Study Methods for Theological Education

Student Workbook

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Why Do We Read?
Some Responses

Education. . . has produced a vast population able to read but unable to distinguish what is worth reading.

G.M. Trevelyan

Wonder is the beginning of wisdom in learning from books as well as from nature. If you never ask yourself any questions about the meaning of a passage, you cannot expect the book to give you any insight you do not already possess.

Mortimer, Adler J. and Charles Van Doren

Reading furnishes the mind only with material for knowledge; it is thinking [that] makes what we read ours.

John Locke

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

Psalm 119:105, NRSV
UNIT 1: APPROACHING SEMINARY ASSIGNMENTS

I. Skills for Seminary Education
Seminary is a life-changing experience! It involves academic work, significant life adjustments, tests of faith, and compromises in attitude and work style. This workbook and the course *Study Methods for Seminary Education* are designed to ease you into the academic lifestyle of seminary.

As you probably have already discovered, theological study is a field like no other. It differs considerably in approach, written expression, and application from other academic studies you may have undertaken and also from the work you may have done in fields such as business, medicine, law, or teaching.

It will be very important in your seminary work to develop and practice the skill of critical and reflective reading. You will read not only to learn about the history of the church, biblical scholarship, and the practice of ministry, but also to formulate your own ideas about these topics. As a part of this process, you will be asked to write both about the texts you read and about the ideas you have as you engage in conversation with these texts.

Engaging in this kind of written conversation will improve your ability to communicate with peers, professors, and members of your congregation. Being able to articulate your faith and the theology that backs it up will be important throughout your entire career in ministry; the reading and writing skills you learn in this course will help you improve that larger and more crucial skill.

This course will also emphasize general study skills and notetaking skills. If you have been away from school for some time or are just a little unsure of yourself in the academic environment of seminary, you will find tips in this manual for making the most of your classroom time as well as your study and writing time. The skills you will develop in these areas will serve you well in any ministry situation in which you have to manage your time efficiently and listen sensitively to the ideas of your ministry partners.

II. Critical Reading
Reading critically doesn’t mean being critical in the way you might assume. To read critically or “critique” a text is to read carefully and with a purpose. You probably did plenty of critical reading in your college studies. You were reading to learn from the experts about a given subject but also to react to their ideas, sometimes agreeing and sometimes disagreeing. You may have written papers that critiqued a certain author’s strategies of argument, analyzed those strategies, or argued with an author’s opinion on an issue.

In theological study, you will be asked to read in similar ways. The difference is that the material you read in seminary will probably be “closer to your heart” than what you read in college. Most of us feel very strongly about matters of faith; after all, we have chosen
to attend seminary and will probably be church leaders for the rest of our lives. Because we have such strong feelings and opinions about our faith, we may find it hard to be objective about texts that challenge those opinions. We may find it hard to read critically.

Even if you have to work hard to remain open-minded and flexible as you read theological texts that challenge your faith, that work is worth the effort. It will broaden your understanding of various faith traditions and enable you to converse more capably about your own. Besides, we all need to be challenged in order to grow in our faith.

III. Approaching a Book
Here are some general suggestions for working with the texts you will read in your seminary classes. For more specific help with reading efficiency and comprehension, see Unit 3: READING EFFICIENTLY AND TAKING NOTES IN BOOKS in this manual.

Entering a Book
Always approach a book with

- attentiveness and curiosity: What do you already know about the subject matter or the author? What stirs your interest? What would you like to learn from the book? What hints has your instructor given you about this text? Does your course syllabus or your class notes indicate how this book relates to the other course material or the course focus?
- self-awareness: You know that you bring your own opinions to the reading of this book. If you are a person of faith, these opinions probably relate to that faith. You need not put them aside while you read, but you should realize that how you react to the text has a lot to do with your own faith.
- flexibility: Realize that you do not need to read everything at the same pace, from cover to cover. Be selective in what you read and how fast you read.

Ask questions
While reading a text, ask questions about what the author is saying and why the author is saying it in this particular way. Have a conversation with the text. Here are some questions you could ask:

- Is the author omitting or stressing certain arguments or subjects in the text? For example, is the author of a text on the history of Christianity failing to mention the Orthodox tradition or emphasizing one particular reform movement?
- What affect does this emphasis have on you as the reader? Do you trust the writer’s ideas more or less because of this emphasis?
- If the author were present what questions would you ask him or her? These questions might be helpful to ask in class discussion.

Reading to Write
Although reading and writing demand the most time from seminary students, they are often the most inefficiently practiced skills. While students may identify several reasons why writing a paper or reading a book takes them so long, this inefficiency lies primarily in not closely enough relating the two skills. Both reading critically and writing clearly are
exacting arts; they require an ability to discern what is essential information from what is not. *If you read without purpose, you read uncritically.*

Instructors frequently provide that purpose for reading. Sometimes it is stated implicitly and sometimes *explicitly*. For example, in a lecture on church history, if your professor frequently uses the term “transformation,” then when you read an assignment for that class, you will read to find evidence of the kinds of transformations the professor has been referring to. This is an implicit direction for your reading.

Writing assignments provide an explicit purpose for students to read. For example, in the course Introduction to Christian Theology, your assignment might be to write on the question “Who is God?” This kind of explicit direction instructs you to read with the purpose of finding information that will help you write a critical response to the question.

**Ask Questions**
Ask lots of questions in order to find a purpose or focus for your reading:
- What is your reading assignment?
- For what purpose has the instructor assigned it?
- What terms are frequently repeated in lectures?
- What explicit writing instructions have been given?
- Do you share an understanding of these instructions with your classmates? If you aren’t sure, *ask them*.

If you can’t answer these questions or you have disagreements with your peers about the answers, then you need to ask your instructor for clarification. Never be afraid to ask!

**Exiting a book**
When you have finished reading, ask yourself if the book or reading assignment answered your questions and met your reading objectives. Were you able to fulfill your reading purpose? Make sure before you leave the book that you have a clear sense of the following:

1. the *overriding theme*: the thesis, main ideas, and supporting arguments.

2. the *context of the author*: By reading the book’s preface, introduction, cover flaps, back page, publishing information (who the publisher is, location, year), and the bibliography the author has offered, you can find out about the author’s life experience and career, what other sources that author has used, and what events and people have informed the author’s own perspective. It is also important to be aware of the author’s intended audience. What assumptions is the author making in his or her use of terms, concepts, or understandings? See “Surveying Reading Assignments” in Unit 2 of this manual for more guidance on getting to know a source by surveying it.
3. **yourself:** What do you think of the thesis? Are you convinced by the arguments? Why or why not? What strong opinions or questions of faith did reading this text stir up in you?

4. **the significance of the text:** Ask the question, “So what?” After reading, what is the impact on you and your understanding of the topic? How might these ideas affect your church and community? How would you present this topic/argument to someone else (your church, your peers, your professor)?

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**Bibliography**


*See especially page 123, chapters 1, 5, 10, and 18.*


*See especially pages 146-147.*


*See especially pages 19-24.*
UNIT 2: MAKING THE MOST OF RESOURCES—NAVIGATING YOUR SYLLABUS AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

I. Helping Your Syllabus Help You
Your course syllabus is the instructor’s most efficient way to communicate the scope and expectations of the course to you and your best way to understand them. But so often students put away their course syllabus the first day of class and never look at it again except to remind themselves of daily assignments.

When you take a closer look at your syllabus, you’ll probably find that it offers much more than deadlines and assignments. In most course syllabi you will find the following:

- Goals for the class
- Methods: how the class time will be spent—lecture, discussion, small groups
  what will be covered—readings, student papers, church-body statements
- Required texts: you will want to compare this list with the books you have purchased
- Topic divisions for the class: major areas of focus and how much time will be devoted to each
- Descriptions of writing assignments, tests, and group activities
- Grading Criteria: Many instructors include on their syllabi what activities they count as part of your grade and how important each one is. Class participation, for example, may count more in one class than in another. Reflection papers may count differently from research papers. If a teacher has not given you any information about grading criteria, do not be afraid to ask for it.
- Instructors’ office hours and phone numbers: Office hours are times when teachers will be in their offices and available for questions. If it is not possible for you to meet during a teacher’s office hours, ask for an appointment at another time. Most teachers are eager to help and will try to meet you at a time that is convenient for you.
- Instructors of courses at McCormick Seminary have been asked to attach to their syllabi the McCormick “Guidelines for Research Paper Form.” You should follow these guidelines in preparing written work. See Unit 9: NUTS AND BOLTS OF DOCUMENTATION in this manual for additional information about documenting sources that you use in your papers.

Besides putting important deadlines on the calendar you keep for your seminary assignments, you will want to refer to the syllabus frequently during the course to refresh your memory about expectations and to “get your bearings” as the class moves through the various topics. In addition, you may want to ask the instructor to clarify some of the information on the syllabus.

II. Asking Questions about Assignments and Expectations
It is important to listen carefully when the instructor reviews the syllabus with the class. At that time, you can ask questions about expectations or assignment due dates. The earlier you ask such questions, the better, because asking questions is a helpful way to establish a line of communication with your instructor and even a relationship.
It would be a great idea to spend a little time NOW, at the beginning of the quarter, looking through all the syllabi for your courses and planning questions to ask your instructors. Use the list above to guide you through each syllabus; note your questions in the margins of the syllabus. If teachers do not invite you to ask questions during the class period, you can stay after class and talk with them or set up an appointment to see them in their offices later. Never be hesitant to ask questions about their expectations.

III. Surveying Reading Assignments
Before beginning to read the assigned pages in a book for one of your courses, you can get to know that book by surveying it. Before you introduce yourself to a book, its size may be overwhelming, or you may be intimidated by its title or its cover. Those feelings can make plowing through a reading assignment harder than it needs to be. Investing just a few minutes of your time before you start to read may enable you to feel in control of the reading assignment and to complete it much more efficiently than you expected.

What is surveying?
• the first stage in getting the overall sense of a text.
• a reading survival strategy!

Why survey?
• to preview.
• getting the big picture may make complex parts of the material less confusing.
• you may find you do not have to read the whole text.

What can you learn by surveying?
• Author and Audience
  - Who wrote the text?
  - For whom is this text written? (Who is the intended audience?)
• The Text
  - What type of writing is it? (fiction, biblical exegesis, argument, etc.)
  - What is the subject of the text?
  - How can the organization help you understand the author’s reason for writing?
  - What are some special or unusual features of the text?
• You, The Reader
  -What do you already know about this subject?
  -What opinions about the author’s position do you already hold?

Before You Survey…..
Consult your syllabus and your class notes to see if your instructor has given any guidance for handling this reading assignment—have you been given any specific instructions? See if you can determine how this assignment fits into the topic being covered currently in your class. Look for study questions or any other reading aids the instructor may have given.
How to Survey: Lifelines

Look through the book that contains the assigned pages you’ve been asked to read. You can learn a lot about the book by examining the features listed below. The way a source handles these features will affect your response to it and your ease in reading it. They are lifelines because taking hold of them before you actually start reading may help you stay afloat when you get into the book’s deep water.

**Layout**

- Flip quickly through the book and notice the size of its type and how the text is centered on the pages. Does the layout look friendly and inviting or does it look intimidating?
- How much white space do you find around the chunks of text? Will you have plenty of room for making margin notes?

Make some notes here about the layout of the text.
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

**Organization**

- Look at the Table of Contents to determine whether the chapters are grouped into sections. If you have been asked to read only one chapter or a group of chapters, notice what section they are a part of.
- What chapter titles interest you the most?
- Look into one of the chapters you have been assigned. Can you detect a clear organizational pattern within that chapter? Does the chapter use sub-sections to divide up material? Do titles of those sub-sections give you an idea of each section’s main point?
- Look at the first and last paragraphs or sections of the chapter. Do they summarize what has been covered in earlier sections? Do they introduce the main point of the chapter or section?
- Can you find any other special features within the chapter that might help you understand the chapter’s point before you begin to read?

Make some notes here about the organization of the material you’ve been asked to read.
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

**Author and Audience**
• Is the book by just one author or by several? If several, how will that fact affect your reading and understanding of the text?
• Do you have any past experience with the author/s?
• Look for information about the author. Sometimes it can be found on the book’s back cover, sometimes at the beginning of the book, and sometimes in a small section at the end. The Acknowledgments or the Preface may also give you an idea of the author’s life situation and viewpoint.
• If there is a Preface or an Introduction to the book, look quickly over it to see if you can find the author’s purpose in writing the book or the main point of the text. Sometimes you can find these in the text on the book’s back cover. Do you have strong personal opinions about this topic?
• Now look for a statement about the audience to whom this book is directed. If you don’t find any information about audience in the Preface, try the book’s back cover or Introduction.

What have you learned about the Author and Audience of this book?________________________
_______________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________

Reference Aids

• Take a look at the book’s Index. Is there more than one index? If your book is a biblical study, you may find an index to scripture references.
• Look for a Bibliography or a Suggestions for Further Reading list. You will usually find these at the end of the book. These sources may be useful to consult for papers you write in this class.
• Are there any questions for further discussion or suggested exercises at the ends of chapters?
• Within the pages you have been asked to read, do you find diagrams, charts, lists, pictures, or other reference aids that present the information in ways other than written explanation? Do you usually find such reference aids helpful in your reading?

Describe how the Reference Aids in this book might help you understand your reading assignment better. __________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________

Completing Your Survey…

At first, surveying may seem to be a time-consuming exercise, but once you get into practice, you can survey a source very quickly. So don’t get discouraged the first time you work through the Lifelines. Keep at it and you’ll be amazed at how much you can learn about an assignment before you read the first page. Spending a few minutes surveying before you begin to read an assignment will enable you to read with more confidence and to get the information you need more quickly than you would if you just sat down and
started reading the assigned pages. Surveying may keep you afloat in the deep water of your reading assignment.

**Your Own Favorites**

After you’ve used the Lifelines a couple of times to survey your reading assignments, make a list here to remind yourself of which lifelines help you the most in getting ready to read efficiently:

6. ______________________________________

7. ______________________________________

8. ______________________________________

9. ______________________________________

10. ______________________________________

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**Bibliography**


*See especially pages 59-95.*


*See especially pages 82-95.*

UNIT 3: READING EFFICIENTLY AND TAKING NOTES IN BOOKS

Once you have surveyed your reading assignment, you are ready to begin reading (see Unit 2: MAKING THE MOST OF RESOURCES: NAVIGATING YOUR SYLLABUS AND READING ASSIGNMENTS in this manual for information on surveying a text). Keep in mind what you learned from your survey work, and remember to look for the lifelines you discovered to help you stay afloat as you read.

The best readers are active, inquisitive readers, letting their own ideas and responses flow freely as they read. Remember, reading is an interaction between you and the author whose words you are reading. Don’t try to memorize the text—have a conversation with it! And in the course of the conversation, don’t be afraid to disagree or question a writer’s assumptions or conclusions.

I. Tips to Increase Your Reading Speed

• **Pace yourself:** Drag the tip of a pen along the line you are reading. Be sure that it moves quicker than your eyes. In this way, the pen becomes your pacer and can keep your eyes from wandering. Eventually this will help you read faster.

Another method is to **use a note card** or bookmark turned sideways. Move the flat edge at a steady pace down the page above or below the line you are reading. Try to keep the card moving.

Using either a pen or a notecard as a pacer helps you get involved mentally and physically in your reading and thus improves your concentration.

• **Read in phrases** rather than word by word. For example, this passage from John E Burkhart’s book, *Worship*, can be divided into phrases. The ‘/’ marks indicate possible phrases.

> Eating and drinking together / in recognition of Jesus / is the basic act / of acknowledgment / by Christians / of what God has done, / is doing, / and will do / through him. / As acknowledgment, / the emphasis is not first upon what we do, but upon what God does. / Those who gather / in recognition of Jesus / know themselves as guests, / invited to the table.

John E. Burkhart, *Worship*

By reading in phrases you can anticipate where the sentence is going. For instance, prepositions usually open phrases (ex: in Jerusalem; around the time of Christ). Nouns often have articles or description words in front of them (ex: an outspoken Pharisee, Paul; the foolish disciples). Be aware of these kinds of phrases as you rhythmically read groups of words. With practice, the groups of words will become larger. For instance, “Eating and drinking together in recognition of Jesus / is the basic act of acknowledgment by Christians / of what God has done, is doing, and will do through him.” (Ibid.)
• **Mark the end** of the reading assignment with a paper clip or Post-it note so that you have a visual reminder of your progress toward completing the assignment. You can even divide the assignment into two or three chunks and mark those to give yourself several short-term reading goals.

