



John Dickson

10 July at 14:45 · Sydney ·

"The strongest sounding arguments can sometimes be the weakest" - my penultimate response to [Matthias Media](#)'s critique of the case for women preaching sermons. <http://bit.ly/TUbjKU>

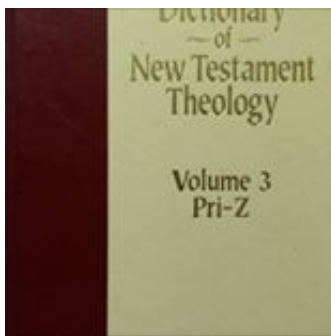
From the Introduction:

A good friend has been reading the new Matthias Media book critiquing my case for women preaching in church. He sheepishly told me recently that he found one of the book's criticisms particularly persuasive. He wondered if I had an answer.

My friend had come across a section of Women, Sermons and the Bible (WSB) that roundly discredits one of the scholars I quote in support of my argument that "teaching" in the Pastoral Epistles (1 and 2 Timothy, and Titus) refers to carefully transmitting the apostolic traditions (not biblical teaching in general). WSB claims that this scholar's work is unreliable: not only does it have a "liberal" agenda, it is so "questionable" that the editor of the volume in which this scholar's research appears felt it necessary to insert an editorial comment into the article alerting readers to how controversial his views really are and directing readers to an article that contradicted him. Based on what he read in WSB, my friend was right to feel concerned. When I first read it, I too was worried.

But things are not as they seem. There is no courteous way to say this: Matthias Media has created an entirely false argument. This is not a matter of perspective. Nor is it a marginal case. WSB has misrepresented things in a very unfortunate way. And I believe the editors of the book owe their readers an explanation.

And, yet, I have a problem before me. Offering arbitrary criticism is easy. Disentangling fact from fiction in response to such criticism requires a slow and laborious itemization of the facts. I apologise to readers up front, then, for the long and multifaceted account below. I can only say I am confident that those who are willing to stay with me and carefully test the truth of the matter will find what follows both clarifying and somewhat troubling ... <http://bit.ly/TUbjKU>



"The strongest sounding arguments can sometimes be the weakest": Reflection #5 on Matthias...

A good friend has been reading the new Matthias Media book critiquing my case for women...

JOHNDICKSON.ORG

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Jason Hobba, Guerin Tueno and 30 others like this.

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Guerin Tueno A thorough and gracious blog post. Thanks John.

10 July at 15:00 · [Like](#) · 3



Ian Powell After reading the early chapters of WSB, I spent an afternoon at the now briefly disappeared Moore TC Library, checking some of the footnotes etc

It was perhaps my most disturbing few hours in my favorite library. I found that this part of WSB (discussed in JD's blog) was accidentally very misleading, and seemed deeply confused and therefore leaves the trusting reader believing that Non-A is actually A.

The errors seem that clear

What seems at first glance to knock JD's argument out of the park, seems very confused and mistaken and therefore actually does what WSB so often says JD does "misleads" the reader.

Anyone who expresses an opinion on the validity of WSB really needs to read and ponder and interact with this blog piece.

A sad business.

It does seem much more careful editing and review was needed to help prevent accidental errors. This book, WSB, has sadly not helped us check Dickson's argument, and hear God's voice through rightly dividing scripture because it simply gets itself in a terrible muddle at key points. Sigh

10 July at 15:34 · Edited · [Like](#) · 3



Jaime Dickson If that's all true, then it reflects pretty badly on Matthias Media and the authors. [Ian Powell](#), are you willing to publish your findings, having chased up the footnotes?

10 July at 15:39 · Edited · [Like](#) · 2



Andrew Kroiter That's a bit disturbing, [Ian](#).

10 July at 15:47 · [Like](#) · 2



John Dickson Thank you, [Guerin](#). I'm so glad. I've sat on this one for several weeks because I know I am making quite serious claims about MM's poor conduct and I wanted to remove any unfair comments or sense of outrage, leaving only a clear, if bold, statement of the facts. I am sure they will be upset with me but they have no excuse with this one.

10 July at 15:53 · [Like](#) · 3



Ian Powell Hi Jamie I worked for a while on a piece but got stuck trying to show briefly and clearly and Kindly what i had found so far. This blog piece by John shows the major and clearest confusion I had found.

(Though my MTC class'mate Peter Bolts' chapter seems about as deeply confused, to me)

So Jamie, John's blog covers most of the material I was working on and, I hate to say it, better than I could.

10 July at 15:55 · Edited · [Like](#)



Nicholas Cassar Thanks for that post John, appreciate your genuine approach to this in light of the situation.

10 July at 16:09 · [Like](#) · 1



Ian Powell From the evidence of the last weeks, it seems a shame the WSB team are unwilling to engage, in any forum, in what CS Lewis used o call "manly Christian debate" (sorry for the sexism) - or have I missed the discussion? Very likely, but I have looked... (The quote may not be perfect)

10 July at 16:15 · Edited · [Like](#) · 2



Jaime Dickson I recall from Tony Payne's blog, where he criticised John's response to their book, that they would not be saying anymore.

10 July at 16:15 · Edited · [Like](#)



John Dickson Thanks, [Nicholas Cassar](#). I will be interested to see if any keen supporter of Matthias Media will attempt to defend this part of WSB against my criticisms.

10 July at 16:53 · [Like](#)



John Dickson [Ian Powell](#), nor have I noticed any discussion on the Matthias side of things. I suspect they believe they are doing dignified silence.

10 July at 16:54 · [Like](#) · 1



Ian Powell Phil Adams came to a debate with WLCraig at Syd Uni a few years back. He had been treated vey politely etc, but he left half way thru on his second visit, frankly as his "arguments" were being interrogated ... He just didn't turn for 2nd half up It looked poor It was poor.

To pretend that you are up for open discussion and then run away when your case is being reviewed, when you get a chance to learn

and grow in understanding etc is ...
It's not just "we don't do Facebook" it's we don't do discussion,
colloquies. In no forum at all it seems

10 July at 17:04 · [Like](#) · 2



Andy Pearce Quick (but important) question ... Can I ask why the
blog post references Matthias Media as the author and not Claire
Smith?

10 July at 17:11 · [Like](#) · 2



John Dickson I was advised by someone I trust, [Andy Pearce](#), that
it was better to speak of "authors" and "Matthias" rather than direct
these quite serious criticisms at an individual. I took the advice early
on. I've stuck to it. It's a judgment call. Who knows if it's right. You
may notice I use "WSB" as the default and mix it up for style.
In any case, there is certainly a bit of authorial backslapping
throughout the chapters of WSB, so there is definitely a collective
approach in this book. Does that make sense?

10 July at 17:24 · [Like](#) · 1



Andy Pearce Yep but by doing that it makes it all appear a little
political rather than an open, honest debate amongst friends. What
do others think?

Up to you ... it's your blog

10 July at 17:28 · [Like](#) · 1



John Dickson What do you think of this as an idea, [Ian Powell](#)? If
the authors of WSB won't meet for a cheerful debate, perhaps there
are some well informed supporters who know their arguments well
and are willing to make their arguments in a public colloquy.

10 July at 17:29 · [Like](#)



John Dickson Yes, [Andy Pearce](#), I can see that. And, actually, one
of the authors of WSB made a similar point to me recently. I can only
say that my intention was good, and the initial advice I mentioned
came from a solid supporter of Matthias Media.
Do you reckon using "WSB" would be okay?

10 July at 17:33 · [Like](#)



Andy Pearce Still feels an odd way for scholars to interact. Just a
flag. AP

10 July at 17:39 · [Like](#) · 2



Richard Keith It's a choice between two different kinds of
politeness. Positive politeness says, "We are friends. We refer to
each by name. I can criticise you like this, because nothing will stop
us ever being friends." Negative politeness says, "I respect you.
When I criticise you, I will not do so indirectly, because I am afraid of
embarrassing you in front of others." People might complain when
you don't speak to them directly, right up until the moment when you
start to speak to them directly and then they suddenly want you to
stop.

