asked to share some personal words! You have blessed my life in several ways, and I will mention three of them briefly. First, I have been blessed to be one of your students and, as I go deeper and longer in ministry, I continue to be shaped by your insights. Your triperspectival approach to God's Word and world has profoundly affected how I perceive the gospel, my various ministry contexts, and my own gifts.

Second, you have excelled not only as a theologian, but also as a practitioner. It has been almost thirty years since we moved to Escondido the same summer, and the four years I spent with you as a fellow elder and pastor gave me the opportunity to benefit from your godly wisdom and careful shepherding of God's people. Lois also has wonderful memories of working together with you in the music ministry of the church.

Third, you have served as a wonderful model to me of how to treat those with whom you disagree. You once made a statement to the effect that a seminary can be a very "violent" atmosphere where words become weapons and fellow believers are treated as enemies. You certainly have the intellect to wage destructive theological warfare, but I have never met anyone who was more fair and loving to his critics. I remember going with you to Fuller Seminary in the early 1980s, at the height of the inerrancy debate, and observing you interact with Paul Jewett and Jack Rogers. And one of my greatest joys was bringing you and my college professor, Gordon Clark, into dialogue and seeing the two of you move beyond the unhelpful caricatures of past theological battles and

come to a far more informed understanding of one another. John, whenever I read Paul's admonition to "speak the truth in love," I think of you.

Thank you for your friendship through all these years! When we taught together a few summers ago in Orlando, it was a joy to pick up our life stories where we had left them when you moved from California. I only wish those times were more frequent!

**TIM TRACEY,
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR WORSHIP,
NORTHLAND, A CHURCH DISTRIBUTED,
LONGWOOD, FLORIDA**

John, I am grateful for the opportunity to honor God in his gift of you to the church. Northland Church is where God called me in 1992, and I'm fairly sure it's my first and last calling to a local church body. I came to my role at Northland with no experience and no idea what to do. I floundered. I had a clear calling, a hunger for God's Word, and an amazing community. But I had little understanding of a corporate worship theology or even the local ethos of worship in our community. And that, despite the reality that Saturdays came with amazing regularity! Further, "worship" was emerging as a "market" in contemporary Christian music, further exerting pressure on the local church to "get it right." I continued to flounder . . . and I was sobered by the reality that creativity would fail me and my mind would soon empty of any stored bank of "good ideas."

Then I read *Worship in Spirit and Truth*. My heart and mind were opened to my calling to the Northland body. In many ways, the Northland body was way ahead of me. Your words made concrete what was happening in our corporate worship gatherings. I began to understand the *Who* and the *why* more clearly. The work of the Spirit in sustaining me in my call was finally made clear through your words. I now had a blueprint that was centered on God's Word and built upon the person of Jesus Christ. As I read through your book and processed it in my community, I began to be set free from the tyranny of "creativity," "good ideas," and "relevance."

On the other side of our author/reader relationship, I now—and I consider it a great, great gift—know and experience the source of your great wisdom, a radically pervasive relationship with the person of Jesus Christ.

Each time I hear you speak, you speak only of Christ. Your relationship with him is prominent in all you are, all you speak, and all you write.

On this, the celebration of your seventieth birthday, I give thanks to God for you as a gift to the local church. I am so very glad you were born!

**KEVIN J. VANHOOZER, PHD,
BLANCHARD PROFESSOR OF THEOLOGY,
WHEATON COLLEGE AND GRADUATE SCHOOL**

Dear John,

Thirty years ago I sent out requests to various theology professors around the United States, asking them to recommend their seminaries to me, a prospective MDiv student. Some didn't understand my parody of the genre (viz., application forms) or the manner in which I had turned the tables. They informed me that it was usually the student, not the seminary, who provided letters of reference (duh!).

You, however, entered into the game with relish. To my question, "What are the strengths and weaknesses of the applicant?" you praised your faculty colleagues for their scholarship and saintliness, and then added, "Except me—I'm totally depraved." I knew then that I had found a kindred spirit, and my mentor.

You did not disappoint—well, at least not until you left for Westminster California at the end of my first year. Still, you went the extra mile by agreeing to supervise my MDiv honors thesis on "The Special Status of the Bible in James Barr, Brevard Childs, and David Kelsey" (and thanks, by the way, for introducing me to Kelsey; I still require his *Uses of Scripture in Recent Theology* for my theological method courses).

John, your example continues to represent the high bar for teaching that I am still trying to jump. Your lecture notes are the gold standard of the genre; no other professor I have had has even come close to rivaling them. But the most important thing I took away as a student was the conviction that it was possible to be both creative and faithful to Scripture and Reformed tradition, because you were.

I could mention many other things—for example, my indebtedness to you for introducing me to speech-act categories (and don't get me started about how multiperspectivalism anticipated what I later discovered in

Bakhtin)—but let me just say that neither a single letter, nor even a chapter in the present book, can suffice to express my gratitude. That is why I have instead dedicated my next book—*Remythologizing Theology: Divine Action, Passion, and Authorship* (Cambridge, forthcoming 2010)—to you:

To John Frame: my first graduate-school theology professor, a master-pedagogue and triangulator extraordinaire, whose multiperspectival approach to the doctrine of God has been a source of continuing inspiration. As a scholar, he exemplifies sanctified erudition in engaging other positions with charitable criticism; as a saint, he personifies a compelling model of how to do theology with creative fidelity while remaining boldly yet humbly honest to God.

Happy birthday!

**DOUGLAS WILSON, MA,
MINISTER AT CHRIST CHURCH, FELLOW OF THEOLOGY,
NEW ST. ANDREWS COLLEGE**

John Frame and I have met only once, when we were speaking at a conference together, and we of course got along famously. This was only to be expected, because we got along quite well when we were not speaking at conferences together as well. John's attitude over the years, whether he has agreed or not, has always been consistently cordial, warm, appreciative, and unthreatened. Committed to the truths of Scripture and the Reformed faith, in that order, John has not been afraid to think creatively within those boundaries. He has also not been afraid to defend others who had the same priorities, whether he agreed with them or not. John has been a model for Reformed theologians in this profoundly secure demeanor.

When asked to write this personal word, I was glad to have the honor of saying something. John Frame has contributed enormously to the edification of the church today. He has excelled at winnowing various intellectual and theological contributions made in different sectors of the church, and having separated the wheat and chaff, bringing all the different kinds of wheat together. The result is fine flour, and really hearty bread.

Theology is meant to be lived, and one of the characteristics of John's contributions is that they are preeminently applicable. Sometimes the appli-

cations are made by him, as with his fine book on medical ethics, and other times he sets out the principles that others will get to apply—as with his work on apologetics. In a word, I am very grateful that John has been faithful in doing what the Lord has given him to do. He has been a man faithful in his generation.

**JON ZENS, DMIN,
EDITOR, *SEARCHING TOGETHER*,
COPASTOR, WORD OF LIFE CHURCH,
TAYLORS FALLS, MINNESOTA**

I began as a student at Westminster Philadelphia during John Frame's first year as a professor there. It was a privilege indeed to be in his classes. I was immediately struck by his humility and approachability, and the insights he gleaned from biblical texts. He stressed that our growing in the knowledge of the Lord was designed to impact our lives at a very practical level. I am thankful that the Lord allowed me to be influenced by Professor Frame's godly wisdom.

PART 1

INTRODUCTION

1

MY BOOKS: THEIR GENESIS AND MAIN IDEAS

JOHN M. FRAME

I'VE PUBLISHED thirteen books. Four are very long and appear in a series called *A Theology of Lordship*. The others, shorter and in more popular style, overlap the *Lordship* books somewhat but also address other issues.