• **Learn to cut corners.** Not all material needs to be read at the same pace. Remember, surveying helps you decipher which sections to read thoroughly and which sections to skim.

II. Tips to Improve Your Comprehension

Seminary students don’t have time to waste. With so much reading to do, you need to use the time you have as efficiently as possible. So use what you already know about yourself and your study habits to help you decide how and where and when to read.

• Choose the right place to read: Think about locations where you have read successfully in the past. Go there again! Remember where you were sitting the last time you fell asleep while reading. Don’t read there!

• Choose the best time to read: If you’re a morning person, you can read well at that time. If not, don’t make yourself try. Set yourself up for success by choosing reading times according to when you have the most energy.

• Choose the right reading company: Most people read more efficiently alone! But if you share a study space and must read in the company of others, try to block out as many distractions as you can by sitting in an isolated area or even turning your back on your study companions. Be selfish about your study situation!

• Keep your focus sharp: If you find yourself staring at the page you have been working on for several minutes and have no idea what you’ve read—STOP! Get a cold drink, take a walk, take a shower, fix a snack. Give your brain a break and try again.

• Stay alert or go to sleep: If you realize that you’ve nodded off to sleep twice during one reading session and can’t remember the main idea of the text—STOP! Take a nap or a cold shower, or just go to bed. Completing a reading assignment is pointless if you do not remember what you’ve read or can’t use the notes you’ve made about the reading to refresh your memory.

• Take at least one break every hour while you are reading. Quickly reviewing the pages you’ve read before you take a break will improve comprehension.

• Discuss aspects of the reading assignment with a classmate. Discussion engages you with the ideas, brings them to life, and motivates further reading and discussion.

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**Bibliography**


*See especially pages 24-26.*
III. Annotating Reading

If you have never developed the habit of taking notes in your books, now is the time to start! Of course, if the book you are reading does not belong to you, you should not mark in it—use Post-it notes on the pages or take notes in a notebook. But if you’ve bought the book, the best way to make it truly yours is to have a written conversation with it as you read.

The best place to make notes about your reading is on the text pages. Use the white space in the margins to note the author’s main ideas and your own thoughts. Making notes can help during reading to keep your mind focused on the text. The symbols can also help you review the text after you finish reading. Later when you come back to the text, the notes can aid your memory and help you find what you are looking for.

The reason making margin notes is so important is that you are usually reading to write. Therefore, you want to be able to locate information quickly. Making consistent margin marks enables you to refer back to what you have read and find the particular information you need for your paper. If your assignment is to summarize the text, your margin notes can help you make a concise outline for writing.

Don’t fall into the trap of using a highlighter or underlining your text extensively. If you have underlined too much or highlighted without adding notes in the margins, it can be a tedious and time consuming task to find important information again or to determine a passage’s main idea. A more helpful strategy is to use margin marks generously and underline conservatively.

Some helpful notation symbols to use in margins include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NOTATION SYMBOL</th>
<th>SYMBOL DESCRIPTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>_______ or }</td>
<td>Thesis, main argument, or important item.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Points or aspects of an established thesis, opinion, or theme.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>} def</td>
<td>Definition of a key word or concept.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*</td>
<td>Something important to the author.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ex</td>
<td>An example.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C/C</td>
<td>Compare and Contrast. These ideas compare or contrast.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Symbol</td>
<td>Notation Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>Circle words that you don’t know.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>?</td>
<td>The author is confusing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>!</td>
<td>You agree with this!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No!</td>
<td>You disagree with this!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“ ”</td>
<td>Notes a good quote.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sum</td>
<td>Summary by author.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lec 10/6</td>
<td>This point relates to class notes you took on 10/6.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Do you have any other symbols that you use when you are reading and taking notes? What are they?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NOTATION SYMBOL</th>
<th>SYMBOL DESCRIPTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Annotating Example**

Read through this example from the essay “The Cultural Context of the New Testament: The Greco-Roman World” by Abraham J. Malherbe. Observe what notation symbols are used.
The Social World

Travel and Communication. One of the first things to strike one about the Roman world is its mobility. Probably not many people traveled as much as the Phrygian merchant whose epitaph claims that he had visited Rome seventy-two times, but travel was not at all unusual, especially for merchants and artisans who followed their business and trade. Travel by sea had become relatively safe and regular, but since sailing virtually ceased between mid-November and mid-March, the highways carried most of the traffic. The Roman system of highways, originally constructed to serve the needs of the military, brought people to Rome in such numbers that Roman critics became alarmed. The Christian tentmakers Aquila and Priscilla, variously located in Pontius, Rome, Corinth (Acts 18:1-3), Ephesus (Acts 18:18, 26; I Cor 16:19), and Rome again (Rom 16:3), fit this picture well, as do the more than two dozen people Paul greets in Romans 16, whom he had evidently known in the eastern Mediterranean, but who at the time of writing had found their way to Rome.

How religions spread. As other religions spread along the highways, so did Judaism and Christianity. For the most part, in the first century, particularly outside Palestine, Christianity took root in major cities, frequently provincial capitals, on the main routes. Its rapid spread was facilitated by a number of factors. People could communicate in the common (koine) Greek (see Acts 21:37), which had developed with the spread of Greek culture three centuries earlier during Alexander the Great’s conquests. Latin was the official language, but local languages and dialects continued to be spoken (see John 19:20; Acts 14:11). The well constructed and drained highways, marked by milestones showing the distance to Rome, made it possible to cover about fifteen miles per day by foot, about twice as far by cart. Maps and guidebooks informed travelers of the sights and accommodations along the way. The latter consisted of inns located at convenient places on the highways, around public squares, and near important buildings in the cities. The conditions in the inns were not of high quality, so, wherever possible, Jews, Christians, and well-off pagans availed themselves of private hospitality (see Acts 21:4-16).

These features associated with mobility affected people’s lives and practices. Christians, for example, wrote in Greek, and it is of special importance

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2 E.g., Juvenal Satires 3.62: “The Syrian Orontes has long since poured into the Tiber.”
4 See Horace Satires 1.5; Acts of John 60.
that letters became a favorite means by which people separated from each other kept in touch as well as gave and received instruction. It is no accident that most of the NT writings are letters or have epistolary features and that letters are found in other writings (e.g., Acts 15:23-29; 23:26-30; Revelation 2-3).

Despite the abuse to which it was subject, hospitality remained a virtue among some pagans. Among Christians it became a concrete expression of love for the church (Rom 12:9-13; Heb 13:1-2; 1 Pet 4:7-11; 3 John 6-8). The Christian practice of providing food and lodging to travelers and of “sending” or “speeding” them on their way--i.e., to pay their traveling expenses--invited abuse. Some became freeloaders, while others took advantage of Christian hospitality to spread heresy (see 2 John; cf. 1 John 4:1-3). In order to assist travelers in securing aid while exercising some control, a special type of letter, in which the writer recommended the bearer to friends or associates, had been developed. Some Christians also wrote such letters (e.g., Acts 18:27; Rom 16:1-2) and some churches evidently demanded them of travelers (2 Cor 3:1).


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5 E.g., Seneca’s *Moral Epistles*.
6 See Dio Chrysostom, *Oration 7*.
7 *Didache* 11.
8 See, e.g., Cicero *Letters to His Friends*, Book 13.
Practice

Using the above notation symbols and others that you are comfortable with, read and take notes in the passage below. It is a continuation of the essay above, about the Greco-Roman world.

Life in the City. Despite a tendency among the well to do to romanticize country life, the vitality of society was in the cities, and that is where Christianity flourished.\(^9\) To the cities were drawn purveyors of goods, proclaimers of new divinities holding out promises of salvation, and moral reformers of every stripe. Merchant and artisans tended to settle in their own neighborhoods, so that customers knew where to shop for what (e.g., 1 Cor 10:25, “in the meat market”). As diverse as the propagandists were, so were their methods of recruitment. Devotees of the Egyptian goddess Isis paraded in procession through the streets of Corinth on the way to the sea, but their initiations and other rites were performed in secret.\(^10\) A huckster like Alexander of Abonoteichos founded his own cult by attracting public attention through his colorful behavior and playing on the credulity of the masses.\(^11\) Philosophers taught in their own schools and the salons of the rich or wherever they were invited to speak, and some of the more unscrupulous posted themselves on street corners or shouted in the marketplace, finding their way to wherever people gathered.\(^12\) The picture that we have, often from writers who decried it, is of an openness to new teachings,\(^13\) a phenomenon well known to Luke (see Acts 17:18-20).

There is very little evidence that Christians in the first century proclaimed their message in so public a manner. The major exceptions are Paul’s preaching in Lystra (Acts 14:8-18) and Athens, but even in the latter instance, after the initial contact in the marketplace, Paul was taken to the relative seclusion of the Areopagus, where he delivered his sermon (Acts 17:17-21). Christianity may at times have been in the public mind, but it was not in the public eye.\(^14\) The book of Acts describes Paul as first preaching in the synagogues and then moving his base of operation to


\(^10\) Apuleius Metamorphoses Book 11.

\(^11\) Lucian Alexander the False Prophet.

\(^12\) See Dio Chrysostom Oration 32:7-11; cf. Oration 9.


private homes (e.g., Acts 18:4-8; cf. 17:1-6), and we frequently read of churches meeting in individuals’ homes (e.g., Rom 16:5, 23; Philemon 2).\textsuperscript{15}

Most people in the cities lived in crowded quarters, some in houses on narrow streets, but more in apartments, which concentrated the population and severely limited privacy. In the hot Mediterranean climate, much of life was spent outdoors, making use of such facilities as public baths and sometimes toilets, buying meat from the market (1 Cor 10:25), hot water from the tavern on the corner, having a dispute settled by a block organization, or shopping in the stores along the main roads or surrounding the central open square where official business was also transacted. Workers labored in small shops or workrooms, which might be part of houses (Acts 18:2-3; I Thess 2:9); organized themselves into guilds; and entertained themselves by going out to dinner in a temple restaurant (cf. 1 Cor 8:10) or in private homes (cf. 1 Cor 10:27) or by attending plays, the races, or political speeches. Pressure could easily build up in the crowded neighborhoods, sometimes in response to mere rumor, especially when self-interest was at stake, and might result in stoning (cf. Acts 14:5, 19), something that children learned at play.\textsuperscript{16} Then confused mobs would pour out of the alleys and streets into the stadium or forum where demagogues would work on them (cf. Acts 17:5-9; 19:23-41).

\textsuperscript{15} The fact that Paul’s preaching in the synagogue is not simply a creation by Luke is indicated by I Cor 9:20; 2 Cor 11:24, 26; cf. Rom 1:16.

\textsuperscript{16} See MacMullen, Roman Social Relations, 66.
Annotating for Response

If you are reading a text that you have been asked to respond to or evaluate, you will want to annotate it with that purpose in mind. Here is an example of a text annotated with questions and reactions that will enable the reader to remember easily the ideas that occurred to her while she read. From these annotations she can build her response to this writer’s argument. For more information about responding to an author’s argument, see the section Unit 6: WRITING ABOUT READING--SUMMARY, CRITIQUE, REFLECTION in this manual.

Paul’s experience on the Damascus Road is usually referred to as his Conversion. In Acts there are three accounts of this episode (9:1-19; 22:4-16; 26:9-19), and there is material in Paul’s own epistle to the Galatians (1:11-17). From reading these accounts it seems reasonable to speak of the event as a “conversion” since that is our usual term for such an occurrence. It appears that a Jew, so strong in his Jewish faith that he persecutes Christians, himself becomes a Christian through a sudden an overwhelming experience. Yet a closer reading of these accounts, both those in Acts and those by Paul himself, reveals a greater continuity between “before” and “after.” Here is not that change of “religion” that we commonly associate with the word conversion. Serving the one and the same God, Paul receives a new and special calling in God’s service. God’s Messiah asks him as a Jew to bring God’s message to the Gentiles. The emphasis in the accounts is always on this assignment, not on the conversion. Rather than being “converted,” Paul was called to the specific task—made clear to him by his experience of the risen Lord—of apostleship to the Gentiles, one hand-picked through Jesus Christ on behalf of the one God of Jews and Gentiles.


Types of Margin Comments:

11. Summary comments—use phrases to highlight central ideas in the text.
12. Questions—include questions about points you don’t understand or questions the text doesn’t answer.
13. Opinions—make comments agreeing or disagreeing with ideas presented in the text.
15. Cross-references—indicate places in another book or your class notes where related ideas are discussed.
16. General comments—propose ideas that occur to you as you read.
Bibliography

See especially pages 48-52.

See especially pages 110-129.

See especially pages 27-80.

See pages 12-15.
Unit 4: TAKING LECTURE NOTES AND ASKING QUESTIONS

Notetaking is listening, thinking, absorbing, concentrating, questioning, and, oh yes, writing.

It is valuable to take accurate, complete, and readable notes during class lectures. Primarily, taking notes helps you to concentrate on the lecture which leads to a greater understanding of the subject. Notes are also useful after class: they aid studying, reviewing, discussing, and writing after the lecture.

You will want to decide early in the term what kind of binder is most useful for keeping all your notes for each class together. Many students like to take notes in a spiral-bound notebook, while others prefer to write on loose-leaf sheets in class and collect them in a three-ring binder. Whatever method you prefer, be careful to keep your notes together and in order by date. If your instructor gives lots of class handouts, you will need a place in your notebook to keep them, too. Don’t make the mistake of getting notes or handouts from different classes mixed together—if you do, you may not be able to find critical information when you need it.

I. Tips for Good Notetaking

• **Be prepared** before class. Know what subject will be discussed, refer to the syllabus for specific information about the focus of the class period, and complete the assigned pre-class readings. Bring your notebook and any texts that the instructor might refer to during the lecture.

• **Record** the date, topic, and professor at the beginning of your notes. Teachers often keep their class notes organized by date; if you can give the class date when you ask for clarification of points made in class, teachers will be better able to find the original information that confused you.

• **Concentrate.** Concentrating is very challenging. Focus and try to tune out distractions around you and in your mind. Use active listening skills:
  - Set goals. Challenge yourself
to concentrate,
to understand what the professor is saying,
to ask questions if you don’t understand his/her arguments or for further information,
to question those arguments if you disagree,
to consider what information will be helpful in the future.
  - Listen for clues.
    Listen for repeated terms.
    Listen for the main ideas.
    clues: “an important concept,” “there are three parts,”
    “remember this”
    Listen for the organization.
    clues: “as a result,” “next,” “first....second”
- Read the professor.
  - Tone of voice
  - Facial expression
  - Hand gestures
  - Writing on board

- **Work efficiently.** One of the biggest challenges in taking notes is keeping up with the instructor’s pace:
  - Write concisely with key words and phrases instead of complete sentences.
  - Use numbers or bullets for lists.
  - Develop your own symbols and abbreviations (see the table in this chapter for suggestions), and be consistent in their use. If the professor is speaking so rapidly that you are falling behind in taking notes, ask him or her to repeat a point or to slow down. Most teachers do not mind being asked to slow down, and you can be sure that if you are falling behind others are, too, and will be grateful that you spoke up.

- **Use your notes** after you take them! Read through notes after class to see if you have any questions, to find any ideas that you might use later in papers or on tests, just to review, or to raise questions about your next reading assignment.

- **Leave space** on the page where you’ve written your notes or on the facing page for your own responses, summarizing comments, questions, and ideas.