10 July at 17:40 · Edited · [Like](#) · 3



John Dickson Richard Keith, yes!

10 July at 17:42 · [Like](#) · 1



John Dickson [Andy Pearce](#), I am afraid the whole thing is odd! But I take your point. Bit late now. I'll wait and see what others think, and then perhaps I can go back in and edit the blog to use names.

10 July at 17:44 · [Like](#)



Ben Pratt I for one think the negative politeness wiser and more gentle at this point, because whilst those reading the articles will know who is being referenced, it helps keep things removed a step from being personal. I'm sure that there's no personal animosity from either side, it's simply a matter of theological disagreement, handled in a questionable manner due to vested interests.

10 July at 17:45 · [Like](#) · 6



John Dickson [Ben Pratt](#), that's the logic, yes. Thanks.

10 July at 17:46 · [Like](#)



Emma Thornett I am not used to seeing publishers addressed when the arguments of particular authors or books are being critiqued (or even praised). I find it weird. Can't think of a similar situation where I've seen things like "IVP says this" or "the IVP book" etc. I'm used to seeing the author's name (or the authors' names).

10 July at 17:50 · [Like](#) · 3



Emma Thornett (Disclosure: I work at Matthias Media.)

10 July at 17:52 · [Like](#) · 1



John Dickson Yes, it would be weird with other publishers. But Matthias Media is not like other publishers in this regard, [Emma Thornett](#). It is a ministry unit with a powerful editorial agenda.

10 July at 17:54 · [Like](#) · 5



John Dickson And, [Emma Thornett](#), the Editor in Chief is both editor and author in this book. That is weird, too. Weirdness all around, really!
But I would be interested to know if anyone is willing to defend this section of the book.

10 July at 17:58 · [Like](#) · 1



Emma Thornett "But Matthias Media is not like other publishers in this regard, Emma Thornett. It is a ministry unit with a powerful editorial agenda." This seems to suggest that you are addressing me and all the others who work here, in all your WSB posts. I'm interested to hear what you think our powerful editorial agenda is.

10 July at 18:17 · [Like](#)



David Ball Emma - I doubt that John is commenting on all MM staff here....

10 July at 18:32 · [Like](#)



Emma Thornett Agreed, David (and hi!). That's part of the reason I find it so weird. Anyway, I realise it's a bit beside the point of John's latest blog post.

10 July at 18:34 · Edited · [Like](#)



John Dickson I would never have imagined that, [Emma](#), but thanks for the perspective. I'll ponder.

In any case, everyone knows MM's agenda: to promote a form of reformed, evangelical, complementarian, evangelistically zealous Christianity decisively shaped by Phillip Jensen. That's why lovers of MM love MM. It is like no other publisher I've known in the world. Surely I'm just stating the obvious. It's not a criticism. It's just an explanation of why referring to MM as the force behind WSB almost makes sense, despite the weirdness in other respects.

10 July at 18:39 · [Like](#) · 6



Chris Sherlock It does look like MM are on shaky ground.

10 July at 18:41 · [Like](#)



Mike Doyle You just made that up [John](#) ! Can you back up your outrageous claim that this is their agenda? Is this what they claim? Where on earth do you get these ridiculous ideas from?

10 July at 18:47 · Edited · [Like](#) · 1



Chris Sherlock Ummm... What part is made up? The reformed part, the evangelical part, the complementarian part, or their zealousness? Or are you concerned about their views having been shaped by Phillip Jensen?

10 July at 18:50 · Edited · [Like](#) · 1



David Ball Is MD's post tongue-in-cheek, perhaps?

10 July at 18:54 · [Like](#)



Rob Paix Mike, John ridicules ideas or has ridiculous ideas?

10 July at 18:55 · Edited · [Like](#)



Chris Sherlock Can't tell

10 July at 18:55 · [Like](#)



Mike Doyle Hey [John](#) - I found their mission statement - it's on he heir website and quite easy to find:

We want to persuade all Christians of the truth of God's purposes in Jesus Christ as revealed in the Bible, and equip them with high-quality resources, so that by the work of the Holy Spirit they will:

» abandon their lives to the honour and service of Christ in daily holiness and decision-making

» pray constantly in Christ's name for the fruitfulness and growth of his gospel

» speak the Bible's life-changing word whenever and however they can—in the home, in the world and in the fellowship of his people.

10 July at 18:59 · [Like](#)



David Ball Mission statements (being akin to motherhood ones) are a great example of the original quote that started this thread.

10 July at 19:03 · [Like](#)



Mike Doyle To paint them as promoting a "form" of "zealous" Christianity "decisively" shaped by Jensen is not only false and a great disservice to evangelicals around the world, but it works to marginalise and dismiss them.

How about giving them the honour of interacting with who they claim to be?

10 July at 19:08 · [Like](#) · 1



Ben Pratt Pretty hard to interact with someone who won't interact with you Mike. Matthias have so far refused any sort of public discourse or retraction of their book. Additionally, to argue that the Anglican Diocese of Sydney, who are the ones ultimately behind Matthias Media, are not zealous (which isn't a bad thing, we're told to have zeal for the Lord) or decisively shaped by Jensen, would be incorrect.

10 July at 19:13 · [Like](#) · 2



Chris Sherlock So they aren't zealous? I think they would disagree with you. And what's so wrong with Jensen influencing them? Many were tutored and mentored by the man!

In no way has John disparaged them in that comment. He certainly hasn't marginalised them!

10 July at 19:17 · Edited · [Like](#) · 3



David Ball Sounds like a pretty uncontroversial description to me (and John has already made it clear that he doesn't mean it negatively).

10 July at 19:19 · [Like](#) · 3



Craig Schwarze Mike Doyle - I'd be surprised if the board of MM were offended by being called "evangelistically zealous"!! In fact, I think they'd be insulted by the opposite suggestion...

10 July at 19:40 · [Like](#) · 2



Craig Schwarze The part of John's description that doesn't ring true for me is the idea that MM are explicitly trying to promote Phillip Jensen or his theology. That was undoubtedly true in the early of days when Phillip was their founder and primary content creator, but I don't think it's been true for quite a while.

10 July at 19:45 · [Like](#) · 1



Hefin Jones My first impression on reading Wengenast prior to reading either WSB or this rebuttal was that he denied the Pauline authorship of the PE.

10 July at 19:48 · [Like](#)



Ian Powell Mike D I genuinely don't understand what part of John's description of MM you think is either untrue or unpositive? (I work with a team at CBF that is quite obviously cut from the same cloth and we are delighted to be so.)

A year back I was reading an MM blog and put up the query about why MM don't get John to respond on their blog site. I was told friendly but firmly that wasn't going to happen as MM is not just an evangelical publishing team but was positional or credal or

something like that and that this involved a particular understanding of women's ministry and preaching.

I was happy to be educated about a group I had been buying stuff for years (still do) there's nothing at all wrong with them being that and no reason for people not to know - I think

10 July at 19:49 · [Like](#) · 1



Ian Powell Craig John said Shaped by Phillip not promoting Phillip they are quite different realities One seems certainly true the other John doesn't say and I wouldn't have a clue about

10 July at 19:51 · [Like](#) · 2



Mike Doyle Would MM feel that was a fair description of their agenda? I doubt it - and since they clearly provide a description of their agenda, a gracious response is to use their self-description, not make something up

10 July at 20:02 · [Like](#)



Tim Coates A very minor point John, but Morling only has one 'o'.

10 July at 20:06 · [Like](#) · 5



Hefin Jones They don't like sounding like mini-Moore

10 July at 20:06 · [Like](#) · 3



Dominic Steele [John Dickson](#) With respect, I think whoever gave you that advice early on about naming authors and publishers was completely wrong.

I am responsible for what I say on the radio. Writers are responsible for what they write. Yes the station and the publisher also have some responsibility.... but the person who spoke or wrote the words is the primary person who needs to give an answer.

I am sure Claire Smith would not mind being named as the author that you are critiquing. After all she did write the chapter and has her name on it.

This is a disagreement between you and her. She has made a critique, you have put forward an answer. It's now up to her to reply.

