With that, I smiled through tears and made my way to the truck for the trip home; with this story already forming in my mind.

Until his death, Daddy always referred to the 410 as "Baby's gun". How remarkable that Steve Tarpley recognized her on sight and by name.

As always,
Linda~

P. S. Happy Father Day, Daddy!

Biographical Sketch:

Linda G. (Brown) English is a native of Prescott, Arkansas. She taught for twelve (12) years within the public schools of southwest Arkansas prior to returning to her alma mater, Henderson State University (in 2001) to teach. Currently, Linda is Professor of Counselor Education in the Teachers College of her "beloved Henderson".

Linda has been published in numerous regional, state and national publications, both professional journals and socio-cultural venues to include: *The Old Time Chronicle,* the *Journal of Poetry Therapy* and *Tales from the South*.

Linda lives in the farmhouse; which is the setting for many of her stories; with Buford and Babe, her silver-point tabby and black Labrador retriever, respectively.

What Do We Mean by the Christian Bible?
The Historical Process of the Formation of Christian Scripture and the Various Bibles across Christianity

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Abstract

From the inception of the Jesus movement, within Second Temple Judaism, to its break with its parent religion, Judaism, Christianity would inevitably distinguish itself by not only reading the texts of ancient Israel differently than their fellow Jews, but also by formulating its own scriptures- the New Testament. This paper briefly discusses the historical process that brought about the sacred text of Christianity from the writing of these texts, to the collection of these writings, to the eventual closing of the canon of Christian Scripture. The paper, however, will suggest that the text of the Christian Scripture has never truly been closed as various Christian

traditions accept differing collections of writings as sacred. This suggests that as the Christian faith further evolves, the shape of the Bible may not remain the same.

What Do We Mean by the Christian Bible?

The French Enlightenment philosopher Voltaire (1694-1778) once stated, "Another century and there will not be a Bible on earth." He was wrong. The Bible has had a long and rich history in Western society, and, despite Voltaire's quip about its demise, the Bible continues to bring many people comfort in times of sorrow, distress, and confusion and its stories have spoken to the hearts of believers for generations. Yet, the Bible is also often misunderstood, as many folks who read the Bible with great sincerity and faith are not familiar with the many critical issues surrounding its origin and some of the historical transformations the Bible has incurred.

This essay will focus on the beginnings of the writings we call the New Testament and will address the subsequent copying, sharing, and compiling of these texts as an historical process toward the closing of the New Testament. This essay will also briefly address the issue over the different "canons" of Scripture across the Western Church that adds to the difficulty of identifying a set Bible within Christianity.

When considering the canonization of the New Testament, that is, how the collection of certain books became the sacred text of Scripture, we must also seriously consider the historical, and therefore, human process of the formation of the Bible in its final form. Though some would like to believe that the Bible fell from heaven, in King James English, wrapped in nicely bound leather, with the words of Jesus in red, this is simply not the case. The history behind the writing, copying, and compiling of the books of the Bible is much more complicated, but certainly much more interesting.

The word "canon" has its etymology in the Latin word *canon/canonis* which means the measuring line or rule. It can also mean the standard. Thus, when we speak of the "canon of Scripture," we are speaking about the books that were recognized as the standard, the rule, or the measure of authority for faith. The canon is what is acknowledged as sacred text.

It was inevitable that Christianity would become a religion with a sacred text. Early believers in Jesus remained solidly Jewish and thus they continued to read Israel's ancient books. Yet, in difference to their fellow Jews, who did not believe Jesus to be the Messiah, they not only read these ancient texts in light of their experience of Jesus as the fulfillment of the promise of the coming of the Messiah, they also began to develop their own set of texts, some of which would eventually become the New Testament.[1] This was an historical process that involved human

[1] For a discussion of how early Jewish followers of Jesus reinterpreted their Hebrew Scriptures, see Donald Juel, *Messianic Exegesis: Christological Interpretation of the Old Testament in Early Christianity* (Fortress Press, 1988).

decisions that would result in some books being included in the canon, while other books would be left out.