### II. Abbreviations and Symbols for Notetaking

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abb.</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Abb.</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>+</td>
<td>And</td>
<td>~</td>
<td>Approximately</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ex</td>
<td>Example</td>
<td>impt.</td>
<td>Important</td>
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<tr>
<td>e.g.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>W/</td>
<td>With</td>
<td>b/t</td>
<td>Between</td>
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<td>W/in</td>
<td>Within</td>
<td>bk</td>
<td>Book</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W/out</td>
<td>Without</td>
<td>ch</td>
<td>Chapter</td>
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<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>Therefore</td>
<td>☐ ☐☐</td>
<td>Paragraph</td>
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<tr>
<td>&gt;</td>
<td>is greater than</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;</td>
<td>is less than</td>
<td>OT</td>
<td>Old Testament</td>
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<tr>
<td>=</td>
<td>Equals</td>
<td>NT</td>
<td>New Testament</td>
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<tr>
<td>≠</td>
<td>does not equal</td>
<td>Heb</td>
<td>Hebrew</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cf.</td>
<td>Compare</td>
<td>Gk</td>
<td>Greek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>JC</td>
<td>Jesus Christ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_____</td>
<td>leads to, results in</td>
<td>HS</td>
<td>Holy Spirit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>?</td>
<td>question to ask later</td>
<td>CE</td>
<td>Common Era</td>
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<tr>
<td>@</td>
<td>At</td>
<td>BCE</td>
<td>Before Common Era</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dif</td>
<td>Different</td>
<td>Xian</td>
<td>Christian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*</td>
<td>Important point</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Take a look at your own notes for a few class periods and write some of your own notetaking symbols and abbreviations in the table above.
III. Methods of Notetaking

Outlining
Outlining is organizing information into main points and supporting points. Usually supporting points are indented. You can see an example of informal outlining above in the Concentrate section of “Tips for Good Notetaking.” In general, outlining is useful for lectures. It is also more efficient to use phrases instead of complete sentences.

Paraphrasing/Summarizing
Paraphrasing or summarizing are effective forms of brief synopsis and interpretation of a lecture in sentences or phrases. See Unit 6: WRITING ABOUT READING--SUMMARY, CRITIQUE, REFLECTION in this manual for more information about these techniques.

Tape Recording
Some people tape record lectures and listen later to fill out their class notes. This strategy can be helpful especially to students whose first language is different from that of the instructor. But it is time consuming. Instead of tape recording, try as you listen to the lecture to determine and select the most important points and arguments to include in your notes. You can’t possibly write everything down, so cultivate the art of selecting wisely what you will write.

Exchanging Class Notes
Some students find it helpful to photocopy class notes and exchange them with each other. Seeing someone else’s notes may answer a question for you or fill in important information you missed. See APPENDIX 1: COLLABORATIVE WORK—WRITING GROUPS, STUDY GROUPS, READING GROUPS in this manual for other ideas about working with peer study groups.

IV. Asking Questions in Class
What is important about asking questions? Doing it! Everyone is a little nervous at first about bringing up questions in class, but asking questions does get easier. It just takes practice. When you do ask a question, try to make it
• relevant to the topic/issue/discussion at hand
• clear
• concise
• considerate and respectful.

Types of Questions: Information, Comparing and Contrasting, and Evaluation
3. **Information questions** ask for clarification, repetition of, or more information about the material presented in class or the readings. These questions are usually factually based:

Could you please clarify your third point?
What do you mean by “sanctification”?
What was the political situation for Paul after his conversion to Christianity?
Who wrote the book of Genesis?
Would you please repeat that last definition?
Try to make such questions very specific. Avoid vague phrases such as “What about the idea of grace?” or “Would you comment on Pentateuch authorship?”.

17. **Comparing and Contrasting questions** ask for an opinion valuing one thing against another in order to recognize similarities and differences:

Which of the differences between the creation stories of Genesis 1 and Genesis 2 have been the most discussed by scholars?
What was the balance of power between King David and the prophet Nathan?
How did King David’s view of his own authority differ from King Solomon’s?
How do John Calvin’s views on the bread and wine of Communion differ from Martin Luther’s views?
How do traditional Presbyterians differ from Lutherans in the words said to parents during the baptismal ritual?

Try to keep these questions narrow enough in scope that an instructor does not have to go back to previous lectures to answer them. Questions about earlier lectures should be saved for an after-class discussion with the instructor.

3. **Evaluation questions** ask for an opinion of worth or a judgment. Usually, there is not one right answer, but a range of views.

Why is Jonah so adamant in his refusal to go to Ninevah?
Did God harden the heart of Pharaoh in Exodus, and if so, how does this shape our understanding of the characters of God?
In Matthew 4, why did Jesus spend time in the wilderness?
What is your opinion on the nature of Ruth and Naomi’s relationship?

Try to ask such questions as an interested learner, not as a challenger in an argument. One way to make evaluation questions non-threatening is to take the personal edge off them. Instead of “How can you defend the Egyptian people against God’s treatment?”, you might ask “Did the biblical writer imply sympathy for the Egyptian people?”

**Remember!** Asking questions can be an uncomfortable act of faith. But don’t let that discomfort stop you from asking. With practice, asking questions will become much easier for you, and you will gain a valuable skill both for academic work and for ministry.

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**Bibliography**

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UNIT 5: MAKING GOOD USE OF LECTURE NOTES—GENERATING PAPERS AND STUDYING FOR TESTS

Unfortunately, many students take careful notes in class but never look at their notes again, not even while they are writing papers for the class. Taking notes is, of course, a good way to keep your mind focused on the instructor’s lecture, so the practice is helpful even if you don’t find ways to use your notes after you’ve taken them. But if you let them, your notes can help you tremendously, both during the class and after you have finished it.

I. Reviewing Lecture Notes
Before you can review your notes, you have to put them together in an organized format. For students who take notes on notebook paper or in a legal pad paper, keeping all the notes for each different class together can be a big challenge. If this is the method you prefer, make sure you collect the notes for each class daily and put them in a notebook—a three-ring binder with pockets for handouts is a perfect solution. Students who prefer to take notes in a separate notebook for each class usually find that spiral notebooks work well. But look for spiral notebooks that have pockets to hold syllabus and handouts.

When to Review
Set a regular schedule for reviewing notes from each class you attend, and stick to it! Once a week may be often enough to review your notes, but if you have time you may want to begin this practice by reviewing your notes every day after class. Reviewing helps you retain information and enables you to see where in your notes there is incomplete or confusing material. Of course, the sooner you review after your class is over, the better. But whenever you do it, reviewing your notes is well worth the time!

Filling in the Gaps
No one can write down everything an instructor says in a class period. You must always judge what information is important enough to write down. In reviewing the notes you have taken, you may find
• incomplete thoughts
• lists that are not clearly labeled with their purpose
• ideas that you don’t understand
• words that you can’t read or that seem to make no sense.
Maybe you did not have time during class to think about these problems and for that reason you failed to ask the instructor to clarify. You may have been writing very fast. If you were sleepy and having trouble concentrating during class, you may even notice in your notes incomplete phrases that trail off the page—that’s perhaps the moment at which you dozed off briefly.

Reviewing your notes soon after class will help you fill in missing or incomplete information. So will going over the day’s notes with a partner. Try explaining your notes
aloud to one another. When you stumble over a difficult portion of your notes, your partner can perhaps fill in the gaps for you from his or her notes. Here are some advantages of working through your notes with a partner:

• You will have a more complete set of notes
• You will retain more of the information
• You will come up with questions you might want to ask the teacher
• You will become more confident in your grasp of the material.

Editing Your Notes
Aside from filling in missing information or clearing up confusing notes, you can edit your notes in other ways that will help you later on. These strategies will not only help you remember the material better; they will also give you a kind of roadmap you can use later to find just what you need in your notes. In addition, they will help you generate ideas for writing about the topics covered in the lecture.

As you edit, use a different color ink from the color you used to take your notes. That way, you can easily scan your reflections, summaries, and questions as you review for a test or look for paper ideas. Here are some additional tips:

If you are taking notes in a notebook, leave blank the back page of each sheet of paper. Use that blank page to write reflections on or questions about the notes on the facing page.

• Make left margins very wide. As you review, use margins to write phrases that summarize major points or signal an important list or definition. Also write questions that the material has raised for you.
• Put a box around definitions in your notes.
• Circle words or phrases you don’t understand and want to follow up on.
• Draw lines or arrows between ideas that are related on each page.
• Add any other graphics that may help you find major ideas later on.
• Number the pages in your notebook so that you can keep track of important information. Putting into your paper outline or essay answer draft the page number in your class notebook that has the material you want to use will save you lots of time later on. It will save you from having to look through your entire notebook for the information.

Exercise
Find a page in your notes that has wide margins or faces a blank page. Take a few minutes now to edit that page, trying out some of the strategies listed above. Use a different color ink and write both in the text and in the blank space around the text. Discuss your techniques with a partner. Which strategy did you find most helpful?

II. Using Class Notes to Focus Your Reading and Writing
Usually the reading homework and the paper assignments in a course have a strong connection to the material that has been covered in class.
A paper assignment may ask you to

- respond to an idea that has been discussed in class
- write about a ministry situation in your own church or field parish that illustrates a problem your instructor lectured about
- apply strategies suggested in class to a situation in your own experience
- explore further through research an idea introduced in class

Your class notes will be a valuable resource for any of these assignments. If you have reviewed the notes regularly and edited them, you should be able to find easily the sections that apply to your assignment. Even if the instructor has redefined the strategy or the idea that you are to write about, be sure to check your notes for additional details about it. This effort will pay off—you’ll have more material to work with, and your instructor will be pleased that you have taken the time to use lecture notes in exploring your topic.

Likewise, reading assignments usually pick up on topics that have been or are about to be covered in class lectures. As you survey your reading assignment before beginning to read, check the course syllabus to see if the assignment fits into a specific topic for this unit of the course. If so, you may have information in your class notes that relates to the reading assignment. Or your instructor may have given questions or other reading aids. Review this information as you prepare to read. (For more on surveying reading assignments, see Unit 2: MAKING THE MOST OF RESOURCES--NAVIGATING YOUR SYLLABUS AND READING ASSIGNMENTS in this manual.)

III. Using Your Notes to Study for Tests

In most of your seminary classes, you will probably not have tests. The tests you do have will likely be essay exams in which you are asked to write an essay in response to a question related to material covered in the course. If you have reviewed and edited your class notes faithfully, you should be able to find easily information that might help you answer such essay questions.

One way to study for an essay test is to compose broad questions that occur to you as you review your notes. Instructors are likely to choose topics that have been covered extensively in class or in reading assignments. For example, if you have extensive class notes on the radical reform movement that was a part of the Reformation, you might expect a question that asks you to explain the movement’s driving force, its main personalities, and the ways in which it was different from the major ideas of the Reformation. One way to prepare for such a question is to write an outline for answering it based on information contained in your class notes. After you have constructed your outline, you should review the assigned readings to see if that topic is covered extensively there—add that material to your outline. For more suggestions about taking essay exams, see APPENDIX 3: TAKING ESSAY EXAMS in this manual.
Exercise
Look through your class notes for one of the courses you are taking. Find a major topic, that is, one about which you have lots of notes. Compose two questions that your teacher might ask you about that topic:
Course Title: ____________________________________
1.______________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________
2.______________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________

What ideas do you remember from reading assignments that have something to do with this topic?
Idea:
_______________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________
Source:_________________________________________________________________
Idea:
_______________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________
Source:_________________________________________________________________

How might you use these questions and ideas? Will you be writing a paper in this course that could include them? Could you use them as you participate in class discussion?

Bibliography
UNIT 6: WRITING ABOUT READING—SUMMARY, CRITIQUE, REFLECTION

I. Summary: Reporting An Author’s Arguments Accurately

Instructors often ask students to write a book report that includes a summary of the book and a critique of it. Even if you never have to write this kind of summary, you will frequently need to summarize material from a source for a research paper. Summary is a skill, therefore, that you will certainly use in your seminary studies. Whether you are summarizing a complete book or a smaller chunk of material, your summary should

- cover the material in a balanced way. Students often cover the earlier parts of a text more thoroughly.
- just report, not judge. That means keeping your own opinion out of your summary. You should not add anything that the author has not included in the original.
- condense the original to its basic points, present them in your own words, and put them in a natural, coherent order.
- flow smoothly. Add transitions and connecting words to make the author’s main points stick together in a unified whole.
- follow your instructor’s directions carefully. If your assignment is two parts—summarize and critique—make sure you do both. If you are only to summarize, resist the temptation to critique or evaluate the source. Also pay attention to the assigned length—it can vary from 1 or 2 sentences to several pages.

Steps in Writing a Summary

Here are some preliminary steps in writing a summary. If you are working with an entire book, you may need to go through these steps for each chapter and then combine your chapter notes to write your summary.

18. Survey your source to get familiar with its layout and the features that will help you read efficiently. For more information on surveying, see Unit 2: MAKING THE MOST OF RESOURCES—NAVIGATING YOUR SYLLABUS AND READING ASSIGNMENTS.

19. Read the text, annotating it with your summary assignment in mind. Most of your marginal notes and in-text marks should relate to the text’s major points.

Note: In order to write a fair and accurate summary, you must first thoroughly understand your text. If you have questions about it after surveying and reading it carefully, ask your instructor to help you.

6. Do your best to divide the text into its major parts. If it has section headings, your job will be much easier. If you are working with an entire book, you may need to divide each individual chapter into its major parts. In your own words, write down the main points of each part.

7. Then try to summarize each part in a sentence.

8. By now, the main thesis or central point of the text should have become clear to you. Try writing it in your own words.
9. What you should now have is a list of main points that begins with a thesis for the whole text. Using this list, you can write your summary, adding transitional words and phrases to help your report flow smoothly.

Often in a longer paper such as a research paper, you will want to summarize a passage from a source. That may require you to condense several paragraphs into a sentence or two. You can follow the steps listed above, adapting them to suit the shorter passage.

Beginning Your Summary
Your summary doesn’t have to be creative; in fact, it shouldn’t be. Just report the facts of your text. The summary’s opening sentence should contain two elements:
• the title of the source
• its the main idea.

Here are some examples:
According to Robert Boling in his article “Levitical History and the Role of Joshua,” _________ . . . . (main idea)

Author Bob Boling in his book Joshua states that ______________ . . . . (main idea)

Keeping Your Summary Neutral
A wide range of reporting verbs can be used in summary writing, but you should be very careful when choosing verbs. Some verbs reveal your opinion about the material and thus have no place in a summary. Your job when you summarize is to remain as objective as possible. The verbs in the following examples are not objective. They evaluate the author’s position and convey the summary writer’s attitude. What do they tell you about the summary writer’s evaluation of Barinaga’s article?

Marcia Barinaga in her article “Is There a Female Style in Science?” alleges that men and women exhibit differences in the way they pursue science.

Marcia Barinaga in her article “Is There a Female Style in Science?” assumes that men and women exhibit differences in the way they pursue science.

Verbs that evaluate should be saved for critique writing, which will be discussed in the next section of this unit.

Exercise
Try to identify which verbs in the following table seem to be objective and which verbs seem to make a judgment. Add any additional verbs that come to mind

**Reporting Verbs**
Documenting Your Summary Source
When your entire paper is devoted to summarizing and perhaps critiquing only one source, the fact that your information comes from this source will be clear to your instructor. In that kind of paper, you would be wise to include a bibliography entry for the source and page numbers for any material you quote.

But if you are using a short summary of one source within a longer paper that makes use of several sources, it is crucial to document the summary material very carefully. You need to make clear to your reader what portion of the paper is a summary of one of your sources. Use a footnote or parenthetical reference along with the bibliography or reference list entry. See the unit Unit 9: NUTS AND BOLTS OF DOCUMENTATION in this manual for more specific information about documenting material from sources.

II. Critique: Evaluating an Author’s Strategies
‘Critique’ is a French word that means ‘a critical assessment’ (positive, negative, or a mixture of both). One common type of critique you may be familiar with is the film review in a newspaper. That kind of critique is usually a short summary followed by an evaluation. Your instructor may assign a book review that is a combination of summary and critique. See the sample book review below.

It is important that critiques be “fair and reasonable.” Part of being “fair” means that criteria that are normally used in one field should not be applied to another field where they would be unreasonable. In other words, your criteria for evaluating poetic literature should differ from your criteria for evaluating prophetic literature. For example, in
evaluating a psalm or another poetic biblical text, you might consider parallelism or imagery. For a prophetic text, you might consider the social context of the prophecy and its historical outcome. For a text that argues for a nontraditional approach to the Trinity, you might evaluate the author’s examples and the supporting evidence used to argue the point.