Full bibliographical information about each of my books may be found in the Bibliography in this festschrift.

A THEOLOGY OF LORDSHIP SERIES

The *Theology of Lordship* series is essentially an expansion of lecture material I have given in the four main areas in which I have specialized over forty-one years of seminary teaching. A major goal of mine in this series is to produce adequate textbooks for my courses. Both the lectures and the books seek to articulate a common theme: God's lordship is the central message of Scripture. "God is Lord" is the fundamental message of the Old Testament (Deut. 6:4–5), and "Jesus is Lord" is the fundamental message of the New Testament (Rom. 10:9; 1 Cor. 12:3; Phil. 2:11). Salvation is the work of God as Lord, hence my book *Salvation Belongs to the Lord*.

As I understand God's lordship, it includes God's control, authority, and presence. Reformed theology has been somewhat imbalanced in favor of the first two, liberal and broad evangelical theologies in favor of the latter. In *Theology of Lordship*, I try to bring these emphases together and provide a balance. Balance is essential because control, authority, and presence are *perspectives* on one another. An adequate understanding of each requires an adequate understanding of the others. That should bring a respite to unprofitable theological battles, which may turn out to be differences over emphasis and perspective rather than principle.

In the books of this series and all my other books, I seek to narrow the differences between factions and traditions within Christianity by suggesting that our differences are at least partly based on differences of emphasis and perspective. This study of God's lordship should also warn modern Christians and non-Christians to forsake their autonomous thinking and to see human thought as one area of service to God, since thought, like all the rest of human life, is subject to God's lordship. (The books try to bring together the concerns of theology with those of presuppositional apologetics.) It should also help us to see that Scripture, God's Word, is sufficient not only for "sacred" matters, but for all areas of human life, since God is Lord over all of life.

The Doctrine of the Knowledge of God (1987)

This work is my attempt to develop an epistemology, or theory of knowledge, based on the Bible. The main idea is that because of the nature of God's lordship, human thought cannot be autonomous. Thinking is one thing we do, and like all other human actions, it must be subject to God's authority. But because God's lordship also involves his presence with us, knowledge also has a subjective dimension.

I am especially concerned in this book with the concept of theology and its method. I develop the view that theology is the application of God's Word, by persons, to all areas of life—note the three perspectives. In theology we are not trying to find truth as such; that is already given to us in Scripture. Rather, theology is for us, to meet human needs from the Word. This excludes at the same time many imbalances commonly found in theology: absolutization of confessions and historical theology, the academic pride of many theological writings, speculative approaches, and subjectivist approaches.

Epistemology and theology can be approached from many perspectives because of the multiperspectival nature of God and of his creation.

The Doctrine of God (2002)

This book contains my most elaborate analysis of the concept of God's lordship in Scripture and my most extensive argument for the primacy of God's lordship therein. It also shows how the concept of lordship can illumine many other things that Scripture says about God. It provides antidotes to speculative, scholastic, and liberal approaches such as process theology and open theism. The structure of the book is intended to make the doctrine of God less philosophical and abstract and more focused on God's personal qualities in relationship with his people. And my multiperspectival approach tries to show how God can be understood from a variety of angles.

The Doctrine of the Christian Life (2008)

This book focuses on ethics and elaborates the case that all of human life (including our thought) is ethical, that is, subject to God's lordship. Half the book is metaethical, discussing what ethics is and how to do it, from the three lordship perspectives. Here I try to reconcile the concerns of Christian command ethics, narrative ethics, and virtue ethics, distinguishing these as equally ultimate perspectives. The other half is properly ethical, showing what Scripture says directly about ethical questions (using the Ten Commandments as a focal point). My ethic is based on *sola Scriptura* and contains frequent critique of natural-law approaches and the related notion that some ethical problems should be resolved by autonomous reasoning, rather than by Scripture.

The Doctrine of the Word of God (forthcoming)

This book urges that the Word of God is, first, God himself, and second, God's personal speech to us, creating obligations in its hearers: to believe, obey, and respond in many other ways. This Word comes to us today indirectly through a complicated process—copies, translations, editions, etc.—but God himself comes with it in the Spirit to illumine the Word and demonstrate its truth. God's Word is God himself speaking as Lord, and this Word manifests his lordship attributes of control, authority, and presence. So today the Word comes to us as the power of God, as his personal

spoken word, and as the dwelling place of God himself with us. Since God always speaks truth to us, his Word is inerrant, but inerrancy is only one of the many qualities of God's personal speech.

MEDICAL ETHICS: PRINCIPLES, PERSONS, AND PROBLEMS (1988)

This book emerged from lectures I gave at a conference in the San Diego area. It briefly sets forth my triperspectival ethical methodology and then, in dialogue with secular and Roman Catholic ethical writers, takes up issues such as patient autonomy, informed consent, confidentiality, justice, clinical trials, and living wills. *The Doctrine of the Christian Life* presents a much fuller methodological analysis, and it overlaps *Medical Ethics* on some questions, such as the definition of death. But it does not cover the earlier list of issues I have mentioned here.

PERSPECTIVES ON THE WORD OF GOD (1990)

This book emerged from a series of lectures I gave at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. It summarizes my approach to the doctrine of the Word of God, thus anticipating *The Doctrine of the Word of God*, and ethics, thus anticipating *The Doctrine of the Christian Life*.

APOLOGETICS TO THE GLORY OF GOD: AN INTRODUCTION (1994)

My apologetics text aims to resolve some matters of dispute among some presuppositional apologists and then to address actual problems of inquirers, something rarely done in the presuppositional literature. Cornelius Van Til had suggested that presuppositional apologetics can employ traditional arguments and uses of evidence. I try to show in general *how* that is possible: Evidences and psychological appeals represent the situational and existential perspectives within the broadly circular transcendental argument that represents the normative perspective.

CORNELIUS VAN TIL: AN ANALYSIS OF HIS THOUGHT (1995)

Written for the hundredth anniversary of Van Til's birth, this work analyzes Van Til's ideas—theological and apologetic. I have always thought

of Van Til as more a theologian than an apologist, although his apologetic approach is very valuable. He put forth a remarkably creative approach to all theological questions, an approach that I have tried to utilize in my other books and that I explain here.

NO OTHER GOD: A RESPONSE TO OPEN THEISM (2001)

In this book, I take a number of ideas from *The Doctrine of God* and add an analysis of open theism to show that the latter movement is a distortion of Scripture.

SALVATION BELONGS TO THE LORD: AN INTRODUCTION TO SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY (2006)

This book, taken from a taped lecture series, is as close as I will ever get to a complete systematic theology. It is a relatively brief survey of the topics of systematics, in popular style. Some of the chapters summarize parts of my longer books, particularly the Theology of Lordship series. Others treat subjects such as Christology and soteriology that I have never addressed elsewhere. One might well ask why I haven't written Lordship books on these topics. The answer is that I have never been asked to teach them on the seminary level, and therefore I haven't researched them to the degree that I have studied the subjects covered in the Lordship books. Blame the system of academic specialization! But certainly all the topics in *Salvation Belongs to the Lord* are important, and I'm happy that I have been able to address them, at least at a popular level. And you will find here, even on these subjects, some triperspectival distinctions that may be helpful.

WORSHIP IN SPIRIT AND TRUTH: A REFRESHING STUDY OF THE PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE OF BIBLICAL WORSHIP (1996)

In this book, I try to show that Reformed theology allows more freedom in worship than is usually believed. I deal with basic biblical principles of worship, along with controversial matters such as the regulative principle, traditional worship models, contemporary music, dance, and drama. I distinguish between worship's narrow sense (Sunday services) and broad sense (our bodies as living sacrifices, Rom. 12:1–2), to show that in one sense all

of life is worship, and worship in both cases is acknowledging the greatness of our covenant Lord. By the way, the subtitle was the publisher's choice, not mine. Some readers have not found the book refreshing.