Over the period of time between the life of Jesus and what we should cautiously refer to as the "closing" of the New Testament canon, texts were written, copied, and passed from church to church. Because of the intrinsic flux to such an historical process, we cannot say with any degree of certainty that what would eventually become known as the New Testament was acknowledged by these early Christians. Indeed, for centuries there was no such thing as a New Testament in the shape we know it today. What would eventually become the New Testament was a long historical process.

Step one of this progression was the writing of texts in response to what early followers of Jesus believed about him. In their experience of Jesus, they believed they were experiencing something new from God; a new revelation that would lead them to formulate stories to tell to others, first in oral tradition and then in written form. They believed they need a sacred text that not only told of God's new work in Jesus, but that also was seen as a fulfillment of God's previous promises laid out in the Hebrew Bible.

The impetus to write these new texts was also caused by the needs of Christian communities that developed after the death of Jesus. Scholars have long known that the epistles we find in the New Testament were written to address problems in certain Christian churches. One only has to read Paul's letters to see that the apostle was writing to answer questions and address problems that existed among churches he himself had established. Instead of traveling to these churches to address these situations in person, Paul wrote letters to them. Thus his letters do not originate in a vacuum, but because of the need to offer answers to certain issues.

Scholars have also argued that the Gospels show signs of addressing community situations. For example, many scholars have argued that the Gospel of Mark was written to a community that was perhaps facing persecution, the community to which Matthew was writing was probably very Jewish, and John may have written to combat the influence of Gnosticism. Indeed, it is very likely that the needs of the community may have shaped the way the Gospels' authors used the traditions about Jesus to shape their individual narratives about Jesus.

If these texts were written to specific communities that existed in the early decades of the Jesus movement, then the immediate subsequent step in the process of these texts becoming canon must have been the reading of texts in worship. If Paul's letters, written earlier than the Gospels, were written to address problems in the churches to which he was writing, then we can logically argue that his letters were being read in these congregations. Moreover, the Gospels, with Mark being the first one to be written in the late 60's or early 70's of the Common Era, give evidence that they were addressed to particular Christian communities, which would mean that they were read in these churches. Indeed, in Mark 13:14, the author offers direction to the one who publicly reads to the congregation with the statement, "Let the reader understand." This was most likely not addressed to one who read in private, but rather to the orator who presented the Gospel to the congregation gathered for worship. The cautionary statement was meant to inform the reader to carefully handle this important part of the text.

While we can pick up a Bible at the local bookstore, or even better, access the text via the Internet or a smart phone app, the ancient world relied heavily on the oratory reading of texts. We might add that such public reading from one voice was in itself a practice in interpretation, for the voice's inflection and stress on certain words or phrases could alter meaning in the hearing of the audience.[2] Yet, the important thing to remember here is that the public reading of these texts, in the context of worship, would have led to the piece of literature to be viewed as authoritative Scripture, growing out of the Jewish practice of reading Scripture publicly and Jesus' own act of reading from the prophet Isaiah in the synagogue in Luke 4:16-19.[3]

If it is the case that those texts that were publicly read in the context of worship in specific churches were then being viewed as sacred texts, then we can assume that such a high view of these writings could have led to other churches wanting to hear these texts. This would lead not only to the copying of these texts, but also to their dispersal to various Christian communities. Churches would swap texts with other churches, as is suggested by the writer of Colossians who commands, "And when this letter has been read among you, have it read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and see that you read also the letter from Laodicea." (Col. 4:15).

What would the effect of public reading and sharing of texts have on the status of these written documents? Perhaps certain texts would become more meaningful for certain groups of people. In other words, certain books would perhaps be more important than other books, much like Christians today have favorite verses or favorite books. This might be particularly true as Christianity spread into various geographical areas of the Roman Empire where it would intersect local ideas and philosophies. Consequently, it is conceivable that the public reading and the sharing of writings with other churches led to some books becoming authoritative for some churches, while other books would not be viewed as Scripture by these churches. Some Christian communities may favor some texts, while other Christian communities would favor different texts, but there would be those texts that were important to most communities.