When you are writing a critique, it is important to remember that your job is not to agree or disagree with the author’s opinion. You are not evaluating the content of the text, but rather the techniques and strategies the author uses to make the argument clear and convincing.

One Kind of Critique: the Book Review
Let’s look at an example of a critical review. This is an abbreviated review of John Dominic Crossan’s book, *Jesus A Revolutionary Biography*, by Ann Verhey-Henke. Note how Verhey-Henke uses information from Crossan’s book to support her evaluation.

The portrait John Dominic Crossan paints in his book, *Jesus: A Revolutionary Biography*, is a provocative and seductive one. Crossan seeks to show that Jesus’ actions were radically subversive, socially revolutionary, and politically dangerous. Crossan appeals to various texts and weaves the arguments together to present the reader with a profound picture of the historical Jesus’ life and ministry.

According to Crossan, Jesus was a “Mediterranean Jewish peasant”, who has much in common with the Cynic school of Philosophy. The Kingdom of God which Jesus taught was not a ‘divine monopoly’ but one in which everyone had ‘unbrokered equality’ and resources were shared. The term ‘unbrokered’, for Crossan, specifically means each member of society was able to have direct contact with God as well as with one another without any mediation.

Another major characteristic of the historical Jesus, according to Crossan, is that Jesus was a ‘free healer’. By this term Crossan means that Jesus did not request compensation for his services. Jesus resisted settling in one town and thus did his healing as an itinerant.

Crossan’s book has many strengths. First, he is a wonderful stylist and a writer who pulls the reader into his arguments. Second, he clearly lays out his methods. Another particularly helpful feature of his book is how he presents his sources. He quotes directly from his major sources and within these quotations gives enough of the text surrounding his focus passage for the reader to get a clear orientation of the situation. Finally, he is sensitive to the shock factor that can be expected when reading his discussion of crucifixion.

The weaknesses of Crossan’s book are in danger of being unperceived amidst his seductive style. First, Crossan clearly states in his preface that he “never build[s] on

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18 Ibid., 103.
19 Ibid., 101, 113.
anything that has only a single independent attestation”.  

However, the text Crossan builds his arguments on why Jesus went to Jerusalem is built on his exegesis of Mark 1:16-38. His desire is to show the transition of disbelief to belief within Jesus’ family. His primary purpose for demonstrating this is to support his thesis that Jesus’ brother James was already in Jerusalem and therefore part of the reason Jesus goes to the city. This passage is only attested in one source. Though he does caution his readers of this one attestation and their need to tread carefully, Crossan has built one of his major arguments, from which he draws startling conclusions, on a passage with one attestation.

Despite this weakness, I would recommend this book to people of faith. It may be particularly useful in Christian Education classes. Crossan’s book is especially valuable for its challenging picture of the historical Jesus.

Discussion Questions

1. What words or phrases are used to introduce material taken from the book?

4. What words or phrases express the author’s opinion of the book?

5. Try dividing the review into its summary and its critique section. What words or phrases help you make this division?

6. Notice how the author organizes her critique, discussing all the strengths first and then the weaknesses. What other ways could she have organized the critique?


Organizing Your Critique

The review you just read shows you one way to organize a critique, that is to cover strengths and weaknesses of the text separately. You could, as that author did, put all the strengths in one paragraph and all the weaknesses in another.

Instead of grouping all the strengths together and all the weaknesses together, you could devote one paragraph to each strategy or technique you want to evaluate. This plan works best if

- you have quite a bit to say about each technique or
- some of the techniques cannot be easily classified as “strengths” or “weaknesses.”

You will need to experiment with organizational plans to find the one that works best for the kind of critique you are writing. But don’t leave the organization of your critique to chance. Take the time you need to think through an outline and write it down; if you follow a plan, you stand a much better chance of having your reader understand the plan and learn from your critique.

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20 Ibid., xiii.
21 Ibid., 100.
**Evaluative Adjectives**

In the first sentence of the book review, Verhey-Henke summarizes her views of the Crossan book with two evaluative adjectives: provocative and seductive. These two words have attitude! They are much more descriptive than words such as “interesting” or “important” and as a result they draw the reader into the critique. Try to use a variety of adjectives in your critiques, but make sure the word you choose conveys the attitude you intend.

(Remember, when you are summarizing, do NOT use evaluative words—keep your adjectives and your verbs as neutral as possible.)

**Practice.** Rate these adjectives on a scale of 1-10.

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<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Positive</th>
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_____ impressive
_____ elegant
_____ scholarly
_____ profound
_____ useful

_____ ambitious
_____ competent
_____ flawed
_____ thin
_____ random
_____ challenging
_____ sensitive

_____ modest
_____ innovative
_____ lacking
_____ sound
_____ minor
_____ valuable

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**Bibliography**


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**III. Reflection: Writing about Your Own Responses to a Text**

The reflection paper is one of the most common papers you will write in seminary. Because they often are based on a text, reflection papers can include portions of summary and critique. But their focus is really on the writer’s own experiences. In a reflection paper, you will set up a conversation between your own life experiences and the
descriptions, argument, or examples in a text. For that reason, reflection papers discuss the content of a text more than summaries or critiques do.

Here are some examples of reflection paper assignments:

- With one of the essays in Body and Bible as a starting point, reflect on your own experiences reading biblical texts with a group.
- Compare one of the pastoral care situations described in The Skilled Pastor to your own ministry encounters. In what ways do your theory and practice of pastoral care differ from those of the author? How are they similar to his?

Getting Personal
A reflection is supposed to be personal, so don’t be reluctant to reveal your own life experiences in the paper. Most of us learned in high school and college writing classes to keep ourselves and our experiences out of our writing. But ministry is, after all, a reflective vocation; it calls on us constantly to reveal our lives and listen while others reveal theirs. If you are a student who is not comfortable talking or writing about yourself, start working to develop that skill immediately—you’ll need it!

Let’s Try It
Your assignment is to reflect on the following passage from David Rhoads’ The Challenge of Diversity using your own experience reading and studying the Gospels.

1. Read the passage and discuss with your classmates
   - what reactions you had to this text
   - whether you’ve ever wondered about the differences between the four Gospel accounts of Jesus’ life, ministry, and death
   - any experiences from your childhood or young adulthood that cause you to agree/disagree with this text.
   - how important this issue of diversity in the Gospels is to your faith.

2. Based on your answers to any of the questions above, what are some ways to focus your reflection? You will probably not be able to use your responses to all of them, so choose no more than two to include in your reflection. Jot down a brief outline for your reflection and share that plan with one of your classmates.

An overall harmonizing of all the stories about Jesus does not work well, precisely because each Gospel writer has offered a somewhat different portrayal of Jesus. For example, in Mark’s Gospel, Jesus keeps his identity a secret. His disciples do not know until halfway through the story that he is the Messiah, and no human calls him Son of God until the centurion does so at the foot of the cross. In John’s Gospel, on the other hand, Jesus proclaims his identity as Son of God openly before all from the start, and early in the story his disciples know him as the lamb of God. We cannot simply put these two portraits of Jesus or the disciples together into one story. When we do, we distort both Mark and John, and we come up with a strange story unlike either one of them. The Gospel writers shaped their stories about Jesus in order to bring out the meaning of the events as they
understood them. Mark is showing that the Christian life is ambiguous and that people have a hard time recognizing Jesus as Son of God and accepting a persecuted Messiah, while John is showing that no matter how open Jesus is, some people will instantly recognize him and others will still not recognize that he is from God. Therefore, we need to take each story on its own terms in order to understand what each author is showing us about Jesus and the Christian life.


IV. Quoting, Paraphrasing, and Summarizing Source Material

Whether you are summarizing a text, critiquing it, reflecting on its applications in your own life, or using it along with other texts in a research assignment, you will need to use specific information from that text in your paper. Sometimes you will want to quote phrases or whole sentences from the text, but often you will put the ideas of the text into your own words by paraphrasing or summarizing them.

Whichever method you use, it is necessary to credit the source of the information that you include in your paper. Also, it is important to remember that this information should be used in support your thesis or your main points; it should not be the thesis or any major point of your argument. For more information on incorporation quotations and paraphrases smoothly into your papers, see Unit 7: INCORPORATING SOURCE MATERIAL INTO YOUR WRITING in this manual.

[The following examples were taken from: Burkhart, John E. Worship. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1982.]

Quotation
A quotation incorporates another author’s exact words into your own writing and cannot stand alone. Always place a quotation within quotation marks; or, if it is longer than four lines, set it up in block quotation format, indented five spaces from the left margin and single spaced. [Note: In a word processing program that automatically indents, the spacing for that is usually half an inch.] Acknowledge the source in an in-text reference or footnote.

Example

Original
“In the New Testament, for the apostle Paul at least, the fundamental criterion, as Christians gathered for worship, is neither service to God, nor service to the self, nor even perhaps service to the neighbor, but the nourishment, growth, and graced delight of the community.”

Quote
Burkhart considers Paul’s crucial purpose of worship to be “the nourishment, growth, and graced delight of the community” (Burkhart 1982, 108).
Paraphrase
A paraphrase accurately and thoroughly states all the relevant information from a passage in your own words and credits the passage’s author in an in-text reference or footnote. By paraphrasing, you demonstrate your grasp of an author’s idea and its relevance to your thesis.

Example:
Original
When Christians are gathered to celebrate reality as given and graced in Jesus, their assemblies, with or without feasts, are often called “services.”

Paraphrase
Burkhart defines “services” as the coming together of Christians to give thanks for Jesus’ presence in their lives (Burkhart 1982, 97).

Summary
A summary briefly expresses in your own words the main ideas of a passage or an entire work. By summarizing, you demonstrate your familiarity with the work’s relevance to your thesis. It is necessary to credit the passage’s author in an in-text reference or footnote, even when you put the author’s idea in your own words.

Example:
Original
“What they [Christians] do together, depending upon the people involved, or the time, purposes, and place, may be designated as a eucharistic service, an evangelistic service, a prayer service, a Scripture service, the divine service, the morning service, the evening service, the service of worship, the worship service, or some other such permutation of words and meanings.”

Summary
Burkhart suggests that there are a variety of forms of worship which different Christians utilize in their various contexts (Burkhart 1982, 97).

III. Practice
Read the following passage from the World Council of Churches, which focuses on God’s calling for God’s people, and
1. write a paraphrase of one idea contained in the following passage
2. write a summary of the whole passage; and,
3. incorporate a quotation from the passage into a sentence of your own.

In a broken world God calls the whole of humanity to become God’s people. For this purpose God chose Israel and then spoke in a unique and decisive way in Jesus Christ, God’s Son. Jesus made his own the nature, condition and cause of the whole
human race, giving himself as a sacrifice for all. Jesus’ life of service, his death and resurrection, are the foundation of a new community which is built up continually by the good news of the Gospel and the gifts of the sacraments. The Holy Spirit unites in a single body those who follow Jesus Christ and sends them as witnesses into the world. Belonging to the Church means living in communion with God through Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit.


Paraphrase

_______________________________________________________________________
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Summary

_______________________________________________________________________
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Quotation

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Bibliography


I. Using Sources
In Unit 6 you learned to use material from a source in summarizing it, analyzing the author’s writing techniques, or responding to his or her ideas. Such assignments usually require you to focus on just one source.

Often, however, writing assignments require you to use several sources to help you develop your own argument or examination of a topic. In these assignments, you use sources to
- support the points of your argument
- to provide examples
- to offer counterpoints.

Use sources to support your own argument or examination, but be careful to treat them fairly. Use examples that you take from a source, for instance, to support contentions that would be consistent with the points the original author used them to support. Never use source material to strengthen an idea that disagrees with the one in the original source.

Deciding When to Quote and When to Paraphrase or Summarize
Quotations lose their force when they occur too frequently in a paper. Quote only when the wording of your source material is especially memorable or so concisely focused on the point you are making that you are hesitant to try to put it into your own words. In a six-sentence paragraph that includes four quotations, those quotations will probably not support your argument as strongly as will the sole quotation in a paragraph of the same length. If you can accurately present an idea from a source by putting it into your own words, paraphrase or summary is usually a better choice than quotation. A general principle to follow is to avoid using more than four lines of direct quotation per page; this principle will not apply, of course, to pages that include block quotations. (See “Using Block Quotations” in this unit for more information.)

II. Incorporating Source Material Smoothly
Because you will be using the words or ideas of another writer in paragraphs that are developing your own ideas, readers may easily become confused about whose ideas they are reading in any given section of your paper. Or they may stumble over sentences that are awkward because quoted words have not been integrated smoothly. Part of the job of handling sources responsibly is incorporating them carefully and correctly. To do that, you need a lead-in that suits the format of the material you are using. And you always need a footnote number or parenthetical citation to indicate the end of the material from your source and to point to detailed information about that source contained elsewhere in your paper. (See Unit 9: NUTS AND BOLTS OF DOCUMENTATION in this manual for more information about citations and footnotes.)

[Note: Each quotation and paraphrase in the examples below has either a footnote number or a citation at the end. These are inserted only to give you models to follow; you will
need to choose one of these methods of documenting and use it consistently throughout your paper.]

**Incorporating Quoted Material**
Always introduce quotations with words of your own. These words provide transition into the idea from the source and make for smoother flowing sentences. Quoted sentences simply inserted into your writing without lead-ins create choppy paragraphs and can frustrate readers who have to work hard themselves to figure out how quoted material connects to your own ideas. So always use a lead-in and try not to use the same lead-in every time. Here are three different lead-in patterns that will help you incorporate quoted material smoothly into your sentences:

- **the simple “he/she says” lead-in:**
  About work, Douglas John Hall says, “No matter how menial our task, how unnoticed by others, how apparently incomplete, how mixed with failure, it is lifted out of obscurity by a grace that is able to incorporate it into a meaningful whole.”

- **Luther admits,** “We find many who pray, fast, establish endowments, do this and that, lead a good life. . . and yet, were you to ask them if they were quite certain that what they were doing was well pleasing to God, they would say no.”

  *(When you use this pattern, the quoted material must form a complete sentence.)*

- **the explanatory lead-in:**
  Though we believe ourselves to be justified by grace, how we participate in God’s work in our lives is something we have not figured out: “We know the language of faith; we need help with the vocabulary of experience” (Jensen 1983, 36).

  When Luther rambled on about inconsequential sins, confessing for hours, Staupitz would reprove him: “Man, God is not angry with you. You are angry with God” (Bainton 1950, 41).

  *(When you use this pattern, both the lead-in and the quoted material must be complete sentences. It is not essential that you place a colon between the two, but the colon helps readers see that the two ideas are connected.)*

- **the continuous lead-in:**
  This process occurs in the church just as it does in secular society, and Braaten thus contends that “the reformation of the church from the standpoint of justifying grace is never finished” (1983, 118).

  Timothy Lull asks this question in a different way: can the heirs of the Reformation hold their own in a modern world “that seems to long for progress and improvement above all things?” (1988, 257).
This action will “exhaust us, drive us to prayer, open us to the word, and empty us and make room for faith.” 2

*(When you use this pattern, the quoted material continues the thought of your own sentence and must fit neatly into it, so that if the quotation marks were removed, the sentence would read smoothly and logically.)*

*Incorporating Paraphrased Material*

When you put material from a source into your own words, you can more easily set it up so that it fits neatly into your writing. The patterns are as varied as your own sentences tend to be, so there are no established patterns for incorporating paraphrases. The one requirement is that you frame a paraphrase very clearly with a lead-in at the beginning and a citation or footnote number at the end. This frame makes clear to your reader where the paraphrased information begins and ends. Readers can thus easily distinguish source material from your own ideas. As with introducing quotations, try to vary the forms of your lead-ins to paraphrased material.

Here are some examples of responsible incorporation of paraphrased material. In each example you will see first the original passage and then the paraphrase:

“We find many who pray, fast, establish endowments, do this and that, lead a good life in the sight of their fellowmen, and yet, were you to ask them if they were quite certain that what they were doing was well pleasing to God, they would say no. They do not know, or at least are uncertain.”

**Paraphrase:**

Luther admits that many who are faithful to their religious practices and live upright lives are still not sure their lives are satisfactory in the sight of God. 22

“The psalms are constant reminders of life’s inescapable misfortunes and of God’s unfailing merciful love and salvific intervention.”

