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USING EXPOSITORY PREACHING TO ESTABLISH
CHRISTOLOGICAL DOCTRINE AT SUMMER
CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH,
HOUSTON, TEXAS

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Paul Edwin Lyle
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USING EXPOSITORY PREACHING TO ESTABLISH
CHRISTOLOGICAL DOCTRINE AT SUMMER
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Paul Edwin Lyle

Read and Approved by:

Terry J. Betts (Faculty Supervisor)

Russell T. Fuller

Date _____

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PREFACE

This project would have been impossible if it were not for the help, encouragement and support from so many people. First, I want to thank Tommy and Charlotte Lyle, my parents. Through all those years of taking, and sometimes dragging, me to church, I know you saw very little fruit for your efforts, but it was not in vain. Thank you for supporting me in all of my schooling endeavors and helping me achieve what the Lord has called me to do.

I want to thank my children, Kendahl, Kaylie, and Kelsey. For many years you had to hear the words, “not right now,” as I studied and wrote papers. It has only been with your encouragement and support that I have completed this task.

I want to thank my church family, Summer Creek Baptist Church. It is and has been such a privilege to pastor a church that has been patient with me through this process. I know that many have prayed, many have participated, and all have encouraged me in this endeavor.

I want to express my sincere gratitude to Allen and Linnie Howard. I will always remember that morning in Kansas, where God put us together for breakfast. You have been so faithful in praying and financially supporting me and my family during the entire process. I am grateful for all the dinners and the conversations. You have helped me more than you know.

I also want to express my gratitude toward William Mark Lanier. Through some of the most tumultuous years of my life, the Lanier Theological Library became a place of study, reflection, and peace. The times of prayer in the chapel and the hours of research within the library have been invaluable. I am grateful for a man who was inspired and obedient to create such a place of refuge in Houston.

Lastly, I am thankful to the Lord. He saved me. He is molding me. One day, he will perfect me. It is because of the zeal for him and his character that I endeavored to complete this project. I pray that he will be glorified in all that is written here and all that is preached from the pulpit.

Paul Lyle

Houston, Texas

May 2016

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Purpose

The purpose of this project was to establish among the members of Summer Creek Baptist Church the doctrine of Orthodox Christology derived or stated in Scripture and summarized in the Nicene Creed within the context of secular pluralism and Mormon heterodoxy.

Goals

Five goals served to evaluate the effectiveness of this project. The first goal was analytical. The goal was for church members to recognize expository preaching as an essential tool for the proclamation of the Doctrine of Christ.

The second goal was apologetic. The goal was for the church to develop a compassionate response for the spiritually immature concerning the Doctrine of Christ while concurrently establishing a confident defense against false religions that advance heretical Christological dogma.

The third goal was historical. The goal was to help the membership realize the early church's development of the doctrine of Christ. This goal enabled the church to recognize repackaged and recycled heresies.

The fourth goal was semantic. The goal was to alert the church to the subtle distortion of Christological doctrine embraced by those outside orthodox Christianity. The church must be able to distinguish the truth from deceit despite the co-opting of Christian terminology and deficient Christological statements by false religions.

The fifth goal was a personal goal. It was my desire to improve both my expositional and doctrinal preaching while especially focusing on application. I also wanted to become more familiar with the passages and scriptural references that delineate the doctrine of Christ specified in this project. I preached these truths in order that the congregation would grasp the importance of such proclamations through illustration, historical references, and application in their lives for the purpose of their own growth and maturity in their faith, but also with the hope that those they come in contact with would hear the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Ministry Context

Summer Creek Baptist Church is located in the northeast quadrant of Houston, Texas, the county seat of Harris County. Although it is within the Houston city limits, Summer Creek Baptist Church is located within the Humble School District, next to the district's newest high school, Summer Creek High School. This high school is located directly inside Beltway 8 Tollway, and across from the Summerwood development. Atascocita, listed as the fastest growing city in Texas, is only 4.2 miles from the church.¹ Within the past six years, the school district has increased from two high schools to five. The population growth from 2000 to 2010 has been 108 percent. Hispanic households in the Atascocita area have increased 278 percent, making it the largest-growing segment of the population.² The total population within HISD (Humble Independent School District) is 167,483 and the median age is 34.2 years. The predominate race is white at 71.3 percent and the majority of households (78.6 percent) are families with 41.2 percent of those

¹Venessa Wong, "Texas Leads U.S. in High-Growth Cities," *Bloomberg Businessweek*, January 28, 2010, accessed January 10, 2012, <http://www.businessweek.com/lifestyle/content/jan2010/bw20100127033961.htm>.

²"America's Fastest-Growing Cities 2010," *Bloomberg Businessweek*, January 28, 2010, accessed January 10, 2012, http://images.businessweek.com/ss/10/01/0128_americas_fastest_growing_cities/44.htm.

families with children under 18 years of age.³ Based on the statistics, Summer Creek Baptist Church is a perfect reflection of the community. The average age of adults in the church is 33.3 years old. The adult membership is split 45 percent female to 55 percent male. Married adults make up 79.6 percent of the adults in the church and 79 percent are white. Unlike the community stats, the number of families that have children under 18 year of age is double at 83 percent.

Summer Creek Baptist Church is a church plant birthed from Woodridge Baptist Church in Kingwood, Texas. Woodridge Baptist Church is thirteen miles north of Summer Creek Baptist Church and is separated by Lake Houston. Pastor Greg Wallace, aware of the growth potential in the southern tip of Humble HISD and the impending completion of Beltway 8, an eighty-eight mile loop around Houston, chose to lead Woodridge in planting a second campus in January 2006. The second Woodridge campus was presented to the Union Baptist Association as a new model of church plant.

The initial strategy included the option that upon maturity, the newly formed campus would have the authority to vote and remain a campus of Woodridge Baptist Church or become an autonomous church. During the interim, Woodridge Baptist Church would offer directional, financial, and inter-office support. In addition, Woodridge Baptist would begin the process of diligently seeking and purchasing property for the campus church in order to provide a future site and expedite the construction of a church building.

The inaugural plant was in the Fall Creek community located 3.4 miles west of the Summerwood community on Beltway 8. The Summerwood/Fall Creek area provided a large mission field but lacked a meeting space. From the outset, the church was too large to meet in a single family home and local home owners associations restrict such

³US Census Bureau, "Profile of General Population and Housing Characteristics: 2010; 2010 Demographic Profile Data," Humble Independent School District, Texas, accessed January 10, 2012, http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=DEC_10_DP_DPDP1&prodType=table.

gatherings. The only school in the area was Summerwood Elementary School and it was occupied by an Assembly of God Church that was in the process of building three miles east on the Beltway. Fortunately a new Kids-R-Kids daycare facility was under construction on Beltway 8 directly across the Fall Creek subdivision, which was an accommodating space because it provided a worship area for approximately 100 people and rooms for Sunday school, complete with all the childcare essentials. On January 8, 2006, Woodridge Baptist Church Fall Creek opened its doors for the first time with 40 in Sunday school and 80 in worship.

In 2007, the search for property proved successful with the purchase of a 4.8 acre lot next door to the fifth high school in Humble ISD. The property is located on the corner of West Lake Houston Parkway and Weckford Drive. The purchase of the property solidified the future of Woodridge Baptist Fall Creek and prompted me, as its founding pastor, to sell my home in Kingwood and relocate my family to the Summerwood area.

While living in a rented house pending our move to Summerwood, I received a phone call that ultimately changed the name and identity of the church. As the country headed toward a recession, the daycare facility in Fall Creek faced its own financial problems and was forced to shut down. Overnight in February of 2008, Woodridge Baptist Fall Creek was uprooted and relocated to another Kids-R-Kids facility in the Lakeshore area, along West Lake Houston Parkway approximately nine miles north-east from the previous meeting location, all within five days. Although this change caught the church off guard, one advantage was quickly discovered. More than 80 percent of the attendance was coming from the West Lake Houston corridor. During the next nine months, a team of leaders, led by James Bethany, a graphic design artist and member of the church, worked through the process of establishing a new identity for the church. From this endeavor came a new name, logo, mission statement, and set of core values. This was a new beginning for the church, newly named Summer Creek Baptist Church. No longer

was this a church plant attempting to find direction, but rather a church plant on mission: “Engaging people through Jesus Christ to transform lives for God’s Glory.”

The church was virtually invisible for months, but then it was time for the community to know who we were, what we were doing, and why we had come to this community. From the very moment we arrived at the new location, Summer Creek Baptist Church was welcomed by the owner of Kids-R-Kids, Kevin Kilgore. He allowed our new church to meet in his facility rent free. The church established both a Sunday morning worship service, as well as a midweek children’s choir and prayer meeting. Out of simple gratitude, we partnered with Kilgore and the work he was doing in the community. Our desire was to minister to him, his staff, and the families that utilized his services. This partnership was the beginning of what God had in store for the Summerwood area. Over the next two years, the church and Kids-R-Kids cooperated in mission projects and neighborhood outreaches. As involvement grew, so too did the church’s desire. God graciously provided opportunities and challenged the church to step up.

Two significant opportunities opened up for Summer Creek Baptist Church almost immediately. The first was the formation of a new relationship with the new high school. Summer Creek High School opened its doors and principal Trey Kramer, a devoted Christian man, allowed Summer Creek Baptist entrance to minister to both the teachers and the students. The church respectfully provided meals, signs, banners, and even cleanup crews to help with grounds maintenance. The area is still under development and therefore the school benefited greatly from these acts of service which help foster community pride. Secondly, although the church was grateful for the space provided at Kids-R-Kids, it simply became too small. During a two-year span, a new elementary school was built directly across the street from the Kids-R-Kids, Lakeshore Elementary. Upon meeting the principal, Nancy Morrison, the church found yet another partner in the community. In the fall of 2010, Summer Creek Baptist Church moved into Lakeshore Elementary School and began meeting in its third location in six years. This

move has helped us grow from an average worship attendance of 102 in the fall of 2010 to an average of 165 in the first quarter of 2012.

Summer Creek Baptist Church continues to be extremely active in the community. In addition to the previously mentioned activities, the church has supported, participated, and invested in various events including National Night Out, Woodcreek Middle School 5K run, the community swim team competition, and the Lakeshore Elementary Spring Carnival. The carnival is a premier event in the community and a model for what can be accomplished when a school, a business (Kids-R-Kids), and a church work together. In 2012, it is estimated that over 1000 people attended the event at which more than \$15,000 was raised in support of the school and the Helping a Hero organization. In addition, this year Summer Creek Baptist Church adopted Lakeshore Elementary through Kids Hope USA, a child mentoring program. On a side note, I currently sit on the advisory board for Summer Creek Bizcom. The Bizcom organization is a group of approximately 120 business owners and community leaders that addresses community concerns and promotes community events. By means of this seat, I am front and center to the needs of the community as they arise.

The steady growth of Summer Creek Baptist church and the available land for an expansive community not only caught the attention of a missional Baptist church but other churches have sought out the area for evangelism as well. Concurrently a Methodist church, a Lutheran church, and an Assembly of God church are entering the community. While we may differ in non-salvific doctrinal views, another church is forming in the Summerwood Community that does not adhere to the Christian orthodoxy that these other churches and Summer Creek Baptist share. An LDS Ward is currently under construction only .7 miles from Summer Creek Baptist's property.⁴ This church is directly across from Woodcreek Middle School. With the aggressive nature of Mormon evangelism, the

⁴From this point, I will use the more popular term, Mormon Church in reference to the LDS (Latter Day Saints) Ward.

increasingly placating or wavering views held by immature church members and the pluralistic views held by those outside the church, bold proclamation of Christological doctrine and its exclusive claims cannot and must not be neglected. It is of dire importance that we uphold this doctrine, both in the pulpit and in the Sunday School class by means of rightly dividing God's Word. The necessity of correct doctrinal teaching concerning Jesus Christ is even more critical when cults, such as the Mormon Church, lead people toward a gospel that is no gospel at all. Even within the church, many blindly follow because of their ignorance and are easily converted because of the Mormons' use of the Bible (King James Version) and similar language as is used by the true church.

In 2012, Summer Creek Baptist Church severed ties with Woodridge Baptist Church and made the move to become an autonomous church. Autonomy of the local church is one of the distinctives among Baptists and the leadership at Summer Creek Baptist Church completed this process by the end of the third quarter of 2012. The autonomy of Summer Creek Baptist was vital for its continual governmental, doctrinal, missional, philosophical, and theological development.

As the church completed its transition from a campus to autonomy and continued to invest in the community of Summerwood, contextual situation had to be addressed, and it had to come from the pulpit. If the church was going to respond to the large influx of Mormons in the community, how would church members develop purposeful relationships with Mormons without fear? In a country that had its first Mormon presidential nominee and potentially its first Mormon president, how should the church insulate itself against the onslaught of popular opinion that Mormonism is simply another Christian denomination in a plethora of churches divided along doctrinal lines? The answer is to embrace, study, and know the distinctive claims of Christianity, which center on Christ. It must be understood that it matters what the church says about Christ. It matters in regard to faith. The answer is to embrace, study, and know what Scripture says about Christ while rejecting extra-biblical claims that are in conflict with biblical

Christology. Without question, it is God that changes the hearts of man, but only with confident understanding of biblical Christology is the individual church member be able to dialogue with those who assert that they possess a saving faith based upon a false view of Scripture and Christ.

Summer Creek Baptist has several strengths as previously listed. The church has become involved in much of the community in which it has been placed and many, although they do not attend the church, see Summer Creek Baptist as an asset to the area. Most importantly, one of the greatest strengths of the church is that since its inception, it has possessed a high view of Scripture and expository preaching. There is a deep and longing desire to know the depth of God and an openness to receiving the truth of Scripture, which is extremely important when presenting defining principles concerning what Scripture states about God. To add or take away from God's Word in regard to what he reveals about himself is to practice idolatry. The church holds fast to this ideal.

Secondly, Summer Creek Baptist has a deeply held conviction that prayer is vital to the church and the mission upon which it has embarked. There is no delusion of grandeur that the church will argue, debate, or coax unbelievers, including Mormons, into believing the gospel. Conversion will occur when God chooses to change the heart. Summer Creek Baptist prays diligently for God to send workers and understands the implications. The church must be ready to reap the harvest. When God changes hearts, will the church be prepared to answer the questions put forth by people in regard to Jesus Christ? Prayerfully, yes.

While many strengths can and have been identified for Summer Creek Baptist, one weakness does exist. The church simply needs a burden for the lost—those they call friends, coworkers, and neighbors. There is fear among the members, the fear of rejection. The fear of not knowing how to answer the questions those of other faiths, or no faith at all, will ask, which is especially true when the other faith proclaims the same savior, Jesus Christ. The problem of fear occurs when the church does not know the distinctives

between the two differing claims or opposing views. Will the conversation move past the simple exchange of agreeing to disagree? The church must remember that eternity is on the line.

Rationale

Printed on the cover of every Book of Mormon is the phrase “Another Testament of Jesus Christ.” Although many differences exist between the Christian faith and the Mormon faith, the predominant disparity between the two faiths is Christological.

In 2 Timothy 4:1-5, Paul charges Timothy to “preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching.” His execution close at hand, preeminent in Paul’s mind was the preaching of God’s Word and the correction of any distortion. This charge was important because a time was coming when doctrinal truth would be rejected and people would “wander off into myths.” Being one of those myths, Mormonism is currently making an insurgence in the Summerwood Community. The church must be confident in its theology, especially Christological, and possess the knowledge necessary to engage genuinely rather than default to confrontational or antagonistic means. Christians must be patient teachers of sound doctrine. Patient and confident teaching combined with prayer allows for bold but calm dialogue between the church and those who have fallen for the Mormon myth. The result is not only be a refutation of Mormon Christological beliefs, but the erecting of a solid doctrinal foundation upon which all heterodoxy is rejected.

The church must become aware that the heretical Christological beliefs held by Mormons are nothing but a revamping of past heresies, heresies that the church refuted long before Joseph Smith ever penned them. To best instruct the church, an effective teaching tool had to be used that addressed all these issues. Since the Baptist church is not creedal, the Nicene Creed, which also primarily Christological in nature, was such a tool because of its historical value in proclaiming the distinctives of orthodox Christology and its concise statements regarding the doctrine of Christ. By teaching the Nicene Creed

in depth and at length, the church would be better equipped to deal with its Mormon neighbors.

Definitions and Limitations

The purpose of this project was to differentiate the doctrine of biblical Christology through expository preaching from the invalid claims of Mormonism, which has co-opted the name of Jesus Christ and the ever encroaching secular, ignoble, and pluralistic view of Jesus.

Christology. Christology is defined as “the study of the person and work of Christ, especially as the branch of theology dealing with the divinity and the humanity of Christ and the definition of the Logos of the Word of God. It answers the question, “Who is Christ?”⁵ This definition continues by addressing the resolutions arrived by such councils in Nicaea, Constantinople, and Chalcedon: “At the Reformation, Christological studies shifted from a discussion of the two natures in Christ that had occupied most of the early councils to his redeeming work.”⁶

Expository preaching. The goal of this project is to utilize expository preaching in order to give the church the resources, biblical references, and knowledge in order to confidently initiate and respond to those outside the church in regard to the person of Jesus Christ. Expository preaching is preaching that is primarily submissive to the text. It is proclaiming God’s Word with the view that the preacher and the hearer are to be transformed through exposing the original author’s intent and subsequently applying the text and message to the current age.

The limitations of this project were as follows. The length of this project was fifteen weeks. Three weeks were for preparation prior to the sermon series: two weeks to

⁵George Thomas Kurian, ed., *Nelson’s New Christian Dictionary: The Authoritative Resource on the Christian World* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2001), 176.

⁶Ibid.

conduct and lead a focus group comprised of church leaders, and one week to survey and acquire data from a broad sampling of members that attend Sunday school. By surveying both leadership and laypersons, a determination was made regarding the understanding and confidence church members have concerning the doctrine of Christ. Following the pre-sermon survey were ten weeks of a sermon series entitled “What Christ Is This?” This series incorporated both Old Testament and New Testament Scripture in order to establish prophecy and fulfillment of the person and work of Jesus Christ. Lastly, two weeks were utilized for participants to complete both a post-sermon series survey and to have final meeting with the focus group.

The second limitation concerning this project was in regard to the Christological proclamations concerning the Person of Christ, rather than the work of Christ. Although the Nicene Creed contains language that addresses Christ’s work, such as creation, death, and resurrection, these issues were not addressed in this project. The Nicene Creed referenced for the sake of this project, is the creed written by the first Council of Constantinople in AD 381 and including the Filioque of The Third Council of Toledo in AD 589.

The third limitation narrowed the scope of the Christological proclamations within the Nicene Creed. Inasmuch as the creed primarily deals with Arianism, the issues addressed in this project focused only on Christological distinctions in contrast to Mormon Christology while avoiding pneumatology and the Trinity. The specific topics were the eternal nature of Christ, Christ’s equality with the Father, and the hypostatic union.

Research Methodology

The fifteen weeks of the project involved two distinct groups. The first group was a focus group made up of church leaders. The purpose of this group was to obtain feedback concerning the project and to retrieve evaluations of each week’s sermon. The second group was made up of the Sunday school members. This group represented the average layperson within the church.

The first goal was for church members to recognize expository preaching as an essential tool for the proclamation of the Doctrine of Christ, which include Christological imperatives either stated or derived from Scripture and later summarized in the Nicene Creed. This goal was measured by a focus group, comprised of church leaders, and the Sunday school organization as a whole completed a pre-sermon series survey to measure their understanding of Christological truths contained in both Scripture and the Nicene Creed. This survey also measured both groups' convictions toward adherence to these truths. Following the ten-week sermon series, the same survey was given again in order to document changes in the congregation's attitudes and beliefs.

The second goal was for the church to develop a biblical response to the spiritually immature concerning the exclusivity of Christological imperatives while concurrently establishing a confident defense against religions that advance false and heretical Christological dogma. This goal was measured by introducing both Old Testament and New Testament passages in the sermon series that address Christological doctrine in order to establish the full biblical premise upon which the church has derived its position. A survey, given before and after the sermon series, addressed the congregation's view toward Christological compromises in opposition to scriptural absolutes concerning Christ.

The third goal was to assist the church in developing an understanding of the early church's response to heretical teachings of Christ which are simply repeated in Mormon doctrine. This goal was measured by introducing the church to the Christological proclamations contained in the Nicene Creed. Primarily Christ-centered, the Nicene Creed succinctly addresses many heretical views held by modern day Mormons. Through a survey given before and after the sermon series, the church's understanding of recycled heresies were evaluated.

The fourth goal was to alert the church to the subtle distortion of Christology embraced by those outside orthodox Christianity. The goal was realized by exposing the

differences in word definitions held by orthodox Christianity in juxtaposition to those who purport to hold to a Christian faith, such as Mormonism. This goal was measured by a survey given before and after the sermon series. Specific to this goal, the congregation's knowledge of biblical Christological truths within the scope of this project and their attitude towards adherence to orthodox views of Christ were measured in the survey given prior to the sermon series and repeated after the series.

The fifth goal was a personal desire to not only incorporate doctrine into expository preaching, but also to better communicate the application of such doctrine. I also wanted to become familiar with the passages and their scriptural references that delineate the truths specified in this project. Primarily, this goal was realized as I researched the biblical passages, analyzed the word studies, investigated the historical responses, became familiar with Mormon doctrine, and composed and preached the sermon series, "What Christ is this?" Secondly, this goal was analyzed as the focus group evaluates the effectiveness of the sermon series through weekly sermon evaluations.

CHAPTER 2
THE BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS
FOR USING EXPOSITORY PREACHING TO TEACH
CORRECT CHRISTOLOGICAL DOCTRINE

**The Importance of Teaching Rightly
Concerning Christ (Doctrine)**

It only takes a moment to assess the dangerous situation in which the church in America finds itself enveloped at the beginning of the twenty-first century. According to the American Bible Society, in 2013, one in six people reported buying a copy of the Bible in the last year, an average of 4.4 Bibles per household.¹ With the proliferation of Scripture, one might assume that adherence to biblical theology, and more specifically biblical Christology, would increase. Unfortunately movement appears to be trending in the opposite direction. Church attendance has steadily declined in orthodox Christian churches (Catholic, mainline, and evangelical).² Membership in the Southern Baptist Convention declined 0.66 percent in 2012, which was the fifth consecutive year of decline.³ Ironically, while Orthodox Christian churches are on the decline, non-Christian faiths that utilize the Bible are on the rise. According to 2011 statistics, Jehovah’s Witnesses, who possess their own version of the Bible, reported a 4.37 percent increase in size.⁴ The

¹American Bible Society, “State of the Bible in 2013,” accessed July 7, 2013, <http://www.americanbible.org/state-bible>.

²Rebecca Barnes and Lindy Lowry, “7 Startling Facts: An Up Close Look at Church Attendance in America,” *Church Leaders*, accessed July 7, 2013, <http://www.churchleaders.com/pastors/pastor-articles/139575-7-startling-facts-an-up-close-look-at-church-attendance-in-america.html?p=1>.

³Cheryl K. Chumley, “Southern Baptist Ranks Decline, Once Again,” *The Washington Times*, accessed July 7, 2013, <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2013/jun/6/southern-baptist-ranks-decline-once-again/>.

⁴Katherine T. Phan, “2011 Church Membership: Southern Baptists Decline; Jehovah Witnesses

Mormon faith, which utilizes the King James Version of the Bible, grew 1.42 percent and is now fourth behind the third largest denomination, Methodist.⁵ Even more telling is the fact that in 2012, 78.4 percent of Americans stated they were Christians; and yet, 7 out of 10 either believed Mormons were Christians, or were unsure.⁶ Twenty-eight percent have left the faith in which they were raised in favor of another religion—or no religion at all.⁷ As a result, individuals are susceptible to both unlearned and false claims concerning the Christian faith. Social networks, YouTube videos, blogs, and podcasts allow for the dissemination of both information and misinformation in all areas of life and to all corners of the globe. Theological thought and opinion is not exempt in this regard. During the fourth century, Gregory of Nyssa wrote concerning Constantinople:

Constantinople is full of mechanics and slaves, who are all of them profound theologians, and preach in the shops and in the streets. If you desire a man to change a piece of money for you, he informs you wherein the Son differs from the Father; if you ask the price of a loaf, you are told by way of reply that the Son is inferior to the Father; and if you inquire whether the bath is ready, the answer is that the Son was made out of nothing.⁸

Today, the “profound theologians” are politicians, newscasters, computer programmers, engineers, college students, and even teenagers, each with the ability to instantly make their voices heard in this age of information. Absent of study or creditability, each speculation concerning Christ is considered valid in the American culture of relativity and customization. There is no need to adhere to a Christ as defined

Increase,” *The Christian Post, Church and Ministry*, accessed July 9, 2013, <http://www.christianpost.com/news/2011-church-membership-southern-baptists-decline-cults-growing-48984/>.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Barna Group, “Most American Christians Do Not Believe that Satan or the Holy Spirit Exist,” accessed July 9, 2013, <https://www.barna.org/barna-update/article/12-faithspirituality/260-most-american-christians-do-not-believe-that-satan-or-the-holy-spirit-exist#.UdxjvZ0o6Uk>.