We must also consider that in this process other texts would come on the scene and become important for certain Christian communities. As Christianity spread away from its Jewish center in Palestine, Christian texts would become more diverse. Other early Christian writings, such as the texts found in the Nag Hammadi Library, would be written that would be important to various Christian communities.[4] This diversity may have been so widespread that it would have been impossible for wide-ranging agreement on the Christian canon to take place across the vastness of the Roman Empire.

Indeed, books such as Hebrews and 2 Peter, which were not necessarily viewed as Scripture by many churches, would become part of the New Testament. Other writings, such as 1 and 2

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[2] Whitney Shiner, *Proclaiming the Gospel: First-Century Performance of Mark* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2003)
[3] On public reading in the first century synagogue, see Lee I. Levine, The Ancient Synagogue: The First Thousand Years (Yale University Press, 2005), pp. 145-155.
[4] James M. Robinson, ed. The Nag Hammadi Library. Rev. Ed. (Leiden, The Netherlands: E.J. Brill, 1988).

Clement and the Shepherd of Hermas, were viewed as Scripture by many churches, and yet they would not be included in the books of the Christian Bible.

While there were always those on the fringe of the emerging orthodoxy of the earliest Christianity, the popularity of the teachings of an eastern bishop named Marcion of Sinope (85-160 C.E) presented a significant threat to the church authorities. Marcion, it seems, offered the first significant attempt to form a canon of Scripture for the church. However, Marcion excluded the Hebrew Bible or Old Testament and included in his scriptures only ten letters of Paul and a particular version of Luke, free of any references to Jesus' Jewish heritage.[5]

Marcion's influence was significant enough to gather a large following as well as the attention of church authorities. Even though he was excommunicated by the Roman church in 144 C.E., he established churches that would rival the Western Church for two centuries. The popularity of his teachings, even long after his death, as well as the beliefs of other communities deemed unorthodox, convinced church leaders that a defined canon of Scripture needed to be finalized. This would be the only way to root out potential challenges to what church authorities considered orthodoxy.

What evidence we do have of a list of writings that could be considered as an early canon of the New Testament is found in the Muratorian Fragment, a Latin text named after its discoverer and editor, L. A. Muratori in the 18th century.[6] The Muratorian Fragment, which some date as early as the late second century, although there are those who question this early dating, is a fragment, and thus some of what was original to it is lost. Moreover, we are not aware of what its place may have been in a larger text.

However, what seems to be valuable about this text is that it does offer some, though not overwhelming evidence of an agreed upon collection of early Christian writings as a "canon". The list contained in the fragment includes twenty-two books, most of which would eventually make up the New Testament. While the books listed do not include the Gospels of Matthew and Mark, the list does begin by calling Luke the third Gospel, which gives evidence that Matthew and Mark were most likely part of the original list, but damage to the text prevents certainty. John is called the fourth Gospel.

What is interesting about the fragment is that it includes the Wisdom of Solomon, the Apocalypse of Peter, and the Shepherd of Hermas, but it leaves out Hebrews, 1 and 2 Peter, James, and 3 John. The Wisdom of Solomon and the Shepherd of Hermas were both popular books, even Scripture to some churches of this early period. Indeed, the popularity of the Wisdom is evidenced by its inclusion in the Apocrypha. The Apocalypse of Peter is a second

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[5] For a classic treatment of Marcion's influence, see Adolf Harnack, *Marcion: The Gospel of the Alien God*. Trans. John E. Steely and Lyle D. Bierma. Labyrinth Press, 1990. A more recent study has been done by Sebastian Moll, *The Arch-Heretic Marcion* (WUNT 250; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010).

[6] For information on the Muratorian Fragment see Bruce Metzger's *The Canon of the New Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), pp. 191-201. A translation of this text can also be found at http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/muratorian-latin.html.

century writing that describes heaven and hell, and it should be noted that though this writing is included in the list, it includes the comment, "though some are not willing that the latter be read in church". Of course, those books that are not listed in the fragment, Hebrews, 1 and 2 Peter, James, and 3 John, would eventually become part of the canon of the New Testament, while the Wisdom of Solomon, the Apocalypse of Peter, and the Shepherd of Hermas would not be included the final canon of the New Testament.