CONTEMPORARY WORSHIP MUSIC: A BIBLICAL DEFENSE (1997)

I led worship at the New Life Presbyterian Church (Escondido, California) from 1980 to 1999. We used contemporary Christian worship songs, along with traditional hymns. Some complained that the use of contemporary music was non-Reformed, and that it detracted from the dignity, reverence, and awe of worship. Friends invited me to read and comment on the defenses of traditional worship penned by various authors. This book is a response to that controversy. I argue that the use of contemporary worship music, while not the only appropriate form of Christian hymnody, is one appropriate form, that at its best it does convey a sense of awe and reverence, and that it is “edifying” (1 Cor. 14:26) for many people today.

EVANGELICAL REUNION: DENOMINATIONS AND THE ONE BODY OF CHRIST (1991)

This book is a cry of the heart, protesting the scandal of the brokenness of the body of Christ through denominationalism. It analyzes what denominationalism is, how it came to be, and how the Bible evaluates it. Then the book presents an utterly unrealistic vision of how these divisions might be healed.

THE COLLECTED WORKS OF JOHN M. FRAME, VOLUME 1: THEOLOGY (2008)

Recently, John Hughes, the editor of this volume, suggested that I put together a “Complete Works” set of CDs and DVDs, containing all my books and articles, plus many audio recordings of my lectures. The original plan was to release these in three volumes, divided by subject matter in a way similar to this book's structure: (1) *Theology*, (2) *Apologetics*, and (3) *The Christian Life*. The first volume was released in 2008. At present we are considering the possibility of releasing the second and third collections, together with the first, in a single set, with some additional material not available elsewhere.

2

BACKGROUNDS TO MY THOUGHT

JOHN M. FRAME

I'VE BEEN ASKED to list some people and writings that have influenced the distinctive ideas of my theology, apologetics, and ethics. But such a list will not mean anything to most readers unless I explain to some extent why and how these people and writings have influenced me.

First some general autobiography, overlapping what I say in *RLT*, included in this volume.

I was born in the Pittsburgh area in 1939. I received Christ as my personal Savior and Lord at around age thirteen, through the ministry of Beverly Heights, an evangelical congregation of the United Presbyterian Church of North America. This was about the time Billy Graham first visited Pittsburgh, where I lived. I went to one of his meetings, with the church youth group. Although I did not “go forward,” some of my friends did, and I saw profound changes in their lives. I sensed my own sin and need for Christ and came to trust him.

The music ministry of the church also changed me profoundly. I took organ lessons there and sang in the choir. The youth ministry taught me the gospel; the music ministry drove it into my heart. From that time on, I have been deeply interested in worship.

My theological interests, too, began very soon after my conversion. Our youth leader, Bob Kelley, was not afraid to get us kids into some pretty heavy-

duty theology; he later became a professor of New Testament at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary. Another professor there was Dr. John H. Gerstner, the same one who had such a deep influence on R. C. Sproul. Gerstner was a frequent speaker at our youth camps and rallies. He was a Socratic master teacher: I don't think I've completely forgotten anything I heard him say, or any of the thought processes he conjured up within me.

In high school years I also listened closely to a number of radio preachers, particularly Donald Grey Barnhouse of the *Bible Study Hour* and Peter Eldersveld of the *Back to God Hour*. Barnhouse was an evangelical pastor in the liberal Presbyterian denomination (PCUSA), rather dispensational in his theology. Eldersveld was a Dutch Calvinist from the Christian Reformed Church. Both had gifts for vivid language and persuasive argument. I hung on their every word.

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY, 1957–61

At Princeton University, the main influences on me were my teachers on the one hand and the Princeton Evangelical Fellowship (PEF) on the other. The PEF was just about the only evangelical group on campus at the time. Through its ministry (and that of Westerly Road Church) I grew spiritually as at no other time in my life. My knowledge of the Bible went to a deeper level at PEF under the teaching of Dr. Donald Fullerton.¹ Both PEF and Beverly Heights encouraged me to memorize Scripture. I learned some seven hundred verses through the Navigators' Topical Memory System, and those are the verses that continue today to serve as landmarks for my theology.

PEF was dispensational in its viewpoint, as Barnhouse was, but Gerstner thought dispensationalism was an awful heresy. I never accepted the dispensational system, but neither could I accept Gerstner's harshly negative verdict about it. My friends at PEF were godly people who loved Jesus and the Word. We prayed together every day and visited dorm rooms to bring the gospel to fellow students. Princeton was a spiritual battleground, and the PEF folks were my fellow soldiers. Struggling together for Jesus against opposition tends to magnify the unity of believers and to decrease the importance of disagreement. Surely Jesus intended for his

1. For more reflections on this period in my life, see "Remembering Donald B. Fullerton," http://www.frame-poythress.org/frame_articles/Remembering_fullerton.htm.

people to wage this battle together, not separated into different denominations and theological factions. My experience with PEF (and earlier with Graham) prevented me from ever being anti-evangelical, as are many of my Reformed friends. At Princeton, I became an ecumenist.

I majored in philosophy and also took courses in religion, literature, and history. The religion courses, together with the denominational campus ministries, gave me my first introduction to theological liberalism. Although I had toyed with similar ideas during my high school years, I sharply rebelled against liberalism in college. Princeton liberalism was casual religion: no authoritative Bible, no passion for souls, no desire for holiness, no vitality. Indeed, the Christ of Scripture simply wasn't there. Later, I read J. Gresham Machen's *Christianity and Liberalism*,² which argued that liberalism was an entirely different religion from Christianity, and I found it entirely persuasive. Although liberalism has changed its face in the years since, I still see it as the opposite of the biblical gospel.

PEF taught me the importance of holding firmly to the supreme authority (including infallibility and inerrancy) of Scripture as God's Word, over against liberal religion. I have never abandoned that foundation, and it has played a major role in my teaching. In PEF, further, one could never argue a theological position without appealing directly to Scripture. Although this approach is sometimes derided as "proof-texting," I believe that rightly used, it constitutes the only sound theological method, and this has been a major emphasis in my work through my life. In this regard, see especially my article *IDSCB*.

My philosophy teachers, for the most part, did not profess to be Christians at all, liberal or otherwise. Walter Kaufmann, who had recently published his *Critique of Religion and Philosophy*,³ was an expert on Friedrich Nietzsche and himself a very Nietzschean thinker, who did his best to destroy his students' Christian beliefs. His anti-Christian arguments didn't bother me much, by the grace of God. But I greatly enjoyed Kaufmann's brilliant intellect, clarity, and wit. His writings influenced my own writing style. (Over the years, I have had to temper the polemic edge of that style.) And like me, he had no sympathy with liberal theology. He attacked both conservative and liberal Christianity with equal zest, even presenting a persuasive critique

2. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1923.

3. New York: Harper, 1958.

of the liberal “documentary hypothesis,” which divided the Pentateuch into works of many different authors.

Other philosophy teachers gave me a good introduction to the history of philosophy, particularly Gregory Vlastos in Greek and medieval philosophy and George Pitcher in the modern period. I also studied with Ledger Wood, who revised and updated Frank Thilly’s widely used *A History of Philosophy*.⁴ But in general, the Princeton philosophers took a negative approach to their discipline’s history. For them, the history of philosophy was largely a history of error. When we studied Plato, the important thing was to see all the mistakes Plato had made, not to value his vision. Same with other philosophers. This negativism can be understood partly from the fact that Princeton’s philosophy department was one of the last to abandon logical positivism. Carl Hempel, the positivist of the Berlin school, taught logic and philosophy of science and, like other positivists, despised metaphysics, which had been such a central concern of the philosophic tradition.