That's the main game. I'm looking forward to reading it.... Warmly, Dominic

10 July at 20:07 · [Like](#) · 8



Tim Coates Indeed Hefin. although I'm not going to take the bait and comment about the 'Baptist Club'.

10 July at 20:09 · [Like](#)



Hefin Jones The 'Baptist Club' - tell me more...

10 July at 20:10 · [Like](#)



Craig Schwarze [Ian](#) - I know what you are saying, and John phrased what he said quite carefully. But I don't think it really reflects what the MM Board is about.

10 July at 20:11 · [Like](#)



Ian Powell While enjoying dinner - I thought - Hey why don't we discuss the points in the blog or the post - scary but that is probably more substantial. (I think there are real Good reasons for names or book) let's get back to the meat of the issue

10 July at 20:17 · [Like](#) · 1



Hefin Jones Re-reading Wengenast confirms my impression.

10 July at 20:20 · [Like](#)



Jaime Dickson Mike Doyle, John's simply offering his opinion about MM, which he is entitled to do. And, as one of their best selling authors, having had a long and fruitful partnership with them over many years, he is well qualified to offer an informed opinion. I thought you too quickly and disrespectfully dismissed his opinion. Let's aim for a kinder, more respectful conversation.

10 July at 20:23 · Edited · [Like](#) · 3



Hefin Jones One example - a proper list will have to wait for after the dinner, dishes, putting bub to bed sequence:

"(c) The Gospels and Paul, with their limited use of didaskalia (6 times only) form a contrast with the Pastoral Epistles, where it occurs no less than 15 times."

10 July at 20:22 · Edited · [Like](#)



Tim Coates I don't want to take this off topic Hefin (I think I have already though). The 'Baptist Club' is like the 'Anglican Club' except they have different rules to allow you to join.

10 July at 20:23 · [Like](#) · 1



Jaime Dickson By the way, John, I agree with [Dominic](#) above.

10 July at 20:25 · [Like](#)



Hefin Jones As Baptist pastor I don't think I've been asked

10 July at 20:26 · [Like](#) · 1



Tim Harris Good work John - scholarly, and carefully expressed. I appreciate your efforts to make your response less personal, and it is true that the editors need to take responsibility for the volume as a whole, and it is also true that the editors point to the chapter in view a number of times as the centrepiece of the argument. I am not especially familiar with Wegenast's article (I may have read it at some point), but my first response on reading your main contentions was that they are quite mainstream academically, and while I could not quote chapter and verse from the 1984 Doctrine Commission report, I can certainly affirm that such views were common in Sydney at the time, espoused by the most credible of SA NT scholars. I think your case is well made, and, to my mind, irrefutable. It is very disappointing that the authors and editors of the MM volume are so unwilling to engage in responses that have been specific and carefully focused on arguments. We do indeed need a much better example of dialogue and a willingness to listen carefully to alternative views, even (or especially) when we might disagree.

10 July at 20:38 · [Like](#) · 9



John Dickson That means a lot to me, [Tim Harris](#). Thanks.

10 July at 20:39 · [Like](#) · 1



John Dickson [Mike Doyle](#), I am not following your disappointment. As someone pointed out above, it made more sense as a tongue-in-cheek comment.

Which part of my description are you not comfy with exactly? As I said, it's not a criticism. It's just kind of obvious.

10 July at 20:45 · [Like](#) · 2



Mike Doyle [John](#) - the part that is not true. Check their website for their actual agenda. You are very keen for people to read graciously and carefully what you say and reflect it accurately - perhaps you could do them the same honour.

10 July at 20:47 · [Like](#)



John Dickson [Craig Schwarze](#), I didn't say "MM are explicitly trying to promote Phillip Jensen or his theology." I simply said that MM's editorial agenda/perspective was decisively shaped by Phillip Jensen's views. How is that problematic? Please don't think for a second I was suggesting that MM promotes Phillip himself. Yikes! He has taken an extraordinary backseat over the years. He could have published 30 books if he wanted to, but instead chose to influence things without putting himself forward.

10 July at 20:48 · [Like](#) · 1



John Dickson Just to backtrack - and this is a truly weird conversation, by the way - we are not talking about the MM mission or agenda, but their "editorial agenda", i.e., what guides the publishing company at the ideological level. I am happy with my description. Remember, I've published 5-6 books with them and worked for them, in the office, for a very happy two years.

10 July at 20:50 · [Like](#) · 2



John Dickson [Dominic Steele](#), thanks for the viewpoint. Opinions seem divided thus far. I will watch for more views and make a call. I am not averse to including names. It just feels more polite - and objective - the way I'm doing it, but I may not have the best read on it. Thanks.

10 July at 20:55 · [Like](#) · 1



John Dickson Pretty please, can someone argue with me about the content of my blog.

10 July at 20:59 · [Like](#) · 3



Mike Doyle I would suggest their editorial agenda is drive by their actual agenda. Easily found on their website. I would urge caution before giving them labels they don't accept for themselves. Especially from one who claims to want a gracious dialogue

10 July at 21:00 · Edited · [Like](#)



John Dickson I stand by what I said, [Mike](#), and find your reaction perplexing. We see it differently. Cool. Thanks.

10 July at 21:02 · [Like](#)



Mike Doyle Actually **John** - I'm thankful that there's been not much interaction recently. I feel there's been more than enough "john bashing" - and it's time to give this topic - and you - a rest.

10 July at 21:03 · [Like](#)



Leeanne Zamagias This is not a topic I have really strong feelings about, but I do feel strongly about Racism. I have never understood why it is acceptable for Sydney Anglican women to teach and preach to any man as long as they take a plane ride first and he is of a different colour.

10 July at 21:12 · [Like](#) · 6



Lionel Windsor John, I re-read your book (first and second editions) on this point, then re-read Claire's essay that you're referring to here, then read your blog post, including your images of Wegenast's article and Brown's insertion.

Basically, I don't think you've understood the key thrust of Claire's critique. She is critiquing your taking the "traditioning" semantic domain and applying it relatively wholesale to the "teaching" semantic domain. The issue is not about more or less specific uses of the word "teach"; the issue is whether the whole gamut of "traditioning" semantic categories can be imported into our understanding of the word "teach". That's Claire's fundamental point, and it doesn't come through in your own criticisms of her. It is this failure to understand the thrust of Claire's critique, I think, that has caused you to misconstrue her arguments against you, including on this particular question of Wegenast.

Furthermore, I think your view on the relationship between ancient "teaching" and modern sermons is continuing to shift as you write your blog posts and interact on Facebook. This complicates matters even further. I am comparing your earlier statements in your book, like this (in the "in a nutshell" summary of the chapter on the connection between ancient teaching and modern sermons, both editions):

"the 'apostolic deposit' is found only in the pages of the New Testament and no individual is charged with preserving and transmitting that information"

with your more recent statements, like this on your blog:

"'Teaching' ... refers to the high and holy duty of preserving, transmitting, and protecting the apostles' traditions concerning Jesus and the new covenant. To the degree that a preacher focuses on this task and fulfills this purpose, I believe Scripture allows this role to be performed only by duly trained, gifted, and authorized men (1 Tim 2:12): in an Anglican context, by the presbyter or priest."

Now I think that the very existence of WSB, and Claire's essay in particular, demonstrates that there has been a massive amount of deep engagement with your work. But, as I've already indicated, I think it's counterproductive to keep going into detail on every fine point you raise, especially when your stated views aren't entirely stable. You know that I was happy to interact with your first edition via blog posts in the early days, but as I've said to you before, this

instability in your stated views has given me great pause. It has caused me to feel strongly that ongoing back-and-forth interaction like this on who is misrepresenting whom doesn't help to achieve any clarity for those who care about the issues themselves. All I will do right now is to urge any readers of your books to read Claire's essay and make up their own minds.

(I know that you can point to other statements in the second edition of your book which appear to counter the statement I've quoted from your "in a nutshell" summary - but this only indicates that your stated views were in flux at that point also).

10 July at 21:15 · [Like](#) · 7



Tim Coates "Pretty please, can someone argue with me about the content of my blog."

