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"Scripture is very clear on the doctrine of regeneration through hearing Christ.

ASHAMED OF THE GOSPEL:¹ A CRITIQUE

by Murray McLeod-Boyle

Introduction

THE CHURCH is forced to contend with many prominent characteristics in our age. We have vain philosophies being propounded everywhere. There is the "New Age" movement; Postmodernism; the remnants of dialectical theology; liberalism and the like. Most of these are threats that, to a large degree, the Church has failed to successfully counter because She has abandoned Her roots in the Word of God (Incarnate and Written). The resistance that was mounted came more from the point of view that these "new" philosophies were derived from outside the mainline Church. The Church had long abandoned apologetics of a serious nature in favour of being tolerant, open, and affirming. This translated into a new apologetic which said, 'we have never done it that way.' So these philosophies and theologies were treated with scepticism. As time went by, and some

"mainline" theologians imbibed this falsehood, their acceptability increased with destructive force.

This raises the question, what is the Church's response to errors that are raised from within? If we no longer have the adequate apologetical abilities to recognise and destroy the rancid pabulum served by overtly atheistic systems, how are we going to uncover subtle error that emanates from within the Church? The answer is short. On the whole, we will not. We will embrace it; coddle it; and use all our powers to defend it.

MacArthur's book was written to counter what he sees as a fundamental error in the Church Growth Movement. More importantly, he is concerned that, because this movement has arisen from within the Church and has "high" ideals, too many absorb its teaching without evaluating it first. Whether we assess the position of this work as right or wrong, we

must certainly join the author in seeking to examine critically the Church Growth Movement. This movement is monolithic. It produces writings at an almost exponential rate and has a very real air of credibility to it. To tackle this monster leaves one open to all sorts of criticisms. "Here are these dedicated Christians who are seeking to save the lost, and you are going to pour cold water on their attempts! Are you not interested in evangelism? Are you one of those hyper-Calvinists? Do you not believe the Great Commission?" These arguments notwithstanding, we must be faithful and always exhibit the Berean attitude (Acts 17:10-11).

1. Pragmatism

THROUGHOUT MacArthur's book he uses the "Prince of Preachers," Charles Haddon Spurgeon, as a touchstone. He notes that in Spurgeon's day he was drawn into what came to be known as the "

1 John MacArthur Jr., *Ashamed Of The Gospel: When the Church Becomes Like the World* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 1993) 254 pages.

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forgive even poor theology as long as they get out before noon” (p. xi-xii).

Welcome to the slippery slope that is the “downgrade.” Everywhere, the preaching of God’s Word is being replaced by anecdotes, poetry reading, liturgical dance, entertainment and the list could go on. The underlying problem is one of substitution. Preachers give up preaching in order to become entertainers. “They lose confidence in the power of God to use the preached gospel to reach hardened unbelievers” (p.157). Having lost this confidence, or never having had it, they abandon God’s ordained method and invent new ways to attract people. Thus the fallow ground is plowed and fertilised ready for the seeds of pragmatism to be sown.

So, what is pragmatism? To be pragmatic means that one is practical or goes with “what works.” Thus, applied in a philosophical sense, it means that one is only interested in outcomes or means-end practices. Put colloquially, we would say it is a simple case of, “the ends justifies the means.” If it works, it must be good. If it works, it must be duplicated. If it does not work, it is to be abandoned. Stated this simply, pragmatism is reasonably acceptable. “If a dripping faucet works fine after you replace the washers, for example, it is reasonable to assume that bad washers were the problem. If the medicine your doctor prescribes produces harmful side effects or has no side effect at all, you need to ask if there’s a remedy that works. Such simple pragmatic realities are generally self evident.

“But when pragmatism is used to make judgments about right and wrong, or when it becomes a guiding philosophy of life, theology, and ministry, inevitably it clashes with Scripture. Spiritual and biblical truth is not determined by testing what “works” and what doesn’t,” (p. xii-xiii) it is declared by God. Thus the basic fault with this pragmatic approach is that it presumes the place of God.

Scripture is very clear on the doctrine of regeneration through hearing Christ. Concomitant, is the doctrine of preaching by those who stand in the Apostolic tradition. In other words, when we search the Scriptures, we are confronted time and again with the fact that it is ordained men who preached the Gospel. In this faithful preaching the very words of Christ were and are heard. This is the power of God unto salvation (Romans 1:16), not dancing and having little skits.³

Therefore, we note that the first mistake inherent in the Church Growth Movement is this pragmatism. In essence, they have decreed that they know better than God how to address this world. It is ironic to say the least that the very instrument (preaching) Paul acknowledges as foolishness to the world, but the power of God to salvation (1 Corinthians 1:18-25), is the very thing the pragmatists despise. This should cause us to consider carefully the words spoken by those involved with, or captive to, the doctrines of this movement.

