



ordained servant

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Reading  
Scripture  
in Worship

# *Ordained Servant Online*

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**CURRENT ISSUE: READING SCRIPTURE IN WORSHIP**

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### *From the Editor*

It is always good to begin a new year by focusing on the most important things in life. “Who Reads Scripture?” could be taken in several ways—all important. How many Christians actually spend serious study time reading God’s Word? In our distracted age the answer might not be completely encouraging. But that is not the subject of my editorial essay. I look at the most important reading of Scripture, the public reading by a minister of the Word each Lord’s Day. May anyone read Scripture, or is public reading in worship an authoritative act of a minister of the Word?

Glenn Clary’s article, “The Public Reading of Scripture in Worship: A Biblical Model for the Lord’s Day,” gives us a helpful and inspiring history of the place of Scripture reading in the biblical history of God’s people, along with five practical implications.

Each year every member of the session in our local congregation reaffirms his commitment to the standards of our church. It is always important for us to examine our faithfulness to those standards. G. I. Williamson challenges us to consider whether or not we are being faithful to Scripture and confession if we do not affirm a six twenty-four hour day creation narrative in his article “What I Learned from my Dutch Reformed Brethren.”

T. David Gordon reviews Sherry Turkle’s *Alone Together: Why We Expect More from Technology and Less from Each Other* in his article, “Alone Together: The Great Irony of Modern Communication.” The once optimistic MIT researcher sounds a thoughtful caution about the de-humanizing tendency of electronic communication.

Finally, one of Shakespeare’s finest sonnets, twenty-nine. A marvelous commentary on Shakespeare is George Morrison, *Christ in Shakespeare*. There is more than meets the eye in Shakespeare—which is the way of the true artist. This sonnet certainly seems to transcend human love. I have been memorizing it on my morning walks. The full meaning of this profound piece really sinks in when the words flow effortlessly.

Blessings in the Lamb,  
Gregory Edward Reynolds

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*Ordained Servant* exists to help encourage, inform, and equip church officers for faithful, effective, and God glorifying ministry in the visible church of the Lord Jesus Christ. Its primary audience is ministers, elders, and deacons of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, as well as interested officers from other Presbyterian and Reformed churches. Through high quality editorials, articles, and book reviews we endeavor to stimulate clear thinking and the consistent practice of historic, confessional Presbyterianism.

# Servant Thoughts

## Who Reads Scripture?

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by Gregory E. Reynolds

Ours is not an age in which the Western church places a high value on the public reading of Scripture. In many churches anyone who volunteers may read Scripture in public worship. To assert that only the minister of the Word is to read Scripture is tantamount to heresy in our egalitarian world. It is curious that, while ministers are not thought to be necessarily the only ones called to the public reading of Scripture, they are often believed to be CEOs, public relations experts, social organizers, psychiatrists, and many other callings that are well beyond the pale of the biblical job description of the minister. And so this is why I like to refer to the office of pastor as minister of the Word.<sup>1</sup>

Within our narrower world of confessional Presbyterian and Reformed churches, I realize that elders often read Scripture in public worship within the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. Our new Directory for Public Worship allows this with the wording: “He who performs this [the public reading of God’s Word] serves as God’s representative voice. Thus, it *ordinarily* should be performed by a minister of the Word” (DPW II.A.2, emphasis added).

Our former directory, as amended in 1992, contained a contradiction by adding a separate paragraph, reflecting the practice in some of our churches of having elders read Scripture in public worship (III.8).<sup>2</sup> Without that contradictory qualifying paragraph the old Presbyterian three-office<sup>3</sup> view stood alone in an earlier paragraph: “The public reading of the Holy Scriptures is performed by the minister as God’s servant” (III.2). This was the practice in our tradition going back to the Westminster Assembly. In the original 1645 directory: “Reading of the Word in the congregation, being part of the publick worship of God, . . . is to be performed by the pastors and teachers.” The one exception is those who “intend the ministry . . . if allowed by the presbytery.”<sup>4</sup> That the public reading

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<sup>1</sup> For those interested in my argument for the three office view see Gregory E. Reynolds, “Democracy and the Denigration of Office,” in *Order in the Offices*, Mark Brown, ed. (Duncansville, PA: Classic Presbyterian Government Resources, 1994), 235–55. See also “Report of the Committee on the Involvement of Unordained Persons in the Regular Worship Services of the Church” submitted to the 58th G.A. (1991). <http://www.opc.org/GA/unordained.html>.

<sup>2</sup> “Nothing in the preceding sections shall be understood so as to prohibit ruling elders from leading in public prayer, reading the Scriptures, leading responsive readings, or, on occasion, exhorting the congregation as part of public worship.”

<sup>3</sup> In my understanding the traditional three-office view of church office in no way diminishes the importance of the eldership, rather it distinguishes between the office of elder and minister of the Word in order that each might pay attention to the proper functions of their respective offices. Cf. footnote 1. Anyone who uses the three-office view to arrogate power to the ministerial office is not holding the traditional biblical, Presbyterian position. On the session the minister has only one voice and one vote.

<sup>4</sup> *The Confession of Faith* (Inverness, Scotland: Free Presbyterian Publications, 1976), 375.

of the Scripture belongs to the pastor's office was everywhere asserted by Presbyterians, as well as other Reformed communions, as the clear biblical teaching.

It is interesting that the broadest view of the involvement of unordained persons in public worship, expressed in the 1991 Report of the Committee on the Involvement of Unordained Persons in the Regular Worship Services of the Church, affirms the traditional restriction on reading Scripture.

The DPW, however, also sets definite limits on the involvement of the unordained. Specifically, an individual role or individual expression, in distinction from the rest of the congregation, is limited to the minister; besides preaching, only he, for instance, may pray aloud and read Scripture to the congregation. Even ruling elders, by implication, are excluded by such individual expression.”<sup>5</sup>

The new form, which took effect on January 1, 2011, is a more consistent way of recognizing and approving of the present practice in our churches. For that I am thankful, especially given the fact that the assumed exceptions are elders who are ordained with the same doctrinal commitment as ministers. But the fact that over three hundred years of Presbyterian tradition is being altered should give us pause to at least reflect on the rationale for the old view. So, while I personally believe in restricting public Scripture reading to ministers and men approved by presbytery, who are training for the ministry, my main objective is twofold. Negatively we should not underestimate the pressure that the egalitarian instinct in our culture can place upon the word “ordinarily,” as a justification for lay readers. That only ministers of the Word should read the Word publicly is an idea to which our egalitarian world is entirely unfriendly. Fortunately, the new directory limits the possibility of abusing the exception implied by the use of the term “ordinarily,” by explaining,

When the session deems it fitting, ruling elders may lead the congregation in prayer, read the Scriptures to the congregation, lead unison or antiphonal readings of Scripture by the congregation, lead congregational singing, or, on occasion, exhort the congregation as part of public worship.” (DPW I.D.2.d)

Positively, I would like to encourage a renewed interest in the public reading of Scripture. A high view of what ministers are doing when they read will help us strive to put greater effort into it.