I thought the content of your blog was lucid and graciously put John. It will be interesting to see what the response is. It made sense to me, although I wouldn't describe myself as a scholar.

As a further comment, and this is not directed either at you or the various authors of WSB or MM, can I, as a word of encouragement, say that we all need to be aware of the sin of pride and not look to defending a position at all costs, but rather to seek, as Paul says to the church at Ephesus to "make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace."

10 July at 21:18 · [Like](#) · 3



Peter Berthon You begged for feedback on the content of your blog John. The word "a" shouldn't be here:

"(2) such an emphasis is to be expected in a letters written to ministry colleagues entrusted with this fixed body of teaching (Timothy and Titus);"

10 July at 21:39 · [Like](#) · 4



Peter Berthon

10 July at 21:40 · [Like](#)



Tim Coates Now you're being picky like me, Peter.

10 July at 21:41 · [Like](#) · 2



John Dickson I'll concede those points, [Peter Berthon](#) and [Tim Coates](#) and get straight onto them.

10 July at 22:06 · [Like](#) · 2



Ian Powell [Mike Doyle](#), will try and find some of the stuff I was directed to on the website a year ago that spelt out some other more detailed concerns.

BUT could you answer my genuine question instead of constantly loudly telling John to be gracious

The definition of MM or whatever it was - what the heck is wrong or negative - I am beginning to feel like an untouchable

10 July at 22:18 · [Like](#)



John Dickson [Lionel Windsor](#), fortunately, people will be able to read the entirety of WSB's critique of Wegenast for themselves in screen shots on my blog. And I imagine they will puzzle at your

rendition of the argument.

On the second point of my shifting views, I can only say that you seem to give the game away when you concede, "I know that you can point to other statements in the second edition of your book which appear to counter the statement I've quoted from your "in a nutshell" summary".

Yes, given that I'm the one who wrote both statements, it's best to listen to what I reckon I was saying. As I have said before, if only you guys had picked up the phone when you were writing your critique!

10 July at 22:30 · [Like](#) · 2



John Dickson Tim Coates, you write, "we all need to be aware of the sin of pride and not look to defending a position at all costs." You're right. I see this in myself. I must keep it in check. Thanks.

10 July at 22:32 · [Like](#) · 3



Tim Coates You're welcome John. I have failed myself at doing this many times.

10 July at 22:33 · [Like](#)



Ian Powell Lionel, I also read the chapter 3 of WSB a few times, and then as I mentioned above, spent some time at Moore C Library checking the NIDNTT and reading the Editors "intervention" etc in Wegenast's article.

WSB in Ch 3 left me thinking, if this chapter is correct then John was an utter idiot to refer at all to Wegenast or better to the trusted NIDNTT. So I studied the footnotes and sources.

John's blog post is absolutely correct in the way WSB accidentally totally misleads the trusting reader. Surely you can see that? If not could you point us to where his blog is wrong.

10 July at 23:28 · Edited · [Like](#) · 1



Hefin Jones Wegenast in the bunch of articles he wrote on didasko, didaskalos etc etc ... does do the following:

(1) He consistently calls the author of the seven undisputed letters "Paul."

(2) He seems critical of the critical 'orthodoxy' that Colossians, Ephesians, and 2 Thessalonians are Deutero-Pauline, i.e. he's more conservative than most German scholars mid-century and thinks it likely that these letters are Pauline. His language is muted/careful.

(3) He never ascribes any of the Pastoral letters to Paul. He does seem to include them in the 'Pauline corpus' once - but that expression is more conventional than definitive about authorship.

(4) He used circumlocutions to describe the author of the Pastorals (in fact the one I've just used).

(5) He distinguishes "Paul's" use in Romans, 1 Cor and Gal from that of the Pastorals.

(6) And in one place he does say "Paul's use of didachē in Rom. and 1 Cor. may be contrasted with the usage found in the Pastoral Epistles."

I think it's fair to suggest that Wegenast doesn't think that Paul's the author of the Pastorals, and further that there is a significant distinction in the way some of the 'teaching' terms are used by the Paul of the major letters and the author of the Pastorals.

I noticed this a while back before reading WSB. Wegenast is simply reflecting a fairly conservative but not very conservative view on Pauline authorship. I didn't think it made a huge difference to John's use of him, though it might have been worthwhile to point out that Wegenast does distinguish more sharply between Paul's use in Romans and 1 Cor and whoever's use in the Pastorals than John D. himself does.

10 July at 23:32 · [Like](#)



Hefin Jones Not sure if this link will work but here's Dr. Mark Harding's summary of Wegenast's view as found in his doctorate „Das Verständnis der Tradition bei Paulus und in den Deuteropaulinen.“:
<http://books.google.com.au/books?id=auO7pyq2i2wC&pg=PA29...>



What are They Saying about the Pastoral Epistles?

books.google.com.au

Another worthwhile contribution to the outstanding What Are They Saying About...series is this volume by Mark Harding dealing with the pastoral epistles. In it the author gives an overview of seminal and recent trends in scholarship on the three pastoral epistles; 1 and 1 Timothy and Titus. A select...

10 July at 23:47 · [Like](#)



Craig Schwarze John, I wasn't making a major criticism, just saying that it didn't "ring true" to me. The other parts your description (reformed etc) rang entirely true

Yesterday at 03:59 · [Like](#)



Ian Powell Craig, Does the not "ring true" comment refer to John's "shaped by Phil J" or your "promoting Phil J" ?? Can't imagine how John's "shaped" is not true of the initial energy of the remarkable ministry of MM.

But To the Blog

I'd love to argue with John but I fear he is right on the money (even though he lives in the Bad Lands)

Yesterday at 07:51 · Edited · [Like](#)



Hefin Jones Harding summarising Wegenast:

Klaus Wegenast (1962) surveys the understanding of tradition itself in the undisputed Paulines and the deuter-Pauline corpus, the Pastorals included (1962:132–57). In the former, Paul appeals to verbal traditions (such as 1 Cor 15:1–11) or cites literary traditions (such as Phil 2:5–11) he and his addressees know. These traditions originated independently of the apostle and are affirming witnesses of the unique and unmediated revelation that he received (see Gal 1:11–12). Paul takes a stance with respect to tradition that demonstrates that he is free with regard to it.

Turning to the Pastoral Epistles, **Wegenast** observes that the author is greatly concerned that his addressees guard the “deposit” (Gr.: *paratheke*; see 1 Tim 6:20; 2 Tim 1:14). **Wegenast** understands the “deposit” as the Pauline tradition: the whole Pauline heritage, now conceived as something immutable, laid down, to be protected and transmitted undiminished at all cost. This is the chief task of the officials of the churches. Whereas for

Yesterday at 07:57 · [Like](#)



Hefin Jones Harding summarising Wegenast part II

30 *What Are They Saying About the Pastoral Epistles?*

Paul the gospel he preached, which came by revelation, stood over all traditions (Gr.: *paradoxeis*) as their norm, in the Pastorals the deposit stands over all contemporary articulations of the Pauline heritage. In the struggle with the early Gnostics, who were infecting the Pauline churches with their own interpretation of the Pauline heritage, the Pastorals are themselves actualizations of that deposit in written form. Moreover, the letters are powerful vehicles of an image of Paul who mandates the message embodied in the letters and sanctions the protecting and leadership role of ecclesiastical officials. Paul's heritage, to which the letters give voice, is to be passed on unchanged by the current leaders to faithful successors. Paul has become author and guarantor of the gospel (1 Tim 2:7; 2 Tim 2:8). As such, he authorizes the fight against the false teachers and is himself the chief weapon in the struggle to protect the Pauline identity of the churches.

Yesterday at 07:57 · [Like](#)



Ian Powell Hi Hefin, how does this material impact on his TIDNTT contributions. His word-study work on Gk word teaching? And way his work is reported in WSB - or maybe you Have other fish to catch and dry

Yesterday at 08:04 · [Like](#)



Hefin Jones I think it is fair to say Wegenast does not present straightforwardly supportive evidence for John's view.