**Paraphrase:**

Bergant points out that the psalms speak not only of the pitfalls and tragedies of life, but also of the constant love of God and God’s involvement in our lives with the intent to bring salvation (1997, 74).

**III. Varying Vocabulary in Introducing Source Material**

Just as it is important to vary the lead-in patterns that you use for source material in your paper, so you will want to use a variety of verbs to introduce paraphrases, summaries, and quotes. Using just the right verb can clarify the reason for using the quotation (“Burkhart explains,” “Jones summarizes”) or convey the forcefulness of the author’s stand on an issue (“the author contends,” “Lull insists”). The chart that follows lists some useful verbs for introducing source material; choose carefully, making sure you understand the meaning and implications of the verb you use.
If you can think of additional verbs that you want to have close at hand for reference, add them to the chart.

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**IV. Punctuating Quotations and Paraphrases**

Notice the placement of end punctuation in the example quotations and paraphrases earlier in this section. Punctuating sentences that include source material can be confusing, but the guidelines and patterns in the examples below will help you.

For quotations:

*If you use footnote numbers*, place the punctuation mark (period, comma, question mark, or exclamation point) inside the quotation marks and the footnote number at the very end.

> . . . into a meaningful whole.”

*If you use parenthetical citations*, always place the period or comma after the citation. The citation should follow the closing quotation mark.

> . . . never finished” (Braaten 1983, 118).

If the quoted sentence ends with a question mark or explanation mark, place that punctuation mark inside the quotation marks if it belongs just to the quoted portion and outside the citation if it belongs to the whole sentence.

> . . .above all things?” (Lull 1988, 257). (OR) . . .above all things” (Lull 1988, 257) ?

For paraphrases:

*If you use footnote numbers*, punctuation should always come before the number.

*If you use parenthetical citations*, punctuation should always come after the citation.

**V. Using Block Quotations**

If the source material you want to quote will be more than four typed lines of your text, you should set it off in a block. Block quotations should be indented five spaces from the left margin and single spaced. They don’t need quotation marks because their format will
alert your reader that they are quotations. Unlike quotations you incorporate into your sentences, the final punctuation for a block quotation always comes immediately after the final word of the quote, before the parenthetical citation.

Examine the following example of a block quotation with its lead-in sentence. Note that an explanatory lead-in such as the one used here is the best pattern for incorporating block quotations.

Numbness and denial often accompany a sudden, traumatic loss:

Traumatic loss is a shock to the system. An organism faced with such a shock usually protects itself from the full impact by entering into a period of numbness. The initial dynamic of grief is most frequently an absence of feeling, a muting of affect. Accompanying this emotional state is often an insistence that the loss has not in fact occurred. As a result, a sense of unreality may pervade our interactions with others early in grief. (Mitchell and Anderson 1983, 62)

Bibliography


I. Taking Notes from Sources
One of the most critical steps in completing a writing assignment that requires the use of sources is smart notetaking. You can save yourself from a major headache later on if you are careful at the beginning of a project to take accurate, complete notes that include all the information about your sources that you will need for documenting them.

Ideally, you will have time during your research to survey the sources you’ve collected, take notes on them for your paper, and assemble those notes in the order you will need to use them. This process is especially useful for sources that you cannot check out of the library or sources that are on reserve there. You will save money and time if you can take notes on those sources in the library and resist the temptation simply to photocopy them for later use.

Most students don’t write their papers the ideal way, however. What they have in front of them when they sit down to write an outline or a draft of their paper is a hodgepodge of source material in several different forms: photocopies, books, pages of notes on sources, and perhaps a few index cards with bibliographical information or notes on them. This situation can make handling your sources responsibly very challenging.

Here are some tips that will help you make collecting and using information from sources as painless as possible:

• Get full bibliographic information from any source you have read, even if you think you will not refer to it in your paper. That way, if you change your mind and want to go back to it, you can find it.
• When you take notes, be sure to paraphrase completely. If you don’t want to put the entire idea in your own words, copy the part you have quoted accurately and use quotation marks to highlight that part.
• If you take notes on journal articles, remember to record the entire page span of the article and not just the page number your information is on. It’s easy to forget that documenting an article requires giving the page range it occupies in the journal it appears in.
• Develop a system for distinguishing in your notes between your own ideas and those from sources. Students often find themselves jotting notes about their own responses on the same page as information taken from a source; then they have trouble telling the difference later on. This kind of carelessness can lead to plagiarism.
• Look on the title page and copyright page of a book for all the information you need to compose your Bibliography or Reference List entry.
• Keep a running bibliography list on a separate sheet of paper that you carry with you wherever you go to do research. Record every source on that list, and be sure to include all the information you will need later to write a bibliography entry.
• Write bibliography information on photocopies. Students often forget that when they leave the library with a photocopy of a journal article, they probably don’t have
II. Avoiding the Plague of Plagiarism

"Plagiarism" comes from the Latin word for “kidnapping,” and it is defined as using another author’s words or ideas without acknowledging their source. The concept of plagiarism has become an integral part of North American and Western European academic cultures. It is based on a number of assumptions that do not necessarily hold true in all cultures. One is that original ideas and expressions are the acknowledged property of their creator (as is the case with a patent for an invention). Another is that it is a sign of disrespect, rather than respect, to copy without acknowledgment from the works of published authorities.

Some students assume that they are only in danger of plagiarizing if they copy exact words from a source and do not acknowledge the source. But you are also plagiarizing if you use ideas from a source that you do not acknowledge, even if you have paraphrased carefully.

Most plagiarism does not result from dishonesty but rather from carelessness. If you follow the suggestions in the section above on taking notes from your sources and are careful to treat quoted material and paraphrased material appropriately, you will not go wrong. But if your notes are sloppy and your work on an assignment is hasty, you run the risk of plagiarism. Most instructors will have little patience with students who claim not to have realized they were plagiarizing. It is your responsibility to be accurate and honest in your work.

Using Common Expressions

Of course, borrowing words and phrases of others can be a useful language learning strategy. Certainly you would not be plagiarizing if you borrowed ideas or phrases that are frequently used in academic English or that are considered common knowledge.

For instance:

McCormick Seminary is in Chicago.
Training in pastoral care is useful for ministers.
The ELCA has eight seminaries.
America has been called the land of opportunity.

But do not borrow often-quoted famous phrases without at least putting them in quotation marks. Here, for example, is a famous quotation by Louis Pasteur, originally in French.

“Chance favors the prepared mind.”

If you are not sure whether the phrase you are borrowing is a standard expression that is used widely, put that phrase in quotation marks and give credit to its source. It is always best to assume you DO need to acknowledge your source in these ways.

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**Exercise.** Here are some approaches to using source material in your writing. They range from honest to careless to dishonest. Which ones would lead to plagiarism? Which are acceptable approaches? Circle the numbers of the approaches you consider acceptable and then discuss your choices with your peers and instructor.

1. Copying a paragraph as it is from the source without any acknowledgment.
2. Copying a paragraph making only small changes, such as replacing a few verbs or adjectives with synonyms; acknowledging your source with a parenthetical citation.
3. Cutting and pasting a paragraph by using the sentences of the original but leaving one or two out, or by putting one or two sentences in a different order.
4. Paraphrasing a paragraph by rewriting with substantial changes in language and organization, amount of detail, and examples; acknowledging your source with a footnote.
5. Composing a paragraph by taking short standard phrases from a number of sources and putting them together with some words of your own.
20. Quoting a paragraph by placing it in block format with source cited.

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**Bibliography**

*See especially pages 542-543.*

*See especially 166-170*

*See especially pages 349-350.*

*See especially pages 555-557.*

UNIT 9: NUTS AND BOLTS OF DOCUMENTATION

I. Working with Turabian
The book, A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations, by Kate L. Turabian (“fondly” called Turabian) is useful for an in-depth look at documentation techniques and also for guidelines on many other topics related to writing. If you will take the time now to become familiar with the information in Turabian, you may find that the book will help you later on when you need to refresh your memory about writing conventions or punctuation rules.

As you read about the features of Turabian in the explanation that follows, look through your copy of the book to familiarize yourself with them.

Major Sections
The two parts of Turabian that you will probably find most useful in seminary are the chapters on writing mechanics (chapters 2-5) and the chapters on documentation (chapters 8-11). Other chapters may be helpful to you, especially if you are preparing a thesis or dissertation (see especially chapters 1, 6-7, and 13).

Numbering System
Flip through the pages of the book and notice the numbering system used to organize information. To use the book efficiently, you will need to pay more attention to this numbering system than to the page numbers. Turn to the Table of Contents for one of the chapters. There you can get a fuller picture of how the numbering system works. If you turn to the book’s index, you will see that it also uses the section numbers instead of page numbers to reference information.

Getting to Know Turabian
Surveying the Index
Using the book’s index, locate the section that would tell you the following:
8. how to document information from a class lecture __________
9. how to abbreviate the name of the state of Arizona __________

Surveying the Writing Reference Chapters (2-5)
Using the Tables of Contents for these chapters, answer the following questions:
21. Which specific section would tell you how to write correctly the name of the 1st Presbyterian Church? ______
22. Which specific section would tell you how to punctuate a block quotation in your paper? ______
23. Which specific section would tell you how to make “Jesus” a possessive noun? ______
24. Which specific section would tell you whether to use italic font to name the Bible? ______
25. What specific section would refresh your memory about when to use a semicolon? ______
26. What specific section would tell you how to abbreviate the books of the Bible? ______
Getting to the Heart of the Matter (chapters 8-11)
You will spend most of your time in *Turabian* using chapters 8-11 because these chapters explain the rules for documenting source material and give you lots of examples to follow. Chapters 8, 9, and 10 are the “How-to” chapters, explaining the way various features of the documentation system work and comparing the two major options for documenting sources in your papers.

If you have used one or both of these documentation methods before, you may not need to spend much time with these how-to chapters. You can probably turn right to chapter 11, which gives models of the two methods side-by-side as they would appear for a number of different kinds of sources.

Turn now to chapter 11. Read the explanation in 11.1 of the way the examples in the chapter are set up. Examine the first example in 11.3 to see how the abbreviation system for N/B and PR/RL works. As you can see, it will be easy to get the forms confused if you aren’t very careful in following the right one. Some students draw a horizontal line to separate the N and B examples from the PR and RL examples for models they use often—this strategy can help you keep your eyes focused on the two patterns you need for each kind of source you use.

The key to using this chapter successfully is following the right model, the one that uses the documentation method you have chosen for your paper. Use the Table of Contents of this chapter to locate models that help you answer the following questions:

10. If you are using the footnote/bibliography method, what is the difference between the way the authors’ names are written in the note and the bibliography when you are referencing a *book with two authors*?
11. If you are documenting an *article from a journal* and using the parenthetical reference/reference list method, what elements from the reference list entry does the parenthetical reference include?

II. Other Guidelines for Documenting
If you are a McCormick student, your instructors have probably attached to their syllabi the McCormick “Guidelines for Research Paper Form.” These guidelines not only give you clear models for documenting several of the sources you will use often, but they also give you helpful abbreviations and some good advice about avoiding plagiarism.

At other seminaries, instructors sometimes distribute specific guidelines or give instructions about which documentation method they prefer that you use. If you have any questions about the method of documentation your teacher wants you to use, ASK!

NOTE: If you are using the parenthetical reference/reference list method (PR/RL), be aware that the examples given there (see “Method II” under “Citing Secondary Sources”) differ slightly from those given in *Turabian* chapter 10. Specifically, the McCormick guidelines ask you to capitalize every major word in a title, while *Turabian* instructs you
to capitalize only the first word and any proper names in a title. For an example, look at the way the reference list entry in *Turabian* 11.3 is written. If you were following the McCormick guidelines, you would write the reference to the Franklin book this way. Notice that the first letter in “Biography” is uppercase:


*Turabian* calls the kind of capitalization it recommends “sentence style” capitalization. You can find guidelines for capitalization of other elements within reference list entries in 10.26—10.30.

McCormick students should follow the McCormick guidelines; LSTC students should choose which convention to follow and be consistent.

### III. The Two Methods

Each method of citing material from your sources has advantages. If your instructor does not specify one method, you are free to choose the one that works best for you and which you are most comfortable with.

**Footnote/Bibliography Method**

This method enables your readers to see full information for each source as soon as they read the material from that source in your text. They can easily glance down to the bottom of the page. This first method might be preferable if you are using several sources that your instructor might not already be familiar with and would appreciate having handy information about.

**Note:** Footnotes also allow you to include discussion about a source that are peripheral to the content and focus of your paper. You can use this kind of footnote (content note) even if your primary method of documentation is the parenthetical citation/reference list method. See *Turabian* 8.149 for more detailed information about content notes.

**Parenthetical Citation/Reference List Method**

This method is generally considered easier for writers because it eliminates the step of writing full information about the source twice (in both the footnote and the bibliography entry). However, the parenthetical citation does interrupt the flow of your sentences, and if a paragraph contains several citations your readers may find that the insertions distract them and slow down their reading.

**Getting Familiar with Your Preferred Method**

Choosing a method does not guarantee that you will remember how to set up your references without looking up the forms in *Turabian* every time. In fact, even the most experienced writers have to consult their documentation guidelines frequently. Though the forms differ for each type of source you use, still there are some distinctive features of entries that remain consistent regardless of the type of source. Open *Turabian* to 11.3 and let’s compare the methods as they are used with single-author books.
For the N/B method, the footnote . . .
- begins with the number you have used in the text of your paper
- has the author’s name written in normal order (first name first)
- uses parenthesis for publishing information (publisher, place, date)
- ends with the page number alone—never uses the abbreviation “p”
- uses a comma between the author’s name and the title of the book

...and the bibliography entry . . .
- indents every line after the first
- has the author’s name written in reverse order (last name first)
- uses a period between the author’s name and the title of the book

For the PR/RL method, the parenthetical reference . . .
- always contains author’s last name, date, and page (if all these are known)
- uses parentheses around the entry and a comma between publication date and page
- contains author’s last name only

Note: Since the parenthetical citation always appears in your paper directly after the material you have used from your source, you may omit the author’s name from the citation IF you have mentioned it in the lead-in to the material. Such a citation would look like this:  (1985, 54).

...and the reference list entry . . .
- indents every line after the first
- has the author’s name written in reverse order (last name first)
- uses periods to divide main portions of information
- includes the publication date immediately after the author’s name

As you compare the two forms for each method, see if you can add other consistent features to the lists above. Before you add a feature, check the forms for other kinds of sources to see if your feature truly appears the same way in the entries for all kinds of sources. Look especially at the form for articles in journals (11.39-11.40) and the one for an article in an anthology (11.26—Component Part by One Author in a Work by Another), both of which you will probably use often.
How the Elements Work Together
The primary purpose of the note in the text of your paper (a single number for the N/B system and a brief parenthetical reference for the PR/RL system) is to help your reader find quickly and easily the full bibliographical information for that source. A footnote number in your paragraph should send the reader to the corresponding footnote at the bottom of the page (or at the end of the paper if you choose to use Endnotes—see *Turabian* 1.46 on Endnotes). A parenthetical reference should send the reader to the corresponding reference list entry at the end of your paper.

Students often ask why the publication date follows the author’s name in a parenthetical reference. If you compare the PR to the RL, you will see why—the author’s name and the publication date are the first two elements in the RL, so it makes sense that they should be the first two elements in the PR.

Another goal of the note in your text is to interrupt the flow of your paper as briefly and “politely” as possible. You are required to give credit to the source from which you are borrowing material, but to include all the bibliographic information for that source at the moment you use the source would distract the reader and make your paragraphs very hard to read. The footnote number and parenthetical reference are both designed to solve this problem.

Following the Forms
Sometimes students postpone their documentation work until their paper is finished and the deadline for submitting it is right around the corner. Documentation that is done at the last minute is often careless and inaccurate. Because they are also writers themselves, instructors care about documentation, and the impression this part of your work makes on your instructor will influence how that teacher views your entire paper.

But impressing your instructor is not the only reason to do your work carefully. A well-written paper deserves accurate documentation! So get started early on this important part of your work. Keep good bibliographic notes about your sources and budget plenty of time to write the Bibliography or Reference List. In-text references, whether they be footnotes or parenthetical references, can and should be written while you are writing the paper. That way, you are composing this crucial part of your documentation at a steady pace as you write. You will thus have less to do after the paper itself is written.