2. Purpose

THE SECOND AREA in which we see great fault with this movement is in the purpose of our salvation and with our abilities.⁴

If there was a prize for being a “bitzer” theologian, John MacArthur jr. would be a front runner to receive it. Standing in the tradition of his beloved Spurgeon, we may term him as a reformed Baptist. In his historical approach to theology, he is a dispensationalist.⁵ In the doctrine of salvation, he firmly upholds Calvin’s soteriology.

His Calvinism at this point leads him to seriously question the motives of the Church Growth protagonists. In Calvin’s thought man is saved by grace alone. God in eternity chose

Downgrade Controversy.”² This was a situation very similar to today, in that the Biblical methodology was being passed by for a more pragmatic approach.

The preface opens with a quote from Spurgeon:

Everywhere there is apathy. Nobody cares whether that which is preached is true or false. A sermon is a sermon whatever the subject; only, the shorter it is the better.

“Contrast Spurgeon’s attitude toward preaching with the prevailing opinion of our day. In fact, Spurgeon’s lament is diametrically opposite the perspective expressed in a column that appeared a few years ago in a popular Christian magazine. A well-known preacher was venting his own *loathing* for long sermons. January 1 was coming, so he resolved to do better in the coming year. “That meant wasting less time listening to long sermons and spending much more time preparing shorter ones,” he wrote. ‘People, I’ve discovered, will

2 Ashamed of the Gospel carries three appendices. The first, found on page 197, surveys this controversy.

3 To show where this leads we will do well to look at some liberal churches. The present writer recalls a documentary about religion in Holland. Interviewed were two ministers whose entire ‘preaching,’ for want of a better word, involved liturgical dance (well, dance). The congregation sat in an auditorium style setting looking down to a stage. No pulpit; no Bible; just these two ministers. Oh yes, they were both women and lived together in a lesbian (homosexual) relationship. Beware the downgrade!

4 Here we are going to broach some ground that is essentially a watershed. Some may not agree with it, but it is our hope that we will explain the case adequately enough so that the bifurcation is at least evident.

5 “Dispensationalism is a fundamentally correct system.... I accept and affirm this tenet.... I consider myself a traditional premillennial dispensationalist.” John MacArthur, *The Gospel According to Jesus* (Melbourne, Aus.: S. John Bacon, 1988 [American version, Grand Rapids: Academie Books]) 25.

those whom He would save. *These are the elect.* This election was based on His free Grace alone. It was not founded in any precondition of the sinner, or in the use of foresight. In fact, the fall had so rendered man incapable of auto-salvation that unless God acted *ex toto* man had utterly no hope. Furthermore, Calvinism posits that man was saved for the glory of God and that we now live to the glory of God. In regard to evangelism this means that we cannot save anyone. We must faithfully preach and introduce people to faithful preaching, but we cannot make people believe.

In contrast, the Arminian doctrine states that man's will was not affected by the fall. This means that presented with enough information and empirical data the sinner can make a rational decision for God and thus be saved. In light of this, Arminians then speak of election as based on God's foreknowledge. Put differently, this means that God viewed the future and saw those who would choose Him and have faith. Thus faith is the basis of justification, and God's choice is conditional upon man's choice. In this scheme, the glory to God is diminished because man has had more than a helping hand in his own salvation. Similarly, it means that we are to make other Christians. It is our responsibility to 'get others saved.' Thus we take whatever measures are possible to appeal to them and to lure them into the Church.

The present writer distinguishes the two methods thus. Arminianism is like one of those competitions where you seek to know how many people you can fit into a given space. In this case we shall say that Heaven is the town hall. The front doors are left wide open. According to the rules, the organisers (Church) must get as many people inside the building as possible before the doors are shut. The hitch is that the organisers are not exactly sure when the curator is going to arrive and shut the doors. Thus they take hold of any means that will lure people through the door. There is singing, dancing, free food, fireworks and an all out carnival atmosphere. Methodology does not matter; results do. It is also possible

to grab innocent passersby and drag them in—regardless of whether they want to be there or not! The point of the exercise is for these people to fill the hall. The hall is empty and will remain so *unless* the organisers do their job properly. In such a scenario, it is *the organisers who are responsible for filling the hall.*