⁷The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, “U.S. Religious Landscape Survey,” accessed July 9, 2013, <http://religions.pewforum.org/reports>.

⁸Gregory of Nyssa, quoted in Alister McGrath, *Studies in Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997), 23.

by doctrine. There are no absolutes. Stephen Nichols sums up this current environment and neglect of Scripture by stating that perhaps a proper description of Christianity and the church would be, “They like Jesus but not Christology.”⁹ In many cases unfortunately, this disastrous direction is not being challenged by the church, but rather, it is fostered by poor preaching. When describing congregations, Fred Craddock states that the people “who sit before pulpits have been given a steady diet of Jesus Christ without a context in theology.”¹⁰

The abandonment of biblical doctrine and the affirmation of a personal theology exist due to the church’s lack of teaching and abandonment of doctrine, specifically doctrines of Christ. Now seeing these doctrines as narrow, arid, and dead formulas, many fail to realize that the doctrines are instead an obedient, responsible, and faithful attempt to make sense of the cluster of astonishing and exciting possibilities opened up by the coming of Jesus Christ.¹¹ In no way does biblical doctrine remove or diminish the personal experience of Christ, but faith cannot simply be uninformed emotionalism absent of depth. McGrath poignantly writes, “Doctrines are essentially the distillation of the Christian experience of God, in which countless personal experiences are compared and reduced to their common features.”¹²

Ligon Duncan further captures the unfortunate state of affairs in today’s culture: “It is now the *zeitgeist* to claim to be suspicious of doctrine, doctrinal systems, and systematic theology all the while holding to one’s own cherished doctrines and

⁹Stephen J. Nichols, “The Deity of Christ Today,” in *The Deity of Christ*, ed. Christopher W. Morgan and Robert A. Peterson (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011), 25.

¹⁰Fred Craddock, “The Gospel of God,” in *Preaching as Theological Task: World, Gospel, Scripture*, ed. Thomas G. Long and Edward Farley (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1996), 74.

¹¹McGrath, *Studies in Doctrine*, 237.

¹²*Ibid.*, 26.

system emphatically if unwittingly and inchoately.”¹³ In reality Duncan acknowledges that the world does not have a problem with doctrine, but rather the world has issues with the source of Christian doctrine:

Although many suggest that doctrine is not important in our postmodern world, the reality is that although biblical doctrine is avoided, doctrine is very much alive. Absent from the descriptive, Bible, a doctrine is simply a principle, position, or system of belief. Everyone has doctrine and everyone has a system, especially those who howl most loudly that they don't and that they don't like proposition and systems.¹⁴

This same shift from a doctrinal Christ to a personal pleasing Christ has occurred over decades of a constantly changing American culture. In the early nineteenth century, evangelicals liberated Jesus from Calvinism and then from the Creeds, transforming him from a distant God in a complex theological system into a near-and-dear person, fully embodied with virtues they could imitate, a mind they could understand, and qualities they could love.¹⁵ Stephen Prothero believes that the American view of Jesus has continued to move from a doctrinal Christ, toward a personal Jesus, and has now arrived at simply a “liberated heroic human.”¹⁶ Albert Mohler writes that Americans will test-drive new spiritualities and try on a whole series of lifestyles.¹⁷ The result is that American pastors and ministers teaching about Jesus, struggle between more biblical and less doctrinal and more “narrative” or “storied” and less didactic and systematic.¹⁸

¹³Ligon Duncan III, “Sound Doctrine: Essential to Faithful Pastoral Ministry,” in *Proclaiming a Cross-Centered Theology*, by Mark Dever et al. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2009), 17.

¹⁴Ibid., 18.

¹⁵Stephen Prothero, *American Jesus: How the Son of God Became a National Icon* (New York: Farrar, Straus, & Giroux, 2003), 13.

¹⁶Ibid., 29.

¹⁷R. Albert Mohler, Jr., *He Is Not Silent: Preaching in a Postmodern World* (Chicago: Moody, 2008), 127.

¹⁸Mark J. Dever, “Improving the Gospel: Exercises in Unbiblical Theology,” in *Proclaiming a*

Although false claims appear to be magnified because of their rapid dispersion through technology, however, there is nothing new in regard to the incorrect and inadequate teaching of Christology. In writing to the church of Colossae, the apostle Paul tells the church to walk with Christ just as they received him, and then warns, “See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ” (Col 2:8).¹⁹ The danger put forth by Paul is that one may be taken from Christ; carried off by way of incorrect teaching. The words translated “that no one takes you captive” use an indicative verb and point to a real, not merely a supposed danger.²⁰ Therefore, by philosophy, “Paul has condemned all spurious doctrines created by man, whatever appearance of reason they may have.”²¹ Curtis Vaughan explains the magnitude of Paul’s concern and the denunciation of the “Colossian Heresy” when he writes that Paul makes it clear that “He [Christ] is the standard by which all doctrine is to be measured, and any system, whatever its claims, must be rejected if it fails to conform to the revelation God has given us in him.”²²

Peter also expressed his concern for the church as she waits for the return of Christ: “You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, take care that you are not carried away with the error of lawless people and lose your own stability” (2 Pet 3:17). These final words of warning in 2 Peter 3:14-18 follow an entire chapter describing false prophets and teachers as blasphemers, irrational animals, creatures of instinct, and ignorant.

Cross-Centered Theology, 17.

¹⁹Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from the English Standard Version.

²⁰Curtis Vaughan, *Colossians*, in vol. 11 of *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981), 197.

²¹John Calvin, *Commentary on The Epistle of Paul to the Colossians, Calvin’s Commentaries*, trans. William Pringle, vol. 21 (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005), 181.

²²Vaughan, *Colossians*, 198.

Matthew Henry describes the situation:

Damnable heresies are commonly brought in privily, under the cloak and colour of truth. Those who introduce destructive heresies *deny the Lord that bought them*. They reject and refuse to hear and learn of the great teacher sent from God, though he is the only Saviour and Redeemer of men, who paid a price sufficient to redeem as many worlds of sinners as there are sinners in the world.²³

This warning follows Peter's attempt to "stir the mind" and remind the church what God said through the prophets and apostles. Peter knows that the truth and growing knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, although "established" (2 Pet 1:12), can become eroded and unstable. As in Paul's letter to Colossae, the danger for believers is being carried and taken away from one's faith in Christ by lawless or wicked teachers. While the apostles reserved their harshest criticism for those who distorted the truth, the American church's disdain for doctrine is a complete reversal from Scripture. This fact does not escape those who adhere to Scripture and its warnings against such attitudes.

John MacArthur clearly expresses his concern:

Ironically, man in today's church do exactly the opposite—tolerating any teacher who claims to be Christian, regardless of the content of his teaching. Such mindless acceptance, in the name of love and unity, has tragically produced a careless indifference to truth. As a result, some Christians view biblical absolutes as an embarrassment, preferring to embrace false teachers despite the Bible's clear protest (Jer 28:15-17, 29:21, 32; Acts 13:6-12; 1 Tim 1:18-20; 3 John 9-11).²⁴

The responsibility to teach rightly and proclaim truth about Jesus Christ was not a task relegated only to the apostles. There is no more impactful nor poignant question put before a man or all of mankind than the one posed by Jesus Christ when he asked his disciples, "Who do you say that I am?" (Matt 16:15). The answer carries more weight than just a title. Even though the question was not "What do people say that I have done?" when one attempts to teach who Jesus is, the "what he has done" is

²³Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991), 2437, emphasis original.

²⁴John MacArthur, *2 Peter & Jude, The MacArthur New Testament Commentary* (Chicago: Moody, 2005), 68.

inescapably linked. The result is that to speak Christologically has enormous implications in regard to both who Christ is and what he accomplished. One must resist the temptation to speak about Christianity as if it were some form of “ism,” like Marxism, Darwinism, or Hegelianism, because these abstract systems have become detached from the person of their founder and reduced simply to sets of doctrines.²⁵ Christ himself was very interested in the correct comprehension and proclamation of who he was. Jesus questioned the Pharisees in Matthew 22 and challenged their understanding of whose son was the Christ: “If then David calls him Lord, how is he his son?” (Matt 22:45). From the moment Christ arrived, the world has distorted, questioned, and reasoned how Christ could not and cannot be what Scripture claims. “The doctrine of Christ’s deity works like a skeleton key, unlocking all other doctrinal doors of Christianity.”²⁶ The doctrine of Christ’s humanity is essential in that by this condescension God brought human history to a decisive climax and reversal.²⁷ The doctrine concerning Christ’s eternity and equality with God marks the difference between biblical Christianity with a true doctrine of the Trinity, and a heresy that does not accept the full deity of Christ and is ultimately destructive to the whole Christian faith.²⁸

The Importance of Preaching Rightly Concerning Christ (Exposition)

The centrality of biblical doctrine answers the question, “What is critical in adherence to biblical Christology?” This question naturally leads to the second: “How is biblical doctrine communicated through the preaching of Scripture?” The answer is

²⁵McGrath, *Studies in Doctrine*, 14.

²⁶Peter Kreeft and Ronald K. Tacelli, *Handbook of Christian Apologetics: Hundreds of Answers to Crucial Questions* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1994), 152.

²⁷Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, eds., *The Ante-Nicene Fathers* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), 6:429-33.

²⁸Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 244-45.

expository preaching. Although preaching has taken on many forms, “Expository preaching is that mode of Christian preaching that takes as its central purpose the presentation and the application of the text of the Bible.”²⁹ Iain Murray summarizes D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones’ belief towards expository preaching in his biography of the great preacher:

For preaching to qualify for that designation (expository preaching) it was not enough, in his view, that its content be biblical; addresses which concentrated upon word-studies, or which gave running commentary and analyses of whole chapters, might be termed ‘biblical,’ but that is not the same as exposition. To expound is not simply to give the correct grammatical sense of a verse or passage, it is rather to set out the principles of doctrines which the words are intended to convey. True expository preaching is, therefore, doctrinal preaching, it is preaching which addresses specific truths from God to man.³⁰

Murray’s explanation of Lloyd-Jones’ belief addresses two fundamental principles of expository preaching and both principles are essential in order for preaching to be considered expository.

The first principle is that the message is from God. In order for the preacher to adhere to this principle, God’s Word must be central in the proclamation of the sermon. Preachers preach because God has spoken. That fundamental conviction is the fulcrum of the Christian faith and of Christian preaching.³¹ Preachers today have no authority for preaching their own notions and opinions; they must “preach the Word”—the apostolic Word recorded in the Scriptures.³² Certainly, this principle applies in the development and proclamation of Christological issues. What God “moved” men to write he now motivates men to preach. He has not promised to bless man’s word; that promise extends

²⁹Mohler, *He Is Not Silent*, 65.

³⁰Iain H. Murray, *D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, The Fight of Faith, 1939-1981* (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1990), 261.

³¹Mohler, *He Is Not Silent*, 40.

³²Jay E. Adams, *Preaching with Purpose* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1982), 19.

only to his own.³³ Apart from Scripture, where will man receive a message from God, and if convinced that God has spoken directly to him, upon what will the spoken word be tested? Without the Bible, there would be no preaching for there would be no message to preach and the sermon would be null and void, a mere reciting of powerless words.³⁴ No better warning exists against scriptural negligence than that directed against Israel. The Jews missed the Messiah not because they failed to look for him; they missed the “Living Word” because they initially missed him in the “Written Word.” Preachers are called to preach the Word of God, unfiltered by notions of political correctness, undiluted by the preacher’s own ideas, and unadapted to the spirit of the age.³⁵

The primacy in expository preaching is the proclamation of Scripture, but alone it fails to fulfill the definition of preaching that is expositional. Haddon Robinson best describes what must also take place in his definition of expository preaching:

Expository preaching is the communication of a biblical concept, derived from and transmitted through a historical, grammatical, and literary study of a passage in its context, which the Holy Spirit first applies to the personality and experience of the preacher, then through him to his hearers.³⁶

In regard to preaching expositionally, the second necessity is application. Without application the exposition of Scripture and the doctrines contained within simply become dogma that has no relevance and no relation to the faith of those expected to live by them. Scripture is not only a mental ascent but an experiential one as well. The question must be asked, “What’s the point?” Expository preaching must not only examine what a passage meant to the original audience, but it must proclaim what a passage means to the

³³Adams, *Preaching with Purpose*, 19.

³⁴Stephen McQuoid, *The Beginner’s Guide to Expository Preaching* (Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus, 2002), 35.

³⁵John MacArthur, “Why I Still Preach the Bible after Forty Years of Ministry,” in *Preaching the Cross*, by Mark Dever et al. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2007), 140.

³⁶Haddon Robinson, *Expository Preaching* (Leicester, England: IVP, 1999), 20.

current congregation. Application is the movement from knowing cognitively what to do or believe in light of a passage of Scripture to understanding how to implement that belief or behavior in one's life.³⁷ Today in the United States, both the congregation and the preacher are separated from the original recipients of the New Testament by two millennia, half the circumference of the earth, culture, language, and circumstances. This separation is a breeding ground for either woeful neglect of application or heretical misapplication. This concern was vocalized by Haddon Robinson in an interview, when he stated, "More heresy is preached in application than in Biblical exegesis."³⁸ Therein lies the problem for the preacher, who although may be competent in his exposition, must neither neglect nor force application. The preacher must keep the point of the sermon in front of him at all times.

Sermons are not about just imparting information. They should be custom-built to change lives. We don't want to fill their heads; we want the proclamation of the Word to grip their souls and motivate them to conform to the will of God. Our approach to the Bible and to preaching, therefore, has application as its ultimate goal.³⁹

It is vital that expository preaching begins with Scripture but concludes with the sole purpose of transforming the lives of the congregation. Preaching is not only exposition, but also communication, and not just the exegesis of a text but the conveying of a God-given message to living people who need to hear it.⁴⁰ The Word of God is not about lives enlightened, but rather lives transformed by the power and the truth. Transformation is only possible through faith in Christ; therefore, Christological error and misapplication of

³⁷Craig Blomberg, *A Handbook of New Testament Exegesis* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2010), 244.

³⁸Haddon Robinson, "An Interview with Haddon Robinson, The Heresy of Application," *Leadership* 18, no. 4 (1997): 21.

³⁹Hershael W. York and Bert Decker, *Preaching with Bold Assurance: A Solid and Enduring Approach to Engaging Exposition* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2003), 11.

⁴⁰John R. W. Stott, *Between Two Worlds: The Art of Preaching in the Twentieth Century* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 137.

Scripture is an extremely critical issue and one Christ himself addressed at the outset of his ministry.

The use of the Old Testament within the New Testament gives ample proof to the necessity of using Scripture correctly and preaching expositionally regarding Christ. One only has to read the gospel accounts of the crucifixion to realize that although the death of Christ was God's plan, it was promoted and carried out by men who did not properly understand the Christological claims of Scripture. Jesus began his ministry in Luke 4, by the reading of Isaiah 61:1-2. This passage was approximately 700 years old and so from the very start, Jesus attempts to lead Israel, the chosen people of God, to grasp that he is the Messiah. The claim of Christ's mission and divinity, by Christ, began with Scripture. Luke Willcock writes,

Christ's great theme was always Himself. His demand is not, Believe this or that which I tell, but, Believe in Me; He begins His ministry by proclaiming that the great prophecy is fulfilled in Him. If this is not the speech of incarnate Divinity, it is the boasting of arrogant egotism.⁴¹

Concurrently, wrath and rejection were the responses Jesus received when he made the proclamation that the Scripture was fulfilled in him. However, it is not solely the exposition of the Old Testament at the start of Jesus' mission and ministry that is most telling. It is also Christ's emphasis of rightly proclaiming, understanding, and applying Scripture in regard to what he accomplished. It is only then that the Bible reveals his person and work as Messiah and Savior. Upon completion of his death and resurrection, Jesus once again turns to Scripture and consequently, his fulfillment of what had been written.

Luke 24 records the account of Jesus on the road of Emmaus. Jesus asked an intriguing question to the two disciples that he chose to join on their journey: "Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?" (v. 26). In

⁴¹J. Willcock, *Luke*, The Preacher's Complete Homiletic Commentary on the Books of the Bible, vol. 23 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 114.

short, it was not only a question, but a rebuke. There is a guilty element to the blindness of these disciples, particularly because they have not responded in a believing manner to the witness of the Old Testament Scriptures.⁴² How could these disciples have missed it? Luke also records that the travelers were not only looking for a Messiah, but even looking to Jesus to be that Messiah. After describing what had occurred in Jerusalem, these two disciples stated, “But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel” (v. 21). This lack of comprehension concerning Christ was not an indictment on them only, but is relevant even today. Within a world that possesses not only the Old Testament, but the New Testament as well, the question remains, “Who is this Christ?” J. C. Ryle notes, “Myriads around us are just as ignorant of the meaning of Christ’s sufferings as these travelers to Emmaus.”⁴³ The modern day preacher must bear some of the responsibility due to the lack of biblical Christology coming from the pulpit.

Although comprehension of the true nature of Christ and the importance of his sacrifice were absent from his apostles prior to his resurrection, a reformed Christology, enlightened by the Holy Spirit is evident as early as Peter’s first sermon on the day of Pentecost. Prior to this sermon, Jesus appeared to the apostles and said, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled” (Luke 24:44). Peter’s use of three Old Testament passages, but specifically Psalm 16:8-11 and Psalm 110:1, accomplished two objectives. First, Peter argues that David, having died and been buried yet not having ascended, fulfills neither Psalm 16 nor 110 and therefore Jesus is both the “Lord” of Psalm 110:1 and the “Christ,” the ultimate Davidic king.⁴⁴ Rabbinic

⁴²John Nolland, *Luke 18:35-24:53*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 35c (Dallas: Word, 1993), 1208.

⁴³J. C. Ryle, *Luke*, Expository Thoughts on the Gospels, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 500.

⁴⁴Craig S. Keener, *Acts: An Exegetical Commentary*, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012), 950.

exegetes often interpreted Psalm 110 messianically, and that custom was probably established among the Jews of Jesus' time.⁴⁵ Peter confronted the people of Jerusalem with the same hermeneutical presuppositions utilized by the Pharisees as he revealed that the literal meaning of the Psalm had not been fulfilled by David and instead applied to Jesus.⁴⁶ Second, Peter emphasizes this claim in Acts 2:36 by explicitly stating that Jesus has obtained the title of both Lord and Christ. I. H. Marshall notes that in regard to the soteriological aspect, Peter did not suggest that Jesus became the Messiah because of the resurrection, but rather "since the Messiah must rise from the dead and since Jesus rose from the dead it follows that Jesus was already the Messiah during his earthly life."⁴⁷

In much the same way the Jews missed the messianic application of Psalm 16, they also failed, as do many today, to both comprehend and accept the claim of divinity in Christ's fulfillment of Psalm 110. Acts 2:34-35 is a strong claim to the deity of Christ in the text but also in its imagery. Robert M. Bowman, Jr., and J. Ed Komoszewski explain,

A careful examination of Psalm 110:1 . . . reveals how remarkable Jesus' claim was and why it seemed to the Sanhedrin to be blasphemous. It was one thing to enter God's presence and yet another to sit in it. But to sit *at God's right side* was another matter altogether. In the religious and cultural milieu of Jesus' day, to claim to sit at God's right hand was tantamount to claiming equality with God.⁴⁸

Likewise, Jesus did not obtain divinity upon his resurrection or ascension. Jesus was already the Lord and Messiah before his crucifixion, and in Psalm 110 the invitation to sit beside God is addressed to one who is already David's lord.⁴⁹

⁴⁵David M. Hay and Robert A. Kraft, eds., *Glory at the Right Hand: Psalm 110 in Early Christianity*, Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series 18 (Nashville: Abingdon, 1973), 33.

⁴⁶Keener, *Acts*, 951.

⁴⁷I. H. Marshall, *The Origins of New Testament Christology* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1976), 77.

⁴⁸Robert M. Bowman, Jr., and J. Ed Komoszewski, *Putting Jesus in His Place: The Case for the Deity of Christ* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2007), 244.

⁴⁹G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson, eds., *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 543.

In contrast to the question put forward by Jesus to the travelers to Emmaus, Paul's assertion directed toward the Jews makes clear that their involvement in the crucifixion of the Messiah was directly associated with their lack of understanding the utterances of the prophets, even though they were read every Sabbath (Acts 13:27). This statement is most certainly self-indicting considering Paul was one who vigorously opposed Christ as one of the Jerusalem elite. Kistemaker states that no devout Jew could ever say that he was ignorant of the words of the prophets. Part of the liturgy of every Sabbath worship service was the reading of the law and the Prophets. On the basis of the prophetic message, then, Jesus could be their savior who died a shameful death as their substitute.⁵⁰ In Antioch, Paul preaches that the experts in the Old Testament failed completely to understand its teaching and had they comprehended it, they would have recognized Jesus as the Messiah. MacArthur describes the irony of Paul's words when he notes that the scribes, Pharisees, and Sadducees fulfilled the very prophecies of the Scriptures they did not understand by condemning Jesus.⁵¹ Jesus had been promised to the fathers, heralded by John, manifested to the Jews, crucified by Pilate, raised from the dead, and received up into glory. In light of this evidence, how could one deny the position or person of Christ? The inaccurate understanding and preaching of Scripture has dire consequences. Although unused by Paul in his sermon in Antioch, the warning of the Son's wrath to come is awful for those who fail to take refuge in him. In accordance to the preaching of the apostles, Scripture must be preached accurately from the pulpit.

The Importance of the Church Articulating Rightly Concerning Christ (Confession)

Biblical doctrine is critical to biblical Christianity and through expository preaching one proclaims biblical doctrine to the masses. The question must also be asked,

⁵⁰Simon J. Kistemaker, *Acts*, New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1990), 478.

⁵¹John MacArthur, *Acts 13-28, The MacArthur New Testament Commentary* (Chicago: Moody, 1996), 23.

“What is the result among the masses in regard to the proclamation?” What is the church’s response and its public declaration in regard to biblical doctrine? The answer is the creed. These ancient formal statements of belief have been manifested or transformed into the confession for Baptists. Unfortunately, for many Protestants, the mention of creeds is automatically rejected and confronted with suspicion. This response occurs for various reasons. Some are simply ignorant of the creeds. Even among Christians who recite creeds on a regular basis, “many never give it much serious thought and have little regard for its controversial roots, history, or position in the larger world.”⁵² Others find the creeds stifling and too impersonal. Still others view the Bible as an “exclusive authority that individuals can understand by themselves, and consider the creed to be an instrument of coercion rather than a glad confession of faith, a monument to the church’s power rather than a movement of the Holy Spirit.”⁵³ Timothy George recounts how even Luther, an ardent objector to creedal authority,

argued *against* tradition, but *from* tradition and *for* tradition. . . . In 1519, Luther and Johannes Eck met in a public debate at Leipzig. In the heat of that exchange, Luther declared the popes could err and had erred, that church councils could be wrong and had been wrong, and that he would henceforth stand forthrightly on the holy written Word of God alone; and yet, his concluding remark in the “Disputation against Scholastic Theology” is as follows. “In all I wanted to say, we believe we have said nothing that is not in agreement with the Catholic Church and the teachers of the church.”⁵⁴

Leon McBeth, distinguished professor of church history at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, writes, “A creed excludes and a confession includes. A creed tells you what you must believe, and a confession affirms what you believe.”⁵⁵ In contrast,

⁵²Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Creed, What Christians Believe and Why It Matters* (New York: Doubleday, 2003), 6.

⁵³*Ibid.*, 4.

⁵⁴Timothy George, ed., *Evangelicals and the Nicene Faith* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011), xxi.

⁵⁵Mark Wingfield, “Difference between Creeds and Confessions Seen in Application.” *Baptist Standard*, accessed July 26, 2013, http://assets.baptiststandard.com/archived/2000/6_26/pages/confessions.html.