Some will complain that I am advocating a “one-man show.” But I hope to demonstrate that there is a biblical and confessional logic to the single leadership of the minister of the Word in public worship on the Lord's Day. Many of us succumb to the fear of being labeled “elitist” for suggesting that only ministers should lead worship, under the false assumption that only those “on stage” are participating.

The metaphor of the “one-man show” is, itself, very instructive in analyzing the problem we face. In a world strongly flavored by, and motivated with, entertainment, we have become a world of spectators who tend to envy those on stage. Thus, in smaller venues like bars and churches it is expected that everyone gets their moment in the

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<sup>5</sup> *Minutes of the Fifty-eighth General Assembly*, (1991), 266.

spotlight. But public worship is not karaoke. Where worship is lead by the minister alone, many struggle to participate because our cultured has largely spoiled that ability.

Hearing the Word read and preached is true participation. The *Shema* of Deuteronomy 6:5–6 indicates that biblical hearing is active, “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.” This is the true meaning of participation—that everyone in the worship of God is fully involved—God speaking through his servant and the congregation responding by hearing, praising, obeying, and serving. Hughes Oliphant Old, in commenting on the ministry of Ezra observed that the reading and preaching of Scripture comprise the ministry of the Word. This ministry is “a public act of worship. It was done with great and reverence. . . . It was an act of the whole religious community.”<sup>6</sup> Thus, properly understood, the leadership of one man, called by God for that very purpose, is in no way inimical to congregational participation.

Along this same train of thought is an aesthetic consideration. Unity of leadership enhances unity of liturgy. Aesthetics is a consideration usually downplayed or ignored today. However, every kind of worship service has an aesthetic dimension, whether it is acknowledged or not. Sensitivity to the perception of beauty is an inescapable reality. When a man is called and trained to lead worship, the simple beauty of Word and sacrament ministry will be more suited to leave a lasting spiritual impression on worshippers.

During the Reformation the “Liturgy of the Word” encompassed every other part of public worship except the separate liturgy of the Lord’s Supper. The nomenclature indicates the centrality of the Word, read and preached, to worship, but also the unity of the liturgy itself as essentially a ministry of the Word, to be administered by a minister of the Word. My concern is that, above all, the reading and preaching of Scripture go inextricably together as the central task of ministers of the Word.

Professor Old’s phrase “with great solemnity and reverence” reminds us of the most fundamental and germane doctrine underlying my assertion: that the public reading of Scripture is an authoritative and interpretive act. Worship leadership in the Bible is clearly restricted to men gifted and called by God to minister the Word. So the public reading of Scripture is an essential part of that leadership. Minister of the Word Timothy is the one who is enjoined by Paul to read Scripture. This is inexorably tied to preaching. “Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching” (1 Tim. 4:13). The ESV properly interprets “the reading” (τῆ ἀναγνώσει *tē anagnōsei*) to refer to public, not private, reading. Modern ears instinctively read this in terms of personal devotions. But in the first century few could afford to own personal copies of Scripture. Furthermore, the codex had not yet been invented, although a century later Christians would be the ones to do so, given their intense devotion to God’s Word.

Our present directory asserts the divine authority inherent in the reading of the Word in public when it states, “Through this reading, God speaks directly to the congregation in his own words” (DPW II.A.2). The logical corollary to this is that only those God has called to preach his Word should read it. The Westminster Larger Catechism is instructive in this regard:

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<sup>6</sup> Hughes Oliphant Old, *Guides to the Reformed Tradition: Worship That Is Reformed According to Scripture* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1984), 59.

Q. 156. Is the Word of God to be read by all?

A. *Although all are not to be permitted to read the Word publicly to the congregation, yet all sorts of people are bound to read it apart by themselves, and with their families: to which end, the holy scriptures are to be translated out of the original into vulgar languages. (emphasis added)*

So the restriction of the public reading is made clear. Question 155 ties reading and preaching together, “The Spirit of God maketh the reading, but especially the preaching of the Word, an effectual means . . .” (cf. WSC 89). Then question 158 makes the above restriction explicit in terms of the authority of preaching, “The Word of God is to be preached only by such as are sufficiently gifted, and also duly approved and called to that office.”

The restriction mentioned in WLC 156 gives the following proof texts:

*Then Moses wrote this law and gave it to the priests, the sons of Levi, who carried the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and to all the elders of Israel. When all Israel comes to appear before the LORD your God at the place that he will choose, you shall read this law before all Israel in their hearing. Assemble the people, men, women, and little ones, and the sojourner within your towns, that they may hear and learn to fear the LORD your God, and be careful to do all the words of this law, and that their children, who have not known it, may hear and learn to fear the LORD your God, as long as you live in the land that you are going over the Jordan to possess. (Deut. 31:9, 11–13, emphasis added)*

So Ezra *the priest* brought the Law before the assembly. (Neh. 8:2, emphasis added)

The reason for the restriction is the authority of God’s Word. This requires an authoritative office to minister it.

But, what is often entirely overlooked, due to a misunderstanding, is the interpretive aspect of reading aloud. Some misinterpret the DPW’s prohibition on commentary interspersed with the reading (DPW A.2.a) to mean that reading of the Word itself involves no interpretation. However, anyone who has ever heard the difference between a school boy stumbling through a Shakespearean sonnet and an actor such as the consummate Shakespearean John Gielgud knows the vast difference. Expert reading clarifies meaning. That is an authoritative activity.

Another misconception is fostered by thinking that synagogue worship, because laymen were allowed to read Scripture, had authoritative status in New Testament times. The assumption that synagogue worship is normative for the New Covenant church is false. The Old Covenant does not authorize the synagogue. What was done there was not worship but “Torah study.” It was voluntary in nature. In reviewing Ralph Gore’s book criticizing the regulative principle Dr. T. David Gordon observes:

If we are required, by apostolic example (Acts 2, Acts 20), endorsement (1 Cor. 16:2), and command (Heb. 10:24), to assemble on the first day of the week, what can those who call us to those assemblies lawfully require us to do there? This was the question that Calvin and the Puritans addressed; and they would have been unmoved

by any consideration of what free individuals did in voluntary societies for encouragement, prayer, or study.<sup>7</sup>

What are the practical implications of this? Paul addresses Timothy as an ordinary (not apostolic) minister of the Word. “Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching” (1 Tim. 4:13). He places the public reading of Scripture on a par with preaching. This means that denying that the reading of Scripture in public is an authoritative and interpretive act diminishes God’s Word. I am not saying that this is necessarily intentional. But, when the reading is not done by an ordained minister, the authority of the Word is diminished.