Calvinism on the other hand is akin to a movie theatre. Imagine a developer came to town. He built a theatre that could seat ten thousand people. While the building was being constructed the developer chose ten thousand people from the local community. Then he appointed commissioned agents to go about proclaiming the criteria and calling forth those the developer had chosen. In this scheme the theatre is full, even if for a time it is not realised. All seats are allocated and will be filled. The obligation is for the agent to proclaim faithfully and validate according to the strict criteria that the developer issued. In this case the 'developer' has taken full responsibility for filling all the seats in the theatre. The appointed agent is required to proclaim and validate, but it is not his job or responsibility to "fill" the seats.⁶

MacArthur rejects the Arminian position because it denies the Sovereignty of God in salvation and places the work in man's hands. When this issue is placed in the open we can see how it leads to pragmatism. If redeemed man's purpose is simply to save others then this grants him a bit of autonomy. Similarly, if man has a hand in his own salvation, then it equally means that he can help others come to the point of salvation. As human effort can achieve this, he will cajole, entreat, and coerce other sinners. Combined these lead to pure pragmatism. If preaching offends, then cut out the sermon. If a survey of the unchurched indicates that they would prefer rock operas, then rock operas it is.

George Barna is cited in this regard. Whilst Barna does produce some interesting statistics, his basic position is that of moving the church forward by applying marketing principles.⁷ In marketing, the basic premise is, *the customer is*

always right. How then do we reconcile the commands of a righteous God with the whims of an ignorant sinner? No man can serve two masters ...! Thus, this pragmatic approach, fueled by a poor understanding of salvation and purpose, causes the average Christian to have divided loyalties. Yet, according to God's Word, such a choice is not possible. Therefore, the Church Growth Movement forces the Christian to choose one or the other. Of course, the choice is dressed up very well so as to present as two methods of arriving at the same destination. In reality, we are choosing between God and falsehood. We are being obedient or disobedient.

We must see this clearly. Today we compromise too easily. This open, affirming, toleration has led the Church down a quite dark alley. If She is not careful it will seek to strangle Her there. In Her present state, she is almost bound to give up without a whimper. Therefore we must recapture the Reformation spirit.

Our fore fathers in the faith, worked long and hard at defining truth. They passed on a Godly heritage that, for the most part, is today despised. One of the chief means our fathers used was to decry heresy. Hence, in giving a right understanding of a doctrine, they would then declare all others to the contrary, anathema. This was not "grand standing," but a serious attempt to guard the truth. With our modern sensibilities we see such things as tasteless and 'politically incorrect.' However, in failing to take the fathers lead, we have opened the Church to all sorts of heresies, Arminianism being one of the greatest.

MacArthur notes that J. I. Packer, some thirty years ago, had warned about pragmatism. More importantly, he noted its source. "If we regard it as our job, not simply to present Christ, but actually to produce converts—to evangelize, not only faithfully, but successfully—our approach to evangelism would become pragmatic and calculating" (157-58). Packer's insight is incisive, but note how, beyond

6 These analogies are simplified in order to make a specific point. One should not look for a total theology in either.

7 See pages 23-24; 48-49.

pragmatism, he takes aim at the underlying theological position. Rank pragmatism and calculating strategies belong to those who believe that evangelism should be *successful*. Who are those that take to themselves the responsibility of having successful evangelism programmes? It is the Arminians.

In similar vein, "Spurgeon quoted Jonah 2:9, 'Salvation is from the Lord,' and then commented, 'That is just an epitome of Calvinism; it is the sum and substance of it. If anyone should ask me what I mean by a Calvinist, I should reply, 'He is one who says, *Salvation is of the Lord.*' I cannot find in Scripture any other doctrine than this. It is the essence of the Bible.... Tell me anything contrary to this truth and it will be heresy; tell me heresy, and I shall find its essence here, that it has departed from this great, this fundamental, this rock truth, "God is my rock and my salvation." What is the heresy of Rome, but addition of something to the perfect merits of Jesus Christ—the bringing in of the works of the flesh, to assist in our justification? And what is the heresy of Arminianism but the addition of something to the work of the redeemer? Every heresy, if brought to the touchstone, will discover itself here (160).

Misunderstanding the doctrine of salvation and the purpose of man has led to an Arminian juggernaut. This has spawned, as its illegitimate child, an equally destructive force in the Church Growth Movement. This should serve to make us aware of the dangers of a lacklustre approach to theology. It should also make us willing to adopt the wise counsel of our fathers. Attacks on the truth sometimes come in very subtle ways. Therefore our standard can

never be anything less than the veritable Word of God.