Charles Deweese, director of the Southern Baptist Historical Society, makes no distinction between the two terms, but simply upon their application: “A confession and a creed can be worded exactly the same way. The thing that determines whether it’s a confession or a creed is how it’s used.”⁵⁶

For the purposes of this project, the utilization of the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed is perhaps more appropriate than a confession if one adheres to McBeth’s view of creeds and confessions. The primary focus of the Nicene Creed was the second person of The Trinity and the language contained in the creed was explicitly exclusionary of Arianism. It is this portion of the creed that this project focuses and utilizes. One can make the argument that creeds are nothing new and are, in a sense biblical, as expressed by Johnson: “The Christian creed takes its origin as a need to express a people’s experience and story, and to distinguish their specific allegiance in the context of competing claims. It is, like the *Shema*, a call for communal, personal, and exclusive commitment.”⁵⁷

Blomberg accurately describes the way most evangelicals should understand creeds:

Ultimately we do not base our beliefs on Chalcedon, Nicaea or even the Apostle’s Creed, but on the Old and New Testaments. We do usually claim that the heart of these creeds’ affirmations about God, Christ, and the Spirit can be supported biblically and that other statements are the logical corollaries of the Bible’s teachings.⁵⁸

In briefly recalling the history of the Council of Nicea, it is important to recognize that while specific names are assigned to theological positions, one cannot assume that the position was initiated by the named individual nor can one assume that the position was uniformly held by all that were associated with the position. For instance, “Arius, a presbyter in Alexandria, began to preach that the Son of God was created around

⁵⁶Wingfield, “Difference between Creeds and Confessions.”

⁵⁷Johnson, *The Creed*, 12.

⁵⁸Craig L. Blomberg and Stephen E. Robinson, *How Wide the Divide? A Mormon & an Evangelical in Conversation* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1997), 118.

AD 318;” and yet, John Behr notes, “If Arius was the originator of a new heresy it is difficult to account for the wide and ready support he found in Syria and Asia Minor.”⁵⁹ It was not until AD 338, thirteen years after the first Nicaea council, that Athanasius first began to use the designation “Arian” (or his preferred term, “arionmaniac”).⁶⁰ Likewise, although the Nicenes are represented by Athanasius, others claimed to represent “Nicene” theology and what Nicaea would later stand for was not a given in the beginning; that it has become identified with the position of Athanasius is a measure of the power of his theology.⁶¹

At the heart of the Nicene Creed is its denouncement of Arianism and those who adhered and promoted such teaching. Arianism is defined as a heresy:

Arianism denies the full divinity of Christ and that the Son of God was not eternal, but was created before the foundation of the world by the Father. The Son was; therefore, not God by nature, but a creature. His dignity as Son of God was bestowed on him as a gift. Full divinity and the worship that goes with it belongs uniquely to the Father.⁶²

This doctrine of the Son or Logos was developed by Justin, Clement, Origen, and others in an attempt to resolve the conflict between the philosophical idea of a supreme being, as taught by pagan philosophers, and the witness of Scripture.⁶³ In opposition to the teaching of Arius was the conviction of Athanasius. Athanasius was a student of Alexander, bishop of Alexandria. It was not until AD 323 that the scandal of Arianism began to

⁵⁹John Behr, *The Nicene Faith, Formation of Christian Theology*, part 1, *True God of True God* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2004), 2:22.

⁶⁰Ibid., 23.

⁶¹Ibid., 27.

⁶²George Thomas Kurian, ed., *Nelson’s New Christian Dictionary* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2001), 48-49.

⁶³Justo L. González, *The Story of Christianity*, vol. 1, *The Early Church to the Dawn of the Reformation* (San Francisco: HarperCollins: 1984), 160-61.

obtain a firm footing; but even before this time Athanasius wrote his famous treatise on the Incarnation, which contained strong statements regarding the divinity of Christ.

What, then, was God to do? What else could He possibly do, being God, but renew His Image in mankind, so that through it men might once more come to know Him? And how could this be done save by the coming of the very Image Himself, our Savior Jesus Christ? Men could not have done it, for they are only made after the Image; nor could angels have done it, for they are not the images of God. The Word of God came in His own Person, because it was He alone, the Image of the Father Who could recreate man made after the Image.⁶⁴

In 325, the First Council of Nicaea was assembled and they produced the first version of the Nicene Creed. Athanasius, as the bishop's archdeacon and secretary, was most likely involved in the encyclical letter condemning Arius. Butler notes,

Even if he did not exercise any influence upon the council it assuredly influenced him, and, as a modern writer has well said, the rest of his life was at one and the same time a testimony to the divinity of the Saviour and a heroic testimony to the profession of the Nicene fathers.⁶⁵

The conflict that led to the Nicene Creed was due to the teaching of Arius, a presbyter in Alexandria. Emperor Constantine, responsible of the Edict of Milan which established religious toleration for Christianity, wrote to both Alexander and Arius and made it clear that in his view the peace and prosperity of the Empire depended on a religious unity pleasing to God.⁶⁶ According to Constantine, Alexander solicited from each of his presbyters what they thought about "a certain passage of the things written in the Law" and this initial inquiry was a concern for doctrinal unity which initiated the controversy.⁶⁷ Both Arius and Alexander garnered support for their positions from other leading figures in the church from the east and west respectively. In order to squelch the

⁶⁴Athanasius *The Incarnation of the Word of God*, ed. John Behr, Popular Patristics Series (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1977), 3.13.

⁶⁵Alban Butler, *Butler's Lives of the Saints*, ed. Hervet J. Thurston, and Donald Attwater (New York: Kennedy, 1956), 2:213.

⁶⁶Eusebius, *Life of Constantine*, ed. Brian Bosworth et al., trans. Averil Cameron and Stuart G. Hall (Oxford: Clarendon, 1999), 250.

⁶⁷Behr, *True God of True God*, 62.

controversy, Licinius prohibited the gathering of bishops as councils;⁶⁸ therefore, the conflict ended, but was ignited again when Constantine conquered Licinius in AD 324.⁶⁹ Prior to Nicaea, Ossius of Corduba, who presided over the Council of Nicaea, carried Constantine's letter and presided over a council in Antioch which dealt with the Arian controversy. The letter of the Council of Antioch states,

That there is one Lord Jesus Christ, begotten not from nothing, but from the Father, not as something made but genuinely as an offspring, so that he is not a son by appointment or by will; that he always is and not previously was not; and he is immutable and unchangeable, the true image not of the will of the Father by of his very *hypostasis*.⁷⁰

Behr notes that the creed concludes “by anathematizing those that believed that Christ was a creature, ‘that there was once when he was not,’ or claim that it was only by his will that Christ remained immutable.”⁷¹ The first ecumenical Council of Nicaea met in AD 325. The term that defined the council and cemented the divide was *homoousios*, which codified the position of the church that the Father and Son were “of the same substance.” The divinity of Christ remained unsettled and opposition to the council continued even while Constantine managed to maintain unity within the church. During the years of AD 337-351, after the death of Constantine, a multitude of councils were convened in order to construct new creedal statements. It was during this time that Athanasius rose to prominence and labeled his opponents “Arians.” Although the conflict continued, both sides experiencing victories and losses, the Nicene Creed was solidified once again by Emperor Theodosius. On February 28, 380, he issued a decree “that according to apostolic discipline and evangelic doctrine, we should believe the sole divinity of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, within an equal majesty and

⁶⁸Eusebius, *Life of Constantine*, 227.

⁶⁹Behr, *True God of True God*, 65.

⁷⁰*Ibid.*, 66.

⁷¹*Ibid.*

an orthodox Trinity.”⁷² The following year, Theodosius convened the Second Ecumenical Council in Constantinople and the council modified the Nicene Creed of 325. It produced what is known as the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed.⁷³ This creed differs from its predecessor in its longer explanation of the second person of the Trinity and an added third section concerning the Holy Ghost. It is upon this specific creed that the remainder of this project references. Shortly after the council ended, Theodosius issued an edict supporting the position of the council. Behr writes,

The edict, *Episcopis tradis*, ordered all churches should be surrendered to bishops who confess that Father, Son and Holy Spirit are of a single majesty, of the same glory, of one splendor, who establish no difference by profane division, but the order of the Trinity by recognizing the persons and uniting the divinity.⁷⁴

Although the fourth century is in the distant past, the inaccurate views and biblically inconsistent beliefs concerning Christ that persist today were present prior to the conflict that culminated in Nicea. The evidence can be found in the epistles written by Paul. One such example is Colossians 1:15-23. This passage has been called one of the Christological high points of the New Testament,⁷⁵ and according to John MacArthur, none is more significant concerning the teaching of Christ.⁷⁶ Although the exact purpose of Colossians is unknown, it is possible to obtain a concept of the false teachings promulgating among the Christians. In general, the problems addressed by Paul dealt with “hollow and deceptive philosophy” and a dependence on “human tradition” (Col 2:8). More specifically, the false teachings were not dependent on Christ but instead denigrated

⁷²Behr, *True God of True God*, 119.

⁷³F. L. Cross and E. A. Livingstone, eds., *Dictionary of the Christian Church* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1997), 1145.

⁷⁴Behr, *True God of True God*, 121.

⁷⁵Douglas J. Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*, *The Pillar New Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 107.

⁷⁶John MacArthur, *Colossians, The MacArthur New Testament Commentary* (Chicago: Moody, 1992), 44.

him. Moo writes, “The assumption, widespread in the literature, that the false teachers were directly questioning the supremacy or sufficiency of Christ, especially in comparison with other spiritual beings, is based on what Paul says positively about Christ.”⁷⁷ While disappointing that the exact false teaching are illusive to the modern day reader, Moo also points out the positive aspect of the unknown: “It means that we can apply Paul’s teaching in the letter to a wide variety of historical and contemporary movements that share the general contours of the false teaching.”⁷⁸ This passage alone challenges the contemporary movement of Mormonism and its adherence to false Christological beliefs and doctrines, which include, but are not limited to, Arianism, subordinationism, and adoptionism. These three false teachings proclaiming a created Christ, subsidiary to the Father, and an exalted man held by the Mormon Church, are nothing but resurrected false teachings both addressed within Scripture and later disavowed by the early church by way of creedal proclamations.

In presenting the preeminence of Christ, Paul encapsulates the authority of Christ. First, ontologically as to who Christ is, and second, by establishing the eternity of Christ’s existence in the initial verse by writing that Christ is the image or icon of the invisible God. Davenant, in an analysis of this image, writes,

An image must possess the likeness of some other thing and an image must be derived from that of which it is called the image. The image is required, that the likeness which exists between the image itself, and that of which it is the image, should pertain to the specific nature of the prototype, as far as to its participation in, or, at least, its designation of the species. When it pertains to the very nature of the species, it is called an essential and natural image or an image of equality. Christ, then, was from all eternity, and always will be, the uncreated Word, the perfect, essential, and invisible image of his invisible Father. Before either angels or men existed, to contemplate this image by mental vision, yet even then, he was the image of his Father.⁷⁹

⁷⁷Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*, 52.

⁷⁸Ibid., 49.

⁷⁹John Davenant, *An Exposition to the Epistle of St. Paul to the Colossians* (Lynchburg, VA: James Family Christian, 1979), 1:173-74.

Christ's relation to the Father is equality. He is neither less than God nor created by God. He is the image of God.

Christ's equality to God also asserts that Christ's relation to all creation is authority. Christ did not rise up through creation, he is above all creation. Christ is the firstborn of all creation in that by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together (Col 1:15b-17). Though many attempt to connect Jesus to creation as a creature himself, as did Arius, Moo notes, "The word *prōtotokos* (firstborn), while often used in the literal sense of the first to come from the womb, takes on a metaphorical significance."⁸⁰ When seen in the fullness of Scripture, it is evident that in Psalm 89, the term "firstborn" has messianic allusions. Paul is describing Christ in messianic terms. O'Brien concludes, "As *prōtotokos* Christ is unique, being distinguished from all creation (cf. Heb 1:6). He is both prior to and supreme over that creation since he is its Lord."⁸¹

It is not sufficient to believe or trust in the name of Jesus Christ while concurrently imputing manmade definitions and philosophies upon that name. Blomberg writes, "A meaningful definition of a word must make clear what it excludes as well as what it includes."⁸² Evidence for such can be seen in the epistles themselves. Paul wrote to the churches in order to correct and refine the doctrine of the church, which includes its beliefs concerning Christ. Judaizers in Galatia were professing Jewish Christians; and yet, they required strict obedience to the law to ensure salvation. Paul condemns them and anyone who preaches such a gospel to hell. Paul also wrote in 2 Timothy, "All

⁸⁰Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*, 119.

⁸¹Peter O'Brien, *Colossians, Philemon*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 44 (Waco, TX: Word, 1982), 45.

⁸²Francis J. Beckwith, Carl Mosser, and Paul Owen, eds., *The New Mormon Challenge* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002), 328.

Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness” (3:16). The accusation made against Mormons for “adding to Scripture” or “modern day Christological formulas” is not exclusive. They believe the same has been done by Orthodox Christians in regard to The Trinity.

Robinson, a BYU professor, states,

Latter-day Saints are Trinitarians in the sense that they truly believe in God the Father, in God the Son and in God the Holy Spirit, and also in that they believe these three are one God. But they are not Trinitarians in the later creedal sense as defined at Nicaea and Chalcedon because those creeds imposed nonbiblical concepts on the biblical data, and they used nonbiblical terms—trinity, *homoousios*, consubstantial, ungenerated, indivisible and so forth—in doing it.⁸³

Robinson asserts that the problem is not that Mormons are not biblical in their beliefs, but that modern day Christians “apply a different standard to post-Nicene Mormons in this regard [Christ’s subordination to the Father] than they do to the ante-Nicene Fathers.”⁸⁴

Christological issues are central to the distinctiveness of the Orthodox Christian faith and too often the weight of those distinctive are not preached and understood within the church. While centuries later than the canonical text, the creeds were not additions, but rather summations of Christological development founded upon the text. It is through the exposition of these texts, both Old and New Testament passages, that the preacher can exhort and affirm the church in its understanding of Christological imperatives, its appreciation for the ancient creeds, and its current application toward evangelism to those who reject orthodoxy, including those in the Church of Latter Day Saints.

⁸³Blomberg and Robinson, *How Wide the Divide*, 130.

⁸⁴*Ibid.*, 131.

CHAPTER 3

EXPOSITION: EXPOSE TRUTH AND DISCREDIT FALLACY

Introduction

The nineteenth century spent an enormous amount of time and energy in an attempt to discover the historical Jesus devoid of the incarnation, which in turn, produced nothing. According to Aloys Grillmeier, “The pendulum has now swung in the opposite direction: whereas the slogan used to be ‘the pure Jesus of history, it is now, ‘the pure Christ of faith.’”¹ Is it possible to adhere to the Bible while concurrently rejecting orthodox creeds and confessions? Mormon scholars not only claim this is possible, but essential, in order to adhere to the fullest and plain meaning of the biblical text. If creeds and confessions are grounded upon Holy Scripture, how can the latter be accepted while denying the former? This discontinuity in orthodoxy can be clearly seen in the Mormon Church’s rejection of creedal statements about Christ and the Trinity. Stephen Robinson, a Brigham Young University professor, writes,

That God is somehow simultaneously three and one I have no doubt because the Bible and the Book of Mormon both tell me so, but I do not trust the intellectuals of the Hellenistic church to have figured out exactly how this is so (1 Cor 3:19), nor do I invest their theories and conclusions with the authority of Scripture.²

Robinson continues by quoting the first article of faith held by the Mormon Church in which he affirms his personal belief and his faith’s adherence in “God, the Eternal Father, and in His Son, Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost,” while sustaining his rejection of the

¹Aloys Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, vol. 1, trans. John Bowden (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1910), 3.

²Craig L. Blomberg and Stephen E. Robinson, *How Wide the Divide? A Mormon & an Evangelical in Conversation* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1997), 128.

ontological oneness of the Trinity, which Mormons view as creedal rather than biblical. Robinson's rejection of Christian orthodoxy is further evidenced by the fact that a Mormon's view of Christianity as an inaccurate systematic theology, allegedly deformed by Greek philosophy, is exacerbated by the inconsistent theological views held by many different Christian denominations. To further complicate the issue, Robinson also claims that pre-Nicene mainstream Christian writers, such as Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, and Eusebius of Caesarea, were all unorthodox by post-Nicene standards:

The writings of the earliest Christians, the Apostolic Fathers, the Greek apologists, and even some of the Nicene Fathers, provide examples of understanding of God that would be "unorthodox" by later post-Nicene Trinitarian standards—though no one would argue that they were "unbiblical" or "unchristian."³

His conclusion is that it is unfair to demonize Mormons and declare them heretical.

Robert Millet, professor of ancient Scripture and emeritus Dean of Religious Education at Brigham Young University, references such doctrinal and ecclesial issues such as inerrancy of Scripture, God's sovereignty, the essentiality of baptism, and the meaning and place of works, and rightly articulates that divisions among Christians exist; and yet, these differences do not seem to exclude others from the distinction of "Christian." So why exclude Mormonism. Millet writes,

Some of these are not exactly insignificant issues. In fact, given the divide between persons under the evangelical umbrella on such matters, one wonders why outright rejection or bitter antagonism must or should exist toward any other faith tradition with differing views, including Latter-day Saints.⁴

Joseph Smith was extremely concerned and frustrated by the various views and opinions held by Christian denominations, theologians, and scholars. He came to the conclusion that resolving these questions could not lie within Scripture itself, but rather

³Blomberg and Robinson, *How Wide the Divide?*, 131.

⁴Robert L. Millet, *A Different Jesus? The Christ of the Latter-Day Saints* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2005), 42.

final authority rested in the apostles and prophets. Millet quotes John MacArthur in order to support Joseph Smith's accusation and rejection of traditional Christianity:

Sometimes we cannot reconstruct the historical context to understand a given passage. One notable example is the mention of 'baptism for the dead' in 1 Corinthians 15:29. There are at least forty different views about what that verse means. We cannot be dogmatic about such things.⁵

In essence, Millet believes that without modern day prophets, the musings of various theologians, influenced by various philosophies, approaching the text with various cultural biases and agendas have created massive theological variations within Christianity and distorted the pure and true meaning of the biblical text. Furthermore, Millet believes the corruption of the church is simply dialectical theology and that the Mormon Church, along with its prophets and doctrines are the solutions to those problems. Robinson writes that the Mormon Church's "guarantee of doctrinal correctness lied primarily in the living prophet, and only secondarily in the preservation of the written text."⁶ Millet clearly holds to that same understanding and wrote, "The final word on prophetic interpretation rest with prophets."⁷ Millet quotes MacArthur both to reinforce the existence of differing Christian views concerning difficult passages and to show his warning about dogmatically holding to one particular view as if the Mormon faith is a model of singularity in doctrinal beliefs.

Although Millet presents a very monolithic view of Mormonism, the reality is much different. First, B. H. Roberts, a Mormon theologian and General Authority, states, "One does well to distinguish between doctrinally binding Mormon theology, traditional Mormon theology, common Mormon beliefs, and that which is permissible as Mormon

⁵John MacArthur, *Why One Way? Defending an Exclusive Claim in an Inclusive World* (Nashville: W Publishing, 2002), 61.

⁶Blomberg and Robinson, *How Wide the Divide?*, 57.

⁷Millet, *A Different Jesus?*, 51.

theology.”⁸ Secondly, unity in Mormon doctrine is somewhat vague due to the variations and differences of opinion proclaimed by Mormon apostles and prophets through the years. In 2007, the Mormon Church released a statement regarding how they perceive statements by church leaders.

Not every statement made by a church leader, past or present, necessarily constitutes doctrine. A single statement made by a single leader on a single occasion often represents a person’s, through well-considered, opinion, but is not meant to be officially binding for the whole church.⁹

The Mormon Church also emphasized that their doctrines reside in the four “standard works” of scripture, which includes the Holy Bible, the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price, as well as, official declarations and proclamations, and the Articles of Faith. This proclamation is quite a contrast from Millet who, as previously stated, believed that the guarantee of doctrinal correctness was “only secondarily in the preservation of the written text.”¹⁰

These two opposing realities, one being a monolithic, unified, and consistent Mormon Church and the second, a church that is splintered and fluid based upon either a staunch or loose adherence to statements made by presidents or prophets, presents a difficult task in regard to refuting the Mormon faith. To add to the difficulty, in a series of dialogues between Millet and Greg Johnson, a Baptist pastor and former Mormon, Millet stated, “I do believe I speak on behalf of what the Mormon church teaches or at least what it is supposed to teach.”¹¹ In the third dialogue, entitled “The Nature of Christ,” Millet says, as recorded by author Steven Crane,

⁸Francis J. Beckwith, Carl Mosser, and Paul Owen, eds., *The New Mormon Challenge* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002), 22.

⁹“Approaching Mormon Doctrine,” *Newsroom, The Official Resource for News Media, Opinion Leaders and the Public*, May 4, 2007, accessed September 10, 2013, <http://www.mormonnewsroom.org/ldsnewsroom/eng/commentary/approaching-mormon-doctrine>.

¹⁰Blomberg and Robinson, *How Wide the Divide?*, 57.

¹¹Steven A. Crane, *Is Mormonism Now Christian?* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2010), 6.

We are not a static unit . . . we are not sitting still. . . . We have undergone in the last fifty years, in the last thirty years, a different emphasis on redemptive doctrines—Development. Should that bother someone? Not if you believe you are a living church. And part of a living church is bringing change and understanding and clarity. If you want to know what [current] Latter-day Saints believe, pay attention to what [current] Saints are saying. Judge the church by the church today.¹²

In reality, Millet does not believe that “the final word on prophetic interpretation rest with prophets,” any more than B. H. Roberts. Millet as much as admits this fact when he says,

We love, we honor, we revere, we respect our prophet leaders of the past, but we do not believe in the infallibility of the Apostles and Prophets. Peter wasn’t infallible. Paul wasn’t infallible. David O. McKay (the ninth LDS prophet, serving from 1951-1970) said, “When God makes a prophet he doesn’t unmake the man.”¹³

The logical question to be asked is “Why believe what McKay says since, as a prophet, he is not infallible?” Millet correctly states, “The men God used to write the Bible were not infallible,” but God’s Word is indeed infallible. Crane sums the problem: “Here we have the crux of the issue. Mormonism does not believe that the bible is the infallible word of God. Mormonism does not believe that their Prophets (and therefore their own teachings) are infallible.”¹⁴ Instead, Mormons adhere to evolving Mormon doctrine, which is evident by the belief in the “principle of continuing revelation leading to an open scriptural canon.”¹⁵

In conclusion, the very accusation leveled against Christianity, that theologians and scholars were influenced by Greek philosophy and culture, and were later reflected in the assembly of creeds, are not completely unfounded. Unfortunately for the Mormon scholar, the reality does not bear out as proclaimed. Carl Braaten writes,

Terms like *ousia*, *hypostasis*, *physis*, *prosopon*, and *idiōma* are nonbiblical categories coming from the Greek philosophers. The bridge from the mythological language

¹²Crane, *Is Mormonism Now Christian?*, 12.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Jeffrey R. Holland, “The Only True God and Jesus Christ Whom He Hath Sent,” *Ensign* (November 2007): 40-42, accessed October 8, 2013, <https://www.lds.org/ensign/2007?lang=eng>.

of the Gospels to the ontological statements of the creeds could be found, the church fathers believed, in the New Testament itself.¹⁶

Braaten continues to write that despite the usage of Greek philosophical terms, the charge that the creedal language and underlying theology are simply reflections of Hellenistic theology or philosophy are unfounded:

They were by no means uncritical in assimilating ideas from Greek metaphysics. They stressed the biblical motifs of the living power and gracious freedom of God in their doctrines of creation and providence, involving God deeply in the world of matter and the flux of history. They stressed these in sharp contrast to the Greek concept of an absolutely unaffected and eternally remote God. It would therefore be erroneous to charge the church fathers with having made the Christian faith captive to the principles of Greek Philosophy. The use of Greek ontology was the *aggiornamento* of the church's theology in that time.¹⁷

First, ironically, it is the constantly changing Mormon faith that closely resembles a Greek philosophical mindset in its theological and doctrinal proclamations. Second, it must be affirmed that not even the New Testament itself was written, nor can it be interpreted, in a vacuum void of any Greek cultural or philosophical influence. Evidence of Scripture not being interpreted void of historical context is seen clearly in Acts 17 where Paul quotes the Greek poets Epimenides and Aratus, conclusively demonstrating Paul's familiarity with both their writings and introspection. By the time of Christ, the Greek culture had so saturated the Roman Empire that everyone, including the Jews, spoke Greek. The Old Testament had already been translated from Hebrew to Greek, the New Testament was almost exclusively written in Greek, and Jesus used language that was solely endemic to the Greek language and culture. One example is his utilization of the word "hypocrite," which Greeks used to describe actors in the Greek theater. Last, although not conclusive, is the plausibility that the prologue contained in the Gospel of John is adapted from the Greek philosophical concept of the Logos, especially as found

¹⁶Carl E. Braaten et al., *Christian Dogmatics*, vol. 1, ed. Carl E. Braaten and Robert W. Jenson (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), 530.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, 531.

in the writings of the Alexandrian Jew Philo.¹⁸ So, any attempt to exclude all Greek influence and God's use of such influence, is both impossible and dismissive respectively. Therefore, the only authority in regard to Christological doctrine must be the consistency of Scripture affirmed in both the Old and New Testament, pre- and post-Hellenization. Further, the original intent of the biblical author must be discovered in order for the truth or fallacy of doctrinal statements to be confirmed or rejected.