Yet I did take a course in metaphysics at Princeton. It was the last one ever taught in that era: shortly afterward, the department voted to never again list a course with the word *metaphysics* in it. But the course I took from G. Dennis O’Brien had a large impact on my thinking. O’Brien was a young Roman Catholic (although Kaufmann said he could not vouch for O’Brien’s orthodoxy). He had studied at the University of Chicago and valued the “classical realism” of Richard McKeon and John Wild.

In the metaphysics course, we studied Aristotle, Spinoza, and John Dewey, three philosophers of very different eras, with very different-looking metaphysical systems. O’Brien rejected the find-the-mistakes approach of his colleagues. When he taught Aristotle, one would have assumed that he was Aristotelian. But when he taught Spinoza, he seemed Spinozist, and when he taught Dewey, Deweyan. His general point was that if you started where Aristotle started, understanding his inheritance from his predecessors, understanding the questions he tried to answer, using the conceptual equipment available to him, thinking with the same intellectual gifts Aristotle enjoyed, you would probably come to the same conclusions he did. For O’Brien, the same could be said of Spinoza and of Dewey.

Aristotle described the world as a collection of things, Spinoza of facts, Dewey of processes; but these, to O’Brien, were not so much factual differences as differences in the philosopher’s “way with the facts.” Metaphysics in

4. New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1951.

general, he thought, was not a discovery of new facts, but rather it explored “ways with the facts.”⁵ Although O’Brien didn’t use this terminology, what I took from his analysis was that Aristotle, Spinoza, and Dewey looked at the world from three “perspectives,” as if viewing from three different angles.

I didn’t entirely agree with this approach, and still do not. I think there are such things as “metaphysical facts,” and I believe that many disagreements in metaphysics are precisely factual disagreements. But O’Brien’s course was stimulating to me as few other courses have been. I was convinced that alongside other differences among philosophers (including factual differences), there were also “perspectival” differences. That is to say, not all the differences between thinkers are differences between truth and falsity, right and wrong; factual disagreements; or differences between clear thinking and “mistakes.” Some are also differences in perspective, looking at the same truth from different angles. That was the beginning of my inclination to understand reality “perspectivally.”

So when I graduated from Princeton, I was biblically oriented (almost biblicistic, but I think in a good way), antiliberal, ecumenical, and incipiently perspectivalist.

WESTMINSTER THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY (PHILADELPHIA), 1961–64

At Westminster, I studied largely with the “old faculty” that had taught there from the 1930s: Cornelius Van Til, John Murray, Ned Stonehouse, Paul Woolley, and Edward J. Young, plus some gifted younger men, such as Edmund Clowney and Meredith G. Kline.

I had begun to read Van Til in college, seeking help in dealing with the philosophical problems I encountered at Princeton. I had earlier read C. S. Lewis’s *Mere Christianity*,⁶ *The Problem of Pain*,⁷ and *Miracles*.⁸ Van Til was very critical of Lewis, but Lewis actually prepared me for Van Til. The *Miracles* book was especially helpful to me. There, Lewis showed that naturalism and Christianity were two distinct and incompatible worldviews, and that

5. One humorist in the class proposed the following essay question for the final exam: “Distinguish between ‘a way with the facts’ and ‘away with the facts!’ ”

6. New York: Harper, 2001.

7. New York: Macmillan, 1957.

8. New York: Macmillan, 1947.

arguments against miracles typically assume that naturalism is true. Lewis seemed to me to be entirely right, and that readied me to believe Van Til's assertion that the Christian faith is a worldview unto itself, with its own distinctive metaphysics, epistemology, and ethics. Lewis also prepared me to accept Van Til's view that opposition to Christianity is not based fundamentally on factual discovery, but rather on presuppositions that rule out Christianity from the outset of the discussion.

Van Til became the greatest influence on my apologetics and theology. In my view, although I have been subjected to some derision for saying this, Van Til was the most important Christian thinker since John Calvin. His message is precisely what people of our time need most to hear: that the lordship of Jesus Christ must govern our thoughts (2 Cor. 10:5) as well as every other area of life. Every problem of theology, apologetics, biblical studies, science, and philosophy takes on a very different appearance when we reject non-Christian presuppositions and seek to think consistently according to Christian ones. Certainly, nobody who has not spent time with Van Til can understand well what I am about.⁹

I was interested in Van Til not only for his presuppositional epistemology and apologetic, but also for ideas of his that are less well known. In my *Van Til the Theologian*¹⁰ booklet and in my larger book *CVT*, I discuss Van Til as a theologian, particularly his understanding of theological method. I took an interest, for example, in his threefold understanding of revelation in his *Introduction to Systematic Theology*:¹¹ revelation from God, nature, and man. He subdivided these, in turn, into various permutations: revelation from God about God, from God about nature, from God about man, from nature about God, etc. He also developed his ethics in accord with another threefold distinction found in the Westminster Confession of Faith: every ethical decision may be evaluated according to its goal, motive, and standard.¹² He denied that these topics must be taken up in any particular order, for he believed that each implied the others.

O'Brien had led me to think in terms of "perspectives." My Christian adaptation of O'Brien, under Van Til's tutelage, was that perspectivalism was

9. See especially the titles of Van Til on my "Recommended Resources" list in this volume.

10. Phillipsburg, NJ: Pilgrim Publishing, 1976; also available at http://www.frame-poythress.org/frame_articles/1976VanTil.htm.

11. Nutley, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1974, 64–109.

12. Cornelius Van Til, *Christian Theistic Ethics* (Nutley, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1971), 1–6. Cf. WCF 16.7.

necessary, since unlike God we are finite beings. We cannot see everything at once, as God does. So we must investigate things, first from this angle, then from that. But Van Til took me a step further: from a general perspectivalism to what would be called *triperspectivalism*, to a set of threefold distinctions that are especially important for our reflection. Nature, man, and God; goal, motive, and standard.

Edmund Clowney reinforced this triadic perspective. In his course on the doctrine of the church, he produced an impressive pyramid diagram. The pyramid's base was divided into two intersecting triads, one listing the church's ministries, the other the church's leadership. The ministries were worship, edification, and witness. The offices of the church provided leadership in teaching, rule, and mercy. The diagram also distinguished "general" officers from "special," by bifurcating the triangle into an upper and a lower section. All Christians hold the "general" office as teachers, rulers, and givers of mercy. But there are also specially ordained people who have particular responsibilities in these areas: teaching elders, ruling elders, and deacons. Above the pyramid, with a space between him and the rest of the pyramid, was Jesus Christ, the head of the church, who embodies the ultimate in all the offices, the supreme Prophet, Priest, and King.¹³

My triperspectivalism began to bring together Van Til's triads, Clowney's triads, and some others into a general overview. When I later began teaching at Westminster, I taught the doctrine of God, organizing the material under the general headings of God's *transcendence* and *immanence*, following a common pattern in theology. But I became uneasy with this approach, coming to sense that *transcendence* was an ambiguous idea. Does it mean that God is so far from us as to be "wholly other" (Otto, Barth)? If so, how can he also be immanent? It occurred to me that biblically it would make more sense to define *transcendence* in terms of God's kingship or lordship: God is not infinitely removed from us in Scripture; rather, he *rules* us. My studies in divine lordship yielded an emphasis on God's *control*, *authority*, and *covenant presence*, which I came to call his *lordship attributes*. When Scripture talks about God's being "high" and "lifted up," it is not referring to some kind of wholly-otherness, but to God's kingly control and authority over his own domain. So why not define *transcendence* in those terms? And then *immanence* can refer to his covenant presence, his determination to be "with" his people, *Immanuel*.