Get in the habit of going about your documentation work with the same amount of attention and loving care as you give to writing your papers. And remember that it’s never a mistake to ask for help. Your questions will show your instructor that you care enough to do your work correctly.

**Bibliography**
UNIT 10: CITING SOURCES—PRACTICE

I. Citing Different Kinds of Material
Most assignments that call for research will require you to use several different kinds of sources. Writing accurate documentation for different types of sources takes careful work and can be confusing. A good rule to follow is never to assume that you can use one bibliography entry, footnote, or reference list entry as a model for the next one you have to compose. With every new source you document, you should turn to *Turabian* for guidance. The models in chapter 11 will be your best source of information, so get familiar with that chapter and mark it in your book for easy reference.

Let’s practice with a few of the common types of sources you will use in a research paper. For each example, use *Turabian* ch. 11 to compose the specified entries:

10. Dianne Bergant
***Israel’s Wisdom Literature: A Liberation-Critical Reading***
Fortress Press
Minneapolis
1997
(see 11.3)
Using the N/B method, write a bibliography entry:

Using the N/B method, write a footnote for information you have used from p. 65:

12. Richard A. Jensen
“Justification—Where Faith and Experience Meet”
***Covenant Quarterly***
v. 41, no. 3, 1983, p. 25-60
(see 11.40)
Using the PR/RL method, write a reference list entry:

Using the PR/RL method, Write a parenthetical citation for information on p. 33:

3. Ellen Levine
“Jewish views and customs on death” (p. 98-130)

Colin Murray Parkes, Pittu Laungani, and Bill Young, editors
Death and Bereavement Across Cultures
   Routledge
   London
   1997
   (see 11.26)
   Using the PR/RL method, write a reference list entry for this source:

   Using the PR/RL method, write a parenthetical citation for information from p. 100:

   27. Terrence E. Fretheim
       “Will of God in the OT”
       The Anchor Bible Dictionary
       Volume 6
       David Noel Freedman, editor
       Doubleday
       New York
       1992
       p. 914-920
       (see 11.26 and the handout from McCormick “Guidelines for Research Paper Form”)

   Using the N/B method, write a bibliography entry for this source:

   Using the N/B method, write a footnote entry for information from p. 917:

   Note: The suggested form in Turabian 11.26 does not account for the kind of source you were given in #4, a work that has been produced in several volumes. Comparing that form with the one for The Anchor Bible Dictionary on p. 3 of the McCormick handout, you will see that the only difference between the two is the volume number, added before the page number in the model on the McCormick handout. If you have been given specific guidelines for documentation by your seminary or your instructor, follow them. If not, follow the Turabian forms as best you can, using your own good judgment when you cannot find a form that fits your source exactly. Then be consistent in treating other sources of that kind the same way.
II. Citing Electronic Sources

The internet, CD-ROMs, and other electronic resources offer a wealth of information for study and research on topics related to the Bible, theology, and the church. It’s great fun to access electronic information, but figuring out how to document this kind of information can be tricky. Don’t let your apprehension about documenting keep you from using these helpful sources in your papers. With just a few basic tips and models to follow, you can document electronic sources accurately and painlessly.

First, you need to know the difference between the two basic types of electronic information:

1. **fixed-format sources** such as CD-ROMs, diskettes, and magnetic tapes. Though these can be updated, they are typically static sources.

2. **on-line sources** such as computer services, bulletin boards, and web sites. These may be frequently revised, so it is important to include in your documentation the date you accessed the source.

Here are sample footnotes for both kinds of electronic sources:


Entries for both kinds of sources must include the same information that entries for printed sources include: author and title, source from which the piece is taken (if, for example, you are using an article from a journal), place of publication and publisher, and date of publication. You should also add the specific type of source. *If you are using an on-line source*, you should also include the pathway of access to it and the date you accessed it.

Look at the sample footnote entries for electronic sources in *Turabian* 8.141. You will notice that the entries for fixed-format sources like CD-ROMs are, in general, simpler than those for on-line sources. Remember, for on-line sources you need the access pathway (look for the words “available from” in those sample entries) and the date you accessed the source.

Now examine the models for the N/B method and the PR/RL method in given in *Turabian* 11.57. The models in this section are the only ones *Turabian* offers for bibliography entries and reference list entries, so it’s up to you to use your own good judgment in making your entries conform to this format.

As long as you include all the required information in your entries, the order of the elements is not all that important. (In fact, you may have noticed that even *Turabian* is not consistent in the format of its examples.) What is important, however, is that you be consistent within your own paper!
If you are using the N/B method, make sure all the bibliography entries have their elements in the same order and all footnotes have their elements in the same order. If you are using the PR/RL method, the parenthetical citations are easy—they should look exactly like those for printed sources. But make sure all the reference list entries for electronic documents have their elements in the same order.

When you are working with electronic sources, it is a good idea to ask your instructor for help with documentation. Asking for help not only lets the instructor know that you care enough to make your documentation accurate, but it also enables him or her let you know about any specific preferences for how you should handle these kinds of sources.

III. Other Special Documentation Situations

No set of documentation guidelines could possibly cover every kind of source you will use in your research. Therefore, it is very likely that in your work you will occasionally use a source that neither *Turabian* nor the McCormick Seminary “Guidelines for Research Paper Form” shows you how to document. The advice given in the *Note* in Part I of this unit is good advice for these situations:

Follow the *Turabian* forms as best you can, using your own good judgment when you cannot find a form that fits your source exactly. Then be consistent in treating other sources of that kind the same way.

There are a few out-of-the-ordinary situations, however, that *Turabian* does cover. The following references may help you with these unusual documentation challenges:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If you want to document. . .</th>
<th>Use these forms in Turabian. . .</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Info from a book’s introduction</td>
<td>11.24 (use 2nd model)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A source quoted or paraphrased in your source</td>
<td>8.148 and 11.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Info used in several different sources</td>
<td>11.65, or cite one the one you used and add “Also reported in several other sources”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notes from class lecture or other presentation</td>
<td>8.130-8.131, see also 11.52-11.53. Adapt forms to fit your needs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As you have looked through *Turabian*, you may have located models for other unusual sources that you think you may need to document in the future. If so, add them to the table above for later use.

**Bibliography**

APPENDIX 1: COLLABORATIVE WORK—WRITING GROUPS, STUDY GROUPS, READING GROUPS

No matter how much of a loner you may be when you study, seminary—and ministry, for that matter—will require that you work collaboratively. It is important to remember that all the texts you will examine in your theological studies belong to communities of learners and to histories of communities of learners. *You cannot understand the text’s impact on your community in its context without conversation with others.* Nor can you get the most out of a class without listening and conversing with others.

Forming a group to study together, read together, or write together is one way to be intentional about learning in community. Being a part of one of these groups doesn’t necessarily mean you do the studying, reading, or writing together; usually it means that after members of the group do the initial work on their own, the group meets to share what they’ve learned or what they’ve written.

**What’s the Point?**

Study groups have different goals from those of a writing or reading group. *Writing and reading groups* meet to share their ideas and questions and to give each other feedback on the writing they’ve done or the responses they’ve had to the reading. Each of the group members does all the assigned work. Members of these groups should be ready for and open to honest responses from others about their work. Writers can learn a lot about how to refine their own styles by paying attention to the way their writing comes across to others. Readers can learn a lot about how to read sensitively and critically by listening to others’ responses to the same assignment they themselves have read. Ideas about writing or reading enjoy their fullest expression only in community, and members of writing and reading groups have a chance to be a part of that exciting process.

*Study groups* have a different goal: divide and conquer. Members often tackle a big assignment as a group, dividing the assignment into manageable chunks and each taking responsibility for one portion. They come together to share their work with each other. In a study group working on a big assignment, no one person has to do all the pieces of the assignment. Dividing up materials and reporting back to a group can help you study more efficiently and quickly.

**Why Join a Writing, Reading, or Study Group?**

1. It broadens your capacity to *understand* an issue.

2. It holds you *accountable* to reading, understanding, and communicating the ideas and claims of the materials.

3. It helps you to *articulate* what you know and determine what you need to understand more fully.
4. It *encourages* you to explore the material or subject matter more intensely.

5. It is a great way to share *resources* and to develop an understanding of the scholarship that has been done.

6. It develops and enriches relationships with your peers.

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**Bibliography**


*See especially pages 141, 149-177.*
APPENDIX 2: MAKING CLASS PRESENTATIONS

Oral presentations are frequent assignments in seminary classes. Though many students dread presenting material in front of their class, often they are glad they did it. In the process of preparing and delivering an oral presentation, you will get to know your material better than you will in almost any assignment. And you will develop critical skills for your ministry, in which you will frequently rely on your ability to speak effectively to groups.

Tips (remember the five “p’s”):

4. **Preparation:** know the material, have a firm organizational plan, anticipate questions, have a backup plan for shortening if you find you’ve run out of time, check your syllabus for directions from instructor.

5. **Practice:** rehearse several times, especially if working with a group. Have a clear, firm plan about who will say what, establish cues to give one another. Don’t assume you don’t need to speak the presentation out loud—very important to hear yourself talk and get feedback from others in your group. If you’re presenting alone, have a friend listen and give feedback.

6. **Props:** bring handouts, visual aids, something for “show and tell.” Generations x-ers are visually oriented and need visual stimulation to stay focused. You will also look more prepared and polished if you have these materials.

7. **Precision:** have the timing right, make sure parts of presentation fit together, that coverage is complete. Make sure to plan just enough and not too much for the time slot you have. Be warned that you will probably take more time than you anticipated, so build in a cushion.

8. **Pace:** Go slowly, enunciate clearly, don’t read a written report. Listening is very different from reading—you will lose your audience if you don’t give them simple sentences that they can process while you are speaking. Don’t try to impress them with your complex prose—you will put them to sleep. Speak slowly, take long pauses, maintain good eye contact.
APPENDIX 3: TAKING ESSAY EXAMS

You probably won’t take many tests in seminary, but an essay exam will likely be one of them. If you’re like most other students, essay questions throw you into a panic. How in the world can you say everything you have to say about a topic in such a short time and keep from losing your cool in the process?!?! The following three lists give you a study plan to try the next time you’re faced with an essay exam, some tips for taking the exam and doing your very best work, and some pitfalls to avoid.

Study Plan—follow these steps:
• Review your notes and reading assignments, paying special attention to your own editing marks and comments from previous review sessions. Look for major themes, controversial points, and ideas the instructor discussed at length or returned to several times. These are likely to appear as essay questions. (See the unit “Making Good Use of Lecture Notes: Generating Papers and Studying for Tests” in this manual for additional suggestions about using your notes to study for tests.)
• Make up several questions that you think the instructor might ask. Write brief outlines of answers to them, looking in your notes and readings for examples to use.
• Compare your sample questions with those your peers have created. A good study group activity would be to work together to outline answers to a number of possible questions.
• Ask the instructor to give the class an idea about what questions might appear on the test. While you may not get much help from the instructor, it never hurts to ask. You may be surprised at how much help you do get.

Essay-Writing Plan—Follow These Steps:
• Exercise your writing hand for a few minutes before you go to class. Write down your plan of attack for the test or a list of facts you remember about one of the likely test topics. Many students experience test anxiety when they begin to write an essay; their hands cramp and their palms sweat. Getting your hand in the writing mood beforehand will help you avoid this unpleasant problem.
• Read the entire exam before you start to write. Plan the time you will spend on each question.
• Analyze each essay question, looking for the implied strategy of answering (“Describe. . . . ,” “Compare. . . . ,” “Argue. . . . ,” “Analyze”) and the information your answer should include. (See the sample questions at the end of this section.) The point of this step is to make sure your answer gives the appropriate information and treats it in the required way.
• Make a quick list of ideas in outline form that will answer the question. Use terms from the question to help you focus your ideas. This outline can be your map for writing the essay. Also, if you are not able to finish your answer, this sketchy outline might give your instructor an idea of what you intended to say and might gain you some credit for your unfinished essay.
• Look at your outline points and review the essay question to be sure what it asks you to do; based on these, write a thesis statement that can appear in your essay’s brief
opening paragraph. This sentence should state your basic argument and indicate your strategy for making it (in other words, it should make clear whether you are describing, comparing, analyzing, arguing for or against another position, or using some other strategy).

- Make the organization of your essay simple and straightforward, with one paragraph devoted to each major point in your answer. In a brief concluding paragraph, sum up your main points. Don’t try to get fancy with organization—just be clear.
- Take the time to read over the essay before you turn it in. Check spelling, punctuation, and the readability of your handwriting. This careful attention to detail will be noticed by your instructor and could help your essay make a better impression.

Pitfalls—don’t . . .
- Start writing immediately before you even read the entire question.
- Write down everything you know about the topic and hope the instructor can sort out the facts.
- Ignore the clock and leave yourself too little time to complete your essay.

Sample Essay Exam Questions
Think about how you would organize your answer to each question based on the wording of the question:

28. Compare Mark and Matthew by discussing the message each gave about (a) the character of Jesus; (b) the meaning of discipleship; (c) the resurrection. Describe two unique features of each gospel.

29. Discuss the Radical Reformation. What is it, when did it take place, why is it important, and what were some of the main themes and important aspects of the movement? Choose two radical reformers and go into some detail about their life, work, and theological positions on major issues. What is the modern significance of this movement?

30. Explain the difficulties of “knowing God” from the perspectives of two 20th-century theologians and point out some similar difficulties you have encountered in your own faith journey.

4. Analyze Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount.
APPENDIX 4: USING THE LIBRARY

Jesuit-Krauss-McCormick Library

Here are some features of the JKM Library with which you will want to become familiar:

- Horizon’s On-line Public Access Catalog (OPAC) (all floors)
- Card catalog (Reference Room)
- Reference desk (first floor)
- Current periodicals shelves (Reference Room)
- Copy machines (Reference Room and second floor)
- ATLA Religion Index (Reference Room)
- Study areas and restrooms (all floors)
- Library bulletin board (just outside entrance—watch for changes in library hours)
- Computers available for word processing (Reference room)
- Microfilm viewers (first-floor computer center)
- Bound periodicals (in the book stacks shelved by call number)

The University of Chicago Regenstein Library

The University of Chicago, in its combined libraries, has more than six million volumes and microforms. This is an incredible resource for students in the Hyde Park area.

Regenstein Library has seven floors of resources and tools for your academic study. Most important to the theological student is Regenstein’s fourth floor religion collection of references, periodicals, and book stacks. These assets are available to University of Chicago and ACTS students by applying for library privileges at the Privilege Window on the first floor of Regenstein, left of the On-line catalogues.

The general reference collection, card catalogue, and on-line catalogue are on the first floor. To enter the main library, you must show your student identification card. The stairs and elevators can take you to the fourth floor. The Regenstein is open Mon-Thu 8:30 a.m. - 1 a.m.; Fr-Sat 8:30 a.m. - 10 p.m.; and Sun 10 a.m. - 10 p.m. There is a convenient bus service located outside the main doors of the library. The schedule is available in the library and is posted near the bus stop. Buses stop at the 1400 building (57th and Dorchester), near the Kimbark apartments (56th and Kimbark), on Greenwood Avenue and Woodlawn Avenue (near Lutheran housing). Please use the bus system at night!

You can use the Regenstein Library basically the same way you use the JKM Library. Computer terminals that enable you to access the Horizon OPAC on-line catalog are on
the first level. This catalog contains all books and periodicals published since 1975. For older materials, check the card catalog.

You will find advantages to using the Regenstein. Library loan periods are longer, some of the library’s bound periodicals may be checked out, and Regenstein has many more study areas and longer hours than JKM. Explore Regenstein early in your seminary career—you’ll be glad you did.