Primary in preaching and teaching Scripture, the deeply held belief that the Bible is the inspired Word of God must be present. If the Bible, as the Word of God, is not firmly rooted, then the interest in proclaiming Scripture will be deficient at best. Within the Mormon's Articles of Faith, article 8 states, "We believe the Bible to be the word of God as far as it is translated correctly; we also believe the Book of Mormon to be the word of God."¹⁹ The primary or true issue at stake between the Christian and Mormon Church is not translation, but rather interpretation. Both faiths accept the King James Version of the Bible; and yet, both faiths interpret passages altogether differently. If the problem is, as purported by Mormonism, that Christianity is flawed because of its interpretation of Scripture through the lens of Greek philosophy from the third and fourth century, then the obvious solution is to allow the Word of God speak for itself and allow it to mold and form the biblical doctrines for the church and the individual. Even today, John Stott exposes the purpose of teaching and preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ when he writes,

Our responsibility as preachers now begins to emerge. This is not primarily to give our twentieth-century testimony to Jesus (most Western preaching today tends to be too subjective), but rather to relay with faithfulness to the twentieth century (and

¹⁸John Ronning, *The Jewish Targums and John's Logos Theology* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2010), 1.

¹⁹Joseph Smith, "The Articles of Faith," Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, accessed October 8, 2013, <https://www.lds.org/scriptures/pgp/a-of-f/1?lang=eng>.

endorse from our own experience) the only authoritative witness there is, namely God's own witness to Christ through the first-century apostolic eye-witness.²⁰

Essentially, neither the first-century church, the third or fourth-century church, nor the twentieth-century church establishes and gives authority to the Bible. In describing how the apostles were given the message of Jesus Christ, Stott continues to write,

It is also increasingly recognized that the New Testament authors were writing as theologians, each of whom selected and presented his material according to his particular theological purpose. Yet neither the churches nor the writers invented or distorted their message. Nor does its authority derive from them or from their faith. For none the apostles or evangelists wrote in the name of a church or churches. On the contrary, they confronted the churches in the name and with the authority of Jesus Christ.²¹

Already established, the Old Testament was affirmed by Christ and concurrently accepted by the church. In regard to the New Testament, the church did not assign and implement the authority of God upon those books; on the contrary, the authority already penetrated the books by the fact that they contained the teaching of the apostles. The creeds were simply a way to concisely state what Scripture had already proclaimed. Jaroslav Pelikan writes, "Even as the church leaders consciously expressed the ancient faith in new and diverse ways, they confidently affirmed their continuity with 'the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints'"²² (Jude 3). The third and fourth-century church, as well as the modern day church, must adhere to the faith "entrusted to the saints." That adherence occurs through proper hermeneutics. The application of hermeneutical principles will determine what a text says and means in its own historical, theological, contextual, literary, and cultural setting.²³ Proper hermeneutics is essential to the exegetical preaching of God's Word.

²⁰John R. W. Stott, *Between Two Worlds: The Art of Preaching in the Twentieth Century* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 98.

²¹*Ibid.*, 99.

²²Jaroslav Pelikan, *Credo: Historical and Theological Guide to Creeds and Confessions of Faith in the Christian Tradition* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003), 9.

²³John MacArthur et al., *Rediscovering Expository Preaching: Balancing the Science and Art of Biblical Exposition*, ed. Richard L. Mayhue (Dallas: Word, 1992), 120.

As previously stated, at issue is interpretation, not translation. So, how is one to know if an interpretation is true or correct? Peter recognizes that not all Scripture is easy to understand or interpret and he was a man who lived in the time, participated in the culture, and communicated daily in the Greek language. Peter wrote,

And count the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, as he does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters. There are some things in them that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures. (2 Pet 3:15-16)

Therefore, one must conclude that difficult passages exist within the Bible and there is a need for interpretation, but the correct interpretation of Scripture must be found in Scripture itself. The Westminster Confession chapter 1, section 9 and 10 states,

The infallible rule of interpretation of Scripture is the Scripture itself; and therefore, when there is a question about the true and full sense of any Scripture (which is not manifold, but one), it must be searched and known by other places that speak more clearly.

The supreme judge by which all controversies of religion are to be determined, and all decrees of councils, opinions of ancient writers, doctrines of men, and private spirits, are to be examined, and in whose sentence we are to rest, can be no other but the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scripture.²⁴

This same belief can be seen in the Baptist Faith and Message. In addressing the authority of Scripture, Article 1 of the Baptist Faith and Messages states,

It [Scripture] reveals the principles by which God judges us, and therefore is, and will remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and religious opinions should be tried.²⁵

This strongly held belief in the exclusivity of Scripture as the ultimate interpreter of scripture is articulated by Charles S. Kelley, Jr., Richard Land, and R. Albert Mohler, Jr., in their book, *The Baptist Faith and Message*: “We do not base our teaching on mere

²⁴Committee on Christian Education, *The Westminster Confession of Faith with a parallel Modern English Study Version* (Suwanee, GA: Great Commission, 1993), 12.

²⁵Charles S. Kelley, Jr., Richard Land, and R. Albert Mohler, Jr., *The Baptist Faith & Message* (Nashville: LifeWay, 2007), 7.

human tradition, nor do we base our faith on human wisdom. The Bible, and the Bible alone, is the rule for our faith and life.”²⁶ If the Mormon faith acknowledges that the Bible is infallible, as Millet stated, then this route of interpretation should be accepted by not only the Christian, but the Mormon as well. Unfortunately, that does not seem to be the case.

The accusation leveled toward Christianity in regard to Christological issues, including Christ’s eternality, his ontological equality, and the hypostatic union of Christ, is a charge of interpretation by fourth-century scholars versus a simple reading of the text. In rejecting the ontological oneness of the Father and Son, Robinson writes,

Whatever it means that the Father is in Christ and Christ is in the Father, it cannot be ontological ones of being or “co-inherence,” since the disciples, who are indisputably separate and individual beings, can also be one in the Father and the Son in the same way that the Father and Son are one in each other. And this is not a philosophical extrapolation from the text using nonbiblical terms formulated centuries later; it’s what the text says.²⁷

The Mormon position regarding interpretation is that the correct understanding of the text must be derived from the simple reading of the text. Yet, when questioned about Joseph’s statement concerning all churches on earth being wrong and that “all their creeds are an abomination in my sight,” and further that The Doctrine and Covenants states that the Mormon Church is “the only true and living church upon the face of the whole earth,” Millet replied, “It may be helpful to consider briefly what the phrase “the only true and living church means and what it does *not mean*.”²⁸ The Doctrine and Covenants text is less than 200 years old. Perhaps the same consideration toward clarifying and interpreting should be given to the biblical text that is over 2,000 years old rather than just a simple reading. Exegesis that leads to proper interpretation is imperative in order to arrive at proper doctrinal instruction.

²⁶Kelley, Land, and Mohler, *The Baptist Faith & Message*, 17.

²⁷Blomberg and Robinson, *How Wide the Divide?*, 130.

²⁸Millet, *A Different Jesus?*, 44.

Exegeted correctly, Scripture exposes the Christological fallacies adhered to by the Mormon faith. These fallacies are not only problematic biblically, but are simply heretical. Heresies revamped and reconstituted still remain what they were when they originated, heresies. Although this project cannot fully address all the problems, three of those heretical proposals, or some form of them, are addressed here and are not unrelated. Ultimately, Arianism, subordinationism, and adoptionism, or at the very least a hybrid of these heresies, are intertwined with the Mormonism's view of God and Christ's equality with God. The difficulty of addressing one singular heresy apart from addressing the other two is compounded by the fact that the terminology utilized by the Mormon faith is continually redefined. Bob Witte notes, "A Christian may think he is in agreement with a Mormon when in reality, they are worlds apart on what is meant by what is said."²⁹ The closest encounter to a creed within the Mormon faith is found in two sets of texts, the Articles of Faith and the Doctrine and Covenants, and nowhere is a redefining of terminology better illustrated than in the first assertion in the Articles of Faith: "We believe in God, the Eternal Father, and in His Son, Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost." Douglas Davies notes, "Though some LDS writers have tried to describe LDS accounts of God in relation to the official creeds of Christendom, the venture is seldom fruitful, because the worlds of thought and of ritual action associated with them are markedly different."³⁰ Davies then describes the difficulty of ascertaining the differences for the "ordinary Christian."

Many ordinary Christians would, in popular terms and in practical spirituality, identify God the Father with the God of the Old Testament, often referred to as Jehovah. For them the link between Father and Jehovah is assumed and they would not anticipate the counter-intuitive LDS view that equates Jesus with Jehovah. In

²⁹Bob Witte, *Where Does It Say That? Photo Reprints of Hard-to-Get Mormon Documents* (Grand Rapids: Institute for Religious Research), 13-1.

³⁰Douglas J. Davies, *An Introduction to Mormonism* (New Haven, CT: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 67.

Mormon terms Jesus is Jehovah and Jehovah is not the Father. In Mormon terminology the source responsible for all spirits, including that of Jesus, is *Elohim*.³¹

This distinction is valuable in that it speaks to the origin of the Son, which is the Father. Doctrine and Covenants states that Christ is “from everlasting to everlasting” (61:1) and “from all eternity to all eternity” (39:1). Again, to the ordinary Christian this understanding would indicate Christ’s eternity and contradict the Mormon belief of Christ’s origin or beginning. Referencing these passages in Doctrine and Covenants, Bruce McConkie states, “He was born, as were all the spirit children of the Father. God was his Father as he is of all the rest.”³² McConkie’s clarification of Mormon doctrine is clearly and quite simply a rebirth of Arianism.

Arius taught that God the Son was at one point created by God the Father, and that before that time the Son did not exist, nor did the Holy Spirit, but the Father only.³³ Although Arius accepted the Trinity, he asserted, as noted by Kevin Giles, “The Trinity was an ontologically and a numerically ordered hierarchy. The Father, the ‘unoriginate’ was first; the Son second, standing below the Father; and the Holy Spirit third, below the Father and the Son.”³⁴ In this way, the position of Mormonism is adherent to Arianism in that it affirms the creation of the Son.

Wayne Grudem defines subordinationism as the belief that the Son was divine but not equal to the Father in being or attributes—the Son was inferior to or “subordinate” in being to God the Father.³⁵ In contrast to Mormonism and Arianism, Grudem indicates subordinationists do believe that the Son was eternal. Origen of Alexandria is one such

³¹Davies, *An Introduction to Mormonism*, 68.

³²Bruce McConkie, *The Promised Messiah* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1978), 46.

³³Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 243.

³⁴Kevin Giles, *The Trinity & Subordinationism: The Doctrine of God & the Contemporary Gender Debate* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2002), 34.

³⁵Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 245.

example. Millet writes that Scripture, through the law of parsimony, gives testimony to the fact that Father and Son are not of the same substance:

The will of the Son is somehow different from or subject to the will of the Father. The Father has power, knowledge, glory, and dominion that the Son does not have and to which the Son is in subjection and that Jesus needed help and a sustaining power from the Father to perform his mission on earth.³⁶

Robinson further clarifies the Mormon belief concerning the Son: “It is true that Mormons are thoroughly subordinationists in their theology of the Godhead, as were many of the early Church Fathers, but this does not constitute a rejection of the New Testament any more than it did for the Fathers.”³⁷ Neither Robinson nor Millet makes any distinction between functional subordination and ontological subordination and both reference several scriptures in order to support their position. But as Kevin Giles notes,

Athanasius argued that Arius did the same thing. Arius also selectively chose scripture to prove the subordination of Christ. In contradiction, Athanasius argued, “to ‘do’ theology, one needed a profound grasp of what he called the ‘scope’ of scripture—the overall drift of the Bible, its primary focus, its theological center.”³⁸

Contrary to the Mormon position that the Nicene Creed was a form of syncretism between biblical doctrine and Hellenistic philosophy, it is Arius who reasoned with a Greek presupposition in order to arrive at his understanding of the Trinity. The Greek’s understanding of God excluded the possibility of God’s having any direct communion or contact with creation; and therefore, Jesus could not be incarnate God in the full sense of the term.³⁹ Second, although Origen of Alexandria rejected Arian’s view of the creation of the Son because he insisted on the “eternal generation of the Son,” Origen depicted the Son different ontologically. Giles writes, “On the basis of his largely Greek understanding

³⁶Robert L. Millet, *The Vision of Mormonism: Pressing the Boundaries of Christianity* (St. Paul: Paragon House, 2007), 69-70.

³⁷Blomberg and Robinson, *How Wide the Divide?*, 130-31.

³⁸Giles, *The Trinity & Subordinationism*, 3.

³⁹*Ibid.*, 34.

of God he concluded that the Son (and the Spirit) must be ontologically subordinated to the Father. For him the Son could only be called God in a secondary sense.”⁴⁰

Therefore, the position of Mormonism concurs with subordinationsim in that it affirms the ontological difference between the Father and Son.

Last, Dynamic Monarchianism, or adoptionism, arose from the second half of the second century and came about in order to preserve the monotheistic faith of Christianity and avoid or combat the belief of two Gods. Wolfhart Pannenburg writes that the basis for adoptionism was “an abstract, philosophically determined monotheism contesting the special divinity of Jesus.”⁴¹ Essentially, adoptionism presents the belief that Jesus was merely a man filled by the Spirit of God. Paul of Samosata

thought of Jesus’ path in the schema of the *homoiōsis theōi* as a progressive assimilation to God, with whom Jesus finally became one through his continual progress toward the good. Jesus had been different from Moses and the prophets as a bearer of the Spirit only in degree.⁴²

Kelly writes, “He [Paul of Samosata] was a strict Unitarian, denying any substance or personality to the Word and teaching that the Son and the Spirit were merely the Church’s names for the inspired man Jesus Christ and the grace which God poured upon the apostles.”⁴³ Paul of Samosata was formally condemned for his adoptionist views by the Synod of Antioch in AD 268. The Mormon faith follows suit in proclaiming that Jesus is the literal spirit brother of all mankind. Millet writes,

Latter-day Saints believe that men and women are the spirit sons and daughters of God, that we lived in a premortal existence before birth, that we grew and expanded

⁴⁰Giles, *The Trinity & Subordinationism*, 63.

⁴¹Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Jesus—God and Man*, 2nd ed., trans. Lewis L. Wilkins and Duane A. Priebe (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1977), 120.

⁴²Pannenberg, *Jesus—God and Man*, 121.

⁴³J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 5th ed. (New York: Continuum, 2009), 118.

in the “first estate” (Jude 1:6; Pearl of Great Price, Abraham 3:26), all in preparation for this “second estate.”⁴⁴

Mormons assert that Jesus was the first born spirit child and therefore the recipient of the birthright and the oldest brother of all the spirit sons and daughters of the Father. Millet continues by stating, “Jesus, above all his spirit brothers and sisters, exercised ‘exceeding faith and good works’ in our First Estate and thereby was ‘called with a holy calling,’ in this case the calling of redemption and salvation.”⁴⁵ In much the same way that Jesus would receive divinity from the Father, Satan also desired the gift of glory from the Father, recorded in The Pearl of Great Price:

And I, the Lord God, spake unto Moses, saying: That Satan, whom thou hast commanded in the name of mine Only Begotten, is the same which was from the beginning, and he came before me, saying—Behold, here am I, send me, I will be thy son, and I will redeem all mankind, that one soul shall not be lost, and surely I will do it; wherefore give me thine honor.⁴⁶

The Mormon belief is that in his preexistence, Jesus did not ontologically possess the divinity of God, but rather was first in birth order and was simply the recipient of divine attributes due to his growth in light, truth, knowledge, and power, as well as his humility in doing the Father’s will. Although the Mormon will claim, “The Almighty Jehovah, the premortal God of the ancient, eventually was born on earth as the man Jesus,”⁴⁷ this claim is not without an understanding of a preexistent adoptionist’s view of the Son’s appointed divine attributes. Ron Rhodes writes, “The Mormon ‘Lord Jesus’ did not eternally exist as God but rather became a God at a point in time.”⁴⁸ Second, although Mormons claim that Jesus was a God in some sense before coming to earth, Mormons also believe in

⁴⁴Millet, *A Different Jesus?*, 19.

⁴⁵Ibid., 20.

⁴⁶Moses 4:1 (The Pearl of Great Price).

⁴⁷Millet, *A Different Jesus?*, 22.

⁴⁸Francis J. Beckwith et al., *The Counterfeit Gospel of Mormonism: The Great Divide between Mormonism and Christianity* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 1998), 136.

eternal progression. Eternal progression is the “concept that a person can progress through three estates (premortal, mortal, postmortal), eventually obtaining godhood.”⁴⁹ Mormons extend this belief to Jesus as well. Joseph Fielding Smith articulates this progression in his three volume series, *Doctrines of Salvation*:

The Savior did not have a fullness at first, but after he received his body and the resurrection all power was given unto him both in heaven and in earth. Although he was a God, even the Son of God, with power and authority to create this earth and other earths, yet there were some things lacking which he did not receive until after his resurrection. In other words he had not received the fullness until he got a resurrected body, and the same is true with those who through faithfulness become sons of God. Our bodies are essential to the fullness and the continuation of the seeds forever.⁵⁰

Although little has been written on this topic, the adoptionist view of Jesus is also supported by Bruce McConkie: “In this life he received not of the fullness at the first, but went from grace to grace until, in the final triumph of the resurrection, he gained the fullness of all things; and all power was given him both in heaven and on earth.”⁵¹

Exposition’s Objective Is Doctrine

The three aforementioned heresies are not absent from biblical “support” from both their originators and from those in the Mormon faith. If these heresies can be falsely supported by poor use of Scripture, then it stands to reason that they can be rightly refuted by the proper exposition of Scripture. The preacher’s objective must not be simply to impart right action on the part of the congregation, but right thought as well. Michael Easley expresses his concern for the loss of expository preaching and its effects on doctrinal awareness: “What if the loss of exposition is dangerous? What if it is creating a

⁴⁹Crane, *Is Mormonism Now Christian?*, 124.

⁵⁰Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation, Sermons and Writings of Joseph Fielding Smith*, vol. 1, ed. Bruce McConkie (Salt Lake City: Deseret, 2012), 32.

⁵¹Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966), 94.

doctrinal vacuum?”⁵² Easley’s solution to the problem is summed up when he writes, “Good preaching is always theological in nature.”⁵³ False doctrines can be refuted when proper exposition is employed. Faris Whitesell writes, “One of the fundamental purposes of expository preaching is explanation, or exposition of the Word of God. The expository preacher seeks to find the true and exact meaning of the Scriptures and to set that meaning against life today.”⁵⁴ In his letter to Titus, the apostle Paul describes an overseer: “He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it” (Titus 1:9). In clarifying Paul’s charge to Titus, Mohler, adamant about the role of pastor as theologian, writes,

He [Paul] makes clear, the pastoral theologian must be able to defend the faith even as he identifies false teachings and makes correction by the Word of God. There is no more theological calling than this—guard the flock of God for the sake of God’s truth.⁵⁵

Going further, D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones does not believe expository preaching was complete until one arrived at doctrinal truth nor did he believe doctrine should be absent in studying Scripture: “Bible study is of very little value if it ends in and of itself and is mainly a matter of the meaning of words. The purpose of studying the Scriptures is to arrive at doctrine.”⁵⁶ The preacher is to study Scripture, arrive at doctrinal truth, and then proclaim or preach such that doctrinal comprehension is obtained by the listeners. In this manner, the flock is protected against heretical teachers and teachings. Pastors or overseers are clearly warned,

⁵²Michael J. Easley, “Why Expository Preaching?” in *The Moody Handbook of Preaching*, ed. John Koessler (Chicago: Moody, 2008), 29.

⁵³*Ibid.*, 33.

⁵⁴Faris D. Whitesell, *Power in Expository Preaching* (Toronto: Fleming H. Revell, 1963), 31.

⁵⁵R. Albert Mohler, Jr., *He Is Not Silent: Preaching in a Postmodern World* (Chicago: Moody, 2008), 107.

⁵⁶D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Faith on Trial: Studies in Psalm 73* (Grand Rapids, Baker, 1965), 88.

Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood. I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them. (Acts 20:28-30)

In today's church, these wolves are making easy prey of congregations because of the congregants' lack of doctrine. In describing the church of the twenty-first century it was written, "Something like a doctrinal defoliation has occurred. The rich doctrinal foliage of the contemporary church seems infested with a deadly disease. Something has radically changed."⁵⁷ In essence, there is an increase of biblical illiteracy and theological ignorance among the laity while increasingly shortened sermons have focused on social or personal issues rather than doctrine.

From the moment God inspired man to proclaim God's Word, doctrine has been preached. Lloyd-Jones expresses this truth in his discussion meetings in Westminster Chapel. He states that the Bible "is a book which is concerned to bring certain particular truths clearly before us and those truths are doctrines."⁵⁸ Looking back to Old Testament accounts, Israel did not understand the doctrine in spite of possessing the Scriptures; therefore, God sent prophets to proclaim or preach doctrine. Lloyd-Jones states,

Let me put it to you like this. Is that not exactly what the prophets did. . . . They went to the nation and they said, "You people think that because you have the law, you know it, but you don't!" They said, "The law is bringing this before you, and this is what you have to grasp and to understand." They preached doctrine to the people.⁵⁹

When Jesus preached, he utilized the Old Testament and preached doctrine. When the apostles preached, they utilized the Old Testament, along with the teachings of Christ, and preached doctrine. In order for the tradition of doctrinal preaching to continue from

⁵⁷Robert G. Hughes and Robert Kysar, *Preaching Doctrine for the Twenty-First Century* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1997), 1.

⁵⁸D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *God the Father, God the Son*, in vol. 1 of *Great Doctrines of the Bible* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1996), 6.

⁵⁹Ibid.

prophets to modern day preachers, expository preaching must be utilized to preach doctrine. Reliance upon Scripture, especially the New Testament, occurred immediately after the apostolic age. Edwin Dargan notes,

Thus as the apostolic tradition became less direct, and what passed for it grew more corrupt, the preachers were furnished with that treasury of divine truth which the true Christian pulpit has ever recognized as the source of its teachings and the authority for its message.⁶⁰

It was during this time, the Patristic Age, that formal doctrine was established and this fixing of doctrine exclusively formed the preaching of the day. Dagan continues,

So great and close is the connection between preaching and doctrine that the discussion and formulation of the latter must of necessity powerfully influence the former. And so in the times which we are now studying (the patristic age) the quickened intellectual interest in some of the great fundamental truths of Christianity, the sharp discussions of them, and their final authoritative definition within accepted limits of orthodoxy, all exerted a mighty influence upon both the content and form of preaching.⁶¹

In regard to the Bible, Augustine wrote, “The aim of its readers is simply to find out the thoughts and wishes of those by whom it was written down and, through them, the will of God, which we believe these men followed as they spoke.”⁶² O. C. Edwards writes that Luther’s preparation for preaching consisted of “immersing himself in the text until he had penetrated to its *Sinnmitte* and developed a *Konzept* that would allow him to get that point across.⁶³ For Luther, to preach was to preach the Word of God, and that meant nothing less than to teach the Scriptures and exhort the congregation to live by them. It was as simple as that and yet as profound as that.⁶⁴ Calvin assesses that faith cannot

⁶⁰Edwin Charles Dargan, *From the Apostolic Fathers to the Close of the Reformation Period*, vol. 1 of *A History of Preaching* (Birmingham, AL: Solid Ground Christian, 2003), 41.

⁶¹Dargan, *From the Apostolic Fathers*, 66.

⁶²Augustine, *De Doctrina Christiana*, bk. 2, ed. and trans. R P. H. Green (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004), 61.

⁶³O. C. Edwards, Jr., *A History of Preaching* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2004), 296.

⁶⁴Hughes Oliphant Old, *The Reading and Preaching of the Scriptures in the Worship of the*

occur apart from God's Word and that faith is dependent not only acknowledging there is a God, but knowing God's will. John Calvin writes,

For faith's understanding, it is not only a matter of knowing that there is a God, but it is chiefly necessary to understand what His will towards us is. For it is not only useful for us to know of what kind He is but of what kind He wants to be to us. We already know, then, that faith is a knowledge of God's will drawn from His word.⁶⁵

To acknowledge God, but not understand how to think and act, is a lack of doctrine.