13. See Edmund Clowney, *The Church* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1995).

Then (since I also taught ethics) I came to see that this threefold scheme correlated with Van Til's "goal, motive, standard." God's *control* was his lordship over nature and history, so that they conspired always to achieve the *goal* of God's glory. His *authority* was the *standard* for the behavior of his creatures. And his redemptive *presence*, in the hearts of his people, creates in them the *motives* necessary for good works.

This threefold understanding also applied to the doctrine of revelation and Scripture, which I also taught in my early years. As Van Til said, there is revelation from God, nature, and man *about* God, nature, and man. Nature is, of course, under God's *control*. But God also comes in person (and in his written Word) to speak to us with *authority*. Further, he reveals himself in human beings, his image, which is to say that God's revelation is *present* in us as well as outside us.

I came to believe that the ultimate root of these triads was the triune character of God. He is the Father, who develops an *authoritative* plan; the Son, who carries out that plan by his powerful *control* of all things; and the Spirit, who as the *presence* of God applies that plan to nature, history, and human beings.

This narrative has gone beyond my Westminster student years, but I need to return there to mention some other influences. One important influence was certainly Meredith G. Kline, who made exciting discoveries about the nature of biblical covenants. In my later teaching and writing, I made much use of Kline's idea that covenants were essentially *treaties* between the great King Yahweh and the "vassal" people that he has called to be his. As Kline showed, these treaties took written form, and their literary structure was somewhat constant: the name of the great King, the historical description of his past blessings to the vassal, the stipulations or laws of the covenant, and the sanctions: the blessings for obedience and the curses for disobedience. In the triad of history, law, sanctions, I found another application of my triperspectivalism. The history describes God's powerful *control* over nature and history; the law pronounces his *authoritative* requirements; the sanctions show that he is not an absentee Lord, but is *present* to show mercy to and discipline his people.

Kline identifies Scripture as God's treaty document in his *The Structure of Biblical Authority*,¹⁴ a book that I have used again and again in my own teaching and writing. I think it is the first real theological breakthrough

14. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972.

since B. B. Warfield on the nature of the Bible. The treaty is authored by the great King, is holy (placed in the sanctuary), and has supreme authority for the vassal. In this study, Kline shows that God intends to rule his people by a book.

But I also received much help from other Westminster professors in maintaining a strong doctrine of Scripture. Edward J. Young's *Thy Word Is Truth*¹⁵ was a great help in showing me the biblical rationale for the doctrine of inerrancy. Indeed, every course I took at Westminster in some way reinforced the truth of the authority of Scripture. Edmund Clowney showed us that the primacy of God's Word could be found on nearly every page of Scripture. Van Til, in *The Protestant Doctrine of Scripture*¹⁶ and in *An Introduction to Systematic Theology*, presented biblical authority as inevitable, in terms of a Christian philosophy. And John Murray's wonderful article "The Attestation of Scripture"¹⁷ and his *Calvin on Scripture and Divine Sovereignty*¹⁸ summarized the issues masterfully.

I should say something more about John Murray. It was common in those days for students to say that they had come to Westminster for Van Til but that they stayed for Murray. Murray was not well known outside Reformed circles, but as a theologian he was peerless. Murray, Clowney, and Van Til are the authors I refer to most often today. Murray's *Collected Writings*¹⁹ are a wonderful treasury of exegesis and theological reflection. The present-day criticism of Murray in Reformed circles is in my judgment unworthy of him.

What I learned best from Murray was his theological method. At Princeton, my PEF friends urged me not to study at Westminster. In their view, Reformed theology was more a celebration of its own tradition than a serious reading of Scripture. When I came to Westminster, I was armed by this criticism. If Westminster had defended its teaching mainly by referring to its confessions and past thinkers, I would not have been persuaded. But Murray focused on Scripture itself. His classes were almost entirely spent in exegeting the main biblical sources on each topic. In this, he was not afraid

15. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1957.

16. Nutley, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1967.

17. In Ned Stonehouse and Paul Woolley, eds., *The Infallible Word* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1946), 1–54. This volume contains essays by many Westminster professors, which were and are very helpful.

18. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1960.

19. 4 vols. (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1982).

to differ from Reformed tradition, even the confessions, when he believed the biblical text pointed in a different direction. He described his method in his essay “Systematic Theology,”²⁰ which I have read again and again, and on which every young theologian should deeply meditate. Here he condemns traditionalism and advocates a concentration on biblical exegesis.

My own theology is very unlike Murray’s in style, diction, and emphasis. But in its method and most of its conclusions, my work is more like his than any other theological writer’s.

I was more ambivalent to the large emphasis at Westminster on redemptive history or biblical theology. A number of the professors had been deeply influenced by Geerhardus Vos, professor of biblical theology at Princeton Seminary. Edmund Clowney, although he had not studied with Vos, was also enthusiastic about Vos’s ideas and taught students to focus their sermons on the redemptive-historical significance of each text. This meant that biblical texts were intended to proclaim redemption in Christ (the Old Testament looking forward to him, the New Testament reflecting on his incarnation, atonement, resurrection, and ascension). Sermons, on this view, should also focus on redemption and not on, say, the moral successes or failures of biblical characters. Sermons that used biblical characters to illustrate spiritual or moral issues were called “exemplarist” or “moralistic.”

I, too, was impressed by the importance of redemptive history, and to this day I benefit most from sermons that have that focus, which is, in the end, a focus on Christ. Clowney was one of my very favorite preachers. In some circles, however, this emphasis has become divisive and sectarian. Churches have been divided by extreme advocates of redemptive history who say that one must never, ever use a biblical character as a moral example, and who bend texts in bizarre ways to make them “point to Christ.” I think this extreme form of the movement has been harmful. The extreme polemic against “exemplarism” is misplaced. Scripture does, in fact, point to characters in its narrative as positive and negative examples (Matt. 12:3–8; 1 Cor. 11:1; Heb. 11; 12:16), and Scripture strongly emphasizes godly examples as an aid to spiritual growth (1 Tim. 4:12; cf. 3:1–13). This is not opposed to the centrality of Christ. In the Bible, Christ is Redeemer, but he is also the supreme example of holy living (Phil. 2:1–11; 1 Peter 2:21; 4:1; 1 John 3:16). So Westminster’s emphasis on redemptive history was a stimulus to my

20. *Collected Writings*, 4:1–21.

thinking, but my experience there led me to oppose redemptive-historical extremism.²¹

I should also mention another major influence on my thought from this period, although from one who was not on the Westminster faculty: Francis Schaeffer. I met Schaeffer only three or four times in my life. I spent a night at his chalet in Switzerland in 1960, but he was away in the States at the time. I hoped to spend more time there, but God never opened the door. Nevertheless, reports of God's work at L'Abri stirred my soul, and I sought any opportunity to read Schaeffer's letters and, when later available, his books.

Early in my study at Westminster, I read Schaeffer's article "A Review of a Review," published in *The Bible Today*.²² Schaeffer had studied both with Van Til and with the editor of *The Bible Today*, J. Oliver Buswell. Buswell had been very critical of Van Til. Schaeffer's article sought to bring them closer together. Much of Schaeffer's argument made sense to me, and from then on I believed that the differences between Van Til's and the "traditional" apologetic were somewhat less than Van Til understood them to be.