3. A Biblical Philosophy of Ministry

AS A DISPENSATIONALIST, there are aspects to MacArthur's argument that let him down.⁸ To his credit, however, he answers the pragmatists by seeking answers from Paul's letters to Timothy. This he does, not at the end, but from the very beginning. In chapter 1, he spends two pages outlining Paul's charge to Timothy. In reflection he notes:

Nothing in that list hints at a market-driven philosophy. In fact, most of those commands are impossible to harmonize with the theories that are so popular today. To sum it all up in five categories, Paul commanded Timothy: 1) to be faithful in his preaching of biblical truth; 2) to be bold in exposing and refuting error; 3) to be an example of godliness to the flock; 4) to be diligent and work hard in the ministry; and 5) to be willing to suffer hardship and persecution in his service for the Lord.

These points are well made and deserve further exploration. Using these points, let us highlight some relevant issues.

1. Preach Biblical Truth

According to the underlying philosophy of the Church Growth Movement, Jesus and some of the Apostles were total failures. If we assess each ministry by pragmatic means, then the effect is all important. Thus any engagement should result in a positive outcome.⁹

In this light, Peter, in Acts 2:14 ff., was an "absolute legend," to use a modern term. People from all over

the known world were cut to the heart and repented. Compare this with Paul's 'ordinary' effort on Mars Hill and we must confess that this is a method we shall not adopt. Sure, some were saved, but quite a number were upset and turned away.¹⁰ If this is the criterion for assessment, then we are in real strife when we come to our blessed Redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ. If measured pragmatically, some might say that Jesus was an utter failure. Now this is not to be taken as blasphemous. We are simply stating a fact, based on pragmatic criteria.

If we turn to John 8:7-11, we see Jesus dealing with this woman taken in adultery. Now we must note that he did not press her for a confession. There was no altar call; no card to sign; and most noticeably Jesus did not do any magic tricks to impress the people. No conversions! Can this be? The Saviour of the world did not press this woman for confession/profession. Rather, He simply bid her, 'go and sin no more.'

In Luke 6:6-11, we have another example. Jesus goes on the Sabbath to the synagogue to teach. There He encounters a man with a withered hand. The Pharisees are watching closely to see what Jesus will do. So Jesus asks them directly, Is it right to heal on the Sabbath? None of them answered, so He went on and healed the man. Now let us pause there for a moment. So far the Church Growth protagonists would have a gleeful smirk on their faces. Jesus has an audience. They are unbelievers. He performs a great magic trick that should have had them weeping in the aisles. Now we read that all the Pharisees were converted; they repented; and as a sign of faith came forward and filled out the papyri so that follow up could

8 We shall explore these later.

9 An example of what we mean here is found on page 132. Doug Murren says, "I've made a deliberate practice of making sure that the messages I direct to my age-group always strike a positive note." Hell is no laughing matter, but we are tempted to ask, how is this preached positively? The best we can answer is, don't worry about packing a jumper. Yet this answer belittles the reality of Hell. So how do you approach it positively, you cannot. Therefore it must be dropped. Consequently, you must also drop the doctrine of judgement. You must deny God's justice etc. In the end you have nothing left. That is why they turn to entertainment.

10 In this regard we must note that there is a thought in scholarship that Paul did fail here. They argue that Acts 17 has Paul first at Athens then at Corinth. Then in 1 Corinthians 2:2, Paul says that he sought only to know "Christ and Him crucified." He adds further, that he did not come with worldly wisdom, etc. From these statements it is adduced that this is a red-faced, guilt ridden Paul who writes to the Corinthians. These words, supposedly, show that the Mars Hill episode was a disaster because Paul had tried to match wits with the philosophers and failed. The point for us to note is that such a reading can only be arrived at if you believe that every evangelistic encounter must be successful (numerically at least). Thus even though some responded, it seems the majority turned away. Therefore we reject this effort as poor because Paul should have converted them all.

take place. No! We read nothing like this. The text says of the Pharisees:

And they were filled with madness; and communed one with another what they might do to Jesus (KJV).

Finally, we consider Matthew 23:37-39 (parallel in Luke 13:34-35), where Jesus' lament over Jerusalem is recorded. All we wish to say at this point is what a pathetic sight. Pathetic, that is, if you are a consistent pragmatist. Jesus, after His years of ministry, can only lament. He has little to show for His efforts—a scraggly band of twelve. If we are to assess Jesus' ministry by pragmatic means, all we can say is that things do not look good for the future of Christianity.