Hughes Old brings clarity to Jonathan Edwards' regard for doctrine:

Although there were plenty of other dimensions to Edward's preaching, he was primarily a doctrinal preacher. He was fascinated by doctrine and was constantly concerned to justify classical Christian doctrine. While he followed the traditional arrangement of the puritan sermon—text, doctrine, and use—it was ever and again doctrine to which he gave the greatest attention.⁶⁶

John Broadus makes it clear that doctrinal preaching is primary in the business of the preacher and central in sermon preparation:

We all regard it as important that the preacher should himself have sound views of doctrine; is it not also important that he should lead his congregation to have just views? In our restless nation and agitated times, in these days of somewhat bustling religious activity, there has come to be too little of real doctrinal preaching.⁶⁷

In summary, doctrinal preaching is fundamentally indispensable in expository preaching.

It is to teach and give the application of the truths of God to the listener. Perhaps the need for doctrinal preaching cannot be more emphasized than it was by Phillips Brooks as he spoke to the Divinity School of Yale College:

The truth is, no preaching ever had any strong power that was not the preaching of doctrine. The preachers that have moved and held men have always preached doctrine. No exhortation to a good life that does not put behind it some truth as

Christian Church, vol. 4, *The Age of the Reformation* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2002), 38.

⁶⁵John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, trans. Elsie Anne McKee (1541; repr., Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2009), 178.

⁶⁶Hughes Oliphant Old, *The Reading and Preaching of the Scriptures in the Worship of the Christian Church*, vol. 5, *Moderatism, Pietism, and Awaking* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2002), 284.

⁶⁷John A. Broadus, *On the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*, ed. Edwin C. Dargan (Birmingham, AL: Solid Ground Christian, 1870), 77.

deep as eternity can seize and hold the conscience. Preach doctrine, preach all the doctrine that you know and learn forever more and more; but preach it always, not that men may believe it, but that men may be saved by believing it.⁶⁸

Doctrinal proclamation from the pulpit is not an invention of the post-apostolic age nor is it absent from biblical text. Both the Old and New Testaments are replete with doctrinal proclamation. McGrath, in comparing “proclamation” and “doctrine” makes the distinction that while proclamation declares the truth; doctrine is the summative truths that must exist in order for the proclamation to be truth.⁶⁹

Turning now to Mormonism, it is not a stretch to say that the Mormon faith makes some of the same proclamations as Christianity. For instance, the Mormon faith proclaims Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. However, when calling Jesus Christ their Lord and Savior, the doctrinal claims of Mormons are radically different from Orthodox Christianity. The two claims are worlds apart and cannot be discounted or overlooked. From the moment Adam and Eve fell for the lies of Satan, doctrine became important. Satan introduced deceit to mankind, but “Christian doctrine is concerned to tell the truth, in order that man may enter into and act upon that truth. It is to be passionately concerned that our actions and attitudes, our hopes and fears, are a response to God”⁷⁰ These very acts and attitudes were the reasons for Scripture.

Consequently, doctrinal statements are found in the opening chapters of the Bible. Upon turning to Genesis 1, the Doctrine of God, the Doctrine of Creation, and the indication of a plurality of persons in God himself, also known as the Doctrine of the Trinity are all present. The Doctrine of Salvation is foretold in Genesis 3:15, known as the protoevangelium. However, while these doctrines are present in the book of Genesis, is the proclamation of these doctrines also present throughout both the Old and New Testament? The answer is resoundingly yes. For instance, when investigating the

⁶⁸Phillips Brooks, *Lectures on Preaching* (New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, 1878), 129.

⁶⁹Alister E. McGrath, *Studies in Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997), 26.

⁷⁰McGrath, *Studies in Doctrine*, 238.

Doctrine of Creation, which God first reveals in the Genesis, one will notice that it is replete throughout Scripture. The Psalmist writes,

By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, and by the breath of his mouth all their host. He gathers the waters of the sea as a heap; he puts the deeps in storehouses. Let all the earth fear the Lord; let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him! For he spoke, and it came to be; he commanded, and it stood firm. (33:6-9)

Isaiah adds his proclamation, saying, “Thus says God, the Lord, who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and what comes from it, who gives breath to the people on it and spirit to those who walk in it” (42:5). In the New Testament, the apostle John makes this moving statement, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made” (John 1:1-3). In Paul’s epistle to the Ephesians, Paul writes,

To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to bring to light for everyone what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things, so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. (3:8-10)

Although each doctrine can be treated as above, for the scope of this paper, the Christological distinctives previously in chapter 2, regarding the Doctrine of Christ, are enumerated.

Refuting Mormon Christology

The Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed of AD 381 expresses, in a concise paragraph, what orthodox Christianity believes concerning Jesus Christ:

And in one Lord JESUS CHRIST, the only-begotten Son of God, Begotten of the Father before all worlds; [God of God], Light of Light, Very God of Very God, Begotten, not made, Being of one substance with the Father; By whom all things were made; Who, for us men, and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate of the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and was made man; He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate; and suffered and was buried; and the third day He rose again, according to the Scriptures; And ascended into heaven, and sitteth on

the right hand of the Father; And He shall come again, with glory, to judge the quick and the dead; Whose kingdom shall have no end.⁷¹

When searching the Scriptures for these Christological truths contained in the creed, it should be known that Old Testament messianic passages were not fully understood apart from the New Testament fulfillment. C. F. D. Moule explains this concept when he writes,

The genesis of Christology—the coming into existence, that is, of the descriptions and understandings of Jesus which emerge in the course of Christian history—can be explained as a sort of evolutionary process, in the manner of the so-called “history of religions school” of thought.⁷²

Moule follows with the thought that “development” is most likely a better analogy, rather than evolution:

But if in my analogy, “evolution” means the genesis of successive new species by mutations and natural selection along the way, “development,” by contrast, will mean something more like the growth, from immaturity to maturity, of a single specimen from within itself.⁷³

Luke Johnson supports this view: “Each of the Gospels makes clear that despite Jesus’ claims and wondrous deeds, neither his opponents nor his followers saw him for what he was.”⁷⁴ It was not until after the resurrection that Jesus’ ontological relationship with God could be understood.

One distinction proclaimed by orthodox Christians in opposition to Mormonism (and Arianism) is the eternality of Christ, which will also necessarily include his ontological oneness with God the Father. Even before Christianity, two important passages in Psalms were interpreted in a messianic sense. These were Psalm 2 and Psalm 110. Hans Kraus notes,

⁷¹Philip Schaff, ed., *The History of Creeds*, vol. 1 of *The Creeds of Christendom, With a History and Critical Notes* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 27-28.

⁷²C. F. D. Moule, *The Origin of Christology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 1.

⁷³*Ibid.*, 2.

⁷⁴Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Creed, What Christians Believe and Why It Matters* (New York: Doubleday, 2003), 106.

It is clear that in early Christianity several Old Testament psalms were extremely important. They were quoted again and again and cited as “star witnesses” in the proclamation that the promises of God had been fulfilled. These are Psalms 2; 22; 69; 110; 118. These two songs (Psalms 2 and 110) stand at the center of the messianic message of the New Testament and are used as witnesses to the messiahship of Jesus of Nazareth.⁷⁵

Aquila Lee writes, “Perhaps, together with Psalm 110:1, this messianic text (Psalm 2) was among the most important messianic texts that helped early Christians to deepen their understanding of Jesus.”⁷⁶ Lee continues by stating,

The former text was crucial for interpreting Jesus’ resurrection as his exaltation to the right hand of God. It was interpreted not only as a prophecy about his “literal” exaltation, but also a statement of God speaking to one who was already Lord in his sight. In a parallel line of thought, starting from Jesus’ claim to be the Son of God early Christians interpreted Psalm 2:7 not only as a prophecy about his divine sonship (which was decisively demonstrated through the resurrection), but also a statement of God speaking to one who was already Son in this sight.⁷⁷

Although, are these two Psalms enough to repudiate the distorted Mormon Christology that acknowledges the preexistence of Christ, along with all mankind, but denies the eternity of Christ? The Old Testament not only speaks to Christ’s preexistence, but attributes to Christ what can only be attributed to God. Isaiah proclaimed, “For unto us a child is born, to us a son is given and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Might God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace (Isa 9:6) Robert Hawker wrote in regard to Isaiah’s proclamation:

How could the prophet be so daring and presumptuous as to describe the Messiah under such great and eternal properties, if, after all, no more than a mere man was expected of Him? Would he have said this of any, even of the highest and greatest of all created beings? Could such attributes, in the smallest degree, be applicable to any less than the Great Supreme?⁷⁸

Jeremiah also declared the name of the deliverer by the name that only belongs to the

⁷⁵Hans Joachim Kraus, *Theology of the Psalms*, trans. Keith Crim (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992), 180.

⁷⁶Aquila H. I. Lee, *From Messiah to Preexistent Son: Jesus’ Self-Consciousness and Early Christian Exegesis of Messianic Psalms* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2005), 240.

⁷⁷Lee, *From Messiah to Preexistent Son*, 202.

⁷⁸Robert Hawker, *The Divinity of Christ* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2007), 72.

divine: “In his days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell securely. And this is the name by which he will be called: ‘The Lord is our righteousness’” (Jer 23:6). It is no surprise that the fullness of Christological statements are not found in the Old Testament. In order to continue to address this topic, investigation must proceed past the Old Testament toward the early church’s understanding of Christ in the New Testament.

The principle argument against the full divinity of Christ by the Mormon Church derives from the idea that Christ’s equality with the Father was formulated through Greek philosophy during the fourth century. However, the fullness of Scripture proves that theory to be incorrect. Jesus’ equality with God the Father can be understood in that the Devil tempted Christ to do what only God could do. Jesus also claimed that he could forgive sins and “claimed the power to interpret the Scriptures as referring to himself, although everyone knew that they referred primarily to God and his covenant with Israel.”⁷⁹ The apostle John wastes no time in affirming the ontological oneness of God the Father and God the Son, by writing, “The Word was with God and the Word was God” (John 1:1). This concept was utterly alien to the ancient Greek mind.⁸⁰ Grillmeier makes note, “The Wisdom of the Old Testament and the Logos of John have many features in common. Both exist from the beginning and dwell with God.”⁸¹ Another problem is in the fact that a strict understanding of Mormon theology would have to deny the eternality of God the Father as well as the Son. In clarifying current Mormon doctrine, Beckwith writes,

I believe it is safe to say, based on documents the Church presently considers authoritative, that current LDS doctrine teaches that God is, in effect 1) a contingent being, who was at one time not God; 2) finite in knowledge (not truly omniscient), power (not omnipotent), and being (not omnipresent or immutable); 3) one of many

⁷⁹Gerald Bray, “The Deity of Christ in Church History,” in *The Deity of Christ*, ed. Christopher W. Morgan and Robert A. Peterson (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011), 175.

⁸⁰Ibid., 176.

⁸¹Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 29.

gods; 4) a corporeal (bodily) being, who physically dwells at a particular spatiotemporal location and is therefore not omnipresent (as is the classical God); 5) a being who is subject to the laws and principles of a beginningless universe with an infinite number of entities in it; and 6) not a trinity, but rather, there exists three separate God's who are one in purpose but not in being.⁸²

McConkie affirms the finiteness of God according to the church and Beckwith's summary as he writes,

Joseph Smith said: God himself was once as we are now, and is an exalted man, and sits enthroned in yonder heavens. I am going to tell you how God came to be God. We have imagined and supposed that God was God from all eternity. I will refute that idea and take away the veil, so that you may see. It is the first principle of the gospel to know for a certainty the character of God, and to know that we may converse with him as one man converses with another, and that he was once a man like us: yea, that God himself the Father of us all, dwelt on an earth, the same as Jesus Christ himself did; and I will show it from the Bible. . . . Where was there ever a son without a father? . . . Hence if Jesus had a Father, can we not believe that he had a Father also?⁸³

The initial problem is that even when the use of Scripture establishes an ontological oneness between the Father and Son, God the Father is not considered "eternal" by the Mormon Church in the classical definition of the word. Moving past the Father's eternity, as defined by the Mormon faith, the apostle John not only affirms that all things were made through Christ, which Mormons would affirm, but John states that the only-begotten Son is "in the bosom of the Father." John again attributes ontological equality to the Word with the Father: "No one has ever seen God; the only [or only-begotten] God, who is at the Father's side [in the bosom of the Father], he has made him known" (John 1:18). The writer of Hebrews also declares the eternity and equality between Father and Son:

He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs. (1:3-4)

⁸²Francis J. Beckwith, "Mormon Theism, the Traditional Christian Concept of God, and Greek Philosophy: A Critical Analysis," *Journal of Evangelical Theological Society* 44, no. 4 (2001): 675-76.

⁸³McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 229-30.

These two verses “were an early Christian confession, perhaps used for liturgical and catechetical purposes.”⁸⁴ Two claims attributed to God, creation of the universe and the universe’s providential Lord, are now attributed to the Son. Even more telling is the fact that the Son shares the throne of God. Stephen Wellum writes,

All this teaching presents Jesus in the place that in the Old Testament and ancient Judaism belong to God alone. . . . Jesus is utterly unique in this shared position. No one else shares God’s throne and rules over all creation. That is because “he with whom God shares his throne must be equal with God.”⁸⁵

Unlike the first 200 years after Christ, which questioned the humanity of Christ, adoptionism readily accepts the humanity, but asserts that his deity was either realized or bestowed upon the man of Jesus either during baptism or upon the resurrection. The adoptionist’s claim is that the Son was not preexistent and the hypostatic union was and is nonexistent, but rather that Jesus Christ simply started out life as a human. Bart D. Ehrman, professor at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, recently published a book in support of the adoptionist view, and he believes the adoptionism represents the belief of the earliest Christians. He wrote that the earliest Christians believed “Jesus was not the Son of God who was sent from heaven to earth; he was the human who was exalted at the end of his earthly life to become the Son of God and was made, then and there, into a divine being.”⁸⁶ Ehrman proceeds to state that the adoptionist or low Christological understanding of Jesus should really be aptly named “exaltation Christology.”⁸⁷ Later in his book, Ehrman, referencing Raymond Brown, a Roman Catholic priest and author, argues that Jesus’ divinity and his status as “Son of God” were shoved backward as time

⁸⁴William Hendriksen and Simon J. Kistemaker, *Exposition of Thessalonians, the Pastorals, and Hebrews*, New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1984), 33.

⁸⁵Stephen J. Wellum, “The Deity of Christ in Apostolic Witness,” in *The Deity of Christ*, 141.

⁸⁶Bart D. Ehrman, *How Jesus Became God: The Exaltation of a Jewish Preacher from Galilee* (New York: HarperCollins, 2014), 217.

⁸⁷*Ibid.*, 231.

moved forward. The earliest Christians believed that Jesus was adopted as God's Son at his ascension. Later in history this adoption was then attributed to his baptism, then his conception, and not until the writings of Paul and the Gospel of John was Jesus' preexistence even proclaimed, which Matthew, Mark, and Luke have no knowledge.⁸⁸ Ehrman leaves no room for speculation concerning his reading of the birth narratives:

If you read their (Matt and Luke) accounts closely, you will see that they have nothing to do with the idea that Christ existed before he was conceived. In these two Gospels, Jesus comes into existence at the moment of his conception. He did not exist before.⁸⁹

Does the New Testament speak of a developed or evolved Christology that did not exist before the second half of the first century as Ehrman contends? Is the adoptionist's belief more in line with the original beliefs of the earliest Christians? The prophet Isaiah proclaimed, "For unto us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace" (9:6). Raymond Ortlund writes, "The prophet rejoices in the glories of the Messiah, who is a human child born to us but also the Mighty God and Everlasting Father exalted above us. No explanation of this paradox is offered; it is simply asserted."⁹⁰ However, Isaiah does not allow for any speculation of who this child is as it is written, "Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel (7:14). Cyril of Alexandria comments on this verse by writing, "But the word was with us as God when he took our likeness and despised not the low estate of humankind, in order that he might save all beneath the heaven."⁹¹ The Old Testament

⁸⁸Ehrman, *How Jesus Became God*, 235-46

⁸⁹Ibid., 243.

⁹⁰Raymond C. Ortlund, Jr., "The Deity of Christ and the Old Testament," in *The Deity of Christ*, 50.

⁹¹Cyril of Alexandria, *Homilies on the Gospel of Luke*, Ancient Christian Doctrine, ed. Thomas C. Oden and John Anthony McGuckin, vol. 2. (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2009), 122.

establishes that Christ was born fully God and that divinity was not achieved, but rather humanity was added to the Son. Athanasius, responding to the heresy of Arianism, also affirmed the preexistence of Jesus and his divinity:

The Word perceived that corruption could not be got rid of otherwise than through death; yet He Himself, as the Word, being immortal and the Father's Son, was such as could not die. For this reason, therefore, He assumed a body capable of death, in order that it, through belonging to the Word Who is above all, might become in dying a sufficient exchange for all, and, itself remaining incorruptible through His indwelling, might thereafter put an end to corruption for all others as well, by the grace of the resurrection.⁹²

Before moving into the New Testament, there is the issue of the preliterate tradition. These are the creeds and hymns that predate the writing of even the earliest Pauline Epistles, but are incorporated within Scripture. Ehrman utilizes these preliterate texts in order to substantiate his argument that Jesus was not God, but rather, he became God: “These preliterate traditions not infrequently express theological views that differ in lesser or greater ways from those found in the rest of an author’s writing.”⁹³ Ehrman acknowledges that Paul had a high Christological view, but that his later writing did not reflect the view of the earliest Christians. First, in regard to Christ’s preexistence and the seeming ignorance of the synoptic gospels, Gathercole points out that all three gospels contain numerous “I have come” statements. In addressing the “I have come,” statements he wrote, “I would suggest that the natural sense of these sayings is that they imply that Jesus has come from somewhere to accomplish his mission.”⁹⁴ Secondly, whereas Ehrman proposes that preliterate hymns, such as Romans 1:3-4, Acts 13:32-33, and Acts 2:26, fail in proclaiming that Jesus is Lord prior to his ascension, Larry Hurtado arrives at a much different conclusion. Hurtado acknowledges that these hymns date back to the

⁹²Athanasius *The Incarnation of the Word of God*, ed. John Behr, Popular Patristics Series (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1977), 35.

⁹³Ehrman, *How Jesus Became God*, 217.

⁹⁴Michael F. Bird et al., *How God Became Jesus: The Real Origins of Belief in Jesus’ Divine Nature* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 97.

earliest points of the Christian movement and characterized Christian groups from the very beginning or as scholars call the “tunnel period,” which spans between the years of the life of Jesus and the first Christian writings (AD 30-50):

A perusal of the New Testament hymns to Christ will show variations in emphasis and in linguistic features, probably indicative of various situations in which the hymns were composed, and also certain similarities in content and intention. They all celebrate Christ as the supreme agent of God, whether in creation (e.g. Col. 1:15-17; Heb. 1:3; John 1:1-3), earthly obedience (Phil. 2:5-8) and redemptive suffering (Rev. 5:9-10), or eschatological triumph (Phil. 2:9-11; Col. 1:20).⁹⁵

In particular, Christ’s participation in creation is dependent upon his preexistence and therefore, adoption at birth, baptism, or ascension is a moot point.

The fullness of Christ’s deity is reiterated in the New Testament. Paul writes in his letter to the Colossians, “For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily” (2:9). The flesh did not obtain the divine, the divine dwelt in the flesh. Leopold Sabourin writes, “We are now told that in Christ ‘the entire fullness (*plêrôma*) of the deity dwells bodily.’ *Theotês*, ‘deity,’ used only here in the entire NT, refers to God’s being, and is to be distinguished from *theiotês*, ‘divine nature.’”⁹⁶ If Christ achieved or was adopted as the Son, the implication is that the Son was not fully divine.

Clearly, neither the new revamped Christological heresies of the Mormon faith nor the old heresies of Arianism, subordinationsim, nor adoptionism embrace the fullness of Scripture. An understanding of Old Testament proclamations, preliterate hymns, and New Testament passages all point to a Savior, a Christ, and a Lord that was fully God, without beginning or end. In essence, truly the Christological differences between Christianity and Mormonism are not able to be bridged or compromised. Millet writes,

No one who professes a present belief in and eternal loyalty to the Lordship of Jesus Christ—who identifies themselves as one of his disciples—would condemn or block a sincere effort to better understand and love our brothers and sisters of others

⁹⁵Larry W. Hurtado, *One God, One Lord: Early Christian Devotion and Ancient Jewish Monotheism* (London: T & T Clark, 1988), 104.

⁹⁶Leopold Sabourin, *Christology: Basic Texts in Focus* (New York: Alba, 1984), 131.

faiths. Jesus taught a doctrine of inclusion, a mindset that emphasized that we “judge not,” meaning that we admit at the outset that we do not know the heart of another human being, that we do not grasp fully how they feel toward God and in what manner they have dedicated their lives to spreading the good news, the glad tidings of his Beloved Son.⁹⁷

Although the sentiment of civility between Mormons and Christians should at all times be expressed and acted upon, Millet is absolutely wrong in his assessment that Jesus, God himself, taught inclusion in regard to false gods. God always demanded a complete rejection of all idols. The Mormon man or woman is not a Christian brother or sister and the good news of the Mormon faith is not good news. The apostle Paul made it clear in addressing the Galatians, “I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel—not that there is another one, but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. (1:6-7). There was nothing inclusive in Paul’s language.

On February 25, 2014, Albert Mohler addressed both faculty and students at Brigham Young University. His presence at BYU emphasized the civility of dialogue between Christianity and Mormonism, but his words could not be misinterpreted in regard to the divide between the two faiths:

I come as an evangelical Christian, committed to the Gospel of Jesus Christ and to the Trinitarian beliefs of the historic Christian faith. I come as one who does not share your theology and who has long been involved in urgent discussions about the distinctions between the faith of the Latter Day Saints and the faith of the historic Christian church. I come as who I am, and your leaders invited me to come knowing who I am. I have come knowing who you are and what you believe and my presence here does not mean that the distance between our beliefs has been reduced.⁹⁸

Mohler then restated a comment he previously said four months earlier: “I believe that we will not go to heaven together, but we might well go to jail together.”⁹⁹ In making this

⁹⁷Robert L. Millet and Gregory C. V. Johnson, *Bridging the Divide: The Continuing Conversation between a Mormon and an Evangelical* (New York: Monkfish Book), 2007.

⁹⁸R. Albert Mohler, Jr., “Strengthen the Things That Remain: Human Dignity, Human Rights, and Human Flourishing in a Dangerous Age—An Address at Brigham Young University,” accessed June 26, 2014, <http://www.albertmohler.com/2014/02/25/strengthen-the-things-that-remain-human-dignity-human-rights-and-human-flourishing-in-a-dangerous-age-an-address-at-brigham-young-university/>.

⁹⁹*Ibid.*

statement, Mohler was clear that although Christians and Mormons share common morals, these faiths do not share common a salvation because these faiths do not share a common Christ.

CHAPTER 4
ELEMENTS OF THE MINISTRY
RESEARCH PROJECT

The ministry research project encompassed a total of seventeen weeks. Within the fifteen weeks, there were four major components consisting of a focus group, a ten-week sermon series, weekly sermon evaluations, and a pre/post-series survey. These elements were implemented in order to evaluate and obtain the project's five goals: (1) the church to recognize expository preaching as essential in promoting the doctrines of Christ; (2) to develop a compassionate response for the spiritually immature concerning the Doctrine of Christ while concurrently establishing a confident defense against the false religions that advance heretical Christological dogma; (3) to realize the church's development of the doctrine of Christ, and therefore, recognize repackaged and recycled heresies; (4) alert the church to the subtle distortion of Christological doctrine embraced by those outside orthodox Christianity; and (5) improve my skill in expository and doctrinal preaching while, in particular, focusing on application. Each of the elements were administered in order to accomplish and/or measure the effectiveness of these goals.

Scheduling of the Elements

The sermon series began in March and continued through mid-May. Although, three holidays were within that timeframe, Easter was easily incorporated into the sermon series because of the project's emphasis on Christology, and Mother's Day, as a secular holiday, was not addressed in the sermon itself. The last meeting of the focus group was postponed one week in order to accommodate for the Memorial Day weekend. A timeline for the project's elements consisted as follows:

1. January 25 – Began recruiting for focus group
2. February 15 – Conducted first focus group meeting
3. February 22 – Conducted second focus group meeting
4. March 1 – Administered pre-sermon series survey
5. March 8 – Began sermon series
6. March 29 – Conducted third focus group meeting (conclusion of Christ’s Eternality” section)
7. April 26 – Conducted fourth focus group meeting (conclusion of “Hypostatic Union” section)
8. May 10 – Ended sermon series
9. May 17 – Administered post-sermon series survey
10. May 24 – Conducted fifth focus group meeting (conclusion of “Equality of Father and Son” section and project)

The total duration of the project was seventeen weeks.