Having said this, it is therefore incumbent upon us to train ministers to take the public reading of Scripture with the utmost seriousness. The corollary to this involves the continuing education of ministers of the Word. We need to continue developing rhetorical and interpretive skills necessary to read the Word of God well in public. I suggest listening regularly to poetry read aloud, which is widely available online. Reading Scripture aloud for daily devotions is an excellent way to cultivate this holy skill.

In 1 Timothy 3:8 Paul warns deacons to not be “addicted to much wine.” The word “addicted” (προσέχοντα*s* *prosekontas*) is the same word used in 1 Timothy 4:13, translated “devoted.” Truly “public reading of Scripture” is something to be addicted to. O that we may devote ourselves with great energy, enthusiasm, and intelligence to this great work.

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<sup>7</sup> T. David Gordon, Review Article: “The Westminster Assembly’s Unworkable and Unscriptural View of Worship,” *WTJ* 65:345–56 (2003), 347.

# Servant Truth

## The Public Reading of Scripture in Worship: A Biblical Model for the Lord's Day

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by Glen J. Clary

In this article, we will briefly survey the history of the public reading of Scripture in worship from Moses to the apostles with a view toward developing a biblical model for this act of ministry that may be applied in our own day. While the public reading of Scripture may be carried out in a variety of contexts, our primary concern here is with the regular services of worship on the Lord's Day.

### **Moses at Mount Sinai**

The public reading of Scripture played a central role in the worship of Israel at Mount Sinai (Ex. 24:1–11). After writing down all the words of the Lord, Moses read the book of the covenant in the hearing of the people (vv. 4, 7).<sup>1</sup> The Israelites responded to the Word by making a solemn vow: “All that the LORD has spoken, we will do, and we will be obedient” (v. 7). The covenant between God and Israel was then sealed with two visible signs: the sprinkling of blood and the sharing of a meal in the presence of God (vv. 8–11). As Moses threw the blood on the people, he exclaimed, “Behold, the blood of the covenant that the LORD has made with you *in accordance with all these words*” (v. 8, italics added).<sup>2</sup> The main point is that the public reading of Scripture was a central part of the ceremony at Mount Sinai which is “the prototype of the worship of God's people down through the centuries” (cf. Josh. 8:30–35; 2 Kings 22:8–13; 23:1–3; Heb. 12:18–29).<sup>3</sup>

### **Ezra at the Water Gate**

The Book of Nehemiah records another event that highlights the public reading of Scripture in worship (Neh. 8:1–9; cf. 8:13–15, 18; 9:3; 13:1). After rebuilding the wall of Jerusalem, the Israelites assembled to hear Ezra the scribe read the book of the Law of Moses (Neh. 8:1).<sup>4</sup> Standing on a wooden platform built for the occasion, Ezra and his

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<sup>1</sup> “The book of the covenant” probably included the Decalogue and its exposition (Ex. 20:1–23:33). See Victor Hamilton, *Exodus* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011), 438–43; Peter Enns, *Exodus* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 488–89.

<sup>2</sup> On the significance of “the blood of the covenant” (cf. Zech. 9:11; Matt. 26:28; Heb. 10:29; 12:24; 13:20), see Leon Morris, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1956), 60–107.

<sup>3</sup> Hughes Oliphant Old, *The Reading and Preaching of the Scriptures in the Worship of the Christian Church*, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 22; cf. John Hilber, “Theology of Worship in Exodus 24,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 39, no. 2 (June 1996): 177–89.

<sup>4</sup> “The book of the Law of Moses” may refer to the Pentateuch as a whole. See John Bright, *A History of Israel* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1976) 391–92. On the teaching ministry of priests and scribes (cf.

assistants read from “the Law of God, clearly and gave the sense, so that the people understood the reading,” meaning they either translated the text into Aramaic or gave an actual exposition of the text or both (v. 8).<sup>5</sup> The reading of Scripture was prefaced by certain liturgical acts. When the scroll was opened, the Israelites stood and lifted their hands in prayer; Ezra blessed the LORD, the great God, and the people bowed their faces to the ground in worship (vv. 5–6). Clearly, the reading of Scripture was regarded as an act of worship; it served the glory of God just as much as the prayers and sacrifices that were offered during that festive month (Neh. 8:2; cf. Lev. 23:23–43; Num. 29:1–39). This account of the public reading of Scripture is “the oldest description we have of a liturgy of the Word”; accordingly, it became the model for the liturgical reading of Scripture in both synagogue and church.<sup>6</sup>

### Jesus in the Synagogue

By the time of the New Testament, the public reading of Scripture was a regular part of the synagogue service.<sup>7</sup> At the Jerusalem council, James observed, “From ancient generations, Moses has had in every city those who preach him, since he is read in the synagogues every Sabbath” (Acts 15:21).<sup>8</sup> In other words, reading the Law in the synagogue was a long-standing, widespread, and regular tradition.<sup>9</sup> Moreover, the Law was read on a *lectio continua*—beginning with Genesis and continuing each Sabbath where one left off the previous Sabbath, until one reached the end of Deuteronomy.<sup>10</sup> This *lectio continua* of the Law was only interrupted during annual festivals and fast days when special lessons, corresponding to the significance of the day, were read.<sup>11</sup>

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Lev. 10:11; Deut. 33:10; 2 Chr. 15:3; Ezra 7:6–12; Mal. 2:7), see Craig Evans et al., *Dictionary of New Testament Background* (Downers Grove: Inter Varsity Press, 2000), 1086–89; Christine Schams, *Jewish Scribes in the Second Temple Period* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998); David Orton, *The Understanding Scribe* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1989); George Moore, *Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era*, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1927), 37–47.