Other Libraries in the Neighborhood

You will find several other libraries in the Hyde Park area that as a seminary student you are invited to use. They are part of the Association of Chicago Theological Schools (ACTS), an ecumenical association of Protestant and Roman Catholic seminaries. Here are the schools whose libraries are within easy walking distance in Hyde Park:

- Catholic Theological Union (CTU): 5401 S. Cornell
- Chicago Theological Seminary (CTS): 5757 S. University
- Meadville/Lombard Theological School: 5701 South Woodlawn
APPENDIX 5: USING BIBLICAL RESOURCES

The use of biblical resources broadens your understanding of a text. It refocuses the relationship between you and the text to also include the perspectives of various scholars. It promotes a conversation among the text, the traditions of translation and interpretation, and you. Understanding the major sources strengthens the link between past scholarship and current research, including your own. Your written work, which utilizes biblical resources, adds your own interpretation to the tradition.

The heart of seminary formation is to develop pastors, counselors, and teachers. The knowledge required to fulfill these roles includes biblical, theological, and historical understandings of the traditions from which you come. Using the best resources available as tools will enable you to become a better scholar and will enrich your understanding of your own faith.

Dictionaries
Dictionaries provide a basic introduction to various terms, topics, and biblical books. They should be one of the first stops in your information search. Using dictionaries is a quick way to gain a broader understanding of various terms, topics, and books of the Bible. Also, dictionaries often list bibliographic information that will help broaden and deepen your search.

JKM Library Dictionaries
Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church (BR 95.08 ref)

a general area for biblical dictionaries: (BS 440-445 ref)
- Anchor Bible Dictionary (BS 440.A54 ref)
- Harper’s Bible Dictionary (BS 440.H237 ref)
- Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible (BS 440.I63 ref)

a general area for New Testament dictionaries: (BS 2397 - )

also: Theological Dictionary of the New Testament
- multivolume (PA 881.K513 ref)
- abridged (PA 881.T47131985 ref)

Dictionaries Available in the Language Resource and Writing Center
- Anchor Bible Dictionary
- Harper’s Bible Dictionary (different editions)
- Oxford Companion to the Bible
- Westminster Dictionary of the Bible
- Dictionary of the Bible - edited by James Hastings
- A Handbook of Theological Terms

66
Commentaries
These provide a more in-depth look at a book of the Bible. Commentaries inform you of the history of the text itself as well as the history of scholarship on the text.

How is a commentary organized?
Each individual commentary or series has its own character. In general, though, a commentary includes these components:
1. Introduction
   - Background information
   - History of the biblical book
   - Author’s assertions
   - Other scholars’ assertions
   - Bibliographic information
2. Translation (usually author’s own)
3. Translation Notes
4. Commentary (gives meaning to a particular text)
5. Reflections (contemporary emphasis)
6. Bibliography (great resource for further research)

Commentaries in the reference section:
- Anchor Bible Commentaries (BS 192.2.A1 ref)
- Calvin’s Commentaries (BS 485.C168 ref)
- International Critical Commentaries (BS 491.16 ref)
- Interpreter’s Bible (BS 491.165 ref)
- Torah Bible Commentaries (BS 491.676 ref)
- Cambridge Bible Commentaries (BS 491.2.C178 ref)
- Hermeneia Commentaries (BS 491.2.H47 ref)
- New Interpreter’s Bible (BS 491.2.N484 ref)

individual commentaries (BS 1245.3 - 1665.3)

Other commentary series located in the library stacks:
- Augsburg Commentaries (spread in the BS stacks)
- International Theological Commentary (spread in the BS stacks)
- Interpretation Commentaries (spread in the BS stacks)
- New Century Bible Commentaries (spread in the BS stacks)
- New International Commentary on the Old Testament (spread in the BS stacks)
- Old Testament Library (spread in the BS stacks)
Available at the Language Resource and Writing Center

*The Anchor Bible* - Rob’s - Joshua, Judges, Ruth
*The Interpreter’s Bible* - The Complete Series
*The New Interpreter’s Bible*

*Note:* Commentaries are a good place to develop your own bibliography. It is important to see what sources the author is reading as well as to read some of them yourself.

**Concordances**
These are general search tools to find lists of word occurrences in a particular translation of the Bible. There are concordances for English translations as well as Hebrew and Greek.

English version concordances (BS 425-435 ref)

**Other Particularly Helpful Reference Materials at the Library**
Periodicals (AP 1 - 201 ref)
*Luther’s Works* (BR 330.E5 ref)
Bibles (BS 75-302 ref)
*Old Testament Abstracts* (BS 410.O42 ref)
Greek reference material: (BS 1699 - ref)

*A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*  
by Bruce M. Metzeger (BS 2325.M43 ref)

*New Testament Exegesis* by Gordon D. Fee (BS 2331.F44 ref)
Greek dictionaries and lexicons: (PA 31-1139 ref)
Latin materials: (PA 2308-3369 ref)
Assyrian materials: (PJ 3523 ref)
Hebrew materials: (PJ 4564-4886 ref)

**Other Particularly Helpful Reference Materials at LRWC**
*The Oxford Bible Atlas*
*The Oxford Companion to the Bible*
*Bible Windows* CD-ROM

**Bible Windows**
This is a valuable resource. It is also a lot of fun to use. Here are some incentives to find out more about it.

1. A high tech Concordance
2. Various Bible translations
3. Translation help
4. Quick word searches
5. Placing Hebrew or Greek in papers

*Note:* MacBible is available at JKM Library.
**Book Stores in the Neighborhood**

1. **Ex Libris, 1354 E 55th Street, 955-3456**
   A used theological book store. The selection varies on the time of year. The best tends to be in the summer.

2. **Halleluia Books, 3546 W. Lawrence Ave, 509-0011**
   A Korean bookstore that is located near subway station.

3. **LSTC Bookstore, 1100 E 55th Street, 753-0700**
   The bookstore that carries the required books for McCormick, LSTC and CTU. If the books are not on the ‘required’ book-list, students get 10% off.

4. **Powell’s Bookstore, 1501 E 57th Street, 955-7780**
   A used bookstore that carries some theological books. The selection always varies.

5. **Seminary Cooperative Bookstore, Inc., 5757 S University Avenue, 752-4381**
   A good bookstore to join. To become a member you buy three shares of Coop stock at ten dollars a piece. Members receive 10% off all books when paying by cash or check, and a dividend is added to your stock holding.

6. **University Bookstore, 970 E 58th Street, 702-7116**
   This is the main undergraduate bookstore of the University of Chicago. They have a very nice reference section.

7. **Word of the Life Books, 3523 W. Lawrence Avenue, 509-1110**
   Another good Korean Christian Bookstore located near the subway station.
APPENDIX 6: TERMS FOR THEOLOGICAL STUDY AND WRITING

Recommended Terms
In Spring, 1996, the faculty members at McCormick were asked to contribute lists of essential terms for their respective fields. Below is a compiled and edited list of terms classified by fields. These are useful for vocabulary development and personal study.

The Bible Field
apocalyptic
apocrypha
biblical
 canon
 Chronicler
 concordance
 context
 contextual
 criticism - form, “higher”, historical, literary, redaction, rhetorical, social-science, source, text
 Deutero-Isaiah
 Deuteronomistic history
 epistle
 exegesis
 gospel
 Greco-Roman
 Hellenistic
 hermeneutics
 hermeneutical
 inclusio/ring construction
 inclusive language
 inspiration / inspired
 interpretation
 lament
 literal
 literary
 manuscript
 parenesis
 Pentateuch
 Pharisee
 prophecy
 pseudepigraphy
 Qumran
 Sadducee
 sociology
 synoptic studies (Gospels, Samuel/Kings with Chronicles)
 wisdom literature
The Theology Field
androcentrism
anthropocentrism
Christology
classism
colonialism
confession
contextualization
creed
critical realism
deism
deutero-canonical
dogma
ecclesiology
ecology
ecocentric
ecumenical
eschatology
ethnocentric
Eucharist
historiography
holism
idealism
ideology
imperialism
interfaith
millennialism - post and pre
modernity
neo-orthodoxy
panentheism
pantheism
patriarchy
phenomenology
pluralism
post-colonialism
post-modernism
pre-modern
racism
sin
soteriology
structural sin
theism
theodicy
theological anthropology
theology - black, contextual, dogmatic, evangelical, feminist, liberal, liberation, political, process, third world, womanist

tradition - biblical, church

utopia

virtue

The Ministry Field

administration
administrative review
affiliate member
assessment
authority
censure
church discipline
commission
community
competence
confessional
context
covenant
curriculum
denomination
diversity
ecclesiology
educational ministry
empathy
evangelical
evaluation
experiential
formation
fundamentalist
governing body
grief
human development
identity
inclusiveness
integration
jurisdiction
majority
mediation
ministry
negotiation
nurture
parish
pastoral
pastoral care
pedagogy
permanent judicial commission
polity
praxis
reflection - critical, theological
sacraments
stress
system
systemic
verbatim
vocation
wholeness

The Ethics Field
character
collective moral
community
consience
ethics
metaethics
moral life
morality
obligation
pacifist
peoplehood
social requisites
value
virtue
vision
The Purposes of Vocabulary Development

1. To be an efficient and knowledgeable reader, requiring that you know more and more words in and outside of your field.

2. To be articulate in conversing with others about theology, biblical studies, church traditions, etc.

3. To better understand lectures, discussions, texts, and commentaries.

Methods to Increase Vocabulary

The best way to learn new vocabulary is to use it in context: in reading, writing and speaking. There are several methods to learn new vocabulary terms. Choose the best one for you or a combination of different methods. To begin, an easy place to find an abundance of new terms is from your class notes and margin notes if you circle the words that you do not know.

Cards: Small cards, such as index cards, are useful for vocabulary practice with the vocabulary word on one side and the definition on the other.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Epitaph</th>
<th>Def: an inscription on or at a tomb or grave in memory of the one buried there.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ex: Someday I would like my epitaph to read, “She was loved.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Lists: Listing the new terms with their definitions is similar to using cards.

Charts: Charts can be more comprehensive than cards or lists. A helpful format includes the word, its definition, an example, and a memory hint.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Memory Hint</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>cano</td>
<td>authoritative religious writings, the standard or rule</td>
<td>Hebrew canon: Hebrew testament Christian canon: OT and NT, for some, also the Apocrypha</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>epistle</td>
<td>a letter</td>
<td>Paul’s Romans, Galatians</td>
<td>“Epistle to the Ephesians”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Memory Devices

There are many ways to help remember terms. Try anything you can. Sometimes someone else’s memory device is helpful. Here are a few ideas:

- Pictures
- Rhymes
- Translate into your first language
- Acronyms (example: ROY G. BIV: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, violet)
- Synonyms/Antonyms
- Stories

Bibliography


When writing about yourself and others, always use inclusive, non-sexist language. Compare the lists of terms below, and strive to use language that does not discriminate or generalize on the basis of gender.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exclusive</th>
<th>Inclusive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>mankind</td>
<td>humankind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>man (to refer to all persons)</td>
<td>humanity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>brothers/brethren (to refer to all persons)</td>
<td>brothers and sisters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>he/him (to refer to an individual, or to individuals whose gender is not specified)</td>
<td>he or she</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>him or her</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>they</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Practice**
Revise the following sentences according to the above guidelines for the use of inclusive language.

Overall, I feel that the pastor is the congregational leader. His roles include inspiring brotherly love, spreading the Gospel to mankind, and enabling fellow Christians.

**Language for God**
People of faith around the world have always called God by many names. Increasingly, American Protestants are expanding the metaphors and thus the language by which they recognize and describe the deity. Some Christians think that referring to God as “father” limits our conception of God’s many roles and makes belief in a loving God difficult for those who have not experienced their own fathers as loving and merciful. Thus they have experimented with other ways to name God, sometimes alternating the male pronoun with the female and sometimes avoiding gender-specific pronouns altogether. For example, here is a familiar table blessing reworded to eliminate the male pronouns from the original version, which are indicated in parenthesis:

- God is great, God is good.
- Now we thank God (Him) for our food.
- By God’s (His) hands we all are fed.
- Give us, Lord, our daily bread. Amen.

As a professional in ministry, you will be called upon to be sensitive in many ways to the experiences and perceptions of others. Therefore, even though the father image may suit your own understanding of God, you will want to remain open-minded and willing to explore alternative images, both in your ministry career and during your seminary years.
Sample Reflection Paper

This excerpt from John Burkhart’s *Worship* (1982) is about the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper. He describes the Lord’s Supper as three basic acts: acknowledgement, rehearsal, and proclamation. These acts, he argues, display principles of Christian life that should be remembered on every occasion that we eat and drink together.

The Lord’s Supper is “the basic act of acknowledgement by Christians of what God has done, is doing, and will do” through Christ. In this statement, Burkhart highlights how the sacrament is about God’s ongoing actions, not only His past actions. It also defines our role as guests, not hosts. The meal exhibits God’s hospitality to us, that is, God’s grace.

Burkhart emphasizes the human relational aspects of the Lord’s Supper when he describes it as “the basic act of rehearsal by Christians.” By sharing a meal with others, we are enacting our relationship to them. Relationships are strengthened and even built by sharing a table. Conversely, refusing to share a table will destroy relationships. In this sense, meals are powerful symbols which Jesus used to develop alliances between groups that were socially segregated. Likewise, we should use meals to connect ourselves with others in anticipation of full human reconciliation in the future.

This emphasis on human social relations continues when Burkhart describes the Lord’s Supper as “the basic act of proclamation by Christians.” He identifies social schisms (e.g. between rich and poor) as sins that are repeated when some Christians exclude others from the Lord’s Supper. Exclusive observances of the Lord’s Supper are
selfish; a “betrayal of Jesus, sacrificing him on the altar of religiosity that despises the humanity for which he died.” Christians’ enactment of the Lord’s Supper proclaims their principles. Schisms evidenced during these enactments only proclaim selfishness and indifference.

Burkhart concludes by drawing a parallel between the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper and every meal. Just as God is the host of the Lord’s Supper, He is also the host of all meals. Therefore, we should honor the host and His guests, our fellow Christians. “Every meal… is an occasion for worship, for eucharistic and ethical behavior.”

In my experience, the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper is, first and foremost, a commemoration of God’s sacrifice of the life of his son, Jesus Christ, to save humans’ lives. It reminds me that I am sinful and need Christ’s sacrifice to be reconciled to God and fellow humans. This reconciliation enables one to then fully partake of Communion (an apt synonym for this sacrament), communing both with God (i.e. vertically, if you will) and fellow participants in the Lord’s Supper (i.e. horizontal communion).

In this excerpt, Burkhart’s primary concern is horizontal communion. His discussion provides a new way to view the Lord’s Supper as a means of reconciliation with other Christians. The sacrament is inclusive of all Christians. It is also a meal. As such, sinful schisms can be mended when conflicting parties come to the Lord’s table together and honor one another as guests.

Burkhart also encourages us to view all meals as reenactments of the Lord’s Supper. In this way, the shared common table becomes a powerful means of affiliation
with other Christians, and worship expands to enhance our everyday life, not just Communion Sunday.

While these aspects of Burkhart’s treatment are enlightening, he, unfortunately and to the detriment of his argument, fails to describe in any detail the key point of the Lord’s Supper: to commemorate Christ’s sacrificial death for the sins of the world. Indeed, Burkhart opens each section with the following: “eating and drinking together in recognition of Jesus is…” But, one still wonders, in recognition of WHAT about Jesus? He also closes by mentioning “…God’s consummate gift…” But this is just another euphemism with no explicit description of what it is we are discussing. And at one point: “Jesus’ willingness to eat with sinners gave a message to the world…” What about his willingness to DIE for sinners?

Perhaps this crucial component of the sacrament, namely, Jesus Christ’s sacrificing his life, is addressed by Burkhart outside this excerpt. If this is the case, then my criticism is unwarranted. However, standing alone, this apparently useful discussion of the Lord’s Supper as a means of reconciliation and affiliation is undermined because the core event from which the sacrament derives meaning is not clearly mentioned.

REFERENCE

In his article “Experience and Explanation in Twentieth-Century American Religious History,” Richard Wrightman Fox describes the incursion of cultural history into twentieth century historiography and how this new approach has informs his own work on the decline of liberal Protestantism from 1920 to the present. Fox argues that cultural history, with its attention to the “lived experience” or ordinary people, can shed light on why liberal Protestantism has declined as a mass faith despite retaining considerable power in central structures such as the university and the press. In using cultural history to explain developments in institutions (the mainline, liberal churches), Fox falls prey to the self-identified temptation of twentieth-century historians to use the past to explain the present. By so doing, he subverts cultural history’s emphasis on the difference and separation of the past from the present, with mixed results.