Even more impressive to me, however, was Schaeffer's example as an evangelist. L'Abri sought both to give "honest answers to honest questions" to the people who visited and to show them an example of radical Christian love and hospitality, a "demonstration that God is real." I came to know many who had been converted through L'Abri, or had been deeply influenced by the ministry. Almost without exception, these believers were spiritually mature, balanced, passionate about both truth and holiness. Although I watched L'Abri from afar off, it influenced my own ministry more than many who were closer by.

I also thought much during my student years about the process of theological education itself. Westminster education was very academic. The seminary sought to draw a very sharp line between academy and church, to the point that many students (more radical than their professors, of course) thought it was inappropriate to have chapel exercises or prayer meetings on campus. I reacted sharply against this kind of thinking. It seemed to me that there was no biblical reason to think that training for the ministry should

21. See *DCL*, 271–97; also "Some Journal Entries on Preaching," http://www.frame-poythress.org/frame_articles/1999Journal.htm.

22. *The Bible Today* (October 1948): 7–9; also available at <http://www.pcahistory.org/documents/schaefferreview.html>.

be apart from the church, much reason to think that such training should be saturated with the means of grace. Many at Westminster said that it was wrong to “separate” the Christian life from Christian doctrine. But as I’ve often noted, *separate* is an ambiguous term. What this phrase sometimes meant at Westminster was that if you got the doctrines right, spiritual growth was the inevitable outcome. Yet both Scripture and my own experience invalidated that judgment.

So some years later (1972) I wrote “Proposal for a New Seminary,”²³ which argued that theological education should be first of all a practical field education within the church with academic supplements as needed (rather the opposite of the current model). This Proposal humbled me: I saw that I would not have been fit to be a teacher in such a seminary. Later, I argued that there was also benefit to be found in the traditional model (in which I have, in fact, participated through my life).²⁴ But my Proposal remains my ideal.

My student years at Westminster were deeply formative. Particularly, I emerged fully convinced of biblical authority and presuppositional epistemology, modified a bit in Schaeffer’s direction, ambivalent toward the redemptive-historical emphasis, somewhat biblicistic in my theological method, and inclined to a perspectival understanding of biblical concepts and theological issues. I believed that theological education was truly a ministry of the church, using all the means of God’s grace. So I sought to speak the truth in love.

YALE UNIVERSITY, 1964–68

I went to Yale for graduate study in philosophical theology. I earned both an MA and an MPhil there, but, alas, I did not finish my dissertation for the PhD.

The program allowed me to take courses both in philosophy and in religion-theology. In philosophy, I took courses from Paul Weiss, who modified Alfred North Whitehead’s process philosophy; from William Christian, who tried to schematize the language of religion; and from H. D. Lewis, a defender of libertarian free will. I did not accept Lewis’s arguments, but I still

23. *Journal of Pastoral Practice* 2, 1 (Winter 1978): 10–17; also available at http://www.frame-poythress.org/frame_articles/1978Proposal.htm.

24. “Learning at Jesus’ Feet,” http://www.frame-poythress.org/frame_articles/2003Learning.htm.

consider his philosophical formulations of libertarianism to be definitive.²⁵ I also served as a teaching assistant to John Wild, who by then had abandoned “classical realism” in favor of a form of existential philosophy.

In theology, I studied with the brilliant young David Kelsey (who raised the question of how Scripture should be *used* as an authority),²⁶ theologian of culture Julian Hartt, and George Lindbeck,²⁷ now known as the father of postliberalism.²⁸ I took courses from Lindbeck on Aquinas and Tillich, but the one that affected me most was a course I audited on comparative dogmatics. Here he urged a perspectival approach to the different confessional traditions. He described himself as “on the conservative wing of the avant-garde of the ecumenical movement.” By “avant-garde” he meant that he was serious about breaking down barriers between different traditions. By “conservative” he meant that he took these differences themselves seriously: he wanted to reconcile the traditions, not dismantle them. As O’Brien had managed to reconcile Aristotle, Spinoza, and Dewey by analyzing their questions in their intellectual context, so in a similar way Lindbeck sought to reconcile the various theological traditions. He recommended to us, for example, Stephen Pfurtner’s *Luther and Aquinas on Salvation*,²⁹ which presents even the deep divide over justification in a perspectival way. I was not convinced, yet I was challenged not to take the traditional interdenominational arguments at face value, but to see if I could find ways in which the parties could look at one another more sympathetically. My ecumenism and my perspectivalism were drawing together.

Another major influence on my thinking at Yale was Paul Holmer,³⁰ my thesis adviser. Holmer had been raised an evangelical and had come

25. See, for example, his *Our Experience of God* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1959), and *Freedom and History* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1962). For my view of libertarianism, see my *DG*, 135–45, and *NOG*, 119–31.

26. See my review of his *The Uses of Scripture in Recent Theology*, in *WTJ* 39, 2 (Spring 1977): 328–53; also available at <http://www.frame-poythress.org>.

27. See my review of his *The Nature of Theology* in *The Presbyterian Journal* 43 (February 27, 1985): 11–12; also Appendix H to my *DKG*.

28. Hans Frei, one of the main figures of “narrative theology,” also taught at Yale at the time, but I did not take courses from him. His graduate courses at the time dealt with nineteenth-century German thinkers and required students to read them in German. Although I knew some German, I did not want to spend time in this type of course, even for the great benefit of studying with Frei.

29. New York: Sheed and Ward, 1964.

30. See my review of Holmer’s *The Grammar of Faith*, in *WTJ* 42, 1 (Fall 1979): 219–31; also available at <http://www.frame-poythress.org>.

back to the evangelical faith after some time as what he called a “positivist.” His theological heroes were Martin Luther and Søren Kierkegaard, and his philosophic hero Ludwig Wittgenstein. I had read both Kierkegaard and Wittgenstein at Princeton, but it was Holmer who got me excited about them. Although Kierkegaard still fascinates me, the scholarly debates on how to interpret him have left me frustrated, and I have not made much use of him in my own thinking. Wittgenstein, however, is a thinker I often turn back to. His view that meaning is, in most cases, its *use* in the language certainly influenced my own view that “theology is application,” although I have been very careful to distinguish my general position from Wittgenstein’s. For other uses of Wittgenstein in my work, see his entry in the name index of my *DKG*.

In brief, I left Yale thinking more deeply about Scripture and perspectivalism, strongly opposed to libertarianism, and persuaded that theology is the use of biblical language for the edification of people. My basic convictions about the authority of Scripture and the presuppositional nature of thought held firm, despite challenges by respected thinkers.

BACK TO WESTMINSTER, 1968–80

At Norman Shepherd’s invitation, I returned to Westminster to teach systematic theology. Cornelius Van Til then asked me if I would also teach some courses in the apologetics department, and by 1976 the administration had added “apologetics” to my title. My required courses were in the doctrine of Scripture, the doctrine of God, apologetics, and ethics. All of these involved reflection on epistemology, so that field also consumed much of my study. With the later addition of worship, these were the subjects on which I have done most of my writing over the course of my life.

As a teacher at Westminster, I sought to formulate and communicate the thinking I had previously developed, but my theology did not remain static. I continued to be influenced by people and literature.

Sometimes I was influenced by my own students. When I arrived, many students at Westminster were disciples of the Dutch Calvinistic philosopher Herman Dooyeweerd. These students tended to be pretty arrogant, arguing that the traditional Reformed theology that Westminster represented was “dualist,” “scholastic,” and so on. Eventually I found myself at odds with them and their ideology. I was particularly concerned about their doctrine

of revelation, in which the authority of Scripture was limited to the “realm of faith” and our main guidance for life was to be found, not in Scripture at all, but rather in the “word of creation,” i.e., natural revelation understood through the lens of Dooyeweerd’s philosophy. The Bibliography in this volume contains a number of titles arising out of this controversy, particularly my booklet *TAP*.