Yesterday at 08:05 · [Like](#)



Hefin Jones Wegenast's TIDNTT article suggests a number of distinctions between the Paul of the main letters and the author of the Pastorals (Wegenast's terms) in their usage of some of these terms that again suggest that Wegenast would not be able support John's argument straightforwardly.

Yesterday at 08:08 · [Like](#)



Hefin Jones I think Hard Marking's summary of Wegenast's more extensive work presents a picture of what's going on in the P.E. that's at some distance from John's view.

Yesterday at 08:10 · [Like](#)



John Dickson Thanks for interacting, **Hefin Jones**. That is true interacting! This provides extra information about Wegenast. But as I

say in the blog, I assume Wegenast didn't think Paul wrote the Pastorals - it is the mainstream view, unfortunately. However, the important things are: (a) he does not argue thus in the NIDNTT, (b) he does not employ a liberal agenda to find evidence in a circular way, as WSB suggests; he interprets the evidence that's there - that everyone agrees on - to a liberal conclusion; (c) his reading of the evidence of the Pastorals does support my view; (d) I say that "teaching" as "traditioning" is especially apparent in the Pastorals, while still observable in the earlier letters. Wegenast just goes further by not acknowledging the evidence of "traditioning" the earlier epistles. You're right that I don't share his view of the Pastoral Epistles, but who cares. In scholarship, as you must know, no one says, "You can't rely on him; he's a liberal who doesn't accept Pauline authorship!" You just interact with the evidence they muster and interpret it as you can. Wegenast's view of "teaching" is still pretty much the same as mine (or the other way around!), as it is the same as that of the Doctrine Commission, 1984. Thanks.

Yesterday at 08:15 · [Like](#)



Hefin Jones Of course John - no "white hats" and "black hats" approach to scholarship. Independantly of reading WSB I thought Wegenast introduces enough distinctions between "Paul's" usage in say 1 Cor 12 and Rom 12 and "the author of the pastoral's" usage in the P.E. to suggest that he would not be able to follow entirely your argument for restricting "teaching" in the way you do.

Having read Mark's thumbnail sketch of Wegenast's 1962 I'd think that the details of preserving the apostolic deposit in the PE on Wegenast's view is a bit different to what it means on yours.

Yesterday at 08:22 · [Like](#)



Paul Knight I just don't like the idea that peoples credentials or background speak louder than their words. MM do that a bit. I read an article "Should Evangelicals sing Hillsong songs?" that followed that line: the songs may have no technical heresy in them, but if we view them though the lens of our disagreement with the author's beliefs, we can read fault into ambiguities, and none of their songs should ever be sung. I mean no song, and probably no theological writing could abide that test in the end, they are all written by sinners!

Yesterday at 08:23 · [Like](#) · 6



Ian Powell Thanks Hefin, although I thought John was quiet clear that W probably didn't think Paul wrote the pastorals (where as John does) That may be the case, but I was hoping you might show something specific that John's (and the 1984 Syd Anglican Doctrine Report) definition was not at least significantly supported or discredited by TIDNTT. Do you have any comment on the Editorial intervention.

Yesterday at 08:24 · [Like](#)



John Dickson Not really, [Hefin](#). The difference between Wegenast's view of "teaching" in Paul and my view of "teaching" in Paul is that I think the strict view of "teaching" as "traditioning" is not only clearly found in the Pastorals (Wegenast and I agree on that) but in the earlier Paulines (Wegenast not so much). Having said that, have

you noticed that Wegenast admits that the usage of *didaskō* in Gal 1:12 is similar to that in the Pastorals "pass on tradition". In other words, there is no great difference between Wegenast's view and mine in relation to the Pastoral Epistles, so I quoted him in that context. It would not be normal to quote someone who supports one thing you're saying and then point out that the person quoted does not go with you in another thing you're saying. Right?

Yesterday at 08:27 · [Like](#)



Hefin Jones I respectfully disagree - I think that both of you think there is a strict process of traditioning but they are different strict processes. Both are passing on the apostolic deposit - but not the same apostolic deposits or the same way of passing them on.

Yesterday at 08:29 · [Like](#)



John Dickson Oh, okay. That's close enough for me, [Hefin](#). None of this, however, is in the complaint WSB makes about my usage of Wegenast.

Yesterday at 08:31 · [Like](#)



Ian Powell In my 2nd time at Moore, lecturers were often using "Liberal" scholars and some of their approaches to really understand the text and words. (at times this annoyed the fundie part of me) It's John's use of Weg work as used by Colin Brown that is under review and also the critical 'Editorial intervention' (my words) that actually points the reader of the dictionary to a view closer to JDs than W - which is not at all the impression that WSB leaves the reader with - hence my shock when I actually read the Dictionary.

Yesterday at 08:35 · Edited · [Like](#) · 1



Hefin Jones It's a not insignificant point though John. At some point we are going to have unleashed upon us a long list of folk who think that *διδασκεῖν* is concerned with passing on the apostolic deposit. It is a commonplace of interpretation of the pastorals. But impressive as that list will be it does not always refer to the same historical model as the one you're positing.

Your interpretation depends on:

- (1) A fairly circumscribed model of what teaching was in the Pauline churches (inclusive of the evidence of the PE)
- (2) A fairly restrictive application of certain teaching/instruction/traditioning language by Paul to that model in his letters so that his readers knew exactly what he was on about. and then
- (3) A fairly tight model of applying the language and it's implicit model to the present.

Yesterday at 08:37 · [Like](#) · 3



Roselyn Drake I suppose you all realise that angels and pin heads come to some minds when reading all this, fun, but the sad thing here is women probably care more about this issue than the angels ever did about the pin,

Yesterday at 08:41 · [Like](#) · 3



Hefin Jones Dear Roselyn - I'm sure both you and [Louise Suzuki](#) think that the issue at hand is a vitally important one? The second

half of your comment makes that clear. But that makes the first half of the comment hard to understand. If the issue is an important one with important implications then isn't it worth careful thought?

Yesterday at 08:50 · [Like](#) · 4



Ian Powell "Teaching in the NT refers to the faithful transmission and defense of of apostolic doctrine or passing on the fundamental structures of the faith" - 1984 Syd Doc Report. - Drs Knox O'Brien Barnett Jensen etc etc

Just prior these guys say "contemporary preaching is not identical with teaching in the NT, Peeaching covers a whole range of activities including teaching, evangelism, encouragement, exhortation, prophecy and testimony, Teaching in the NT See above.

Section 4.3

Yesterday at 08:51 · [Like](#)



Ian Powell Roselyn Think we'd all rather be doing something else but sometimes these things need careful discussion because they totally shape how we live and love

Yesterday at 08:53 · [Like](#) · 2



Louise Suzuki Ian and Hefin, I probably misunderstood Roselyn's comment. I clicked like without thinking...I agree issue need to be deeply thought....thanks for clarify. I am thankful fir your thoughts and contribution on this important issue

Yesterday at 09:14 · [Like](#) · 2



John Dickson Hefin, I like that you recognise as "commonplace" the view that didaskō in the Pastorals is "concerned with passing on the apostolic deposit." I'm not sure, though, what value there would be in a list of scholars who think that - we all know it is not a novel view. I reckon the evidence of the Pastorals is enough. Perhaps the way I've laid it out in my book isn't enough to convince everyone. I don't mind. I don't object to people grappling with the argument and thinking it is not proven. I object to the course plotted in WSB - to caricature everything and then denounce everything as so mistaken that it looks like Dickson needs to go back to 1st Moore College and learn Greek and history and hermeneutics and so on. And I object to people refusing to recognise that a reformed evangelical can come to the view that women may preach in church on biblical grounds (think of our 1984 Doctrine Commission, think John Stott, think J I Packer ...).

But, to be honest, I really didn't understand your numerated points in the above post. If you can restate what you mean, I could respond sensibly. Then again, it is off topic. I would love to know if people can defend WSB against the criticisms in my blog. You don't seem to be doing that, even though I enjoy your insights on these related themes.