The Pre-Sermon Series Focus Group

The focus group consisted of a cross section of the church. The group was made up of 6 men and 7 women that I perceived would make a conscious effort to see the project through to the end. The commitment entailed 5 Sunday evening meetings in addition to completing evaluation comments for each Sunday morning sermon. Summer Creek Baptist Church is an elder-led church; all the men who served on the focus group were the elders except for one, who is a former pastor. The age range for the men consisted of 2 men ages 30 to 49, 1 man age 40 to 49, and 3 men ages 50 to 59. The women on the focus group were slightly younger. The age range for the women consisted of 3 ages 30 to 39, 2 ages 40 to 49, and only 1 above 50. All but 1 woman worked full-time.

Each individual received an invitation concerning the focus group and within the email all expectations were listed out including weekly evaluations, attendance, and the five focus group meetings held on Sunday nights. Although 13 individuals agreed to participate in the focus group, 1 female dropped out of the group due to a decision by her

husband to leave the church. A total of 12 participants completed the seventeen-week project.

On Sunday evening, February 15, 2015, the focus group met for approximately 45 minutes in order to clarify the requirements and the expectations for the group. It was a time of prayer along with questions and answers. This meeting was also a time for the focus group to be introduced to the purpose behind the series, “Who Is This Christ?” I stressed the importance of doctrine alongside correct Christological thinking. Also, I introduced issues that evolve without such doctrine, such as the Christological heresy within the Mormon Church. At the end of the meeting I gave the focus group members the challenge to once again prayerfully consider their participation over the next sixteen weeks. One week later on Sunday, February 22, 2015, the focus group met for the second time in order establish who would continue to participate and to pray for the upcoming series.

Administering the Pre-Sermon Series Survey

The survey was composed of two sections. The first section gathered demographic information concerning those participating in the survey. The second section consisted of 34 questions set up on a 6-point Likert scale (see appendix 1). The survey was administered to the adults during the Sunday school hour which precedes the worship hour. The survey evaluated both the attitude and perception of the adults in regard to expository preaching and three specific Christological issues. The Christological issues were Christ’s eternal nature, the hypostatic union, and the equality of the Son with the Father. The survey was administered during the Sunday school hour which precedes the worship hour.

Synopsis of Sermons Preached

The theme of the sermon series, “Who Is This Christ,” derived from the continual questioning of the people throughout the gospels in regard to Christ’s identity.

Jesus Christ asked of his disciples, “Who do the crowds say that I am?” (Luke 9:18b). Their reply indicated that although there were many responses and speculations, all missed the mark except for Peter’s answer. The same inaccurate and often misguided understanding of Christ is prevalent today, which made this series invaluable to the church as it stands in opposition to heretical Christologies. Throughout the series, I utilized the Old Testament, the Gospels, and the Epistles to emphasize the consistent message contained within all of Scripture.

Sermon 1

The first message from the scripture passage, 2 Timothy 4:1-8, introduced the overall theme of the series. It introduced the curiosity as well as the misunderstanding that existed about Jesus even as Christ lived among mankind. It also introduced the recurring nature of the questions concerning Christ through the fourth century, the 1800s, and in the current age. This series was the first time that many in the congregation were exposed to creeds, specifically the Nicene Creed. It was important for the church to know that these heresies had been addressed before and that opposition was both scriptural and creedal. This message emphasized that Paul instructed Timothy to “Preach the Word,” which is the only foundation upon which one can conclude who Christ was and is today. The Word of God must speak for itself. One cannot preach traditions or opinions. The emphasis in week 1 was that “Doctrine Matters,” and that while it may seem that some are too immersed in the details, the apostle Paul was adamant that Timothy not forget that sound doctrine must inhabit his preaching. Paul knew his time was coming to an end and Timothy would have to take his place. Christian teachers must be diligent in making sure students of God’s Word are immersed in sound doctrine because the day is coming that they will have to take our place. One’s life will be a reflection of what he believes.

Sermon 2

The second sermon began the first of three essential doctrines in regard to Christ. “Christ’s Eternality—Part 1” focused on Psalm 2. This Psalm, along with Psalm 1 introduces all the others Psalms. Psalm 1 focuses on the ways of the righteous man in contrast to the ways of the wicked man. Psalm 2 moves beyond man and focuses on God, and specifically on his wrath on the unrighteous and his grace and mercy for those who turn to him. The message focused on removing the confusion around the word “begotten” and the pre-existence of Christ as the King of Zion long before he arrived as the son of man, Jesus of Nazareth. The Day of Judgment is coming and now is the time to be wise and take refuge in Christ.

Sermon 3

Sermon 3 was a transition from the Old Testament to the New Testament. Christology is more fully developed in the New Testament. The shadows or types of Christ have now come to fruition. The focus of the Nicene Creed is the Son and within that focus was the statement that the Son of God was “begotten, not made.” This emphasis was put in contrast to the heresy which led to its origin, Arianism. I explained the similarities between Mormonism and Arianism and then I preached the passage, Colossians 1:15-18, in stark contrast to both of the aforementioned heresies. All things could not have been created through Christ if Christ himself was created. He is not just the central figure of the Bible, but rather, Paul is clear that Christ is the end for which all things exist, which is impossible if there was a time when he did not exist. We also exist for the glory of God, Christ, and between mankind and God, is the blood of Christ that either saves or condemns. There is no middle ground.

Sermon 4

This sermon was the last sermon to focus solely on the topic of Christ’s eternity. I utilized the passage that is most likely the most easily recognized by Christians in regard to Christ’s eternity, John 1:1-4. This sermon solidified in the minds of the

congregation the non-negotiable tenant of the Christians faith, and expose how the Mormon view of Christ puts in jeopardy not only the eternality of Christ, but the immutability of God as well as the Father's eternal love. This passage establishes Christ relationship to God; he was with God and he was God. This passage also establishes his relationship to all of creation; it was all created through him. Christ is the one who bestows life to men and that life is the light that reveals truth. That truth reveals the Father and that truth reveals one's true self in the light of the Father.

Sermon 5

I preached Sermon 5 on Easter Sunday. This sermon introduced the second of three issues facing the church in response to Mormonism. Was Christ fully God and fully man? Is the hypostatic union biblical? Once again, I introduced the language of the Nicene Creed to the congregation, which states that Jesus that "came down from heaven, and was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and was made man." Paul made it clear to the believers in Colossae that all of who God is dwelled in the body of Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ is the head of all rule and authority. Paul seemed to be battling some form of dualism, and no matter if one adhered to Arianism, adoptionism, or Mormonism, this passage is in conflict with those beliefs, because at some level within those belief systems Christ could not be fully God and fully man. Along with the strong emphasis on Christology, I clearly presented the gospel for all the guests that attended the church on Easter. Salvation is in Christ alone, but salvation is not just a confession. It includes transformation and ultimately triumph over sin and death.

Sermon 6

Using Isaiah 9:1-7 as the text, sermon 6 focused on the full humanity and full divinity of Christ. The previous chapter, Isaiah 8, speaks to the coming Assyrian invasion. All hope was gone. God would use the Assyrians in order to bring his wrath upon his chosen people who had turned from him. However, the answer to that great wrath was

God's great mercy through a great light, a great joy, and a great victory. How would God provide his mercy? He would provide it through a child. A human being, but not any ordinary child. This child would be a Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and the Prince of Peace. Truly this human child is also fully God. One does not need to even approach the New Testament to see God's revelation in the full humanity and deity of Christ.

Sermon 7

Sermon 7 was the last sermon to focus on the full divinity and humanity of Christ. In review, I reminded the congregation what Mormon, not Christian, theologians have stated in regard to Christ. Mormonism does not believe in the traditional Christ of Christianity. Professors at Brigham Young University have stated that Jesus inherited powers and he was gifted with divinity by the will of the Father and Jesus Christ obtained divinity by obedience and devotion to the truth. Romans 1:1-7 was preached in order to once again battle these heretical beliefs in regard to Christ. Paul's greeting emphasizes the creation of Christ's flesh but also the call of Christ as the Son of God in power and the Lord. God loves his people and his chosen are comforted through the grace and peace given to them.

Sermon 8

Sermon 8 began the last of the three Christological issues preached through the series, the equality of the Father and Son. Once again, it was important for the church to understand that the equality of the Father and Son was not a New Testament concept that developed or evolved, but rather it existed in the Old Testament; therefore, the first week on this topic began in Jeremiah 23:1-8. Jeremiah presents God as the owner of the sheep/people and later in the book of John, Jesus makes the claim that he is the Good Shepherd who owns the sheep. This passage is also extremely important in the fact that Christ, the righteous branch in the line of David, is given the name "The Lord is our righteousness."

David proclaimed in Psalm 4 that righteousness only comes from God. The equality of the Father and Son are clearly proclaimed by the prophet Jeremiah.

Sermon 9

Sermon 9 was an opportunity to once again familiarize the congregation with the heretical writings within Mormon leadership in which Jesus is seen as a god only through the will of the Father and the contrary statements contained with the Nicene Creed. The main emphasis of the Nicene Creed was to pointedly address this issue by stating that the Son is “Light of Light, Very God of Very God . . . of one essence with the Father.” I utilized John 8:48-59 for this sermon. Within the context of this passage, the Pharisees are concerned with two issues. They want to know where Christ came from and what he is made of. Evidence of this curiosity comes from the repeated usage of the word “father.” “Father” occurs fourteen times between verses 12 and 47. The Jews were already seeking to kill Jesus due to the fact that he was making himself equal with God (John 5:18), and their reaction to Jesus taking on the name, I AM, is evidence that they understood that Jesus’ claim in John 8 was that he was God. God’s people must be confident that Christ is God and aware that the response of the world will not be favorable to that understanding.

Sermon 10

The final sermon ended where the first began, Paul writing to Timothy. In only three verses Paul makes it clear that he is very concerned about not only the conduct of the church, thus the qualifications for both elders and deacons, but also about the confession of the church. Paul confesses that there is mystery in godliness, which is in Christ. Apart from God and God’s revelation of Christ and through Christ, man is helpless. The humanity and divinity of Christ is beyond human invention or comprehension, but because God has chosen to reveal that “God was manifest in the flesh” (1 Tim 3:16), it can be known by man. Christ is God manifest in the flesh. Christ

is God. The Father and Son are equal. The church must ask, “Do I put my trust in Christ, God, to save me?”

Administering the Post-Sermon Series Survey

During the Sunday school hour on May 17, I administered the post-sermon series survey. The survey was identical to the pre-sermon survey. The purpose of administering the same survey was to evaluate the effectiveness of the sermons in achieving the project’s goals. I compared the pre-sermon and post-sermon survey in order to gauge if the goals of the project were achieved.

Focus Group Meetings

Following the completion of the first Christological issue, Christ’s eternity, the focus group met for the third time in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the sermons in conveying this truth to the congregation. Nine people were in attendance. The discussion and evaluation lasted approximately one hour. The focus of the discussion centered on comments made by the focus group each week and recorded on a sermon evaluation form.

Following the completion of the second Christological issue, Hypostatic Union, the focus group met for the fourth time in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the sermons in conveying this truth to the congregation. Eleven people were in attendance. The discussion and evaluation lasted approximately one hour. The focus of the discussion centered on comments made by the focus group each week and recorded on a sermon evaluation form.

The final meeting of the focus group was Sunday afternoon, May 24. The duration of the meeting was a little over an hour. The group evaluated each sermon and I collected the evaluations and comments used for discussion during the meeting. The group provided feedback in regard to the final Christological issue as well as the overall sermon series.

CHAPTER 5

EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT

Although the research and process of writing ten sermons dealing with three Christological differences between Mormonism and Christianity were extremely helpful to me, the question is, “Did those who heard it preached change?” The only way to begin to grasp that change, if present at all, was to evaluate what the congregation believed prior to hearing the sermons versus what they believed afterwards. The hope was that I could determine what took place in the hearts and minds of the congregation and myself as well.

Analysis of the Data

Two identical surveys were given to the church body. The first survey was given prior to the ten-week “Who is this Christ” sermon series, and the second survey was given after its completion. Each survey was comprised of two sections. The first section dealt with demographic information, and there were no significant changes in the pre and post-surveys. Embedded within the second section of the survey were questions dealing with four different subject matters: expository preaching, the hypostatic union, the eternal nature of Christ, and the equality of the Father and Son. Forty people from the church body completed the pre-sermon series survey and 35 completed the post-sermon series survey. The pre-survey and the post-survey data were entered on a spreadsheet for comparative analysis.

Due to the small sample size and the nature of the data, the best statistical tool for analyzing the Likert Scale and for analyzing discreet data, such as “agree” or “disagree” responses, is a Two-Sample *t* Test. A Two-Sample *t* Test is made up of information that is put in table form and mathematical calculations are conducted in order

to compare the data from independent samples. The sample sizes are to be greater or equal to 30 and less than 10 percent of the respective population. The objective of the Two-Sample t Test is to determine if a significant statistical difference in the two independent values exists, using statistical probabilities. Therefore, by utilizing the Two-Sample t Test, I was able to determine if any significant changes in attitudes or beliefs occurred in the congregation concerning the topics presented. I do not have a background in statistics; therefore, two individuals assisted me with the statistical analysis. Kendahl Lyle, my son and a senior at Summer Creek High School, was instrumental in completing the initial analysis. His work was checked by Frankline Owino, who has a Bachelor of Science in Mathematics from the University of Arkansas and a Masters in Education in Mathematics from Concordia University.

Second, the responses from each question were examined in order to determine the percentage of people who responded in each possible category. For example, for question 1, 12 respondents out of 40 people chose “strongly agree,” therefore 30 percent of the people selected that response. We then compared the response from the post-sermon survey and calculated the difference between the pre-survey and the post-survey results. Utilizing the same question 1 as an example, 30 percent strongly agreed in the pre-survey and 37 percent strongly agreed in the post-survey, which gave a 7 percentage point increase, or a 23 percent increase of the pre-sermon survey.

Each of these analytical tools were utilized to calculate if the church’s awareness of three Christological issues (the eternal nature of Christ, the equality of the Father and Son, and the Hypostatic Union) increased as well as its understanding of expository preaching. The measurement of these results were necessary in order to examine if the goals were realized. After examining the results, it is somewhat difficult to conclude that any significant statistical change occurred as a result of the project. However, one issue has become apparent. One of the challenges with pre-surveys and post-survey is that people invariably have preconceived ideas that may not match reality

in regard to the church. What I discovered was that my church already had a somewhat sufficient knowledge of the three Christological issues addressed. Second, although they may not have been familiar with the term “expository preaching,” the church understood the significance and importance of preaching that exposes the truth of God’s Word.

For example, in question 1, “I believe that preaching is the most important part of the weekly worship service,” the pre-survey exposed that 100 percent already agreed it was the most important part of the worship service and there was little movement between the pre- and post-surveys (see table A7 in appendix 6). In an age where much emphasis is put upon music, I did not expect that result.

Another example involves a Christological issue. For question 6, “Jesus’ virgin birth is non-essential for salvation; and therefore, unimportant,” 96 percent responded that it was important and that result only changed by 1 percentage point to 97 percent on the post-survey (see table A46 in appendix 6). The adherence to this truth as important prior to the sermon series was unexpected. Likewise, question 15, “If the Father is greater than the Son, as Jesus stated, then Jesus was not fully God,” dealt with the equality of the Father and Son. The church overwhelmingly, 100 percent, either disagreed or strongly disagreed (see table A55 in appendix 6).

Although the church appeared to have a firm grasp of the Christological issues, some misconceptions about the essential elements of expository preaching were apparent. One example of this discovery was question 3, “Expository preaching explains Scripture within the boundaries of the author’s intent.” Even after the sermon series, 25 percent did not agree with that statement (see table A43 in appendix 6). Another example of the misconceptions involving expository preaching can be found in the results of question 8, “Expository preaching is preaching that simply explains the selected passage.” After the sermon series, 52 percent agreed with that statement (see table A48 in appendix 6).

Although the results were not as drastic as my preconceptions would have liked them to be, partly due to the church’s maturity in Christological issues, slight

changes did occur in the congregation's understanding of Christology and their attitude toward expository preaching. For instance, for question 10, "God the Son is subordinate (in nature) to God the Father," a 50 percent increase in "strongly disagree" took place. This is significant to the project. Whereas, the Mormon faith would affirm that Christ is subordinate in nature to God the Father, Christianity strongly rejects that belief. There was a clear movement in strongly disagreeing with that statement. Also significant was a 46 percent movement toward disagreement in all response options (see table A50 in appendix 6). Using the Two-Sample t Test, this movement showed a significant statistical difference (see figure A1 in appendix 7). This change demonstrates that the church is more confident that Christ is of the same nature as the Father.

The Two-Sample t Test also showed a significant statistical difference in question 33, "The selected biblical passage is central to expository preaching." Although no one selected "somewhat disagree," "disagree," or "strongly disagree" in either survey, there was a significant movement, 85 percent increase, in "strongly agree" (see table A73 in appendix 6). This result shows a greater confidence among the church regarding this issue. Utilizing the Two-Sample t Test, this question showed the only other significant statistical difference (see figure A2 in appendix 8).

Some disappointments were seen throughout the survey, such as the outcome of question 12, "All Christian denominations have different beliefs about Jesus Christ." Whereas 59 percent selected "somewhat agree" to "strongly agree" in the pre-survey, the post-survey only showed an increase of 15 percent that agreed with that statement (see table A52 in appendix 6). The introduction of the Nicene Creed was presented in order to help establish that doctrines, articulated in a creed, existed concerning Christ that are simply non-negotiable. These doctrines, which are adhered to by the Christian faith, are distinctives that once a faith negates or rejects, that faith is or never was a part of the Christian faith. The responses to question 12 also appeared to contradict the responses to question 14, "As long as people believe in God, what people believe about God is

unimportant.” In both the pre-survey and post-survey, fully 100 percent either selected “somewhat disagree,” “disagree,” or “strongly disagree” (see table A54 in appendix 6). Second, the responses to question 12 appeared to be in conflict with the responses to question 28, “What one believes about Jesus Christ is not as important as simply putting one’s faith in him.” In both the pre-survey and post-survey, the congregation marked 98 percent and 88 percent respectively that they either somewhat disagreed, disagreed, or strongly disagreed with that statement (see table A68 in appendix 6).

The question that appeared to give the most trouble to the congregation was question 24, “God the Father has authority over God the Son.” The pre-survey showed 72 percent somewhat agreed, agreed, or strongly agreed and the post-survey showed only a slight drop to 69 percent that marked the same answers (see table A64 in appendix 6). Unfortunately, I believe, the problem was not the congregation, but rather the wording of the question. The question was written in order to supposedly expose the church’s view in regard to subordinationism. My hope is that it would be rejected. The flaw in the question is that I did not distinguish between function subordination and ontological subordination; therefore, I believe there was much confusion in regard to question 24.

Evaluation of Goals

The first goal of the project was to recognize expository preaching as an essential tool for the proclamation of the Doctrine of Christ. The data indicated that the church already had a good grasp of this issue. Summer Creek Baptist Church is only ten years old and I have been the only pastor of the church. From the first Sunday the church began to meet, expository preaching has been the standard in the pulpit from which the church has accepted and grown. Statistically, no significant changes were seen in regard to the church’s attitude or beliefs towards the essential need for expository preaching in proclaiming the Doctrines of Christ, but the surveys clearly show that the church already recognized this tool as important in the proclamation of God’s Word.

The second goal was for the church to develop a compassionate response for the spiritually immature concerning the Doctrine of Christ while concurrently establishing a confident defense against false religions that advance heretical Christological dogma. Throughout the sermon series, “Who is this Christ,” the church was introduced to Mormon scholars as well as secular scholars who denounced the three essential doctrines presented in this project. Repeatedly, God’s Word was utilized in order to combat these heretical beliefs throughout Scripture. It was important for the church to realize that these Christological truths were not just bolstered by isolated passages, but were supported throughout Scripture. The Old Testament, the Gospels, and the Epistles were used in order to help the church develop a defense of their faith. Again, the statistics revealed very little change, but the pre-survey indicated very little need for change.

The third goal was to help the membership realize the early church’s development of the doctrine of Christ. Although I continuously introduced the Nicene Creed throughout the sermon series and addressed the issue of Mormonism as a rehashing of Arianism, I am not sure how much the church was either interested or retained from that information. The survey did not address this issue. The survey was already quite long in addressing four different topics and there was no indication that the church grasped the reoccurrence of the same heresy throughout history. The historical context and the introduction of the Nicene Creed also proved to be difficult within the context of a sermon when the primary focus was to be the scriptural passages.

The fourth goal was to alert the church to the subtle distortion of Christological doctrine embraced by those outside orthodox Christianity. I believe this goal was achieved. Through research and using the words of Mormon Church leaders as well as BYU professors, the church was able to see the large chasms between Mormon and Christian Christology’s even though the appearance is that only subtle cracks divide the two different faiths. Evidence of the church’s understanding seems to bear out in the surveys. Although there were no questions concerning the Mormon faith, the church appeared to

have a firm grasp on Christian doctrines concerning the eternity, equality, and the hypostatic union, which affords the church the ability to observe any faith that strays from those Christian doctrines.

The fifth goal was a personal goal and it was to improve both my expositional and doctrinal preaching while especially focusing on application. I wanted to become more familiar with the passages and scriptural references which delineate the doctrine of Christ specified in this project. This goal was achieved. It was a challenge to communicate to the congregation the application of these Christological truths into their daily lives, but perhaps even more important, the congregation is more confident about their faith and why they believe what they believe. I also have developed a better sense of apologetics concerning these truths and key points in Scripture where these doctrines are proclaimed and solidified.

Evaluation of Process

I would change or do differently several things about the process if I completed the project again. First, I would have used a town hall meeting or the end of a business meeting to communicate more fully the scope and purpose of the project. Although the focus group that provided feedback throughout the project was aware of the objectives, goals, and process, the entire church was not to the fullest extent.

The second thing I would change about the process would be to have a separate session on the history leading up to and the development of the Nicene Creed. There was simply too much history to cover within a sermon. A historical overview was possible, but without the proper context, the significance of what took place was lost. A session on history would have also given me the opportunity to present to the church the history of Mormonism. Although many in the church know about Joseph Smith, it is difficult to determine if they know the truth about him or if they know the rewritten history in which Joseph Smith is seen as a martyr. Last, given the time, the continued deception of Joseph Smith, including the writing of the Book of Abraham, would have

helped the congregation know the founder of Mormonism more completely and aided in discrediting his claims and writings even further.

The third issue I would change is to be more intentional in my questions for the survey and perhaps have fewer questions. Question 24, “God the Father has authority over God the Son,” was worded poorly and I had already asked the same question from the opposite perspective in question 10, “God the Son is subordinate (in nature) to God the Father.” For those filling out the survey, perhaps the feeling of attempting to be “tricked” was felt. Question 24 was a poorly worded question. In addition, since the scope of the project included three Christological issues and the church’s understanding of expository preaching, the preaching element seemed to be lacking in importance; and therefore, it was reflected on the survey.

Last, I believe the scope of the project was too large. Because each topic only had three weeks, it was difficult to cover biblical history, ancient history, Mormon history, and preach a passage all on the same Sunday; and yet, that is what was required at times. Perhaps, if only one, or at the most two, of the Christological issues would have been addressed, then more time could have been devoted to history and the selected passage for the week. The preaching seemed rushed at times. If the topics would have been fewer, it would have also cut down on the length of the sermon survey.

Theological Reflection

This project was an incredible journey for me. During this process, personal tragedy struck me and my family and it was through the research, study, and preaching that I, along with my church, was reminded who my Lord and Savior was and is in Christ Jesus. Additionally, one of the challenges I faced was preaching not just Christ, but preaching Christ’s attributes from the Old Testament and proclaiming how that translated to the everyday life, or application, to those living in this modern age, including my own life.

I felt it important to show the church that these claims about Christ were not just New Testament claims, but biblical proclamations. The implication was that I had to dive into and study various interpretations of Old Testament passages and how they pointed to Christ. These were passages I was not particularly familiar with and the joy of connecting those passages to the New Testament is one that I hope to do repeatedly in the future. The result is that the church is also hungry for preaching from the Old Testament as I have not seen before.

Finally, what has been quite apparent is that the incommunicable attributes of Christ, namely his eternality, his equality, and the fact that he alone is fully God and fully man, are not just theological or Christological claims to be learned in seminary, but are attributes of our Savior that bring us great comfort. Comfort in that God, not a lesser god or a creation of God, but God himself, has always been involved in redeeming his creation. This series has been instrumental for the church to see that unlike those who have attempted to create a divide between the God of the Old Testament and Jesus Christ, we are firm in our belief and understanding that Christ is our God. Christ is our God who condescended himself, not a man who elevated himself. Christ took on the form of man without ceasing to be God, and he accomplished on the cross what he had long spoken of to his people.