Although I opposed the Dooyeweerdian movement, it motivated me to rethink some things. Particularly, I had to learn how to give some account of the place of Scripture in relation to general revelation, Christ as the Word of God, and the various unwritten media by which the Word of God comes to us. I found help in Van Til’s triads, nature, man, and God, which contributed to my own triperspectivalism.

Also contributing much to triperspectivalism was Vern Poythress, who studied at Westminster in the early 1970s. Poythress took a great interest in my work, and my student soon became my teacher. Poythress had studied with Kenneth Pike, the famous linguist who taught many of the Wycliffe Bible Translators. Pike had developed what Vern described as triperspectival distinctions within linguistics: particle, wave, and field. Poythress was and is very brilliant, and he stimulated me to see dimensions to my triperspectival ideas that I could not have thought of myself. His support convinced me that God had led us into some important insights, and Vern has ever since been a friend and theological partner. See especially his *Symphonic Theology*,³¹ but his many other books also articulate our joint vision. For many books and articles he has written, see our joint Web site, <http://www.frame-poythress.org>.

In a different way, Norman Shepherd was influential in my thinking and life. Norman had graduated from Westminster by the time I arrived as a student, but even in his absence he was well known on campus. My fellow students often referred to him as the likely successor to John Murray. Both men were brilliant and were exclusive psalm singers. Shepherd lacked Murray’s Scottish brogue, but his style of lecturing, his choice of words, and even his mannerisms were very similar to Murray’s.

When Ned Stonehouse died in 1962, Shepherd was asked to teach Stonehouse’s former course in New Testament biblical theology. Shepherd’s major field was systematic theology, not New Testament, but we students were in awe of him. Given little advance notice in teaching the course, he

31. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1987; also available at <http://www.frame-poythress.org>.

worked hard to stay ahead of the class. We saw him every day, sitting at a library table, surrounded by books and notes. I put in a special effort to understand his material, out of respect for his hard work and excellent presentation. Perhaps I worked too hard, because my mind went blank during the final exam. I was given one of the lower grades that I received as a seminary student.

In the mid-1960s, Shepherd was called to work alongside Murray in systematics, and then, when Murray retired, Shepherd taught all the systematics courses for one year. He wrote to me at Yale to see whether I would be interested in helping him out, and of course I was, although I was surprised that he would call on one who had made a mere B+ in his New Testament biblical theology course. I got to know him fairly well in those days; we attended the same church as well as participating together in the seminary program. Even as a colleague, I was still in awe of him. His understanding of the Scriptures and the Reformed tradition far exceeded mine.

Shepherd was the last person that I (or anyone else) would have expected to create doctrinal controversy. He was so like Murray, and Murray had virtually defined Reformed orthodoxy for the rest of us. But in 1974 Shepherd was challenged on his view of justification and continues today to be a figure of controversy.³² Today I don't think I can fairly be called a "Shepherdite" in terms of that controversy. But I learned a huge amount of theology from Shepherd. I audited two of his courses just for my own personal edification, and I continue to be edified by what I learned there. Shepherd remains for me a model of careful, precise, responsible theological scholarship and doctrinal formulation. Like Murray, he always puts Scripture ahead of tradition, and in that respect he remains a model for me.

Another colleague who influenced me profoundly was C. John Miller, who taught practical theology. Although "Jack," as we called him, was an able scholar, his heart was in evangelism and church planting. He founded New Life Church, which rapidly became a megachurch, the World Harvest Mission, and the Sonship ministry, a ministry of conferences and tapes that articulate Miller's vision of gospel-centered Christian living.³³ I greatly admired Jack's evangelistic boldness and humble spirit. On a number of occasions, he invited me to accompany him on evangelistic projects. I

32. For my response to his view of justification, see my *RLT* in this volume. For Shepherd's position, see his book *The Call of Grace* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2000).

33. For my evaluation of Sonship, see my *RLT* in this volume.

declined, citing other business; but I regret now that I didn't make time to be with Jack at those times. I think that would have made me a better Christian and theologian.

I suppose that Jack's greatest influence on me was to make me willing to endure the scorn of traditionalists in the church. Jack's emphasis on evangelism led him to employ a style of worship at New Life that was far from the Presbyterian tradition. He used contemporary songs, guitars, cultivated informality. Many in our circles balked at this, even ridiculed it. But people came to Christ by God's grace, overcame besetting sins, became zealous for Christ. Eventually, many who had at first mocked New Life became enthusiastic members.

When I moved to California, we planted "New Life Presbyterian Church in Escondido," patterned in many ways after New Life in Philadelphia. The pastor was Dick Kaufmann, who had been a ruling elder at New Life in Philadelphia. We hoped to reach the unchurched, rather than merely to attract Reformed people. (Had we adopted the latter policy and succeeded, we would have added another division to a rather small Reformed community.) I was the elder in charge of worship, and I taught adults a class on worship, which led to my book *WST*. I was also asked to reply to letters we received that were critical of our worship, and that correspondence led to my book *CWM*. So I cite Jack Miller as a major inspiration for my work in this area. His books, especially *Outgrowing the Ingrown Church*,³⁴ defined for me what life in the church should be like, and Dick Kaufmann, my pastor for fourteen years, defined for me the model of a godly pastor. Miller and Kaufmann had a very broad influence on my thinking in many areas. Their attitude of love and grace to believer and unbeliever, friend and enemy alike rebuked my pride and spiritual complacency.

In my years of teaching in Philadelphia, I also had a good relationship with my colleague Jay E. Adams, who developed a new approach to pastoral counseling that was known as "nouthetic" or "biblical" counseling. Jay has been very supportive and encouraging to me over the years. Later we were also colleagues at Westminster in California.

He wrote many books on nouthetic counseling, but the basic exposition of his position was *Competent to Counsel*.³⁵ I have waxed hot and cold on this approach through the years. Since counseling is not my field, I have not

34. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986.

35. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1970.

had to take a final position on it, and I'm glad of that. On the positive side, Adams's counseling method is presuppositional and semi-biblicistic in the way that I am. I love it when people search the Scriptures to find what the Bible says on a subject of importance. On the other hand, Adams has been criticized for not making sufficient use of general revelation, and therefore for his almost entirely negative view of secular psychology. That criticism rings a bell with me, too, because for all my biblicism I do believe it is important to understand extrabiblical truth, if only to accurately apply the Bible to a situation. (This is what I call the "situational perspective.") Practically, I've seen nouthetic counselors, by God's grace, help people solve many serious problems in their lives. But I've also seen some nouthetic counselors who have not listened hard enough to their counselees, who have ignored important situational factors, and who have therefore brought harm. I think the younger generation of nouthetic counselors, such as David Powlison and Ed Welch, have found a better balance here.

Another student during the Philadelphia years who led me to rethink some things was Greg Bahnsen. He was a disciple of Van Til and Rousas Rushdoony and became the leading formulator and defender of theonomy, the view that Old Testament civil law must be followed by modern civil governments, particularly that the penalties of crimes laid out in the Old Testament are norms for contemporary penology.³⁶ Bahnsen was a friend until his untimely death in 1995 from the complications of heart surgery, although our friendship did have some ups and downs. I never became a theonomist, but theonomy was a major motivation in my attempt to think through the implications of the law of Moses for today, as in my *DCL*. Vern Poythress's *The Shadow of Christ in the Law of Moses*,³⁷ in my view, gives the best answers to the questions raised by theonomy, and I consult it regularly.