<sup>5</sup> This could have included both the targum and the midrashic sermon. See Jacob Mann, *The Bible as Read and Preached in the Old Synagogue* (New York: KTAV Publishing House, 1971), XIV; cf. Charles Perrot, “The Reading of the Bible in the Ancient Synagogue” in *Mikra*, Martin Mulder et al., eds. (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2004), 155; Donald Binder, *Into the Temple Courts: The Place of the Synagogues in the Second Temple Period* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 1999), 401; Ismar Elbogen, *Jewish Liturgy: A Comprehensive History* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1993), 151, 156; William Oesterley, *The Jewish Background of the Christian Liturgy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1925), 41.

<sup>6</sup> Old, 1:96; cf. Binder, 399; Elbogen, 130–31; Hughes Oliphant Old, *Worship Reformed According to Scripture* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 2002), 60–61.

<sup>7</sup> Attempts to reconstruct the synagogue service in the Second-Temple period are somewhat conjectural since most of our sources come from a later period. There is no question, however, that the public reading of Scripture on the morning of the Sabbath was “a universally accepted custom in the first century of our era both in Israel and the Diaspora,” Perrot, 137. Cf. Heather McKay, *Sabbath and Synagogue: The Question of Sabbath Worship in Ancient Judaism* (Leiden: Brill, 1994).

<sup>8</sup> Some first-century Jews (e.g., Philo and Josephus) believed that Moses had instituted the study of Scripture on the Sabbath. According to Binder, the septennial reading of the Torah prescribed by Moses (Deut. 31:9–13) was “extended both temporally and spatially so that the weekly synagogue assemblies served as microcosms of the larger, national convocation,” Binder, 399. When this practice was established is unknown. See Perrot, 137–59; Mann, XIII–XIV; Elbogen, 130–32; Eric Werner, *The Sacred Bridge* (London: Dennis Dobson, 1959), 51.

<sup>9</sup> Darrell Bock, *Acts* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007) 507.

<sup>10</sup> Old, 1:99; cf. Perrot, 137–59; Mann, XII–XIII, XXI–XXIII; Elbogen, 129–42; Moore, 1:296–307.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Perrot, 145, 147–50; Ferguson, 580; Mann, XIX; Werner, 57; Elbogen, 129–31.

The Gospels make it clear that Jesus regularly participated in Sabbath worship, including the reading and preaching of Scripture (Matt. 4:23; 9:35; Mark 1:39; Luke 4:44; John 6:59; 18:20; etc.). Luke's account of Jesus's participation in the service at Nazareth is most informative (Luke 4:16–30).<sup>12</sup> When Jesus stood up to read, the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him, and he found the place where it was written, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor” (Luke 4:18–19).<sup>13</sup> After reading the text, Jesus rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant (*chazzan*) and sat down (v. 20).<sup>14</sup> Here, we see a clear distinction between the act of reading and the act of preaching. Jesus stood to read and sat to preach; also, the scroll was rolled up and returned to its place before the sermon began.<sup>15</sup> Thus, in the synagogue, the reading of Scripture was treated as a distinct act of ministry.<sup>16</sup>

That Jesus read from the prophet Isaiah and not from the Law indicates that this was the second Scripture lesson in the service.<sup>17</sup> In each service, there were two Scripture lessons: the Law (*torah, parashah, seder*) and the Prophets (*haftarah, pl. haftarot*), which in the Jewish division of the Scriptures also included the historical books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings.<sup>18</sup> Thus, Moses was read every Sabbath (Acts 15:21) and so were the Prophets (13:27). Unlike the *torah*, the *haftarot* were not read as a *lectio continua* but were specifically chosen to complement the *torah* lessons and provided the key to their interpretation.<sup>19</sup> In Luke's account of the service that Paul and Barnabas attended in Pisidian Antioch, both readings are mentioned:

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<sup>12</sup> See Larrimore Crockett, “Luke 4:16–30 and the Jewish Lectionary Cycle” in *Journal of Jewish Studies* 17 (1966): 13–48.

<sup>13</sup> That Jesus “found the place” may mean that the lesson had been previously prepared and marked in the scroll in such a way that Jesus could easily find the prescribed passage (Werner, 56). However, Wacholder conjectures that the particular book (Isaiah) was predetermined (either by custom or by the synagogue officials), but Jesus was free to read any text from that book (Mann, XVI; cf. Elbogen, 144). Although not recorded in Luke, it is likely that Jesus offered benedictions before and after the reading (e.g., Neh. 8:6; cf. Perrot, 144, 155; Elbogen, 146; Werner, 53).

<sup>14</sup> On the *chazzan*, see Aaron Milavec, *The Didache* (New York: Newman Press, 2003) 594–602; cf. Binder, 343–87; Evans and Porter, 1146–47; Perrot, 154–55; Ferguson, 581. The *chazzan* “carried out the orders of the president of the congregation. It was he who asked the members of the congregation to lead in prayer, to read the Scriptures and to preach. It was his task to take the Torah scrolls from the ark and to return them; it was he who opened the scroll at the portion to be read,” David Hedegård, *Seder R. Amram Gaon* (Lund: A.-B. Ph. Lindstedts Universitets-bokhandel, 1951), XXXI.

<sup>15</sup> On sitting to teach, see Elbogen, 139, 158; Binder, 72, 306; Kenneth Newport, “A Note on the ‘Seat of Moses’ (Matthew 23:2),” *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 29 (1990): 127–37; L. Y. Rahmani, “Stone Synagogue Chairs: Their Identification, Use and Significance,” *Israel Exploration Journal* 40 (1990): 192–214.

<sup>16</sup> Gerhardsson writes, “Scripture reading was . . . a distinct entity, sharply distinguished from explanatory translation . . . and the expository or practically applied sermon . . . which also had its place in worship. Scripture reading did not, then, merely form a basis for instructional translation and preaching, but had its own intrinsic value,” Birger Gerhardsson, *Memory and Manuscript* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 68.

<sup>17</sup> Binder, 401.

<sup>18</sup> Paul Bradshaw, *The Search for the Origins of Christian Worship* (Oxford University Press, 2002), 37. See Binder, 400; Perrot, 137–59; Mann, XI–XXIII; Elbogen, 129–63. I agree with Elbogen that the word *haftarah* indicates the conclusion of the reading and not the conclusion of the service. Elbogen, 143; cf. Perrot, 153. See 2 Macc. 15:9; 4 Macc. 18:10–18; Matt. 5:17; 7:12; 11:13; 22:40; Luke 16:16, 29; 24:27, 44; John 1:45; Acts 24:14; 28:23; Rom. 3:21, etc.

<sup>19</sup> Perrot, 153, 157; Elbogen, 143–39; Werner, 55; Old, 1:10, 102, 130.