While the Muratorian Fragment is certainly important in giving us evidence of an early canon being worked out, particularly in reaction to those deemed heretics like Marcion, it still does not offer overwhelming evidence concerning the twenty-seven books that comprise the New Testament. Rather, what it might suggest is that various Christian communities held their own canons as authoritative. But for many church authorities, this kind of pluralism would not do. Thus, they sought to bolster what they determined as orthodox through the closing of the Bible.

At this point in the discussion, it might be helpful to note that as early as the second century of the Common Era, Christians began to utilize the codex over the scroll. While Greek texts outside of Christian writings overwhelmingly continued to use the scroll, Christians favored codices. The preference for the codex might have various explanations, but one plausible reason for preferring the book form, as opposed to the scroll, was the ability to include additional writings into one collection. Scrolls were generally seven to ten meters in length, which meant that longer writings could take up a full scroll. The codex, however, took the shape of our modern book, and other texts could be added, which, of course, was an extra convenience. Indeed, evidence demonstrates that as early as the second century, and perhaps even at the close of the first century, there existed collections of the letters of Paul, one of those coming from Marcion.[7] This offers further evidence that the intentions of early Christians were to collect their writings into a canon of Scripture.

A significant step toward the establishment of a canon of Scripture comes from Eusebius, Bishop of Caesarea (ca. 260-341). In reference to the Hebrew Scriptures, Eusebius calls them "the canonical Scriptures of the Old Testament, undisputed among the Hebrews", a statement in direct opposition to the anti-Hebrew view of Marcion. Eusebius' list of what he calls the writings of the New Testament is found within his history of the church, probably completed between 323 and early 325 C.E. In his *Ecclesiastical History,* Eusebius places books in three different categories: *homolegumena*, those books that were accepted; *antilogomena*, writings that are disputed, but nevertheless accepted by some churches; and those books that were rejected due to non-apostolic authorship or theological heresy.

Among those accepted, Eusebius includes the four Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, fourteen epistles he attributes to Paul, probably including Hebrews, although it is highly doubtful that Paul wrote Hebrews and very debatable among scholars if Paul wrote some of the other letters attributed to him. Eusebius also includes the first epistles of John and Peter and the Apocalypse

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[7] On this see Harry Gamble, *Books and Readers in the Early Church* (Yale University Press, 1997), pp. 42-81 and Larry Hurtado, *The Earliest Christian Artifacts: Manuscripts and Christian Origins*, (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.), pp. 43-94.

of John, or what is commonly referred to as the book of Revelation. Eusebius does seem to mention that the Apocalypse of John is rejected by some, but nevertheless he includes this apocalyptic writing in his list of New Testament books.

In his list of those disputed books, that is, those books accepted by portions of the church, but not universally accepted, Eusebius places James, Jude, 2 Peter, and 2 & 3 John, all of which would become part of the New Testament. His list of rejected books includes the Acts of Paul, the Shepherd of Hermas, the Apocalypse of Peter, the Epistle of Barnabas, and the Teachings of the Apostles, also known as the Didache.[8] Recall that two of these, the Shepherd of Hermas and the Apocalypse of Peter, are found in the Muratorian collection.

It was not until 367 C.E. that a list of the twenty-seven books was affirmed as the canon of the New Testament. This canonical list appears in a letter written by Bishop Athanasius of Alexandria (296-373) to the churches for the purpose of setting the date for Easter. In his Festal Letter, Athanasius calls those twenty-seven books "the Scriptures of the New Testament" and the "springs of salvation." His list, however, does not include those books considered heretical by the church, as well as some books that were popular even among orthodox Christians; although he does call the latter books "reading-matter" to be used for instruction in piety. Only fifteen years after Athanasius letter, Pope Damascus I commissioned St. Jerome to translate the Bible into Latin into what would be known as the Latin Vulgate, the official Bible of the Medieval Church.