WESTMINSTER IN CALIFORNIA, 1980–2000

I moved to California in 1980 to help establish a new campus for Westminster. Other founders and early teachers were Robert Strimple, Allen Mawhinney, Dennis Johnson, Jay Adams, Robert Godfrey, Derke Bergsma, and Meredith Kline. We went with a missionary vision, for California had

36. See his *Theonomy in Christian Ethics* (Nutley, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1977).

37. Brentwood, TN: Wolgemuth & Hyatt, 1991; also available at http://www.frame-poythress.org/Poythress_books/Shadow/bl0.html.

very few Reformed churches, and we were probably the only Reformed seminary west of the Mississippi. The excitement of those early years (along with the planting of New Life Church, as I described it earlier) stirred me. There was a wonderful collegiality among the early faculty and students, despite some theological diversity.

My ecumenical vision was tested in the mid-1980s, when the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (of which New Life was a congregation) declined to join the Presbyterian Church in America, in my opinion for quite inadequate reasons. In 1989, New Life, and I with the church, left the OP denomination for the PCA. Jack Miller and the New Life Church in Philadelphia made the same decision. My *ER* was motivated by these events and summarized my thinking about them. In this context I came to see that denominationalism itself was unbiblical, and the book dealt with that broader issue.

By the 1990s, things at the seminary had also deteriorated, from my point of view. Differences that had been tolerable in the 1980s became matters of contention and faction in the 1990s. Among these were redemptive history, worship style, the regulative principle of worship, and the place of confessions. Some new faculty made the situation worse, in my opinion. I came to see that factionalism itself as a major evil, both in the churches and in the seminary. This situation influenced my writing thereafter.

My colleague Meredith Kline also became something of a negative influence on me during this period. I mentioned that during my student years at Westminster Seminary, Kline was one of my heroes. He stood for the Bible against Reformed traditionalism and taught me how theology could be wonderfully creative within the bounds of orthodoxy. But in later years, Kline developed a degree of rigidity and dogmatism that surprised and disappointed me. Perhaps his conflicts with theonomy and with Norman Shepherd in the 1970s had marked the turning point. I thought his review of Bahnsen's *Theonomy*³⁸ was over the top, as we say. And in his response to Shepherd, Kline seemed to be saying that one could not be orthodox unless one adhered to Kline's distinctive (and sometimes innovative) positions on the covenant of works and the culture/cult distinction.

Even though I disagreed with Kline, I was happy that he was willing to join us at Westminster in California, for I thought he was still the most brilliant biblical theologian in the Reformed community, and he was the

38. "Comments on an Old-New Error," *WTJ* (1978–79): 172–89; also available at http://www.covop.org/Kline/Kline_on_Theonomy.html.

one who, more than anyone else, could get students excited about biblical theology. In retrospect, however, I see Kline as a divisive figure at the California campus. In the mid-1980s, he wrote letters to colleagues, attacking my apologetics as insufficiently Van Tillian. Those letters raised issues that I had already answered a number of times, and they showed an inadequate grasp of what I was trying to say. I thought that perhaps he had turned against me because he thought I was too close to Bahnsen and to Shepherd. The administration and faculty treated Kline's letters with "benign neglect." But in later years, Kline pressed with students the argument that one must accept his distinctives to be truly Reformed. Whether explicitly or not, intentionally or not, he thereby condemned my thinking as non-Reformed, and many students drew that inference. I tried to counter this in ways consistent with my continuing deep respect for Kline. But Kline proved to be more persuasive to the students than I was, to the effect that I became increasingly isolated. That, and a great many other problems, led to my resignation from Westminster and joining the faculty of Reformed Theological Seminary (RTS) in Orlando in 2000.

I mention this now only to indicate that although I mourned Kline's death in 2007, his work is now to me both a positive and a negative influence. I still revere him as a brilliant and devoted servant of Christ, and I make liberal use of his early studies in suzerainty treaties and divine lordship. But I argue against much of his later work, particularly his distinction between cult and culture, which leads to sharp distinctions between sacred and secular and between church and culture—sort of like Luther's "two kingdoms." This is a fairly pervasive theme of my *DCL*. Not only do I believe this teaching is wrong, but, as maintained by Kline himself and by many of his followers, I consider it divisive to the church. Even if this teaching were true, it would not be suitable as a test of Reformed orthodoxy, if only because it is not required by the Reformed confessional standards.

Another major division at Westminster in California was between those who saw theology as primarily a republication of Reformed confessions and traditions and those who saw it, as I did, as an application of Scripture to human life in the present. The traditionalist emphasis seemed to me to encourage ministries to be inward-facing rather than outward, to deemphasize evangelism and social action, and to emphasize denominational distinctives. As I interpret the situation, traditionalism came to prevail at Westminster in California. And for questioning it, I myself was considered less than truly Reformed. So I had

to move on. The separation between me and the seminary to which I had given twenty years was traumatic to me. I had seen not only the theological error of traditionalism (which John Murray had taught me) but also the practical effects of it in the Christian community. So this conflict (and a number of similar ones that occurred through my life) influenced me to see traditionalism as an error to be opposed. I refer to it often in my writings.³⁹

REFORMED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, 2000–PRESENT

After the trouble at Westminster Seminary in California, my move to RTS Orlando was like dying and going to heaven. I received a warm welcome at RTS beyond my fondest dreams. Seven of my former students were on the Orlando faculty and two more at other RTS campuses. More important, many of my colleagues made use of my work and sought to build on it. Many of the writers featured in this volume, as well as others, have been part of that cooperative effort, and we have learned much together. I consider them now to be among the influences on my own thinking and writing.

Most of all, RTS has convinced me that it is possible to have a genuinely, unapologetically Reformed seminary in which believers cooperate peacefully and enthusiastically to prepare students for ministry, without partisanship or rancor. Here we have a slogan: we are not T.R. (“truly Reformed”) or B.R. (“barely Reformed”), but W.R. (“winsomely Reformed”). The seminary has provided me with a vision of what seminary education can be, one that I honestly hope will be implemented elsewhere.

HISTORICAL

I would be remiss if I didn’t list among the influences on my work people who wrote before my own lifetime. I am not primarily a historical theologian, and my reading has been more in recent and contemporary sources than in older writings. Yet to be Reformed at all is to be profoundly influenced by the Reformers, their predecessors, and their successors.

Among the church fathers, Athanasius is my favorite—a man persecuted for his faith, but courageous and steadfast, and right about so many things, so early.

39. See, for example, *TRAD*.

Augustine has certainly been important to me, particularly his *Confessions*, the *City of God*, and his earlier philosophical/epistemological work, such as *Soliloquies* and *On the Teacher*. His teaching on the Trinity is profound, and I think more scriptural than the rather facile “social Trinitarianism” that has caught the imagination of many today. And so much more should be said about this wonderful, godly Christian teacher.

Anselm of Canterbury has been a special interest of mine since my AB thesis on the ontological argument at Princeton. His *Proslogium* is a wonderful piece of theology: prayerful, presuppositional, remarkably fresh.

I have spent many hours with Thomas Aquinas, and although I share some of the criticisms of him by Van Til and others, I think he did far more good than harm to the theology of his time, and I have been vastly impressed by his genius.

Of course, Luther and Calvin have meant a great deal to me, as to all other Reformed theologians. My commendations of them could add nothing to their greatness and would only echo the praises of others in the Protestant tradition.

The same should be said of Jonathan Edwards, a great philosopher and Reformed theologian who did a rare thing in our circles: he struck a proper balance between emotions and intellect.

And I yield to no one in admiration of three brilliant and godly men, friends of one another, who set the highest standards for Reformed theology in the 1900s: B. B. Warfield, Abraham Kuyper, and Herman Bavinck.