Yesterday at 09:27 · Edited · [Like](#) · 2



Jen Barker MM's first sentence in WSB's Product Description: "well-known Australian speaker and author John Dickson" kind of says it all. Compare it to how they describe Claire Smith here:

<http://www.matthiasmedia.com.au/gods-good-design> It was their use of the word 'novel' that made me question why they wrote what they did. It so obviously isn't.

Yesterday at 09:50 · Edited · [Like](#)



John Dickson I don't really mind that description, [Jen Barker](#). In fact, I am most proud of my popular-level speaking and writing - scholarship is not my first love. And it makes sense given that they think I'm a bit of a dill and Claire is the great defender of (their form of) complementarianism. In any case, given all the clear examples of 'positioning' throughout WSB, this one doesn't register on my radar. Blessings.

Yesterday at 10:01 · [Like](#) · 2



Mark Edmonds Well you did find that PhD of yours in a restroom at Bogabri TAFE, John. So popular speaker it is.

Yesterday at 10:20 · [Like](#) · 6



John Dickson I'll accept that, [Mark](#)!

Yesterday at 10:29 · [Like](#) · 1



Mike Doyle [Ian](#) - There are many people who view Jensen, and everything associated with him as negative. To describe MM's agenda in what they write and do as "decisively shaped by Phillip Jensen" functions as a powerful rhetorical device which acts to polarise how people see MM. To then describe their agenda as simply "a form" of Christianity, and a particularly "zealous" form acts to both dismiss and marginalise them.

You and [John](#) are two of the most skilled rhetoricians in the diocese, and know that the power of words, and how they are constructed and conveyed plays a more important part than the meaning of the words themselves. To use John's words - it ends up being a type of "Dog Whistling" - calling the "faithful" to gather against the other party. So in effect, the rhetorical function of the claimed agenda is to marginalise those you disagree with, and encourage those who don't agree to not take their words at face value - after all - they are just a "form" of Christianity, and a particularly "zealous" form "decisively shaped by Phillip Jensen".

You have expressed outrage at the rhetorical function of chapter 2 of WSB - and so I would hope you would show as much charity to MM and you would have liked them to show to you, being careful of the rhetorical power of them.

As well as this, my concern with this whole debate is it seems that - again - it's running down party lines. And whilst @john and yourself keep wanting people to not do this - the rhetorical function of claiming to know the agenda of MM, which is far different from their published agenda, ends up bringing more heat and darkness to the discussion, rather than light. It fits a certain narrative about MM and those supporting a biblical Christianity - but it certainly doesn't help the discussion. It just ends up polarising people.

I think the fact that supporters of MM (such as myself) have said @john's claim doesn't "ring true" shows that he has failed to capture their true agenda.

Please be aware that I'm not attributing motive in claiming this agenda - I have tried to only comment on the rhetorical function of it (and why I have reacted negatively).

@John - I am surprised and disappointed that you stand by your claim. I am perplexed that you plead with people to not only to take you at your words in your books, but to try hard to understand what you mean by those words. Even in this discussion you have criticised [Lionel](#) for not doing this enough. Yet you have applied a different standard to yourself. You claim to know MM's agenda despite it being so different from what they themselves claim. And when it's pointed out to you - you still stand by your claim. Bewildered. Dazzled. Perplexed. Confused. Surprised. Disappointed. Pick the adjective that you enjoy the most.

@Jaime - I don't think @john is in a position to fairly describe MM's agenda. Yes - he wrote a few books for them a bunch of years ago, but he hasn't for a long time. More than this - over the last 18 months or so he has engaged in a long and very public campaign of criticising MM. He is not some neutral observer - not should he be. Not only does he have real beefs with MM, but has been strongly criticised by them. He may be right about his beefs, and he may be rightly hurt by their criticisms - but I think that suggests he is not in the best position to have a fair and balanced view of their agenda. More so - since we have all claimed to be attempting to engage in this conversation in a generous and gracious way, I think the fair thing to do is let MM speak of their agenda, and avoid as much as possible claiming to know something different from what they say it is.

And yes, I am obviously a strong supporter of MM. I won't claim otherwise. I think they have done, and continue to do a wonderful job in defending biblical Christianity. This is not a "a form" of Christianity - and defending it is something Christians from throughout the world and ages do, and are commanded to do.

Yesterday at 13:07 · [Like](#) · 3



Ian Powell Thanks Mike, I appreciate your thoughtful blunt honesty. I would like to take what you have said and mull on it. Some instant reactions ...

I think I can say of myself that I am deeply deeply indebt to MM and am a genuine supporter, defender at times, and admirer I sort of feel I am being forced into an either/or and my "or" is then being decided by you

And again - I work in a team (CBF) that would "compete" with MM for the label "decisively shaped by Philip Jensen" & I simply have no interest in distancing us or myself from that history or influence.

That's not dog whistling - at least I don't think it is - it's just accurate (of CBF I am sure and I think of MM)

Yesterday at 14:39 · Edited · [Like](#)



Ian Powell But back to the issues of John's clear Blog

Yesterday at 13:42 · [Like](#)



David Ball Mike - you are complaining that this debate is running along "party lines", yet your last post simply adds a whole lot of extra fuel to that particular fire. It just will not do for either side to justify such an approach on a "tu coque" (you also) basis. I reckon everyone should just call a truce on this right now.

Yesterday at 14:20 · Edited · [Like](#)



John Dickson That just sounds weird to me, [Mike Doyle](#). It is public knowledge that Phillip decisively shaped MM. Those who respect Phillip see this as a good thing; those who don't don't. Given that I have a very high view of Phillip and agree with him on 90% of things, your reading of my rhetoric just misses the mark. But I'm glad you were able to express your point of view so forthrightly. Yet, I must remind you (and anyone still looking in on this bizarre subplot) where this all began:

Emma Thornett expressed to me that she felt it was weird for me to speak of 'MM' in my blog, rather than the authors' names, and explained that this was not normal: no one would expect to read "IVP says ..." or "Zondervan says ..."

I acknowledged that this would be weird in connection with other publishers (which generally don't have tightly defined editorial positions) but pointed out that Matthias Media is unique in publishing. It is more like a "ministry unit", I said, "with a clear editorial agenda."

When asked to explain what that editorial agenda was, I described it as reformed, evangelical, complementarian, evangelistically zealous, and decisively shaped by Phillip. That's when you chimed in with your several posts.

Phillip's way of looking at things profoundly shapes editorial policy at MM, if only in the way a powerful founder of an organisation shapes the perspective of an organisation for decades - think of the way Billy Graham shaped Christianity Today.

I don't retract. I believe most reasonable-minded people, including most supporters of MM, will think my description accurate. You don't. Okay, that's fine. But I am glad to be able to let you and readers know where this part of the conversation came from.

Yesterday at 14:44 · [Like](#) · 2



Ian Powell I confess i do not at all feel its a party thing (doesn't feel much like a party - hoho) I am, as i feel sure most are, trying to do the Berean thing - what do the scriptures say and mean

Yesterday at 14:46 · [Like](#)



John Dickson At least I only have one more blog post to go!

Yesterday at 14:49 · [Like](#)



John Dickson [Craig Schwarze](#), you wrote "I wasn't making a major criticism, just saying that it didn't "ring true" to me. The other parts your description (reformed etc) rang entirely true"

I knew it wasn't a major criticism, and from you it wouldn't matter if it was a major criticism. You have a free pass for all criticism of Dickson! But so long as we're clear: you now understand, don't you, that I said MM was "decisively shaped" by Phillip not (as you remarked at one point) that it was "explicitly trying to promote Phillip Jensen or his theology"? I just want you to be clear what I was and wasn't saying. Cheers.

Yesterday at 14:55 · [Like](#)



Matthew Robson Are we ready to agree that Theological discussions don't work on Facebook yet?

Yesterday at 16:01 · Edited · [Like](#) · 1



Jordan Rastrick Do any sort of discussions "work" on Facebook?
Do theological discussions "work" anywhere?

[Edit: in retrospect I think the smiley really does make my intended tone more accurate....]