We should recall, that by the time of Athanasius's letter, the Council at Nicaea (325 C.E.), at which Athanasius plays a significant role against the Arians, had already defined what orthodoxy would be, and thus teachings outside of their definition would be regarded as heretical. This does not mean that the orthodox view did not exist before Emperor Constantine, who called the council, for there is clear evidence that early monotheistic Jewish followers of Jesus were ascribing to him things reserved for God, and there is clearly evidence of an orthodoxy forming.[9]

What Nicaea did was define, in Greek philosophical terms, what orthodoxy would be and what heresy would be, thus shutting out various factions of Christians, most significantly those followers of Arius. Hence, what appears to be the final step in closing the canon of Scripture was a move brought on by Constantine's gift of power to the church at Nicaea, opening the way for church authorities to determine what went into the sacred text of Christianity. Thus, the canon of the New Testament was "closed".[10]

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[8] Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History,* Book III, Chapter XXV. Philip Schaff, Translator. http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf201.iii.viii.xxv.html#fna_iii.viii.xxv-p14.1

[9] See Larry W. Hurtado, *One Lord, One God: Early Christian Devotion and Ancient Jewish Monotheism* (T & T Clark, 2003) and Larry W. Hurtado, *How on Earth Did Jesus Become a God: Historical Questions about Early Devotion to Jesus* (Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2005)

[10] In a letter written to Exuperius, Bishop of Toulouse, in 405 C.E., Pope Innocent I lists the books of the New Testament and attributes fourteen letters to Paul. While the book of Hebrews is not specifically mentioned, Innocent may have included Hebrews as a part of the Pauline Corpus. However, some scholars have argued that

We must be careful, however, when we speak about what we refer to as the canon of Scripture. Various traditions within the Christian faith differ in the books accepted as holy writ. Indeed, throughout the history of the church, the canon of Scripture has been debated and has never really been conclusively settled except within each specific tradition.

Space prevents an extensive discussion of the differences between canons across the spectrum of Christianity, as one could write a lengthy book on the topic. But to raise the significance of the question over the canon of Scripture, I will mostly concentrate on the variations between the Roman Catholic and Protestant Bibles. However, we should be aware that churches in the Eastern Church also differ in what they view as canonical.

For example, early in its history, the Syrian Church accepted, as Scripture, a writing known as the *Diatessaron*, an amalgamation of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John into one produced by Tatian in the late second century. They also accepted fourteen letters associated with Paul, including a third letter to the Corinthians as part of their canon. Later, this tradition would accept the four Gospels, along with the Pauline corpus, but they rejected II Peter, II and III John, Jude, and Revelation.

The Ethiopian Church, which has existed since the early centuries of Christianity, recognizes forty-six books as the books of the Old Testament and thirty-five writings as their New Testament, which includes the twenty-seven traditional books as well as eight additional writings not found in other Christian canons.

The Eastern Orthodox Church, which split from the Roman Church in 1054 over various controversies, but most notably over the *Filioque* Controversy, also has a different canon of Scripture. While the Orthodox Church agrees with many of the books found in the Roman Church's canon, the Orthodox Bible contains four additional books, 1 Esdras, 3 and 4 Maccabees, Prayer of Manasseh, as well as Psalm 151, a chapter of the Psalms not included in either the Roman Catholic Canon or the Protestant Bible. The Orthodox Bible contains five more books that the Roman Bible, but this is because the Letter of Jeremiah is separated from Baruch. In the Roman Bible, Baruch and the Letter of Jeremiah are placed together.

These examples may be insignificant to many of us, for many Western Christians may be unaware that these other Christian traditions even exist. But these examples should raise questions concerning who determines the scope of the Christian canon. Yet, even in the history of the Western Church, there exist significant differences between two canons of Scripture; one affirmed by the Roman Catholic and the other by Protestants.