At the heart of this error is the belief that every encounter should have a positive outcome. Viewed from man's perspective, this means there should be conversions galore. However consider 2 Corinthians 2:15-16:

For we are a fragrance of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing; to the one an aroma from death to death, to the other an aroma from life to life.

This text, rarely cited in our day, shows that the Word of God and the mission of the Christian serves two functions. We call to life and we harden unto death. When we speak God's truth, it will either be, according to God's divine prerogative, a word of blessing unto life or a word of judgement unto death. If we forget this, we are bound to commit error.

2. Refute Error

In terms of the Church Growth Movement they are more inclined to embrace error. This is because the Bible is reduced to a mere moral guide. It is interesting that MacArthur goes to some length to show the difference between "being all things to all men" and maintaining doctrinal purity. This emphasis is necessary because the pragmatic view sacrifices purity on the altar of expedience. In the name of being 'relevant,' historic doctrine is jettisoned. In the long run, pragmatism can never refute error because to do so would be to go against everything it believes. To decry error would be to sever its own head.

Simply put, doctrine ties your methodology to an immovable

point. Doctrine becomes the touchstone and directs what is and is not permissible. Man must submit his ideas and will to these. Thus, doctrine halts all flights of fancy. However, as we have seen, Arminian doctrine exalts man's will and is, therefore, not interested in coming to a touchstone.

3. Godliness

MacArthur has an interesting element here. Although he does not follow it through, he has raised a pertinent point. Ministers today are generally scared or apathetic about enforcing moral standards. There are, no doubt, various reasons for this. One which is evident is the idea of being accountable to the same standards. If you say that this must happen, then as the minister you should be willing to set the lead. It is interesting that with the rise of movements like Church Growth, the standard of personal holiness has slipped generally, but amongst ministers, particularly. The words of Paul, "follow me as I follow Christ," are rarely heard today.

4. Diligence in Ministry

Here again we come to an area of contention. Suffice to say that it is not uncommon to find ministers who are distracted. There are those who just cannot wait to get away from their parish. Others who, in order to earn a little extra, schedule an endless procession of funerals and weddings. They then wonder why they are criticised because the sermon is not up to scratch or certain pastoral duties were not completed.

A good contrast here would be that of the Puritans and others of that era. It was their contention that they were engaged to teach and preach. Because they were convinced that the preached word, and not drama, was the power of God unto salvation, they diligently followed that path.

5. Hardship and Persecution

This area is almost self explanatory. When you cater to the whims of the world, as the pragmatics do, there is no need to be concerned about persecution. After all, you are simply making friends, contra James 4:4. You have removed the offence of the gospel, precisely because you have removed the Gospel. Some years ago in Victoria, we were involved in the Sunday trading debate. Interestingly, it was the

ministers who were deafening in their silence.

Pragmatism has robbed the Church of a great many treasures. In particular it has struck at the heart of ministry. It has turned ministry from God's work to man's. It has made the faithful preacher feel guilty because thousands are not converted every sermon. However, the pragmatists have built a monstrosity out of cards. It shall rage for a while, but when it is finally discovered that its dreams and promises are hollow, it shall fall with a great crash.

4. Summary

A. Readability: MacArthur has done a reasonably good job of showing how this pragmatism has lead to any number of errors. The book is generally very readable. There are a couple of points at which he becomes a little verbose, but on the whole it would be an easy bedtime read.

B. Recommendation: This is a book well worth having. As Christians we need to be aware of the 'philosophies' that are circulating in our day. We noted at the outset that the Church has lost its ability to be truly discerning. Until we return to Scripture that state will remain. Thus a book like this will help you understand some of the issues.

C. Criticism: MacArthur debunked Arminianism, and rightly so. However, his own dispensationalism is also in need of rebuke. The dispensational idea of God's plan a, for Israel and plan b, for the Church is to be rejected outright. This brings out the most pressing weakness in the book viz. his use and application of Scripture.

Under the heading, "Is All Innovation Wrong?" MacArthur says:

Please do not misunderstand my concern. It is not innovation per se that I oppose. I recognize that styles of worship are always in flux. I also realize that if the typical seventeenth-century Puritan walked into Grace Community Church (where I am Pastor) he might be shocked by our music, probably dismayed to see men and women seated together, and quite possibly disturbed that we use a public address system. Spurgeon himself would not appreciate our organ.