Yesterday at 16:06 · Edited · [Like](#) · 4



Ian Powell Matthew - i think the illusion is that serious discussions work well or easily anywhere. Not your illusion but many critique fb not realising that all communication is full of miscommunication, misunderstandings etc.

The shame with this post is how hard it has been to get people to discuss John's very well researched and gently worded correction of a series of mistakes in WSB - that is different to things i disagree with - but there are just errors of fact in WSB that can be and should be acknowledged.

The ability to Oops and sorry (and both quickly) is hard hard hard for all of us

Yesterday at 16:18 · Edited · [Like](#) · 3



John Dickson Matthew, some days I agree with you. But two reflections. First, in this case, most interaction is not happening here on my wall but over on the blog - ten fold. This post was really just a launching pad, an advertisement, for the more serious points I am trying to make in the blog.

Then again, secondly, most of the scrappiness that you're no doubt detecting above is around peripheral issues, not theology: whether I should be using the name of the author instead of referring to MM, whether MM is shaped by Phillip Jensen, and so on. The only genuinely theological interaction above was from [Hefin](#), and I think that was a great contribution. It was measured and insightful, and it moved us all forward a little, even if Hefin and I didn't agree entirely. So, all is not lost, is all I am saying.

Yesterday at 16:44 · [Like](#)



Richard Shumack Hi Mike, Nice to meet you. I'm sorry but of course MM has an agenda, and it is clear to anyone who has followed it over the years. In fact you just stated it yourself: to promote and defend Biblical Christianity. In the case of WSB it seems that Biblical Christianity needs to be defended to some extent against Dickson's poor hermeneutics and scholarship. Perhaps it does. The problem is that despite the vibe it sends out MM has no mortgage on defining just what Biblical Christianity is supposed to be, and especially on just what a proper hermeneutic is. I have worked with Biblical Christians in many cultures and countries and it really is fair to say that MM do represent a particular form of Biblical Christianity that is profoundly shaped by local history and culture - including Philip Jensen and (perhaps more significantly) Broughton Knox. This form formed me, and I am profoundly thankful for it, but I do wish that WSB had not played the "Dickson uses novel exegesis and dubious hermeneutics while we stick with plain readings" card. Things are a lot more complicated than that. The more I watch this conversation it appears they are so complicated that none of us without a PhD in semantics, NT, history have any hope getting it

Richard

Yesterday at 17:07 · [Like](#) · 9



Richard Keith To channel the thread towards the blog, I'd say it hits a home run and ticks all the boxes (throw in your own cliché). The arguments of the "authors of WSB" are sharp and challenging, but the challenge has been met and the edge blunted. John's points are well made. Wegenast's support has been vindicated, and any question over his opinion of Pastoral authorship only strengthens John's case, rather than weakens it. Dr Windsor's concerns about the semantic range of *didasko* have been answered in an earlier blog (the first one? the second?) and his complaint that John seems to be learning and improving his position in response to criticism is disappointing. (Although I have a similar frustration when the batsmen insist on standing in front of the stumps and hitting the ball, instead of just letting it hit the wickets. Fishing would be easier too if the fish would just jump onto the hook). The constant mention of MM in the blogs did seem odd at first, but the editor is not just publishing it, but is one of the authors, so what do I know? Personally, I would edit them out. Engage with the authors and not with the real or imagined system. This isn't a conspiracy (or at least that what they want us to think :)) I think the tone of respect and deference in the blogs suits the genre and the circumstance. An author is defending himself against quite a sustained attack on his credibility and professionalism. It needs to be done in a credible and professional way. A chatty, matey kind of approach may have given the impression that John was only a popular author and not a scholar in his own right who can't be easily dismissed. In conclusion, it doesn't prove John right, but it goes a long way to showing (proving?) that his views are in no way "novel".

Yesterday at 17:08 · [Like](#) · 4



Alix Beeston Hi [John](#) and others, I've followed these conversations over the last year and a half fairly closely. I just wanted to comment to say that I'm quite alarmed at the speciousness of the arguments of WSB in this instance - which seems to me to be plainly obvious from the excerpts from it and from Wegenast's article/s in your blog entry. I'm in the final stages of my PhD in English at Sydney Uni, and this kind of inaccuracy and poor scholarship (not to mention the dismissive tone) simply wouldn't fly within the critical debates in which I am engaging. I'm sad to see it muddying these very important discussions, and I humbly but sincerely hope to see a retraction and an apology issued in the print version of WSB.

Yesterday at 17:45 · [Like](#) · 11



John Dickson Wow, I feel I want to call a close on this discussion and let [Richard Shumack](#), [Richard Keith](#), and [Alix Beeston](#) be the last words - except it probably looks like I paid them!

Yesterday at 17:51 · [Like](#)



Alix Beeston I'm a PhD student [John](#) - I wouldn't mind if there was payment!

Yesterday at 17:53 · [Like](#) · 5



John Dickson I remember the feeling, [Alix Beeston](#)!

Yesterday at 17:53 · [Like](#)



Hefin Jones (Sorry John I was drafting this as your last comment appeared!)

Hi [John](#), I think I'll leave my three dot points as they are for now, as they are strictly speaking a bit off-topic in this thread. I've no interest in being an apologist for WSB - in fact I still haven't read more than 40-50% of it and the authors are all big boys and girls who can speak (or decide not to speak) more than adequately for themselves. That my bottom-line practical-outworking position on the matter itself is somewhere similar to some of the authors of WSB is not hard to spot! The 'success' or 'failure' of WSB is not especially interesting to me. I'm more interested in your arguments (whether or not they're 'novel').

Yesterday at 17:57 · [Like](#) · 2



John Dickson No worries, [Hefin](#). Always glad to interact. But, seriously, perhaps you can direct message me to explain your dot points. I didn't understand them and I want to. Blessings.

Yesterday at 18:06 · [Like](#) · 1



Craig Schwarze Hi [John](#), it's a bit of a sideshow, but an interesting point. You wrote, "[MM] promote a form of... Christianity decisively shaped by Phillip Jensen"

I paraphrased that as, "[MM] promote Phillip Jensen or his theology" (and suggested that it was no longer true).

I agree that there is a distinction between the two comments, though it is a fine one. If I had written, "promote Phillip Jensen's theology", then I think the distinction would disappear.

It's not an important point. I should disclose that I'm friends with some of PJs family, and I know how much they dislike comments like this, so I'm perhaps a little sensitive to them as well. PJ's success has made him an easy target - the same goes for yourself too. I'm sympathetic to both of you.

Now, [Amelia](#) has just discovered DCI Banks Seasons 2 on iTunes, so I really must run...

Yesterday at 20:25 · [Like](#) · 1



John Dickson Thanks, [Craig Schwarze](#). So long as you see the distinction between our two thoughts. Blessings.

Yesterday at 20:46 · [Like](#)



Craig Schwarze All good, my friend

17 hrs · [Like](#)



Benjamin Pakula Hey John, I notice that you originally said about Matthias Media:

'It is a ministry unit with a powerful editorial addenda.'

The language of power, to my mind, is at least part of the reason

people thought your rhetoric was quite political.

But more recently, when you described the reaction as "weird", and quoted yourself, you changed the word "powerful" to "clear". You wrote:

'It is more like a "ministry unit", I said, "with a clear editorial agenda."

I suspect there would've been no problem if you'd used the word "clear" instead of "powerful" in the first place.

I point this out for two reasons. Firstly, I think it's important to quote yourself accurately: you said what you said!

Secondly, it makes things *appear* that you're deliberately politicising things as per Mike [Mike Doyle](#)'s observation.

12 hrs · [Like](#) · 2



John Dickson You're absolutely right, [Benjamin Pakula](#). I quoted myself from memory. Thanks.

Still, I will happily acknowledge that MM has a 'powerful' and 'clear' editorial agenda: 'clear' in the sense that they all know exactly where they stand on pretty much everything, and 'powerful' in the sense that nothing gets through the publishing pipeline that doesn't fit with that clear viewpoint. It is why some love pretty much everything they publish, and why others like me, who agree with only about 90% of their views, love a majority of what they publish. And, of course, it's why some dislike most of what they do. This is (nearly) unique in the publishing world. MM knows it and embraces it. If you try not to second guess my motives in all this, I'm sure you'll come to see that my descriptions of MM's 'powerful/clear editorial agenda' - i.e., 'reformed, evangelical, complementarian, shaped decisively by Phillip Jensen' - are entirely accurate. For the record, while I think it's unlikely MM will want to publish me in the future, I myself would jump at the chance to be published by them.