The Roman Catholic Old Testament follows what is known as the Alexandrian Canon, which is associated with the Septuagint, an ancient Greek version of the Hebrew Bible.[11] This canon

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the best copies of the letter attribute thirteen letters to Paul, which would have excluded Hebrews. If this is correct, it suggests that even in the 5th century some doubted the canonicity of Hebrews. See F.F. Bruce, *The Canon of Scripture* (Intervarsity Press, 1996), p. 234.

[11] The name, "Septuagint" refers to the Greek translations of the Hebrew texts of the Hebrew Bible, mainly the first five books. The name comes from the Latin *septuaginta*, meaning 70, because tradition states that the

consists not only of books accepted by Protestants, called *protocanonical* by Roman Catholics, but also additional books known by Roman Catholics as *deuterocanonical*: Tobit, Judith, Wisdom, Sirach, Baruch and 1 and 2 Maccabees. Protestants do not accept these additional books as canonical and refer to them as *apocryphal*.

The Roman Church affirmed its canon long before the birth of Protestantism, and reaffirmed it at the Council of Trent in 1546, and in more recent history at Vatican Councils I (1870) and II (1960s). Yet, Protestants deny this canon and only recognize the shorter number of books. What brought about the difference between the canons of these two Christian traditions? The answer lies in the historical impact of the Renaissance and the theological divergence of the Protestant movement from Rome.

The Renaissance brought about the practice of reading ancient texts in their original languages. Indeed, the influence of the Renaissance's delight with classical languages can be seen in Erasmus' first production of a Greek New Testament, printed in 1516. The 1550 publication of the Greek New Testament, still largely the work of Erasmus, came to be known as the *textus receptus*, the source for the King James Version of the New Testament, printed in 1611. Such an emphasis on the classical languages led Protestant Reformers also to read the Old Testament in Hebrew, not Latin, thus favoring the Palestinian Canon of the Hebrew Bible, instead of the Alexandrian Canon or the Septuagint. The Palestinian Canon, the name given to the Old Testament that is written in Hebrew, not Greek, and contains the thirty-nine books of the Protestant Old Testament, known as the *Tanakh* of Judaism.

The most significant reasons for excluding these *deuterocanonical* or *apocryphal* books, however, were theological. Most Reformers attacked central theological teachings of the Roman Church, such as purgatory, and so they dismissed certain books as teaching such false doctrines. From the position of attacking these doctrines, they then determined that these books were not divinely inspired, and thus they should not be considered Scripture. Again, it seems reasonably clear that theological positions led to what books would be included in the canon and which ones would be left out.

However, although some Protestant leaders, including Luther, refused to see these books as canonical, they did include the *deuterocanonical* or *apocryphal* books in their translations of the Bible, designating them as useful for devotional reading. Even the Authorized Version of 1611, better known as the King James Version, included these books and placed them between the Old and New Testaments.

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translation was done by 72 scholars in 72 days. The dating of the Septuagint ranges from 300-200 B.C.E. While the reasons for the translation of the Hebrew Scriptures are debated, it does seem that the Greek translations became popular among the Alexandrian Jews, who spoke Greek. The *Letter of Aristeas,* which dates anywhere from the 3rd to 1st century B.C.E., states that Ptolemy II, ruler of Egypt from 285 to 246 BCE, desired a Greek translation of the Jewish law for the library at Alexandria. However, modern scholars doubt the authenticity of the letter (See Bruce Metzger, *The Bible in Translation: Ancient and English Versions* (Baker Academic, 2001), pp. 13-20). The significance of the Septuagint can also be seen in some of Paul's letters when he quotes from the Septuagint instead of the Hebrew text.

In 1646, however, the Westminster Confession of Faith declared these books as non-canonical in the Protestant Church stating, “The books commonly called Apocrypha, not being of divine inspiration, are no part of the canon of the Scripture, and therefore are of no authority in the Church of God, nor to be any otherwise approved, or made use of, than other human writing.”[12] Eventually these books would be omitted from Bibles published by Protestant Bible Societies, forever sealing the fate of these books in the Protestant tradition.