After the reading from the Law and the Prophets, the rulers of the synagogue sent a message to them, saying, “Brothers, if you have any word of exhortation for the people, say it.” (Acts 13:15)

The sermon (“word of exhortation”) immediately followed the Scripture reading in the order of service because it was an exposition of the biblical text.<sup>20</sup> Accordingly, whenever Jesus preached in the synagogue, he was expounding the Law and the Prophets, by which he provided a model of systematic, expository preaching for his disciples to follow.

### **The Apostles in Worship**

The first converts to Christianity (being either Jews or God-fearers) were personally familiar with the liturgical customs of the synagogue.<sup>21</sup> In fact, the earliest Christians continued to participate in synagogue worship as long as they were permitted, and some Christians (e.g., Paul) even carried out a teaching ministry in the synagogue.<sup>22</sup> It is not surprising, therefore, that the basic pattern and elements of Christian worship came from the synagogue service.<sup>23</sup> Nowhere is this clearer than in the reading and preaching of Scripture in worship.<sup>24</sup>

After commending the Scriptures to Timothy, Paul solemnly charges him to “preach the Word,” namely, “all Scripture” which is inspired and profitable (2 Tim. 3:16–4:2). In other words, the Law and the Prophets that were read and preached in the synagogue every Sabbath were to be read and preached in Christian assemblies as well. Paul instructs Timothy to devote himself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation and to teaching (1 Tim. 4:13).<sup>25</sup> This, of course, refers to the Old Testament Scriptures, but

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<sup>20</sup> Among Hellenistic Jews, “word of exhortation” was an idiom for the synagogue sermon (Acts 13:15; Heb. 13:22). It also “appears to be a fixed expression for the sermon in early Christian circles,” William Lane, *Hebrews 9–13* (Dallas: Word, 1991) 568. See Lawrence Wills, “The Form of the Sermon in Hellenistic Judaism and Early Christianity,” *Harvard Theological Review* (1984): 277–99; Carl Black II, “The Rhetorical Form of the Hellenistic Jewish and Early Christian Sermon,” *Harvard Theological Review* (1988): 1–8.

<sup>21</sup> On the synagogue liturgy in the Second-Temple era, see Bradshaw, 21–46 and works cited therein; Binder, 389–435; cf. Elbogen; Oesterley.

<sup>22</sup> See Acts 6:9–10; 9:20; 13:5, 13–48; 14:1; 16:13–16; 17:1–3, 10–11, 17; 18:4–8, 19, 24–28; 19:8–10; 28:23.

<sup>23</sup> This is not to ignore the influence of the Temple on early Christian liturgy. In my opinion, one should not dichotomize Temple worship and synagogue worship as if they were contradictory. As Binder demonstrates, it is simply incorrect to categorize the Temple as “the place of the cult” on the one side, and the synagogue as “the place of the scroll” on the other, Binder 403–4; cf. Peter Leithart, “Synagogue or Temple? Models for the Christian Worship” *Westminster Theological Journal* 63 (2002): 119–33. See Aidan Kavanagh, “Jewish Roots of Christian Worship,” in Paul Fink, *The New Dictionary of Sacramental Worship* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1990), 617–23; Hedegård, XIII–XL; Oesterley; Clifford Dugmore, *The Influence of the Synagogue Upon Divine Office* (London: Faith Press, 1964). For more recent studies, see Bradshaw, 21–46 and works cited therein.

<sup>24</sup> See Crockett; Leon Morris, “The Saints and the Synagogue” in *Worship, Theology and Ministry in the Early Church*, Michael Wilkins et al., eds. (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992) 38–52; Michael Goulder, *Midrash and Lection in Matthew* (London: SPCK, 1974); Leon Morris, *The New Testament and the Jewish Lectionaries* (London: Tyndale, 1964); Aileen Guilding, *The Fourth Gospel and Jewish Worship* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960).

<sup>25</sup> The word “reading” in this verse indicates “the public reading of Scripture” in particular. See Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, Frederick Danker et al., eds. (Chicago: University

“the reading and exposition of the New Testament Scriptures soon joined that of the Old Testament.”<sup>26</sup> This is already hinted at in the New Testament (cf. Col. 4:16; 1 Thess. 5:27; 2 Pet. 3:15–16; Rev. 1:3), and by the middle of the second century, it was firmly established. Justin Martyr, writing at Rome around the year 150, says that on the Lord’s Day, “the memoirs of the apostles” and “the writings of the prophets” are read as long as time permits.<sup>27</sup> According to Ferguson:

The Gospels and Prophets may have been a Christian counterpart to the Jewish readings from the Law and the Prophets. Justin does not say whether the reading was part of a continuous cycle of readings (a lectionary) or was chosen specifically for the day. The phrase “as long as time permits” implies that the reading was not of a fixed length, but it does not have to mean a random selection. There is a third possibility: the reading may have been continuous from Sunday to Sunday, taking up where the reading left off the last week, but not of a predetermined length. The indication is that the readings were rather lengthy . . . The sermon [which immediately followed the reading of Scripture] was expository in nature, based on the Scripture reading of the day and making a practical application of that Scripture to the lives of those present.<sup>28</sup>

Although Justin’s description of Christian worship is brief and at some points vague, one thing at least is clear: “By the middle of the second century the writings of both the Old Testament and the New Testament were read in worship side by side as Holy Scripture.”<sup>29</sup>

### **A Biblical Model for the Lord’s Day**

From this brief survey of the public reading of Scripture in worship from Moses to the apostles, we can develop a basic pattern (a biblical model) for carrying out this act of ministry in our services today—a model that can be adapted and applied in a variety of ways. The public reading of Scripture (according to this model) is: (1) prefaced by prayer, (2) distinguished from interpretation, (3) followed by exposition, (4) sealed with visible signs, and (5) systematically conducted.

#### **1. Prefaced by Prayer**

Before the reading of Scripture, the people of God “bless the Lord” in prayer—as in the example of Ezra (Neh. 8:5–6). In this prayer, it is appropriate to petition the Lord for the

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of Chicago Press, 2000), 60–61; cf. J. N. D. Kelly, *The Pastoral Epistles* (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1963) 105; see Luke 4:16; Acts 13:15, 27; 15:21; 2 Cor. 3:14–15; Deut. 31:11 (LXX); Neh. 8:8 (LXX); 1 Esdr. 9:48; 2 Clem. 19:1; Melito 1:1. According to Lane, “The definite expression ‘the exhortation’ is a synonymous designation for the sermon. It referred specifically to the exposition and application of the Scripture that had been read aloud to the assembled congregation,” William Lane, 568; cf. Old, 1:244–50.