Cultural history has been slow to catch on in twentieth-century historiography, Fox explains, because many historians focus on the twentieth century in order to understand their own society, and thus “have a vested interest in fashioning a past continuous with the present” (395). In contrast, cultural history “defamiliarized” the past, looking not for continuity, but for what is particular to the past and is different from our own situation. However, cultural history is gaining strength and is more likely than traditional history to enter the mainstream of twentieth-century historiography because it is less sectarian, analyzing religion as an anthropological phenomenon rather than trumpeting the impact of
religious figures and institutions of the times.

The challenge for cultural history, according to Fox, will be to show how explorations of particular settings answer broader historical questions. Fox tries to model this by using cultural history to explain the decline in participation in the mainstream liberal churches. He identifies a split between secular liberalism, which is skeptical about the supernatural and focuses on social ethics, and evangelical liberalism which maintains a place for miracle and personal encounter with Jesus. Evangelical liberalism was largely devastated by World War I, which brought disillusionment in individual conversion as a foundation of the good society, though it survived in figures like Harry Emerson Fosdick and the civil rights movement. Secular liberalism went on to be a dominant ideology until its participation in the Vietnam War seriously undermined its position in the mid-1960’s.

Fox’s thesis is that the split between secular liberalism and evangelicalism led to the demise of liberalism as a mass faith long before its ideological power began to wane. Secular liberals tended to go in either of two directions – to abandon their faith altogether, or to find a personal religion in the evangelical camp. Taking the role of the cultural historian, Fox traces liberalism’s abandonment of the miraculous by contrasting Harry Emerson Fosdick and Henry Ward Beecher, “first generation migrants from orthodoxy to liberalism” who retained a notion of a personal savior who could work miracles in individual lives, to Reinhold Niebuhr and Washington Gladden, who placed less stress on personal piety and Jesus as personal savior.

But can cultural history do what Fox wants to do? Fox has done a good job of pointing out the split between liberalism and evangelicalism in individual lives as well as in
public discourse and events. In the best cultural historical manner, he has given us windows into the past which readers can compare with their own experience. But Fox is reaching for more than comparison; he is reaching for an explanation for a widespread trend in institutions, a step that most cultural historians have wisely refused to take. To explain such a long-standing and widespread phenomenon as the decline of liberal Protestantism, Fox needs more than the anecdotal evidence that cultural history provides. He needs to engage in some of the sociology favored by the old historical method. Cultural history may well shed some light on longstanding issues of historical explanation, as Fox says in his conclusion, but other historiographic methods will be needed to solidify these insights.
Introduction

The Tower of Babel narrative in Genesis is a memorable and perplexing story for Bible readers. As a story within primeval history it seeks to answer two questions that arise from the Biblical presupposition that humanity can be traced back to common ancestors; why do we live in different places? And why do we speak different languages? The common and accepted answer is that God chose for us to be different in these regards. Debate arises, however, over whether or not this choice by God was a curse or a blessing.

Through examining the Tower of Babel narrative of the J (Yahwist) source, I will attempt to show that the story does not follow the traditional sin-punishment outline of other primeval history stories of J as is often believed. In the narrative God makes a judgment about humanity’s desire to seek unity through isolation and homogeneity, but God’s responsive action of confusing people through language and scattering them throughout the world is not a curse on humanity. It is a blessing that re-directs humanity to find unity in diversity.

Historical and Social Setting

The Tower of Babel story is unique in that it is a part of primeval history, yet it highlights a place that is real to history. Evidence from the text indicates that the narrator was familiar with certain cultural practices of Mesopotamia and, in particular, the construction of a tower in the city of Babylon. Such historical references reveal clues in
discerning the origin of the text.

The first concrete evidence in the text is the location of Shinar (Gen 11:2). Throughout biblical texts, the region of Babylonia is referred to as Shinar. The origin of the name is more difficult to know. One etymological proposal, by Ron Zadok, is that it is derived from the name of a Kassite tribe who were at one time rulers of Babylon (Davila 1992, 1220). The important deduction that can be made from this text is that the place in question is that of Mesopotamia, a plain between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers (Sarna 1989, 81).

By identifying Mesopotamia as the region wherein the story takes place, later elements of the story can be placed into context. The initial discussion of bricks and mortar prior to a discussion about the building of a tower provides insight into Mesopotamian culture (Gen 11:3). The fact that making bricks is discussed before mentioning building a tower or city acknowledges that the narrator was aware of the importance of bricks in Mesopotamian architecture. This practice is referred to often in Akkadian texts. Likewise, the narrator speaks of the ingredients used by the people; “they had brick for stone, and bitumen for mortar” (11:3). Stone was rare in parts of Mesopotamia, and bitumen was a common ingredient; knowing that these elements were used indicates further that the narrator was familiar with the culture. However, the fact that the narrator mentions these ingredients with some surprise can be inferred to mean that the narrator was not from Mesopotamia. This becomes more convincing when recognized that stone was used in the construction of large architecture in Canaan (Sarna 1989, 81).
The construction that takes place in the narrative is that of a large tower (Gen 11:4). Such a tower being referred to is likely a ziggurat which is a large temple tower that was common to many Mesopotamian cities. In the last verse of the narrative, the city in which the tower is being built is named Babel or Babylon (Gen 11:9). The ziggurat being referred to is likely the famous Entemenanki (Spina 1992, 561). E.A. Speiser rejects this idea by arguing that the Entemenanki was not made famous by the Greeks until the seventh century BC., and J is dated to the tenth century BC. (Speiser 1964, 75). Other scholars note, however, that the ziggurat was likely built and rebuilt on several occasions. The time at which J wrote (or one of J’s sources) was probably a time during which the ziggurat lay in ruins.

This insight may indicate that one purpose of the narrative was to explain the existing ruins of the Entemenanki at the time by inferring that it was God’s will for the ziggurat to not be completed. Regardless of this intent or not by the narrator, the story appears to have an anti-urban and anti-Babylon perspective. One, Babylon was a major city of Mesopotamia in the second millennium BC.; it is said to have been the center of great power where culture radiated outward (Rad 1972, 150). God’s actions which resulted in the unfinished city indicates an anti-urban stance (Gen 11:8). Two, the wordplay on “Babel” (to be discussed further in Literary Features) throughout the text indicates an anti-Babylon position (Margueron 1992, 563). The setting of Babylon for the story is important in discerning the intent of the narrator and further indicates that the story likely did not originate in Babylon. The question regarding the origin of the story, though, is perhaps one that may be better addressed by analyzing the literary features.
Literary Features

The Tower of Babel story is unique as a primeval history story not only because of its historical reference but also because there are no literary comparisons in the region of Mesopotamia to assist in determining the reason for the narrative (Westerman 1984, 537). Various features of the text allude to the fact that J may have used several sources in creating the narrative with a particular intent. Likewise, other evidence from the text and from the story’s placement in the primeval history as done by the final redactor, P (Priestly Works), gives insights into the meaning of the narrative.

First, it is worth noting that J is widely accepted as the writer of the Tower of Babel story of Genesis. The use of the “LORD” or “Yahweh” for God is common to J writings, and it is the term used in this text. Likewise, the style of the narrative, as it differs from P’s writing, is a style attributed to J which can be seen in other primeval history narratives: Creation (Gen 2:4a-25), the Fall of humanity (Gen 3), Cain and Abel (Gen 4:1-16), parts of the Flood, and the curse on Canaan (Gen 9:18-27). There is little debate that J should be credited with the Tower of Babel story (Spina 1992, 561).

Many questions still exist as to where the story originated or what resources J used in writing the Tower of Babel. Claus Westermann addresses this by noting that the Tower of Babel story consists of several motifs and, therefore, was likely composed from several sources known to J. The dominant motif is the confusion of language. Incorporated into this motif are the motifs of building and the dispersion of humanity. Although no parallel stories to the Tower of Babel can be found among immediate neighbors, stories do exist with some of the individual motifs found here (Westermann 1984, 535).
The most notable aspect of Westermann’s argument is that the motif of the confusion of languages is a different motif than the dispersion of humanity. He states this by recognizing that the narrative would still flow without the verses relating to the “scattering” of humanity (vv. 4b, 8, 9). In other words, the motif of the dispersion of humanity was added to the motif of the confusion of languages. A possible explanation is that J, in creating the narrative, sought to show that dispersion came about as a result of the confusion of languages.

The most notable addition to an earlier motif that J may have adopted is in the final verse which provides an etiology for the naming of the city of Babylon. Without the final verse, the narrative is still complete; however, it certainly follows what is a play on words throughout the text. The Hebrew word “balal” meaning “to confuse” is a word play on “Babel.” In the final verse, the naming of Babylon is said to have been derived due to the confusion of languages that happened there. This would indicate an anti-Babylon perspective, particularly since the etiology is false, for the Akkadian word “Bab-ilani” means the “Gate of the gods” (Rosenberg 1993, 18).

J’s work likely involved the gathering of several sources and additions of her or his own work; however, it is one of the more symmetrically structured and complete narratives of Genesis. The narrative appears to have two equal parts: the first part tells of the words and actions of humanity, and the second part gives God’s words and actions in response to humanity. Such a structure would indicate that the writer was not interested in the interaction between humanity and God, but rather to explain how a present situation came to be. The parallels in language as seen in v.1 and v.9 and also in the repetition of
the phrase “Come, let us” (vv. 3, 4, 7) help support this (Brueggeman 1984, 98).

Other word repetitions give insight into the meaning of the text. The first notable set of repetitions (vv. 1, 4, 8, 9) is of the phrase “all the earth” or “the whole earth.” Emphasis on these phrases implies that the narrator is speaking about all of humanity and not one particular group. The story is an attempt to explain a universal phenomenon. Second, the word “language” is repeated four times (vv. 1, 6, 7, 9). One phenomenon that is being explained is the confusion of languages. God confused the languages of the people in response to the behavior of humanity, which is explained further by the next set of repetitions. The word “scattered” is repeated three times (vv. 4, 8, 9). Brueggeman notes that the word “scatter” is not necessarily a negative word that denotes exile or a form of punishment, rather it is a word of fear. The people feared being scattered and so they strove for a unity that was self-serving (v. 4). God’s response to “scatter” them is not an action of punishment, but an action that responds to the people’s fear of losing a form of unity that does not serve God but only themselves (Brueggeman 1984, 99).

Therefore, through the repetitions of certain words and phrases, the intent of the text is more clear; it is a text about all humanity to explain the confusion of languages and the dispersion of people.

Because of the development of the narrative as constructed by J, the Tower of Babel can serve as an independent story; however, the narrative’s placement within the larger context of the Bible also provides further insight into the purpose of the text. P, the final redactor, placed the Tower of Babel story directly after the Table of Nations (Gen 10:1-32). To a certain degree this causes an incongruity. At the end of the table of
nations, the people have already been dispersed throughout the world (Gen 10:32). The beginning of the Tower of Babel story has the people wandering together and speaking one language. Likewise, the city of Babylon already exists in the Table of Nations (Gen 10:10). For these reasons, the two narratives cannot be read as if they are in chronological order; however, they must be read together. The Tower of Babel story is set to explain the dispersion that is accounted for in the Table of Nations. What must be noted, in this case, is that the dispersion that occurs at the end of the Table of nations is not regarded in a negative way (Rad 1972, 152).

The placement of the Tower of Babel narrative also must provide a bridge or segue between primeval history and the accounts of Abraham. Interestingly, a genealogy not only precedes the Tower of Babel narrative but one follows it also. Likewise, in the call of Abraham (Gen 12:1-4), another J text, God blesses “all the families of the earth.” Being placed between two sets of genealogies and followed by a blessing of families, it appears that the Tower of Babel narrative is used to explain the many peoples that existed at the time, and that this was God’s intention.

God’s reason for confusing the languages and dispersing the people should also be examined in light of the larger context of primeval history. Walter Brueggeman argues that the desire of humanity to create self-serving unity is in direct opposition to God’s call to “fill the earth” (Gen 1:28). God’s actions were in response to God’s call being denied (Brueggeman 1984, 98). This argument can be support for either the belief that God’s action to disperse the people was a punishment on humanity, or for the belief that God’s action was a re-direction of the people and a new call. In attempting to understand God’s
action, there are serious theological implications that should be discussed.

Theological Themes

The Tower of Babel narrative has long been regarded as a typical sin-punishment story. In other words, it is a story that tells of the sinful behaviors of humanity and the subsequent response of God which is a punishment for the sin. Such stories are prevalent in primeval history and are used to explain why something is the way it is that cannot be explained by any other reason. Examples in the primeval history of Genesis include the Fall of humanity (Gen 3), the story of Cain and Abel (Gen 4:1-16) and the account of the Flood. In each of these stories, God responded to the actions of humanity by cursing them. Such a theology depicts God as vengeful and angry. In the Tower of Babel narrative, God is not depicted in the same manner.

Gerhard von Rad argued that the Tower of Babel was the climax of primeval history and the sin-punishment saga. Much of his argument is summed up in the following statement:

The Yahwistic narrator has told the story of God and man from the time mankind began, and this story is characterized on the human side by an increase in sin to avalanche proportions. The sins of Adam and Eve, Cain, Lamech, the angel marriages, the Tower of Babel – these are stages along the way which has separated man farther and farther from God. This succession of narratives, therefore, points out a continually widening chasm between man and God. But God reacts to these outbreaks of human sin with severe judgments. The punishment of Adam and Eve was severe; severer still was Cain’s. The final judgment was the Dispersion, the dissolution of mankind’s unity.

Von Rad also saw God’s act of grace following each punishment. However, von Rad is quite certain that the act of confusing the languages and dispersing humanity is a
There is little doubt that J’s earlier stories of primeval history do follow the sin-punishment outline that von Rad speaks of. In each circumstance, God’s actions upon humanity are described as a “curse” (Gen 3:17, 4:11, 8:21). The Tower of Babel story never mentions the word “curse”, nor are the actions of humanity ever described as wicked or sinful. Likewise, the story follows the Table of Nations in which the dispersion of humanity appears to hold no negative connotation.

Bernhard Anderson explores the possibility of seeing the Tower of Babel story in a different light. He states, “One thing is clear: when the Babel story is read in its literary context there is no basis for the negative view that pluralism is God’s judgment upon human sinfulness…the Babel story has profound significance for a biblical theology of pluralism (Anderson 1977, 68).” Several reasons support this theory. One, any sin that humanity may have committed is not explicitly stated in the passage. Two, the story of Creation by J accounts for great plurality and diversity of life through the acts of God. Three, in the narrative humanity is attempting to achieve unity; God is attempting to diversify humanity (64). There is little question that in the overall context of the Bible, that God’s will is for humanity to be united. What appears to be the conflict in the narrative is how humanity is seeking unity. God is not punishing humanity, rather God is re-directing humanity to seek unity in diversity.

Conclusion

We live in a multi-cultural society in a multi-faceted world. Each day we recognize the gifts of God’s creation. Likewise, we are grateful for the great diversity of
life that transforms the world. However, we are also aware that our diversity creates barriers. Our striving for unity is impeded upon when we must relate with people who are different from us.

To be confronted with difference is frightening. It is a challenge. The people of Babel were frightened by the possibility of being scattered and not being unified in their sameness. God did not punish them because they sought safety amongst themselves. God challenged them to find a greater unity that recognized all of God’s creation. Similarly, Jesus challenged us with the commandment to love our neighbors as ourselves. This is not always easy. And frankly, I sometimes feel I cannot love my neighbor who comes from a different culture, who has different values and who may not even speak the same language. It is difficult, but that does not make it a punishment. God’s decision to create great diversity among humanity is difficult for us, but that does not make it a punishment either.

Multi-culturalism – the diversity of humanity – involves conflict, danger, frustration, hatred, and vulnerability. Encountering multi-culturalism involves the opportunity to know God and all of God’s creation. Just as the people who gathered in Babel out of fear, we too isolate ourselves in our four-block neighborhoods and high-rise apartment buildings. Our diversity threatens our security. But, just like the people who gathered in Babel, we are called not to scatter ourselves but to unify ourselves. We are called to love all of God’s people.
Reference List