It should also be mentioned that some Reformers, most notably Martin Luther, also questioned some of the New Testament books. Luther doubted the canonicity of Hebrews, James, Jude, and Revelation, placing these four at the back of his 1522 German New Testament, stating in his preface to Hebrews, "Up to this point we have had to do with the true and certain chief books of the New Testament. The four which follow have from ancient times had a different reputation." Erasmus, upon whom Luther relied for his Greek text, also doubted the authority of these four as canon. But Luther was particularly troubled by the Epistle of James. He found James to be “an epistle of straw with no character of the Gospel in it,” for James clearly states that a person is justified by works, thus challenging Luther’s doctrine of salvation, which emphasized *sola fide*, salvation by faith alone, apart from works. Thus, even after eleven and a half centuries, the makeup of New Testament was still being disputed.

This historical process demonstrates that as Christianity developed some Christian groups, in response to what they believed about God, and specifically what they believed about Jesus, and in reaction to opposing views from other Christian groups, made decisions about what would be called the Christian Bible. Moreover looking back on the history of the canonization of the Bible, as well as the changes it has undergone, raises certain questions about the range of the canon of Scripture, about who determines what the Bible is and says, and to what extent the scriptures serve as the basis for Christian faith and living.

In her book, *The Great Emergence,* religious historian and author Phyllis Tickle uses the image of a rummage sale, as her overarching metaphor, to describe what happens to the church about every 500 years. By using this metaphor, Tickle suggests that about every half-century or so Christianity undergoes a major renovation in which the old is taken out and the new takes its place, to some extent. While she may be a tad off in her calculations, we can at least suggest some significant historical markers that fit her thesis.

In the late fourth century, under Emperor Theodosius I (379-395), Christianity became the only official religion of the Empire. In 1054, the Great Schism that split the Roman Church and the Orthodox Church took place. Then, in 1517, Luther started the Protestant Reformation in Wittenberg. We are almost 500 years from what historians generally mark as the start of the Reformation. Who knows what may happen within Christianity and how this might affect the shape of the Christian Bible, or if not the actual shape, certainly how Christians view the Bible.

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[12] http://www.reformed.org/documents/wcf_with_proofs/

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Biographical Sketch

Dr. C. Drew Smith is the director of the Center for International Programs at Henderson State University, where he also teaches courses in philosophy and world religions. He earned his Ph.D. in Early Christianity at the University of Edinburgh, Scotland. He has presented and published research in the area of early Christian studies, primarily focusing on the literary nature of early Christian literature and how this literature constructs social formation. He has also presented lectures on the interconnections and interrelationships between the Abrahamic faiths of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, and he has organized and moderated inter-religious panel discussions.

The Art of Sincerity

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Abstract: This paper explains some constraints that, due to certain policies, may affect and limit the idealism of the young actor or musician when joining the ranks of professionals in a union. In addition, as in the case of the visual artist, where there is no professional union, I discuss how various rules and regulations may demand compromise. I discuss how the compromise can either "make or break" the artistic opportunity. This research endeavor contains examples of how various actors, musicians, and visual artists have dealt with compromise. I argue that those who were successful, in spite of their acceptance of compromise, were so because of their ability and willingness to execute their art with sincerity.

The Art of Sincerity

A student entering any field of professional art soon discovers that his or her ideals, goals, and artistic freedoms are often met with rules and regulations from unions, directors, fellow artists, record companies, patron censorship, galleries, etc. Especially when entering into any professional artistic society, the young artist will definitely confront the need to compromise these ideals, goals, and artistic freedoms in order to survive. The accepted compromise may hinder or enhance the artist's final product.

It is my belief that most young professional artists can mediate between their own idealism and the typical hegemonic set of rules that are prevalent in the artistic world by executing their art with sincerity.

This paper will explain some constraints that, due to certain policies, may affect and limit the idealism of the young actor or musician when joining the ranks of professionals in a union. In addition, as in the case of the visual artist, where there is no professional union, I will discuss how various rules and regulations may demand compromise. I will show how the compromise can either "make or break" the artistic opportunity. This research endeavor contains examples of how various actors, musicians, and visual artists have dealt with