<sup>26</sup> Willy Rordorf, *Sunday: The History of the Day of Rest and Worship in the Earliest Centuries of the Christian Church* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1968) 267; cf. Werner, 58.

<sup>27</sup> See Bard Thompson, *Liturgies of the Western Church* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980), 3–10; cf. Old, 1:265–69; Rordorf, 262–73; Oesterley, 117–18.

<sup>28</sup> Everett Ferguson, “Justin Martyr and the Liturgy,” *Restoration Quarterly* 36 (1994), 271–72.

<sup>29</sup> Old, 1:267.

Holy Spirit, who enlightens the eyes, opens the heart, and makes the reading of Scripture an effectual means of salvation (WLC 155).<sup>30</sup>

## 2. Distinguished from Interpretation

The reading of Scripture is a distinct act of ministry that is never confused with, but distinguished from, the interpretation of Scripture in the sermon. The exposition of Scripture does not begin until the whole lesson has been read (cf. Luke 4:16–30; Acts 13:15).<sup>31</sup>

## 3. Followed by Exposition

That the people of God may understand the meaning of Scripture and know what they are to believe concerning God and what duty God requires of them (WSC 3), the reading of Scripture is followed by a sermon that is an actual exposition and application of the text read (Neh. 8:8).

## 4. Sealed with Visible Signs

As in the covenant ceremony at Mount Sinai, the proclamation of Scripture is sealed with visible signs (Ex. 24:1–11). In the new covenant, this is done by means of baptism and the Lord's Supper, which, as Calvin said, are added to the Word as a sort of appendix, with the purpose of confirming and sealing it.<sup>32</sup>

## 5. Systematically Conducted

In the regular services of worship on the Lord's Day, the Scriptures are read and preached as a *lectio continua*. While there are certain occasions when the *lectio continua* may be interrupted (as was the case in the synagogue during festivals), the continuous, systematic reading and exposition of Scripture is the basic rule (Deut. 31: 9–13; Neh. 8:1–9; 2 Tim. 3:16–4:2).<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> See Hughes Oliphant Old, *Leading in Prayer* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 139–74; cf. Hughes Oliphant Old, *The Patristic Roots of Reformed Worship*, American ed. (Black Mountain: Worship Press, 2004), 211.

<sup>31</sup> This is also the model found in The Westminster Directory for Public Worship. See Richard Muller et al., *Scripture and Worship* (Phillipsburg: P&R, 2007), 121, 122, 146.

<sup>32</sup> See Glen J. Clary, “Holy Communion in the Theology of John Knox,” *The Confessional Presbyterian* 7 (2011), 18.

<sup>33</sup> The *lectio continua* was carried over from the synagogue into Christian worship and remained the basic rule for the first few centuries of the church, as we see in the sermons of Origen, Augustine, Chrysostom, etc. It was eventually supplanted, however, by lectionaries and the liturgical calendar. See Hughes Oliphant Old, *The Reading and Preaching of the Scriptures in the Worship of the Christian Church*, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998).

# Servant Truth

## What I Learned from my Dutch Reformed Brethren

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G. I. Williamson

It was my privilege to serve as a pastor for nearly two decades with the Reformed Churches of New Zealand (or RCNZ). And it was during this time that they adopted the Westminster Confession of Faith (WCF) as one of the doctrinal standards of their Churches having authority equal to that of the Three Forms of Unity. And what has impressed me more and more over the years is not only the fact that these Dutch immigrants did this rather remarkable thing, but also showed quite clearly by their actions the integrity of that adoption.

It was not long after the WCF was adopted that one of the pastors who came from the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands lodged what they called a gravamen against WCF 21.7–8. The pastor, who brought that gravamen to his session, then presbytery, and finally synod, was a man of integrity. He did not start publicly preaching or teaching “his” view of the Lord’s Day/Sabbath. No, he had too much respect for the integrity of confessional subscription. What he wanted was either the removal of 21.7–8, or a newly written replacement for that section of the WCF. So he sought it by refraining from publicly teaching or writing anything contrary to the church’s adopted confessional standards, while working within the assemblies of the elders of the churches to effect a change with which he could agree. I was opposed to his gravamen, but I respected very much the way that he dealt with this matter. We remained good friends during the time when this was adjudicated—and also after he left New Zealand to serve in a different confessional context in Australia.

One of the things that left a deep impression on me was the fact that even though this was an issue that could have become a serious source of conflict, it did not. The reason was that an orderly course had been followed. And when the synod (or what I would call the broadest assembly of the elders of the RCNZ) determined that the churches wished to uphold WCF 21.7–8, my friend did not even want to publicly teach or preach what was contrary to this. He sought, instead, a place in a church that had not adopted the WCF as the RCNZ had. And it is my conviction that we Presbyterians would profit by learning from this example.

In our earlier history, as I understand it, we Presbyterians had a similar concept and conviction. Let me give two examples: (1) the original text of the WCF 25.6 said:

There is no other head of the Church but the Lord Jesus Christ. Nor can the Pope of Rome, in any sense, be head thereof: but is that Antichrist, that man of sin, and son of perdition, that exalteth himself, in the Church, against Christ and all that is called God.

I hope that everyone who reads this will understand that I am in complete agreement with the first part of this section of the WCF. But I am also thankful that the part that I have underlined has been changed. I certainly believe that what the Scriptures say about the antichrist has a valid application to the false claims of the papacy. I also believe what 2 Thessalonians says about “the man of sin [or lawlessness]” can be applied—by the principle of analogy—against the papacy. But I do not believe (as the authors of the WCF did) that the papacy is what the Apostles Paul and John specifically intended us to understand their words to mean. I am therefore in complete agreement with the deletion of the underlined words in the OPC and PCA version. (2) The original text of WCF 24.4b said, “The man may not marry any of his wife's kindred, nearer in blood than he may of his own: not the woman her husband's kindred, nearer in blood than of her own.” It is my recollection that Professor John Murray defended this original section of the WCF. But my interest here is to point out that in earlier times Presbyterians saw it as important to either agree with their confession or change it so that it says in plain, understandable words, what the church actually believes. When they no longer held this view, it too was deleted. And it is this integrity that I wish we could recover.