But I am not in favor of a stagnant church. And I am not bound to any particular musical or liturgical style. *Those things in and of themselves are not issues Scripture even addresses.*¹¹

We agree with some of these things. However, we have great problem with the last sentence. We understand that Scripture does not enunciate to the smallest jot all that should be in a worship service. However, there is a vast difference between this and saying Scripture does not even address the issue. Were the Westminster divines wrong when they wrote:

The light of nature sheweth that there is a God, who hath lordship and sovereignty over all, is good, and doth good unto all, and is therefore to be feared, loved, praised, called upon, trusted in, and served, with all the heart, and with all the soul, and with all the might. (Rom. 1:20, Acts 17:24, Ps. 119:68, Jer. 10:7, Ps. 31:23, Ps. 18:3, Rom. 10:12, Ps. 62:8, Josh. 24:14, Mark 12:33) **But the acceptable way of worshipping the true God is instituted by Himself, and so limited by His own revealed will, that He may not be worshipped according to the imaginations and devices of men, or the suggestions of Satan, under any visible representation, or any other way not prescribed in the Holy Scripture?** (Deut. 12:32, Matt. 15:9, Acts 17:25, Matt. 4:9–10, Deut. 15:1–20, Exod. 20:4–6, Col. 2:23)¹²

No they were not. Scripture has much to say about the worship of God. Subjective approaches as the one used here by MacArthur, are going to lead, in the end, back to the pragmatism he has tried to counter.

This fault also surfaces a little later. In clarifying what Paul meant

by being all things to all men, MacArthur arrives at a discussion of Jewish practices. In speaking of the Jerusalem council's proclamation to the Gentiles he says:

They were to sever the tie completely with pagan styles of worship *so repulsive to Jews*. Third, they were to abstain from the meat of strangled animals; and fourth, they were to stay away from blood.... Understand the significance of this. The Jerusalem Council's decision was *an explicit condemnation of legalism*. The Council refused to put the Gentiles *under the Mosaic law*.... In other words, they were to abstain from those four things so they would not offend the Jewish unbelievers. If Christians practiced these most offensive of all Gentile rituals, unbelieving *Jews might turn away from the Gospel before hearing it*.¹³

Now this is where MacArthur's dispensationalism can be clearly seen. In the first instance the Jews are the ones clearly in view. The Council handed down its findings so that things repulsive to the Jews could be avoided. What happened to doing things for God's glory? If it is true that some pagan practices were offensive to Jews it is equally true that some Jewish practices were equally offensive to Gentile Christians. More to the point, they were offensive to God. Our Father in heaven, was by no means happy with the Jews offering the blood sacrifices of animals when His beloved Son had shed His blood for salvation. The Council ruled on things particular to the ceremonial law; that part of the law made complete in Christ.

Secondly, we note how in two consecutive sentences he equates "legalism" and the "Mosaic law." In fairness, MacArthur does not believe in antinomianism, or in a radical dispensational theology which,

in his view, has tried to compartmentalise the Scriptures. In short he rejects the position that would see most of Jesus' message pushed of to another dispensation. Nonetheless, standing in that tradition, we note the weak elements, and this is one. Dispensational elements of the law versus grace age are clearly seen here. The place of the Jews is held out as legitimate and the Gentile Christians must give way. Further, it is apparent that to believe in the just application of law, is to be a legalist.

5. Conclusion

THIS IS THE WEAKNESS of MacArthur's work. He is very eclectic in his theology and has bits and pieces from all over. This serves to weaken his strengths. As an example, we note the last sentence in the above quotation. He is vehemently opposed to Arminianism, and yet that statement would be at home in an Arminian's mouth. If God is in control of salvation, as per his Calvinistic soteriology, then those who are to be saved will, by His grace, find themselves under the preaching of the Word.

All in all, this is one book you should take time to read. Thankfully, it is not too heavily dependent on theology and so the "weak" areas are minimised. It should be read, if only to gain an appreciation of the modern trends which we are facing each and every day. The reach of the Church Growth Movement is long. If you have a minister under forty, we would be surprised if he does not own or has not read a book from this line of thinking. Consider this. You may have such influences in your church already; you may just not know it.

11 xviii. Emphasis added. We realise the intent of what is said here. However, the overtones clearly point in the direction of the Bible having nothing to say on the topic of worship.
 12 21:1 Westminster Assembly, *The Westminster Confession of Faith*, (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.) 1995. Emphasis added.
 13 Page 98. Emphasis added.