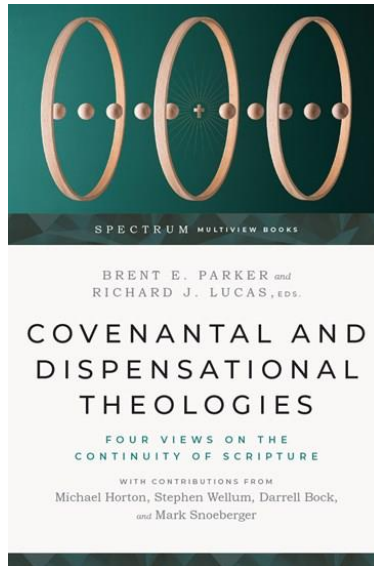


Four Views: Observing Staff Discussions at Divisional Meetings



It was a pleasure to take part in some of the divisional meetings within DTS, via my internship with Dr. Chisholm, and observe discussion around both Covenantal and Dispensational theologies. I admire that professors at DTS charitably invited professors from other schools such as: G.K. Beale (RTS), Michael Horton (Western Seminary, California), etc.

The major views represented in this book and in the meetings were as follows:

- **Covenant Theology:** Michael S. Horton, Gresham Machen Professor of Systematic Theology and Apologetics, Westminster Seminary California
- **Progressive Covenantalism:** Stephen J. Wellum, professor of Christian theology, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary
- **Progressive Dispensationalism:** Darrell L. Bock, Senior Research Professor of New Testament Studies, Dallas Theological Seminary
- **Traditional Dispensationalism:** Mark A. Snoeberger, professor of systematic theology and apologetics, Detroit Baptist Theological Seminary

What follows after this point are major points of reflection and notes taken during some of these divisional meetings. While they may feel scatter-shot they cover some of my biggest observations and takeaways during these meetings. See the following page.

Divisional Meeting Notes Part II

Perception of Dispensationalism—Dr. Darrell Bock—Notes

Linking the elements in the program of God to one another—where's the continuity vs. discontinuity? Misunderstanding plagues us: essay tries to underscore discussion of God's faithfulness (God keeps his word, rooted in His grace—the essay in the book underscores this)

Complaint about George Ladd: doesn't discuss the corporate nature of Israel enough in the plan of God

Emphasis on structures and how covenants connect to promise

Structures: administrative elements and how program proceeds (emphasis on what we call the different dispensations or administrative arrangements)

Not necessary to choose between the dispensations and covenants

Already, Not Yet (unapologetic in bible teaching an “already/not yet”)

Analogy of how we view our salvation—are you saved? Vs. is God done with you yet?

Structure of salvation: related to what God is doing in his program and plan (Jesus is not passive in Acts 2)

Luke 3:16 ties to pentecost (distribution of Spirit being the proof, in line with passage he cites, not as analogy, but as initial fulfillment)

Unity and diversity side by side (oneness on one side—distinction on the other)

Fulfillment and escalation comes alongside the traditional type, doesn't wipe it out

Terminology used

Replacement theology or supersessionism (talk to a covenant theologian, they will say that's not fair—Christ is the fulfiller, call it fulfillment theology)

If you're going to call it fulfillment theology, see what the fulfiller is going to have to say

“Until the times of restoration come/until the time of the gentiles come to fullness”

Isaiah 19—Egypt and Assyria—each described as language that marks them out as God's people (period of restoration, nation groups)

Raised questions about covenant tied to works and covenant tied to Adam

Cultural mandate (but Bock would not describe in covenantal bucket)

Dispensationalism is about God's faithfulness and his commitment to keeping God's word

Not abandoned idea of focus at individual and national level (emphasis on distinctions, but unity in reconciliation)

Reconciliation without diversity in covenantal theology (you lose the Jew and Gentile part of it—which dispensationalism has always

In traditional dispensationalism there was a spatial separation that isn't there with progressive dispensationalism

There is a separatism that we need to guard against

This form of reconciliation is not a form of Israelite nationalism that is being exposed

It's not Israel at the expense of the nations, it's Israel alongside the nations (will you follow through on the reconciliation that God has given to you?)

God has adopted us—the question is: have we adopted one another?

WE are talking about redemption going across all structures—not just believing Jews being saved, but all Israel (?)

There is a corporate identity (believing nations, Cf. Egypt and Assyria above)

European Union as Analogy (just as theoretically states are comfortable with the rest of their neighbors)

Divisional Meeting Notes Part I

Position and Defense of Traditional Dispensationalism (Dr. Michael Snowberger)

Mentor more interested in whole divine govt than in 7 dispensations

Not a covenantal center, but a governmental structure seated in the kingdom (evolution of the divine govt)

Gospel while important existed within the divine govt and non as an end within and of itself

Gospel center was contrary to dispensational focus (in his view ?)