I have noted several instances, lately, in which the great Herman Bavinck has been cited in support of the assertion that no creed has as yet made six-day creation a confessional doctrine. And it is true that Dr. Bavinck not only admitted that historically “Christian theology, with only a few exceptions, continued to hold onto the literal historical view of the creation story” but then went on to say “not a single confession made a fixed pronouncement about the six-day continuum.”<sup>1</sup> I have the highest respect for Herman Bavinck and am thankful, at last, to have my hands on his great work of dogmatics in English. But even great men make mistakes. And the fact is that on this he was not correct. The Westminster Assembly of Divines did make a fixed pronouncement about the six-day continuum. They said in the WCF, and again in both the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, that God—by the word of his power—created “all things visible and invisible, in the space of six days.” And that they intended this to mean what our children take it to mean when they learn the shorter catechism, has been clearly demonstrated by Dr. David Hall.<sup>2</sup>

I (and other six-day creation people) have been accused of wanting to excommunicate Hodge, Warfield, and Machen because of their willingness to tolerate views such as the day-age view. This is a false charge. Did Luther and Calvin want to excommunicate Augustine because they found error in his teaching? Wasn't the Reformation itself liberation from blind obedience to false tradition—even if that false tradition was sometimes embraced by truly great men? Likewise, I believe a serious mistake was made in the way this creation issue was handled by some truly great men. I think it should have been handled in the same way the items enumerated above as (1) and (2) were handled. Men who did not hold to the six-day view (so clearly expressed in the three Westminster Standards) should have been required to refrain from public teaching or preaching their different views unless and until those sections of the WCF and Catechisms were either removed or rewritten. I say this because I think it is a serious failure on the part of the

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<sup>1</sup> Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004), 495.

<sup>2</sup> David Hall, “The Westminster View of Creation Days: A Choice between Non-Ambiguity or Historical Revisionism,” <http://www.reformed.org/creation/index.html>.

eldership of the church to teach our children one thing (in the catechism) while the preacher teaches another thing. Had this restraint been required, those who do not agree with six-day creation would have seen it as their duty to remain silent (in public utterance and writing on the subject) while they made diligent study in order (in private) to formulate what they had come to believe to be the truth in order to bring it before their session, presbytery, and general assembly, seeking a change in the Westminster Standards. Had this been done, it is possible that the church would have finally been persuaded that one or another of the various views was correct. Then the doctrinal standards could have been changed to clearly state the other view. Or at least it might have resulted in the church simply removing the sections of the WCF and Catechisms that say God created the world “in the space of six-days.” As it is at present we have, in effect, taken on a new method of confessional revision. We no longer insist that our confession and catechisms unambiguously state what we as a church unitedly believe, so that the words of our confession themselves are subordinately authoritative (meaning that while they can be changed when appropriate, as Scripture cannot, they nevertheless must be adhered to unless changed by due process). Now the doctrinal authority seems more and more to reside in whatever the majority is willing to allow, rather than in the words of the confessions and catechisms taken according to their intended and long-received meaning. I think the brethren who brought the Dutch Reformed heritage to New Zealand exhibited something better than “our way” of dealing with our subordinate standards, and we would do well to learn from their example.

I’m aware of the fact that some may appeal to *animus imponentis* as a way of weakening what I've written. But, as the 2004 report on Creation to the Seventy-first General Assembly itself admits,

the church ought to interpret her Standards consonant with the meaning intended at its adoption . . . It is inimical to constitutional government for the church to interpret her constitution in any way that is clearly at variance with its own words and the original intention of the framers/adopters. To disregard the Standards’ clear statement about a particular doctrine and to believe otherwise in spite of what is confessed is the mark of a declining, if not to say, apostatizing church. When the church comes to believe that the Scriptures teach something other than what she has confessed the scriptures to teach, integrity demands she amend her constitution in the manner that the constitution itself prescribes for its own amendment.<sup>3</sup>

Or, to say it more briefly, “*animus imponentis* may not be employed so as to make a wax nose of the Standards and to pit the church's interpretation of the Standards against the plain words of the Standards itself.”<sup>4</sup> In our OPC handling of the doctrine of creation I do not believe we have lived up to these excellent statements.

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<sup>3</sup> Minutes of the Seventy-first General Assembly (2004), 260.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

# ServantReading

## Alone Together: The Great Irony of Modern Communication

A Review Article

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T. David Gordon

*Alone Together: Why We Expect More from Technology and Less from Each Other*, by Sherry Turkle. New York: Basic Books, 2011, xvii + 360 pages, \$28.95.

Sherry Turkle has written a thorough and interesting analysis of our curious relationship with electronic and digital technologies. The entire book examines the paradox contained in the sub-title: That we expect (even long for) human relationships with our technologies, while contenting ourselves with sub-human relationships with humans. As she says in the preface, “I leave my story at a point of disturbing symmetry: we seem determined to give human qualities to objects and content to treat each other as things” (xiv).

This is no mere editorial or screed. Turkle is Professor of Social Studies of Science and Technology at MIT, a licensed clinical psychologist, the director of the MIT Initiative on Technology and Self, the editor of two books, and the author of four other books. Turkle studied under the late Joseph Weizenbaum in the mid-1970s when he was working on his famous ELIZA program. This particular volume functions as the third part of a trilogy that includes *Life on the Screen: Identity in the Age of the Internet* (1997) and *The Second Self: Computers and the Human Spirit* (2005). It is the result of a fifteen-year study that included interviews with over 450 individuals. The book is 360 pages long, and includes 290 footnotes spread across forty-one small-type pages. The book is divided into two parts, and the two parts disclose the paradox that constitutes the book’s thesis. Part One (chapters 1–7) is entitled “The Robotic Moment: In Solitude, New Intimacies” and Part Two (chapters 8–14) is entitled “Networked: In Intimacy, New Solitudes.”

When Turkle refers to ours as “the robotic moment,” she qualifies that she does “not mean that companionate robots are common among us; it refers to our state of emotional—and I would say philosophical—readiness” (9). She traces the development of social/companionate robots since Weizenbaum’s ELIZA, discussing Tamagotchis, Furbies, Paros, My Real Baby, AIBO, Cog, Kismet, Domo, and Mertz. Her observations of these devices and our usage of them lead to her basic conclusion that “now, instead of simply taking on difficult or dangerous jobs for us, robots would try to be our friends” (xii). “The robot, for some,” says Turkle “is not merely ‘better than nothing,’ but better than something, better than a human for some purposes” (7). Robots are now being developed to care for the young and the elderly, and some of each appear to be content with the circumstance. One elderly woman said of her robotic dog, “It is better than a real

dog . . . It won't do dangerous things, and it won't betray you . . . Also, it won't die suddenly and abandon you and make you very sad" (10). Indeed, the fifth-graders Turkle studied "worried that their grandparents might prefer robots to their company" (118), and in one case she observed such an event: "Edna's attention remains on My Real Baby. The atmosphere is quiet, even surreal: a great grandmother entranced by a robot baby, a neglected two-year-old, a shocked mother, and researchers nervously coughing in discomfort" (117). And though the young people did not like being overlooked by (great) grandparents or parents, many of them also preferred robots to people, as one young girl said: "In some ways Cog would be better than a person-friend because a robot would never try to hurt your feelings" (93). After fifteen years of observation, Turkle noted, "children want to connect with these machines, to teach them and befriend them. And they want the robots to like, even love, them" (86). Indeed, both young and old alike, while acknowledging verbally that these robots are just machines, continued to cover and make excuses for their obvious mistakes, a trait that Turkle refers to as "complicity" (131).