Personal Reflection

Pursuing this doctorate has been one of the greatest challenges and greatest joys I have experienced in my life. I previously mentioned that tragedy struck my family and it was such that I questioned if I even wanted to finish this degree. Through the encouragement of my friends and my children, I found myself comforted through studying and preaching God Word, and that is what brought me out of the storm. This process was, once again, an example of turning to the Lord and watching him calm the storm. So, the first result of this project was simply personal growth and faith in Christ. I have

often heard one of my elder's state, "If you want to grow in your faith, teach." That proved to be true.

This degree has helped me gain confidence in the pulpit and has corrected some of my deficiencies in preaching. There is no longer any passage that worries me. I will admit that, as is true for all young preachers, some passages were intimidating for me to preach, and that is no longer the case. True, some will require more study, more time in the library, and more time late at night, but those are the passages where perhaps some of the greatest truths about the Lord are sitting, waiting for us to find them.

Last, for too long I believed that preaching was simply a matter of opening the Bible and telling the congregation what was in Scripture. Very early in this degree I was made aware that without application, it was not expository preaching, but rather a running commentary. This challenge moved me to truly get involved in the lives of people around me, observe what they are dealing with, their joys and sorrows, and investigate what and how God's Word applies to those moments in life that all of us experience.

Conclusion

This doctoral program and this project has certainly taught me one important truth and it is reflective of what King David spoke. "Who am I, O Lord God, and what is my house that you have brought me thus far" (2 Sam 7:18b)? I am humbled that the Lord has allowed me to go to school all these years and it is simply by his grace that I have been able to do so. It is amazing how many men, both fellow students and faculty, have patiently invested in me and allowed me to grow through this process. I will never forget the early morning prayers and late night dinners discussing, growing, and in awe of our God. I have learned, again as King David spoke, "If I ascend to heaven, you are there! If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there" (Ps 139:8). I have grown to love his church, his Word, and my God and King deeper than I knew I was capable of just a few years ago. Although I wondered at times why I had even started this process, I know that the Lord has used this to refine his child and grow his church.

APPENDIX 1

PRE AND POST-SERIES SURVEY

Section 1: Demographics

Please check the appropriate box

11. How old are you?
 18-19 20-29 30-39 40-49 50-59 60+
12. Are you a member of Summer Creek Baptist Church?
 Yes No Considering Joining
13. How many years have you been a member of Summer Creek Baptist Church? If less than 1 or the previous answer was "No" or "Considering Joining," please check "0."
 0 1 2 3 4 5 6
14. How many years have you been a member of any church?
 0-5 5-10 10-15 15-20 20-30 30-40 40-50 50-60 60+
15. How long have you been saved?
 Not confident in my salvation 0-5 yrs 6-15 yrs 16-25 yrs 26+ yrs
16. On average, how often do you attend church services each month?
 1 time 2 times 3 times 4 times

Section 2: Preaching Survey

Please circle the appropriate response

1. I believe that preaching is the most important part of the weekly worship service.
- | | | | | | |
|----------------|-------|----------------|-------------------|----------|-------------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Strongly Agree | Agree | Somewhat Agree | Somewhat Disagree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
2. Preaching should tell me how to live more than what to believe.
- | | | | | | |
|----------------|-------|----------------|-------------------|----------|-------------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Strongly Agree | Agree | Somewhat Agree | Somewhat Disagree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
3. Expository preaching explains Scripture within the boundaries of the author's intent.
- | | | | | | |
|----------------|-------|----------------|-------------------|----------|-------------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Strongly Agree | Agree | Somewhat Agree | Somewhat Disagree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |

4. As long as people say they believe in Jesus Christ, they are saved.
- | | | | | | |
|----------|-------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Strongly | Agree | Somewhat | Somewhat | Disagree | Strongly |
| Agree | | Agree | Disagree | | Disagree |
5. I would rather hear sermons that speak to my felt needs (money, marriage, family, careers, etc.) more than going verse by verse through book in the Bible.
- | | | | | | |
|----------|-------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Strongly | Agree | Somewhat | Somewhat | Disagree | Strongly |
| Agree | | Agree | Disagree | | Disagree |
6. Jesus' virgin birth is non-essential for salvation; and therefore, unimportant.
- | | | | | | |
|----------|-------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Strongly | Agree | Somewhat | Somewhat | Disagree | Strongly |
| Agree | | Agree | Disagree | | Disagree |
7. I am concerned about what type of preaching comes from the pulpit.
- | | | | | | |
|----------|-------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Strongly | Agree | Somewhat | Somewhat | Disagree | Strongly |
| Agree | | Agree | Disagree | | Disagree |
8. Expository preaching is preaching that simply explains the selected passage.
- | | | | | | |
|----------|-------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Strongly | Agree | Somewhat | Somewhat | Disagree | Strongly |
| Agree | | Agree | Disagree | | Disagree |
9. My beliefs affect how I live my daily life.
- | | | | | | |
|----------|-------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Strongly | Agree | Somewhat | Somewhat | Disagree | Strongly |
| Agree | | Agree | Disagree | | Disagree |
10. God the Son is subordinate (in nature) to God the Father.
- | | | | | | |
|----------|-------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Strongly | Agree | Somewhat | Somewhat | Disagree | Strongly |
| Agree | | Agree | Disagree | | Disagree |
11. I am more concerned about the church ministering to me and my family than the preaching.
- | | | | | | |
|----------|-------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Strongly | Agree | Somewhat | Somewhat | Disagree | Strongly |
| Agree | | Agree | Disagree | | Disagree |
12. All Christian denominations have different beliefs about Jesus Christ.
- | | | | | | |
|----------|-------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Strongly | Agree | Somewhat | Somewhat | Disagree | Strongly |
| Agree | | Agree | Disagree | | Disagree |
13. Jesus was fully man.
- | | | | | | |
|----------|-------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Strongly | Agree | Somewhat | Somewhat | Disagree | Strongly |
| Agree | | Agree | Disagree | | Disagree |

14. As long as people believe in God, what people believe about God is unimportant.
- | | | | | | |
|----------------|-------|----------------|-------------------|----------|-------------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Strongly Agree | Agree | Somewhat Agree | Somewhat Disagree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
15. If the Father is greater than the Son, as Jesus stated, then Jesus was not fully God.
- | | | | | | |
|----------------|-------|----------------|-------------------|----------|-------------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Strongly Agree | Agree | Somewhat Agree | Somewhat Disagree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
16. Expository preaching is the preacher's interpretation of a passage.
- | | | | | | |
|----------------|-------|----------------|-------------------|----------|-------------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Strongly Agree | Agree | Somewhat Agree | Somewhat Disagree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
17. Jesus Christ never claimed to be God.
- | | | | | | |
|----------------|-------|----------------|-------------------|----------|-------------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Strongly Agree | Agree | Somewhat Agree | Somewhat Disagree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
18. Jesus was God's first creation, and then everything else was created through Jesus.
- | | | | | | |
|----------------|-------|----------------|-------------------|----------|-------------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Strongly Agree | Agree | Somewhat Agree | Somewhat Disagree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
19. Jesus could not be God if he "increased in wisdom and stature."
- | | | | | | |
|----------------|-------|----------------|-------------------|----------|-------------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Strongly Agree | Agree | Somewhat Agree | Somewhat Disagree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
20. Christian beliefs should be preached.
- | | | | | | |
|----------------|-------|----------------|-------------------|----------|-------------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Strongly Agree | Agree | Somewhat Agree | Somewhat Disagree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
21. My beliefs, concerning God, have very little effect on my daily life.
- | | | | | | |
|----------------|-------|----------------|-------------------|----------|-------------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Strongly Agree | Agree | Somewhat Agree | Somewhat Disagree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
22. As long as the preaching is relevant to me, I am not concerned about the biblical context.
- | | | | | | |
|----------------|-------|----------------|-------------------|----------|-------------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Strongly Agree | Agree | Somewhat Agree | Somewhat Disagree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
23. I am more interested in what a passage says, not WHY it was written.
- | | | | | | |
|----------------|-------|----------------|-------------------|----------|-------------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Strongly Agree | Agree | Somewhat Agree | Somewhat Disagree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
24. God the Father has authority over God the Son.
- | | | | | | |
|----------------|-------|----------------|-------------------|----------|-------------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Strongly Agree | Agree | Somewhat Agree | Somewhat Disagree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |

25. Jesus Christ was fully God.
- | | | | | | |
|-------------------|-------|-------------------|----------------------|----------|----------------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Strongly
Agree | Agree | Somewhat
Agree | Somewhat
Disagree | Disagree | Strongly
Disagree |
26. Unlike topical preaching, expository preaching is not relevant to my life.
- | | | | | | |
|-------------------|-------|-------------------|----------------------|----------|----------------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Strongly
Agree | Agree | Somewhat
Agree | Somewhat
Disagree | Disagree | Strongly
Disagree |
27. Expository preaching should always explain how the passage should be applied to my life.
- | | | | | | |
|-------------------|-------|-------------------|----------------------|----------|----------------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Strongly
Agree | Agree | Somewhat
Agree | Somewhat
Disagree | Disagree | Strongly
Disagree |
28. What one believes about Jesus Christ is not as important as simply putting one's faith in him.
- | | | | | | |
|-------------------|-------|-------------------|----------------------|----------|----------------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Strongly
Agree | Agree | Somewhat
Agree | Somewhat
Disagree | Disagree | Strongly
Disagree |
29. Jesus Christ was a man fully filled by God.
- | | | | | | |
|-------------------|-------|-------------------|----------------------|----------|----------------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Strongly
Agree | Agree | Somewhat
Agree | Somewhat
Disagree | Disagree | Strongly
Disagree |
30. God the Father and God the Son are equally God.
- | | | | | | |
|-------------------|-------|-------------------|----------------------|----------|----------------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Strongly
Agree | Agree | Somewhat
Agree | Somewhat
Disagree | Disagree | Strongly
Disagree |
31. Jesus Christ was not fully God until he ascended into heaven.
- | | | | | | |
|-------------------|-------|-------------------|----------------------|----------|----------------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Strongly
Agree | Agree | Somewhat
Agree | Somewhat
Disagree | Disagree | Strongly
Disagree |
32. If a sermon is expository, it cannot be topical.
- | | | | | | |
|-------------------|-------|-------------------|----------------------|----------|----------------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Strongly
Agree | Agree | Somewhat
Agree | Somewhat
Disagree | Disagree | Strongly
Disagree |
33. The selected biblical passage is central to expository preaching.
- | | | | | | |
|-------------------|-------|-------------------|----------------------|----------|----------------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Strongly
Agree | Agree | Somewhat
Agree | Somewhat
Disagree | Disagree | Strongly
Disagree |
34. Scripture should aid in interpreting Scripture.
- | | | | | | |
|-------------------|-------|-------------------|----------------------|----------|----------------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Strongly
Agree | Agree | Somewhat
Agree | Somewhat
Disagree | Disagree | Strongly
Disagree |

APPENDIX 3

SERMON OUTLINES

Sermon 1 2 Timothy 4:1-8 “Doctrine Matters”

- I. Introduction
- II. 2 Timothy Context
- III. The imperative: WHAT we are to do - Preach the Word
- IV. Why is teaching sound doctrine so important
- V. How does one fulfill the imperative to preach the Word?
- VI. Paul’s point

Sermon 2 Psalm 2 “Christ’s Eternality” – part 1

- I. Review of 2 Timothy 4:1-8
- II. Introduction to Psalm 2
- III. The Question – Why do the nations rage?
- IV. The Observation – They want to burst their bonds and cords
- V. The Pause – God Laughs
- VI. The Announcement – Christ is revealed
- VII. The Warning – Christ’s future actions
- VIII. The Gospel – Take Refuge

Sermon 3 Colossians 1:15-20 “Christ’s Eternality” – part 2

- I. Review of Psalm 2
- II. Heresy and the Nicene Creed
- III. Introduction to Colossians
- IV. Christ’s relation to deity
- V. Christ’s relation to creation
- VI. Christ’s relation to the church

Sermon 4 John 1:1-15 “Christ’s Eternality” – part 3

- I. Review of Colossians 1:15-20
- II. Adoptionism
- III. Christ’s relation to deity (John 1:1)
- IV. Christ’s relation to creation
- V. Christ’s relation to the world and the church

Sermon 5 Colossians 2:6-15 “Fully God, Fully Man” – part 1

- I. Review of Heresies and the Response
- II. Context - Colossians 2:1-5 (Encouragement)
- III. Colossians 2:6-7 (Christian life)
- IV. Colossians 2:8 (Warning)
- V. Colossians 2:9-12 (Salvation)
- VI. Colossians 2:13-14 (Transformation)
- VII. Colossians 2:15 (Triumph)

Sermon 6 Isaiah 9:1-7 “Fully God, Fully Man” – part 2

- I. Introduction – fear of the future
- II. Isaiah 9:1 – A Great Hope
- III. Isaiah 9:2 – A Great Light
- IV. Isaiah 9:3 – A Great Joy
- V. Isaiah 9:4 – A Great Victory
- VI. Isaiah 9:5 – A Great Peace
- VII. Isaiah 9:6 – A Great Child
- VIII. Isaiah 9:7 – A Great Salvation

Sermon 7 Romans 1:1-7 “Fully God, Fully Man” – part 3

- I. Introduction
- II. Romans 1:1-2 – Greeting
- III. Romans 1:3-4 – The Person Christ
- IV. Romans 1:5-6 – The Call of Christ
- V. Romans 1:7 – The Comfort of Christ

Sermon 8 Jeremiah 23:1-8 “Equality of Father & Son” – part 1

- I. Introduction – What’s a little sin?
- II. Jeremiah context
- III. Jeremiah 23:1-2 – The Shepherds
- IV. Jeremiah 23:3 – The Sheep
- V. Jeremiah 23:3-4 – The Owner
- VI. Jeremiah 23:5-6 – The Righteousness
- VII. Jeremiah 23:7-8 – The Savior

Sermon 9 John 8:48-59 “Equality of Father & Son” – part 2

- I. Review – Bad (evil) shepherds and bad (evil) people?
- II. Heresy of Arianism and Mormonism
- III. John context
- IV. John 8:48-51 – Apart from The Word, Christ is DISTORTED and DISHONOERED
- V. John 8:52-56 – From distortion and dishonor to DISPUTE
- VI. John 8:57-59 – From distortion, dishonor, and dispute to DESTROY

Sermon 10 1 Timothy 2:14-16 ”Equality of Father & Son” – part 3

- I. Review – Wrap up of the last 9 weeks
- II. Heresy of Arianism and Mormonism
- III. 1 Timothy context
- IV. 1 Timothy 3:14-15 – Conduct
- V. 1 Timothy 3:16 – Confession

APPENDIX 4
DEMOGRAPHIC AVERAGES

Table A1. Average responses to demographic question 1

Question 1: How old are you?						
	18-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60+
Pre-Test Percentages	3	8	21	40	20	8
Post-Test Percentages	0	14	23	40	18	5

Conclusion: There was no significant movement

Table A2. Average responses to demographic question 2

Question 2: Are you a member of SCBC (Summer Creek Baptist Church)?			
	Yes	No	Considering
Pre-Test Percentages	100	0	0
Post-Test Percentages	94	3	3

Conclusion: There was no significant movement

Table A3. Average responses to demographic question 3

Question 3: How many years have you been a member of SCBC (less than 1 or considering = 0)							
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Pre-Test Percentages	3	10	10	18	0	5	54
Post-Test Percentages	8	0	9	17	11	14	41

Conclusion: There was no significant movement

Table A4. Average responses to demographic question 4

Question 4: How many years have been a member of any church?									
	0-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	60+
Pre-Test Percentages	5	3	10	5	18	26	12	21	0
Post-Test Percentages	8	6	6	6	23	20	17	14	0

Conclusion: There was no significant movement

Table A5. Average responses to demographic question 5

Question 5: How long have you been saved?					
	0-5	0-5 Years	6-15 Years	16-25 Years	26+ Years
Pre-Test Percentages	0	0	13	23	64
Post-Test Percentages	0	9	17	23	51

Conclusion: There was no significant movement

Table A6. Average responses to demographic question 6

Question 6: On average, how often do you attend church services each month				
	1 Time	2 Times	3 Times	4 Times
Pre-Test Percentages	5	3	20	80
Post-Test Percentages	3	0	26	71

Conclusion: There was no significant movement

APPENDIX 5

AVERAGES RESPONSES TO SURVEY

Table A7. Average responses to question 1

Question 1: I believe that preaching is the most important part of the weekly worship service.	
Pre-Test Average	2.00
Post-Test Average	2.20
Difference	0.20
1 = Strongly Agree 2 = Agree 3 = Somewhat Agree 4 = Somewhat Disagree 5 = Disagree 6 = Strongly Disagree	

Table A8. Average responses to question 2

Question 2: Preaching should tell me how to live more than what to believe.	
Pre-Test Average	4.10
Post-Test Average	4.23
Difference	0.13
1 = Strongly Agree 2 = Agree 3 = Somewhat Agree 4 = Somewhat Disagree 5 = Disagree 6 = Strongly Disagree	

Table A9. Average responses to question 3

Question 3: Expository preaching explains Scripture within the boundaries of the author's intent.	
Pre-Test Average	2.33
Post-Test Average	2.57
Difference	0.24
1 = Strongly Agree 2 = Agree 3 = Somewhat Agree 4 = Somewhat Disagree 5 = Disagree 6 = Strongly Disagree	

Table A10. Average responses to question 4

Question 4: As long as people say they believe in Jesus Christ, they are saved.	
Pre-Test Average	5.28
Post-Test Average	5.38
Difference	0.10
1 = Strongly Agree 2 = Agree 3 = Somewhat Agree 4 = Somewhat Disagree 5 = Disagree 6 = Strongly Disagree	

Table A11. Average responses to question 5

Question 5: I would rather hear sermons that speak to my felt needs (money, marriage, family, careers, etc.) more than going verse by verse through books in the Bible.	
Pre-Test Average	4.85
Post-Test Average	5.03
Difference	0.18
1 = Strongly Agree 2 = Agree 3 = Somewhat Agree 4 = Somewhat Disagree 5 = Disagree 6 = Strongly Disagree	

Table A12. Average responses to question 6

Question 6: Jesus' virgin birth is non-essential for salvation; and therefore, unimportant.	
Pre-Test Average	5.73
Post-Test Average	5.77
Difference	0.04
1 = Strongly Agree 2 = Agree 3 = Somewhat Agree 4 = Somewhat Disagree 5 = Disagree 6 = Strongly Disagree	

Table A13. Average responses to question 7

Question 7: I am concerned about what type of preaching comes from the pulpit.	
Pre-Test Average	1.63
Post-Test Average	1.66
Difference	0.03
1 = Strongly Agree 2 = Agree 3 = Somewhat Agree 4 = Somewhat Disagree 5 = Disagree 6 = Strongly Disagree	

Table A14. Average responses to question 8

Question 8: Expository preaching is preaching that simply explains the selected passage.	
Pre-Test Average	3.73
Post-Test Average	3.69
Difference	0.04
1 = Strongly Agree 2 = Agree 3 = Somewhat Agree 4 = Somewhat Disagree 5 = Disagree 6 = Strongly Disagree	

Table A15. Average response to question 9

Question 9: My beliefs affect how I live.	
Pre-Test Average	1.33
Post-Test Average	1.51
Difference	0.18
1 = Strongly Agree 2 = Agree 3 = Somewhat Agree 4 = Somewhat Disagree 5 = Disagree 6 = Strongly Disagree	

Table A16. Average responses to question 10

Question 10: God the Son is subordinate (in nature) to God the Father.	
Pre-Test Average	4.10
Post-Test Average	5.20
Difference	1.10
1 = Strongly Agree 2 = Agree 3 = Somewhat Agree 4 = Somewhat Disagree 5 = Disagree 6 = Strongly Disagree	

Table A17. Average response to question 11

Question 11: I am more concerned about the church ministering to me and my family than the preaching.	
Pre-Test Average	4.95
Post-Test Average	4.85
Difference	0.10
1 = Strongly Agree 2 = Agree 3 = Somewhat Agree 4 = Somewhat Disagree 5 = Disagree 6 = Strongly Disagree	

Table A18. Average responses to question 12

Question 12: All Christian denominations have different beliefs about Jesus Christ.		
	Pre-Test Average	3.70
	Post-Test Average	3.29
	Difference	0.41
1 = Strongly Agree 2 = Agree 3 = Somewhat Agree 4 = Somewhat Disagree 5 = Disagree 6 = Strongly Disagree		

Table A19. Average responses to question 13

Question 13: Jesus was fully man.		
	Pre-Test Average	1.30
	Post-Test Average	1.23
	Difference	0.07
1 = Strongly Agree 2 = Agree 3 = Somewhat Agree 4 = Somewhat Disagree 5 = Disagree 6 = Strongly Disagree		

Table A20. Average responses to question 14

Question 14: As long as people believe in God, what people believe about God is unimportant.		
	Pre-Test Average	5.80
	Post-Test Average	5.86
	Difference	0.06
1 = Strongly Agree 2 = Agree 3 = Somewhat Agree 4 = Somewhat Disagree 5 = Disagree 6 = Strongly Disagree		

Table A21. Average responses to question 15

Question 15: If the Father is greater than the Son, as Jesus stated, then Jesus was not fully God.		
	Pre-Test Average	5.80
	Post-Test Average	5.77
	Difference	0.03
1 = Strongly Agree 2 = Agree 3 = Somewhat Agree 4 = Somewhat Disagree 5 = Disagree 6 = Strongly Disagree		

Table A22. Average responses to question 16

Question 16: Expository preaching is the preacher's interpretation of a passage.		
	Pre-Test Average	4.40
	Post-Test Average	4.40
	Difference	0.00
1 = Strongly Agree 2 = Agree 3 = Somewhat Agree 4 = Somewhat Disagree 5 = Disagree 6 = Strongly Disagree		

Table A23. Average responses to question 17

Question 17: Jesus Christ never claimed to be God.		
	Pre-Test Average	5.23
	Post-Test Average	5.31
	Difference	0.08
1 = Strongly Agree 2 = Agree 3 = Somewhat Agree 4 = Somewhat Disagree 5 = Disagree 6 = Strongly Disagree		

Table A24. Average responses to question 18

Question 18: Jesus was God's first creation, and then everything else was created through Jesus.		
	Pre-Test Average	5.15
	Post-Test Average	5.32
	Difference	0.17
1 = Strongly Agree 2 = Agree 3 = Somewhat Agree 4 = Somewhat Disagree 5 = Disagree 6 = Strongly Disagree		

Table A25. Average responses to question 19

Question 19: Jesus could not be God if he "increased in wisdom and stature."		
	Pre-Test Average	5.50
	Post-Test Average	5.15
	Difference	0.35
1 = Strongly Agree 2 = Agree 3 = Somewhat Agree 4 = Somewhat Disagree 5 = Disagree 6 = Strongly Disagree		

Table A26. Average responses to question 20

Question 20: Christian beliefs should be preached.		
	Pre-Test Average	1.60
	Post-Test Average	1.77
	Difference	0.17
1 = Strongly Agree 2 = Agree 3 = Somewhat Agree 4 = Somewhat Disagree 5 = Disagree 6 = Strongly Disagree		

Table A27. Average responses to question 21

Question 21: My beliefs, concerning God, have very little effect on my daily life.		
	Pre-Test Average	5.55
	Post-Test Average	5.60
	Difference	0.05
1 = Strongly Agree 2 = Agree 3 = Somewhat Agree 4 = Somewhat Disagree 5 = Disagree 6 = Strongly Disagree		

Table A28. Average responses to question 22

Question 22: As long as the preaching is relevant to me, I am not concerned about the biblical context.		
	Pre-Test Average	5.90
	Post-Test Average	5.86
	Difference	0.04
1 = Strongly Agree 2 = Agree 3 = Somewhat Agree 4 = Somewhat Disagree 5 = Disagree 6 = Strongly Disagree		

Table A29. Average responses to question 23

Question 23: I am more interested in what a passage says, not WHY it was written.		
	Pre-Test Average	5.15
	Post-Test Average	4.94
	Difference	0.21
1 = Strongly Agree 2 = Agree 3 = Somewhat Agree 4 = Somewhat Disagree 5 = Disagree 6 = Strongly Disagree		

Table A30. Average responses to question 24

Question 24: God the Father has authority over God the Son.		
	Pre-Test Average	2.83
	Post-Test Average	3.30
	Difference	0.47
1 = Strongly Agree 2 = Agree 3 = Somewhat Agree 4 = Somewhat Disagree 5 = Disagree 6 = Strongly Disagree		

Table A31. Average responses to question 25

Question 25: Jesus Christ was fully God.		
	Pre-Test Average	1.40
	Post-Test Average	1.31
	Difference	0.09
1 = Strongly Agree 2 = Agree 3 = Somewhat Agree 4 = Somewhat Disagree 5 = Disagree 6 = Strongly Disagree		