John Whickham and *presuppositionalism*

Image of God included capacity of language—language has a divine capacity
Presupposed laws of language
Bought into literal hermeneutic — in lock step with Ryrie
Allegorical herm had no charm
Very baptist in tradition
Darby evangelists frustrated with magisterial nature of Anglicanism
Canonical theology focus
Left unsettled when faced with progressive dispensationalism
Marry dispensationalism with inaugurated (?)
Still seated in spectrum of dispensational thinking

Questions:

Dr. Burer:

Why traditional rather than classic or revised dispensationalism
Snowberger:

Not classic or revised but think of them as a single conglomerate

Bock: why would one contrast commitment to covenant and commitment to govt.? (Bock is concerned about the relationship. For Bock it's not an either or its a both and...) // Bock doesn't disagree with the end goal of the rule of God in a harmonious state, but he is worried about the means by which it's created. The idea which there is a civil sphere and spiritual sphere is one that Bock accepts. Bock objects to how we 'wall' off our witness in the public sphere (fundamentalism's impact on how we interact on the world). Emphasis is not what we need to do to fix the world: the direction of the arrow is what we need to minister in a world in our witness to God. (Bock does not see himself in shoes of Henry) // Bock hears individualism in Snowberger's response but wonders about a corporate dimension. // danger that Snowberger has raised raises another danger that we lose our ability to bridge toward evangelism // in the fundamentalist and modernist controversy liberals said I like the christian ethic but I don't like the theology behind it (conservatives did the inverse, liked the theology but not the ethic ... each created a divorce we have this shadow of separation now in the conversation). // Bock's point is that they understood themselves as fundamentally holistic (the state church movement shows that people were thinking holistically and that goes way back ... abolitionist movement is evidence that Christianity holistically stepped into a public space)

Snowberger: Don't think we can just exclude the covenants...but at the same time when we think of the covenant. Of redemption it draws attention to this idea of redemption and covt. End up being dispensations of the redemptive grace of God. // God trying to save people is the center piece of what's going on ... I'd rather see the gospel in the service of the divine kingdom or the divine govt. that will push into the eternal state. Objects that: Bock's question is as Carl Henry suggests that we've cut the nerve of sensitivity toward the world and compassion for the world (acknowledges the errors of fundamentalism) // Sky's the limit of how to be a good citizen and a good person — But in distinction from the average person that has no philosophical reason, introduce them to people of God ... teach, baptize (great commission) and bring them into ecclesiastical communities. // Church can be drawn so much to social and political concerns that the church recedes of it (two sphere in which God operates in present day)

Weaver: Question about pushback from other traditional dispensationalists?
There are those in traditional dispensational camps that don't hold this view

Snowberger: McClain's greatness of the kingdom staked out a view of dispensationalism that centered much more squarely on divine govt. and it's intersections.

Daniel Steffen: not a traditional dispensationalist. Verbalize how is the new covt. Have nothing to do with gentiles or church, strictly Israel when it is so canonized in NT — reading the NT as the church receiving the NT documents ... Gentiles would assume they are included in on New Covenant?

Snowberger: tried to be generous in including other views Roy Beacham (OT guy and great influence on Snowberger) who says the NT community is principally and fundamentally Israel. (No one is saying there is no connection but says there is not direct or primary connection mediate through Israel) ... spillover or excess benefits // dispensationalists have always argued that OT texts not be set aside, but admits that NT passages are hard

Question — Snowberger:

Bock: people were understanding why we got to the two new covenant options. Dr. Walvoord talking about eschatology...discussed his waltz with the two new covenant view — basic idea: an attempt to deal with a herm tension that everyone was wrestling with

Weaver: theological refinement, mentions asking Ryrice, changing view from two new covts. To one new covenant

Bock: reconsiders why he had been there to begin with

Bock: When Jesus speaks of his death being the clearing of the way for the new covenant...how can that in the long run exclude gentiles?

Snowberger: primary recipients is Israel and any other benefits that accrue to church or New Covenant believers are received to gentiles?

bock: how does this deal with Ephesians 2...Galatians 3 and Ephesians 2. Dividing wall imagery?

Snowberger: Christ is seed by which we receive these benefit // does not believe that HS is benefit of the New Covenant

Bock: what about await the promise of the father in Luke, in light of acts 2? // man and woman old and young which Joel cited

Snowberger: does not see Joel 2 as predictive prophesy but as more of an analogy

Bock: Bock objects to either or I have to choose this or that ... it can be a both and ... don't have to choose in Israel's participation between covenant blessing. Both have access to same benefits. Preached in synagogues while gentiles are being included in the middle of acts ... why future in specific group

Snowberger: ANE covenants are pretty stationary documents ... would be like introducing another partner to a marriage covt. ... reference can't be changed or added to these are sacred covenants

Bock: sees Christ in van diagram way whereby Christ mediates between Abrahamic covt. and as referent can mediate it to gentiles (?)

Johnston: Challenged one of beachhead's arguments ... idea of promises and parties not changing ...

when beacham wrote may have been prior to collections of ANE treaties covenants and texts ... 50

Hittites treaties we actually have occasions in which vassal of Matani (vassal ruler was found to be obedient, placed another person of choosing upon throne, Hittite removed and covenants stayed the same, but renews the covt. through installation of a new king) or install a vassal ruler ... renew, make adjustments to obligations and boundaries, more of a living document that was designed to reward good behavior and make adjustments to induce loyalty ... look at Sinai, look at exodus 21, 23 Deuteronomy. 12 case laws have to change now. /// chase laws in 21-23 get adjusted and changed even in Leviticus 17 ... as land and residence changes (covt. doesn't get abolished but stipulations get changed) Snowberger's understanding of the metaphor doesn't uphold — Isaiah 56 envisioning new covenant /. Not only passage that talks about New covt. contemplates foreigners and eunuchs.

Snowberger: just because there is abuse of the covt. System doesn't mean that the principle is the same

^ seems a bit too literal

THINKING ABOUT RUTH AND Uriah the Hittite as well