Turkle is not an alarmist, but she writes the book with genuine concern over what she perceives as a profoundly de-humanizing tendency to expect and desire robots to replace human companionship: "Many roboticists are enthusiastic about having robots tend to our children and our aging parents, for instance. Are these psychologically, socially, and ethically acceptable propositions? What are our responsibilities here?" (17). Turkle shares the concern of one young girl who said, "Don't we have people for these jobs?" (76). Towards the conclusion of Part One, Turkle says, "My Real Baby was marketed as a robot that could teach your child 'socialization.' I am skeptical. I believe that sociable technology will always disappoint because it promises what it cannot deliver . . . A machine taken as a friend demeans what we mean by friendship" (101).

In Part Two, Turkle discusses how the network has altered our social structures in similarly dehumanizing ways, referring to "the unsettling isolations of the tethered self" (155), and citing research that "portrays Americans as increasingly insecure, isolated, and lonely" (157). In this section, she discusses social networks such as Second Life and Facebook, and the communications technologies of instant messaging, texting, and cellphones. Even though young people show traits of virtual addiction to their digital technologies (Turkle is aware that multi-tasking "feels good because the body rewards it with neurochemicals that induce a multi-tasking 'high,'" 163), they also share candidly with Turkle their misgivings and anxieties about them. They are very aware that they are, as Turkle says, "always on" (151, and Turkle also refers to "the anxiety of always," 260), constantly producing and managing their digital *personae*, fearful that they will project a "self" that others will not like and fearful that they cannot erase from these websites mistakes that can injure them both now and in their futures. As one young woman said to her, "I feel that my childhood has been stolen by the Internet. I shouldn't have to be thinking about these things" (247). Many young people also appear to be aware of the addictive tendencies of these technologies: "I think of a sixteen-year-old who tells me, 'Technology is bad because people are not as strong as its pull' " (227).

Turkle shares the concerns others have expressed about the tendency of social networking sites to become a substitute for real human community. For many of the individuals she studied and interviewed, the online "life" was as important as their actual life: "Pete says that his online marriage is an essential part of his 'life mix.' . . . He makes

it clear that he spends time ‘in physical life’ with friends and family. But he says that Second Life ‘is my preferred way of being with people’ ” (160–61). Many log on to anonymous “confessional” sites to acknowledge their transgressions without actually having to do anything about them face-to-face with anyone: “I ask her if online confession makes it easier *not* to apologize. Her answer is immediate: ‘Oh, I definitely think so. This is my way to make my peace . . . and move on.’ I am taken aback because I did not expect such a ready response” (233).

Perhaps the most surprising result of Turkle’s interviews was the intensity with which her subjects (both adult and youth) avoid/evade landline telephones and, increasingly, even cellphones (many use their cellphones exclusively for texting). They regard telephones as intrusive, and express anxiety that they will not know what to say or how to end the conversation, so they prefer texting or IM-ing, where they can compose what they wish to say without the anxiety of immediacy. Referring to this tendency, Turkle expresses again the paradox that constitutes her thesis: “We work so hard to give expressive voices to our robots but are content not to use our own” (207).

Though trained in psychoanalysis, Turkle writes as a true media ecologist, observing “not what computers do *for* us but what they do *to* us, to our ways of thinking about ourselves, our relationships, our sense of being human” (2, emphases mine). “We make our technologies, and they, in turn, shape us” (19). “Technologies live in complex ecologies. The meaning of any one depends on what others are available” (188). Turkle’s voice is joined to that of Maggie Jackson (*Distracted: The Erosion of Attention and the Coming Dark Age*, 2009), Winifred Gallagher (*Rapt: Attention and the Focused Life*, 2009), Mark Bauerlein (*The Dumbest Generation: How the Digital Age Stupefies Young Americans and Jeopardizes our Future (Or, Don’t Trust Anyone under Thirty)*, 2008), and Nicholas Carr (*The Shallows: What the Internet Is Doing to Our Brains*, 2010).

We can no longer afford the conceit that our helpful and powerful technologies—for all their help and all their power—come without remarkable human costs. “But these days, our problems with the Net are becoming too distracting to ignore . . . The ties we form through the Internet are not, in the end, the ties that bind. But they are ties that preoccupy. We text each other at family dinners, while we jog, while we drive, as we push our children on swings in the park. We don’t want to intrude on each other, so instead we constantly intrude on each other, but not in ‘real time’” (294, 280). If there are any solutions, they will not be easy: “This is hard and will take work. Simple love of technology is not going to help. Nor is a Luddite impulse” (294). What Turkle suggests, instead, is what she calls “*realtechnik*” (294f.), as we assess the results of the networked life and “begin with very simple things . . . Talk to colleagues down the hall, no cell phones at dinner, on the playground, in the car, or in company” (296).

Turkle is evidently a humanist, but she does not disclose whether she is a theistic humanist or a secular one (she does make passing reference to her Jewish heritage). Readers of *Ordained Servant*, therefore, will not find a theology of technology here nor a theological critique of our current technologies. But readers will find here many insights about how and “why we expect more from technology and less from ourselves.” *Tolle, lege.*

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# ServantPoetry

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William Shakespeare (1564–1616)

## Sonnet 29

When, in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes,  
I all alone beweep my outcast state,  
And trouble deaf heaven with my bootless cries,  
And look upon myself and curse my fate,  
Wishing me like to one more rich in hope,  
Featured like him, like him with friends possessed,  
Desiring this man's art and that man's scope,  
With what I most enjoy contented least;  
Yet in these thoughts myself almost despising,  
Haply I think on thee, and then my state,  
(Like to the lark at break of day arising  
From sullen earth) sings hymns at heaven's gate;  
    For thy sweet love remembered such wealth brings  
    That then I scorn to change my state with kings.