Table A32. Average responses to question 26

Question 26: Unlike topical preaching, expository preaching is not relevant to my life.		
	Pre-Test Average	5.55
	Post-Test Average	5.54
	Difference	0.01
1 = Strongly Agree 2 = Agree 3 = Somewhat Agree 4 = Somewhat Disagree 5 = Disagree 6 = Strongly Disagree		

Table A33. Average responses to question 27

Question 27: Expository preaching should always explain how the passage should be applied to my life.		
	Pre-Test Average	2.35
	Post-Test Average	2.49
	Difference	0.14
1 = Strongly Agree 2 = Agree 3 = Somewhat Agree 4 = Somewhat Disagree 5 = Disagree 6 = Strongly Disagree		

Table A34. Average responses to question 28

Question 28: What one believes about Jesus Christ is not as important as simply putting one's faith in him.		
	Pre-Test Average	5.28
	Post-Test Average	5.06
	Difference	0.22
1 = Strongly Agree 2 = Agree 3 = Somewhat Agree 4 = Somewhat Disagree 5 = Disagree 6 = Strongly Disagree		

Table A35. Average responses to question 29

Question 29: Jesus Christ was a man fully filled by God.		
	Pre-Test Average	4.08
	Post-Test Average	4.18
	Difference	0.10
1 = Strongly Agree 2 = Agree 3 = Somewhat Agree 4 = Somewhat Disagree 5 = Disagree 6 = Strongly Disagree		

Table A36. Average responses to question 30

Question 30: God the Father and God the Son are equally God.		
	Pre-Test Average	1.38
	Post-Test Average	1.29
	Difference	0.09
1 = Strongly Agree 2 = Agree 3 = Somewhat Agree 4 = Somewhat Disagree 5 = Disagree 6 = Strongly Disagree		

Table A37. Average responses to question 31

Question 31: Jesus Christ was not fully God until he ascended into heaven.		
	Pre-Test Average	5.25
	Post-Test Average	5.46
	Difference	0.21
1 = Strongly Agree 2 = Agree 3 = Somewhat Agree 4 = Somewhat Disagree 5 = Disagree 6 = Strongly Disagree		

Table A38. Average responses to question 32

Question 32: If a sermon is expository, it cannot be topical.	
Pre-Test Average	4.45
Post-Test Average	4.66
Difference	0.21
1 = Strongly Agree 2 = Agree 3 = Somewhat Agree 4 = Somewhat Disagree 5 = Disagree 6 = Strongly Disagree	

Table A39. Average responses to question 33

Question 33: The selected biblical passage is central to expository preaching.	
Pre-Test Average	2.00
Post-Test Average	1.74
Difference	0.26
1 = Strongly Agree 2 = Agree 3 = Somewhat Agree 4 = Somewhat Disagree 5 = Disagree 6 = Strongly Disagree	

Table A40. Average responses to question 34

Question 34: Scripture should aid in interpreting scripture.	
Pre-Test Average	1.33
Post-Test Average	1.49
Difference	0.16
1 = Strongly Agree 2 = Agree 3 = Somewhat Agree 4 = Somewhat Disagree 5 = Disagree 6 = Strongly Disagree	

APPENDIX 6

ACTUAL RESPONSES TO SURVEY

Table A41. Actual responses to question 1

Question 1: I believe that preaching is the most important part of the weekly worship service.				
	Pre-Test		Post-Test	
Possible Responses	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	12	30	13	37
Agree	16	40	12	34
Somewhat Agree	12	30	6	17
Somewhat Disagree	0	0	0	0
Disagree	0	0	2	2
Strongly Disagree	0	0	2	2

Conclusion: There was no significant movement

Table A42. Actual responses to question 2

Question 2: Preaching should tell me how to live more than what to believe.				
	Pre-Test		Post-Test	
Possible Responses	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	3	8	2	6
Agree	1	3	1	3
Somewhat Agree	10	25	4	11
Somewhat Disagree	7	18	12	34
Disagree	13	33	12	34
Strongly Disagree	6	15	4	11

Conclusion: There was no significant movement

Table A43. Actual responses to question 3

Question 3: Expository preaching explains Scripture within the boundaries of the author's intent.				
	Pre-Test		Post-Test	
Possible Responses	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	8	20	9	26
Agree	22	55	10	29
Somewhat Agree	4	10	7	20
Somewhat Disagree	2	5	4	11
Disagree	3	8	4	11
Strongly Disagree	1	3	1	3

Conclusion: There was no significant movement

Table A44. Actual responses to question 4

Question 4: As long as people say they believe in Jesus Christ, they are saved.				
	Pre-Test		Post-Test	
Possible Responses	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	1	3	1	3
Agree	0	0	1	3
Somewhat Agree	3	8	1	3
Somewhat Disagree	1	3	0	0
Disagree	13	33	9	26
Strongly Disagree	22	55	22	65

Conclusion: There was no significant movement

Table A45. Actual responses to question 5

Question 5: I would rather hear sermons that speak to my felt needs (money, marriage, family, careers, etc.) more than going verse by verse through books in the Bible.				
Possible Responses	Pre-Test		Post-Test	
	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	0	0	0	0
Agree	2	5	1	3
Somewhat Agree	3	8	2	6
Somewhat Disagree	7	18	7	20
Disagree	15	38	10	29
Strongly Disagree	13	33	15	43

Conclusion: There was no significant movement

Table A46. Actual responses to question 6

Question 6: Jesus' virgin birth is non-essential for salvation; and therefore, unimportant.				
Possible Responses	Pre-Test		Post-Test	
	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	0	0	0	0
Agree	1	3	1	3
Somewhat Agree	1	3	0	0
Somewhat Disagree	1	3	0	0
Disagree	2	5	4	11
Strongly Disagree	35	88	30	86

Conclusion: There was no significant movement

Table A47. Actual responses to question 7

Question 7: I am concerned about what type of preaching comes from the pulpit.				
Possible Responses	Pre-Test		Post-Test	
	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	28	70	19	54
Agree	6	15	12	34
Somewhat Agree	3	8	2	6
Somewhat Disagree	1	3	1	3
Disagree	0	0	1	3
Strongly Disagree	2	5	0	0

Conclusion: There was no significant movement

Table A48. Actual responses to question 8

Question 8: Expository preaching is preaching that simply explains the selected passage.				
	Pre-Test		Post-Test	
Possible Responses	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	0	0	3	9
Agree	7	18	5	14
Somewhat Agree	12	30	10	29
Somewhat Disagree	7	18	3	9
Disagree	13	33	10	29
Strongly Disagree	1	3	4	11

Conclusion: There was no significant movement

Table A49. Actual responses to question 9

Question 9: My beliefs affect how I live.				
	Pre-Test		Post-Test	
Possible Responses	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	28	70	22	63
Agree	9	23	9	26
Somewhat Agree	2	5	3	9
Somewhat Disagree	0	0	1	3
Disagree	0	0	0	0
Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	0

Conclusion: There was no significant movement

Table A50. Actual responses to question 10

Question 10: God the Son is subordinate (in nature) to God the Father.				
	Pre-Test		Post-Test	
Possible Responses	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	5	13	0	0
Agree	9	23	4	11
Somewhat Agree	2	5	0	0
Somewhat Disagree	0	0	1	3
Disagree	9	23	10	29
Strongly Disagree	15	38	20	57

Conclusion: There was a 50 percent increase in "Strongly Disagree" and a 46 percent movement towards disagreement

Table A51. Actual responses to question 11

Question 11: I am more concerned about the church ministering to me and my family than the preaching.				
	Pre-Test		Post-Test	
Possible Responses	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	0	0	0	0
Agree	1	3	1	3
Somewhat Agree	3	8	4	12
Somewhat Disagree	8	20	3	9
Disagree	13	33	17	50
Strongly Disagree	15	38	9	26

Conclusion: There was no significant movement

Table A52. Actual responses to question 12

Question 12: All Christian denominations have different beliefs about Jesus Christ.				
	Pre-Test		Post-Test	
Possible Responses	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	3	8	3	9
Agree	3	8	7	21
Somewhat Agree	17	43	13	38
Somewhat Disagree	3	8	3	9
Disagree	8	20	4	12
Strongly Disagree	6	15	4	12

Conclusion: There was no significant movement

Table A53. Actual responses to question 13

Question 13: Jesus was fully man.				
	Pre-Test		Post-Test	
Possible Responses	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	32	80	30	86
Agree	6	15	4	11
Somewhat Agree	1	3	0	0
Somewhat Disagree	0	0	0	0
Disagree	1	3	1	3
Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	0

Conclusion: There was no significant movement

Table A54. Actual responses to question 14

Question 14: As long as people believe in God, what people believe about God is unimportant.				
	Pre-Test		Post-Test	
Possible Responses	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	0	0	0	0
Agree	0	0	0	0
Somewhat Agree	0	0	0	0
Somewhat Disagree	1	3	1	3
Disagree	6	15	3	9
Strongly Disagree	33	83	31	89

Conclusion: There was no significant movement

Table A55. Actual responses to question 15

Question 15: If the Father is greater than the Son, as Jesus stated, then Jesus was not fully God.				
	Pre-Test		Post-Test	
Possible Responses	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	0	0	0	0
Agree	0	0	1	3
Somewhat Agree	0	0	0	0
Somewhat Disagree	0	0	0	0
Disagree	8	20	4	11
Strongly Disagree	32	80	30	86

Conclusion: There was no significant movement

Table A56. Actual responses to question 16

Question 16: Expository preaching is the preacher's interpretation of a passage.				
	Pre-Test		Post-Test	
Possible Responses	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	0	0	0	0
Agree	6	15	3	9
Somewhat Agree	6	15	2	6
Somewhat Disagree	4	10	8	23
Disagree	14	35	14	40
Strongly Disagree	10	25	8	23

Conclusion: There was no significant movement

Table A57. Actual responses to question 17

Question 17: Jesus Christ never claimed to be God.				
	Pre-Test		Post-Test	
Possible Responses	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	1	3	0	0
Agree	3	8	5	14
Somewhat Agree	2	5	0	0
Somewhat Disagree	0	0	0	0
Disagree	8	20	4	11
Strongly Disagree	26	65	26	74

Conclusion: There was no significant movement

Table A58. Actual responses to question 18

Question 18: Jesus was God's first creation, and then everything else was created through Jesus.				
	Pre-Test		Post-Test	
Possible Responses	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	2	5	2	6
Agree	2	5	0	0
Somewhat Agree	0	0	0	0
Somewhat Disagree	2	5	2	6
Disagree	11	28	9	26
Strongly Disagree	22	56	21	62

Conclusion: There was no significant movement

Table A59. Actual responses to question 19

Question 19: Jesus could not be God if he "increased in wisdom and stature."				
	Pre-Test		Post-Test	
Possible Responses	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	0	0	1	3
Agree	0	0	2	6
Somewhat Agree	0	0	0	0
Somewhat Disagree	3	8	0	0
Disagree	14	35	8	24
Strongly Disagree	23	58	23	68

Conclusion: There was no significant movement

Table A60. Actual responses to question 20

Question 20: Christian beliefs should be preached.				
	Pre-Test		Post-Test	
Possible Responses	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	25	63	17	49
Agree	12	30	14	40
Somewhat Agree	0	0	2	6
Somewhat Disagree	1	3	0	0
Disagree	1	3	1	3
Strongly Disagree	1	3	1	3

Conclusion: There was no significant movement

Table A61. Actual responses to question 21

Question 21: My beliefs, concerning God, have very little effect on my daily life.				
	Pre-Test		Post-Test	
Possible Responses	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	0	0	0	0
Agree	0	0	0	0
Somewhat Agree	1	3	1	3
Somewhat Disagree	1	3	0	0
Disagree	13	33	11	31
Strongly Disagree	25	63	23	66

Conclusion: There was no significant movement

Table A62. Actual responses to question 22

Question 22: As long as the preaching is relevant to me, I am not concerned about the biblical context.				
	Pre-Test		Post-Test	
Possible Responses	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	0	0	0	0
Agree	0	0	0	0
Somewhat Agree	0	0	0	0
Somewhat Disagree	0	0	0	0
Disagree	4	10	5	14
Strongly Disagree	36	90	30	86

Conclusion: There was no significant movement

Table A63. Actual responses to question 23

Question 23: I am more interested in what a passage says, not WHY it was written.				
	Pre-Test		Post-Test	
Possible Responses	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	0	0	0	0
Agree	1	3	1	3
Somewhat Agree	2	5	2	6
Somewhat Disagree	3	8	3	9
Disagree	18	45	21	60
Strongly Disagree	16	40	8	23

Conclusion: There was no significant movement

Table A64. Actual responses to question 24

Question 24: God the Father has authority over God the Son.				
	Pre-Test		Post-Test	
Possible Responses	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	7	18	7	21
Agree	15	38	5	15
Somewhat Agree	7	18	8	24
Somewhat Disagree	2	5	2	6
Disagree	7	18	6	18
Strongly Disagree	2	5	5	15

Conclusion: There was no significant movement

Table A65. Actual responses to question 25

Question 25: Jesus was fully God.				
	Pre-Test		Post-Test	
Possible Responses	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	32	80	30	86
Agree	5	13	3	9
Somewhat Agree	0	0	0	0
Somewhat Disagree	1	3	0	0
Disagree	2	5	2	6
Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	0

Conclusion: There was no significant movement

Table A66. Actual responses to question 26

Question 26: Unlike topical preaching, expository preaching is not relevant to my life.				
	Pre-Test		Post-Test	
Possible Responses	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	0	0	0	0
Agree	1	3	0	0
Somewhat Agree	0	0	0	0
Somewhat Disagree	0	0	2	6
Disagree	14	35	12	34
Strongly Disagree	25	63	21	60

Conclusion: There was no significant movement

Table A67. Actual responses to question 27

Question 27: Expository preaching should always explain how the passage should be applied to my life.				
Possible Responses	Pre-Test		Post-Test	
	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	12	30	10	29
Agree	16	40	10	29
Somewhat Agree	4	10	8	23
Somewhat Disagree	3	8	2	6
Disagree	4	10	5	14
Strongly Disagree	1	3	0	0

Conclusion: There was no significant movement

Table A68. Actual responses to question 28

Question 28: What one believes about Jesus Christ is not as important as simply putting one's faith in him.				
Possible Responses	Pre-Test		Post-Test	
	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	1	3	1	3
Agree	0	0	3	9
Somewhat Agree	0	0	0	0
Somewhat Disagree	4	10	2	6
Disagree	16	40	12	34
Strongly Disagree	19	48	17	49

Conclusion: There was no significant movement

Table A69. Actual responses to question 29

Question 29: Jesus Christ was a man fully filled by God.				
Possible Responses	Pre-Test		Post-Test	
	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	5	13	6	18
Agree	9	23	6	18
Somewhat Agree	2	5	0	0
Somewhat Disagree	3	8	0	0
Disagree	4	10	8	24
Strongly Disagree	17	43	14	41

Conclusion: There was no significant movement

Table A70. Actual responses to question 30

Question 30: God the Father and God the Son are equally God.				
	Pre-Test		Post-Test	
Possible Responses	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	26	65	25	71
Agree	13	33	10	29
Somewhat Agree	1	3	0	0
Somewhat Disagree	0	0	0	0
Disagree	0	0	0	0
Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	0

Conclusion: There was no significant movement

Table A71. Actual responses to question 31

Question 31: Jesus Christ was not fully God until he ascended into heaven.				
	Pre-Test		Post-Test	
Possible Responses	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	0	0	0	0
Agree	3	8	2	6
Somewhat Agree	0	0	0	0
Somewhat Disagree	2	5	3	9
Disagree	14	35	5	14
Strongly Disagree	21	35	25	71

Conclusion: There was no significant movement

Table A72. Actual responses to question 32

Question 32: If a sermon is expository, it cannot be topical.				
	Pre-Test		Post-Test	
Possible Responses	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	0	0	0	0
Agree	4	10	3	9
Somewhat Agree	3	8	2	6
Somewhat Disagree	7	18	4	11
Disagree	23	58	21	60
Strongly Disagree	3	8	5	14

Conclusion: There was no significant movement

Table A73. Actual responses to question 33

Question 33: The selected biblical passage is central to expository preaching.				
Possible Responses	Pre-Test		Post-Test	
	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	8	20	13	37
Agree	24	60	18	51
Somewhat Agree	8	20	4	11
Somewhat Disagree	0	0	0	0
Disagree	0	0	0	0
Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	0

Conclusion: There was an 85 percent increase in "strongly agree" responses from the pre-test to the post-test.

Table A74. Actual responses to question 34

Question 34: Scripture should aid in interpreting scripture.				
Possible Responses	Pre-Test		Post-Test	
	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	28	70	21	53
Agree	11	28	13	33
Somewhat Agree	1	3	0	0
Somewhat Disagree	0	0	0	0
Disagree	0	0	1	3
Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	0

Conclusion: There was no significant movement

APPENDIX 7

SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE TWO-SAMPLE
T TEST FOR QUESTION 10

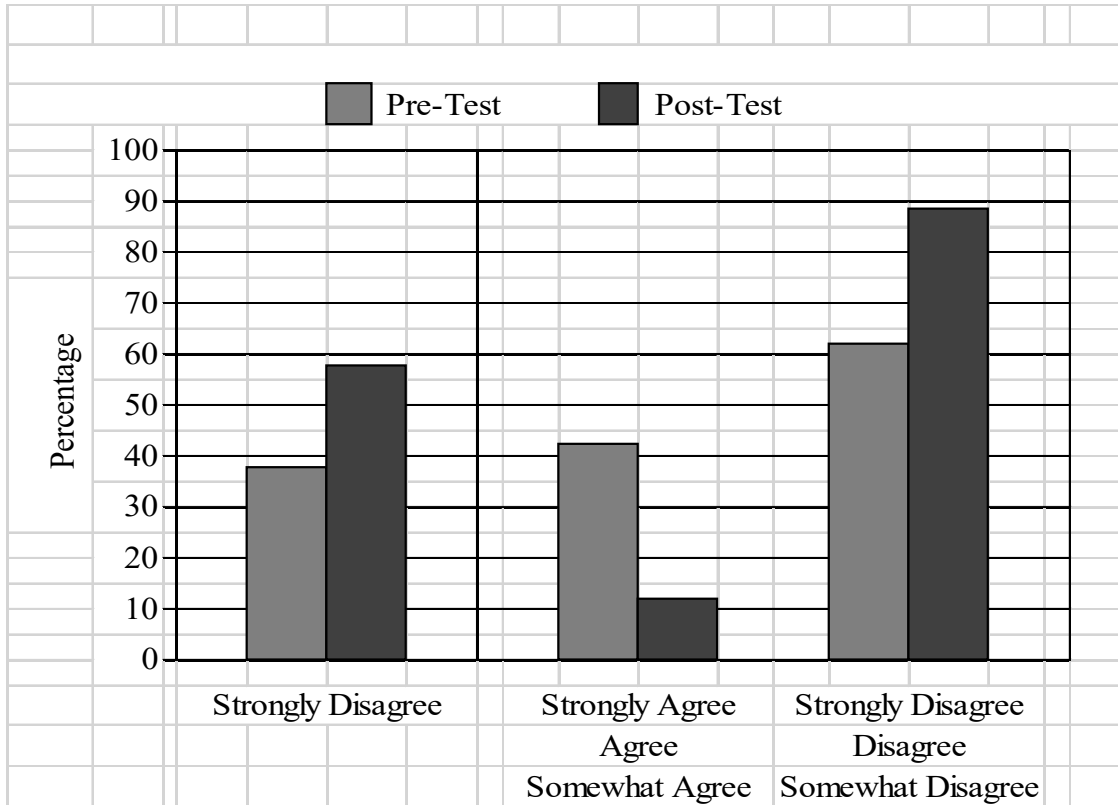


Figure A1. Two-sample *t* test for question 10

$t = 2.89974$, $df = 34$, *t* distribution critical values = 1.6909 at Tail probability = .05

Based on these results, a *t* value of 2.89974, indicates a significant statistical difference exists within the analysis of question 10.

APPENDIX 8

SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE TWO-SAMPLE *T* TEST
FOR QUESTION 33

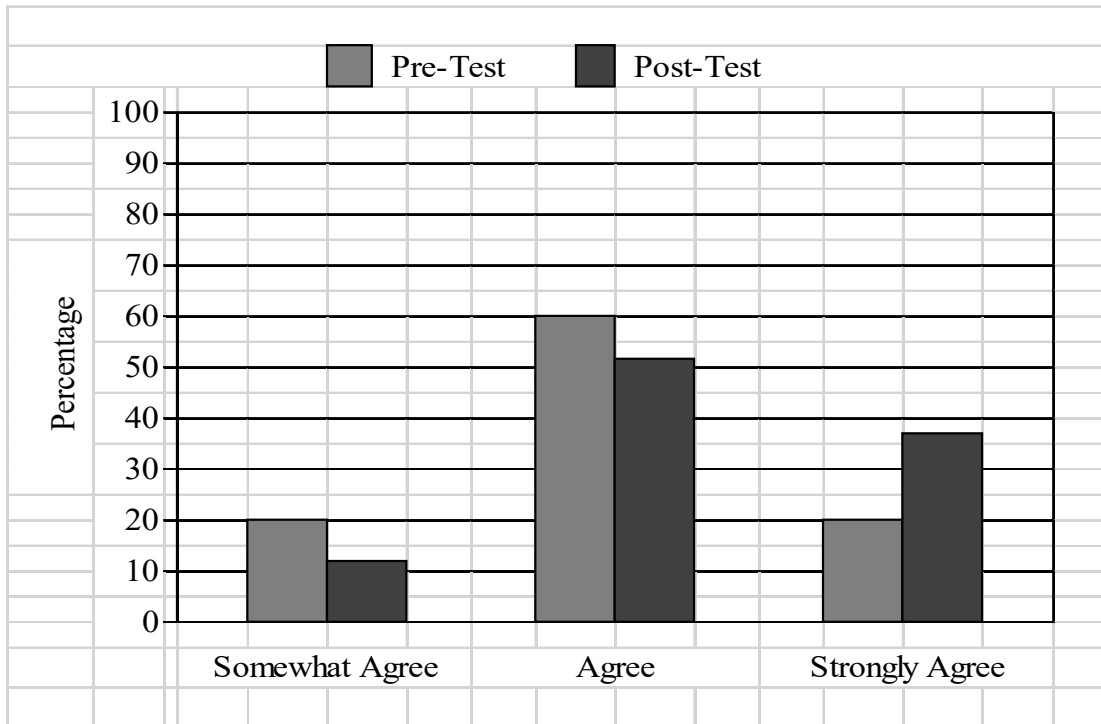


Figure A2. Two-sample *t* test for question 33

$t = 1.7295$, $df = 34$, *t* distribution critical values = 1.6909 at Tail probability = .05

Based on these results, a *t* value of 1.7295, indicates a significant statistical difference exists within the analysis of question 33.

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ABSTRACT

USING EXPOSITORY PREACHING TO ESTABLISH CHRISTOLOGICAL DOCTRINE AT SUMMER CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH, HOUSTON, TEXAS

Paul Edwin Lyle, D.Min.
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2016
Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Terry J. Betts

Chapter 1 explains the purpose and the need for the project. The chapter covers the goals, the ministry context, the limitations, and the methodology behind how the project would be carried out.

Chapter 2 shows the importance of both biblical and theological reasons for utilizing expository preaching in order to proclaim accurately the doctrines of Christ. Highlighted in this chapter are the importance of doctrine, the importance of expository preaching, and the importance of the church rightly articulating the gospel.

Chapter 3 details the claims of Mormonism seen in contrast to the Christian faith. Scholars and theologians on both sides of the issue are examined and the chasm between the two faiths are exposed.

Chapter 4 presents the details of the completed project. Included in this chapter are the schedule of the project, the process described in order to evaluate the project, and a summary of each of the sermons.

Chapter 5 unveils an analysis of the project. Each aspect of the pre- and post-sermon survey are reviewed, as well as and the results of changes in attitudes or beliefs concerning expository preaching and three essential Christological doctrines.

VITA

Paul Edwin Lyle

EDUCATION

B.Arch., Louisiana Tech University, 1992

B.M., Houston Baptist University, 1999

M.Div., Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2006

MINISTERIAL

Music and Youth Associate, Humble Area's First Baptist Church, Humble, Texas, 1996-1998

Music Associate and Minister to University Students, Humble Area's First Baptist Church, Humble, Texas, 1998-1999

Minister of Youth, Woodridge Baptist Church, Houston, Texas, 1999-2006

Senior Pastor, Summer Creek Baptist Church, Houston, Texas, 2006-