And, to dear brother [Mike Doyle](#), I only just realised that you said the most extraordinary thing above. Would please clarify what you meant by "over the last 18 months or so he [John Dickson] has engaged in a long and very public campaign of criticising MM". What could this possibly mean? I wrote my book 18 months ago, yes, but MM offered its response only two or so months ago (May), right? I can't recall talking about MM until they produced WSB. Have you seen me say things about them - a 'campaign' even! - before this? Or are you imagining that my whole argument for women giving sermons is itself a campaign against MM? Thanks for clarifying.

11 hrs · [Like](#)



Greg Lake Site down for maintenance.

9 hrs · [Like](#)



John Dickson It's a conspiracy, I say!

9 hrs · [Like](#) · 1



John Dickson Check your inbox, [Greg Lake](#). I've sent you my essay for your reading pleasure!

9 hrs · [Like](#) · 1



Greg Lake Still only half way through. But can I just say that your explanation of why a liberal (and Deutero-Pauline) reading of the 'fixed body' of paul's reading isn't circular (even though you don't agree with it) is masterful. Not only does it respect those who hold that view (by treating their views with honesty and respect) but it demonstrates why misrepresenting them in this way doesn't really help promote frank discussion. I love how you do that **John** - how you only disagree with someone after you've demonstrated a clear willingness to fully grapple with their point of view.

9 hrs · Edited · Like · 1



John Dickson Thanks, **Greg Lake**. I'm glad you like how I do that but, honestly, this is Engaging with Scholarship 101. I meant what I said in that section: "The particular wording of WSB at this point would perplex most experts today—even the evangelical ones." The disrespect shown to Wegenast by WSB is shameful, in my view. They even do the same thing to James Dunn, who is one of the leading NT experts of the last 30 years. The fact that Peter Bolt, who plays in that serious New Testament space, did not pick this up and moderate the language is doubly strange. This should never be done, not in scholarship, nor in more popular works seeking to appear scholarly. The whole thing has dented my confidence in these authors' ability to engage with stuff they don't like.

8 hrs · Edited · Like · 1



John Dickson Oh, by the way, I see the website is back up!

8 hrs · Like · 1



Greg Lake Scholarship 101 apparently isn't that common then John.

8 hrs · Like · 1



John Dickson Well, it is very, very common elsewhere in evangelical writing. I cannot imagine any other evangelical scholars doing what they've done here.

8 hrs · Like



Greg Lake Its a little worrying that I didn't recognise it though right? Haha. That said, I hardly claim to be an academic!!!

8 hrs · Like



John Dickson Perhaps, **Greg Lake**. The only circular argument in that section is that section itself. Seriously. Think about it. In effect this chapter says, "Wegenast only holds the view that teaching is about passing on the apostolic deposit because he's a liberal. We know that he's a liberal because he holds that teaching is about passing on the apostolic deposit."

8 hrs · Like



Greg Lake Yeah, it is clearly circular. I do worry about your line "Schreiner and Wegenast (indeed, every scholar I've read on the matter, apart from the authors of WSB) agree that the Pastoral Epistles have an increased emphasis on the importance of passing on the fixed traditions of the apostle." I guess you're fairly well-read

with all the people the Matthias guys would be across too, but I hope the majority of NT scholars actually makes a strong point about that emphasis. If the WSB people can demonstrate that most at silent on the issue, they could refute that argument as being at least hyperbole (albeit to distract from the real debate)...

8 hrs · Edited · [Like](#)



John Dickson Fair point, [Greg Lake](#). I might have overcooked that one! If they were to find a scholar who doesn't even comment on it, that might count as evidence against what I say there. Then again, my "on the matter" means on the matter of whether or not there is an increased emphasis. I'm pretty sure I've never read a scholar who explicitly denies that there's an emphasis in the Pastorals on the importance of passing on fixed tradition.

8 hrs · [Like](#) · 2



David Webb I am probably going to a Uniting Church with a female minister tomorrow, found her sermons to be good. God gave men and women a brain and can surely guide each equally. Don't see any reason to discuss as there are good and bad male and female preachers, I am pleased to say I have not herd any bad unbiblical preachers at any of the churches I have attended.

7 hrs · [Like](#)



Matt Lucas Mike Doyle, it seems you are over reaction to John's comment re: MM, and reading into it something that isn't there, and was not intended. Your constant referral to MMs stated agenda doesn't seem to strengthen your view or diminish John's statement, in my opinion.

6 hrs · [Like](#)



Ian Powell On the way Wegenast is treated poorly, I think it also clearly reflects poorly on Colin Brown the editor of the NIDNTT. No one forced them to include this "circular bad scholar" but they did. What was Brown thinking??? There seem to be too many excellent scholars being "discredited" in order to dismiss a disliked argument or to defend a previously advocated position or something driving this dishing. But I am not a scholar, but I believe in a fair go as I must as an Ossie

5 hrs · Edited · [Like](#)



Dani Treweek John, in responding to Dominic's post of a few days ago (regarding the appropriateness of directing your critique of content of WSB to the author of that content rather than the publisher of the full volume), you wrote that "you will watch for more views and make a call".

Here is my view.

I realised today that not only do you direct your critique of the Wegenast discussion to Matthias Media (ie. the publisher), but you also hold the 'authors of WSB' (plural) as responsible for what you believe is inaccurate content regarding Claire Smith's critique of Wegenast. For example, you write:

"What is striking in all of this is the way the authors of WSB have

sought, invalidly, to discredit a well regarded scholar just to undermine my use of his work"

(This is just one of approximately 5-6 occasions in which you critique the "authors of WSB" in your latest blog post)

As one of the "authors of WSB" I find this strange. I'm perfectly happy to be associated with Claire's work, agree with her that there is very real reason for us to 'take care' regarding Wegenast's enlistment in support of your thesis and remain unconvinced by your claims of contrived mischeviousness.

However, Claire was the only "author of WSB" who referenced Wegenast at all. Neither I nor any of the other contributors to WSB even mentioned his name, let alone sought to discredit him (which, for the record, I do not believe Claire sought to do either). As such it simply makes no sense to me that you would include any of the authors other than Claire in your critique on this point.

I'd like to echo Dominic's suggestion that you address (and redress) your critique of an individual's work to that individual for two reasons.

Firstly, because the universal convention, which WSB followed, and which you yourself have followed countless times in articles and books as you interacted with other authors in a non-personal way is to simply use the individual's last name.

Secondly (and most importantly) because your decision not to follow this standard procedure throughout most of this discussion has had a most unfortunate consequence which has become most explicit in this thread -- namely of giving the whole discussion an unhelpful political edge, as if it is 'Matthias Media v. John Dickson' rather than (in this instance) C. Smith critiquing an exegetical argument published by J. Dickson.

I'd like to encourage you to make a call on this as soon as possible.

5 hrs · Edited · [Like](#) · 3



Greg Lake Nah [Ian](#). Surly he was included by Chris because he had the most easily accessible explanation of the idea of 'teach'. The insert was included to cover his arse against the very thing John's been accused of - agreeing with the guy in full because you agree with one (presumably) small aspect of his research.

5 hrs · [Like](#)



Greg Lake Hey Dani, can I just ask, are you saying that John should go with identifying the individual author of chapters/essays in dealing with this argument (e.g. Smith) albeit by referring to them by the last name because it is important not to 'tarnish all authors with the same brush'? I.e. are you saying that some of the other authors wouldn't agree with C Smith's argument? If not, are you saying they'd all agree? Wouldn't even making it 'C Smith' still be quite personal? If John has made the assumption that the authors (or at least the editors of WSB) agree with all the chapters (which is a fair assumption isn't it?) then isnt the most effective non-personal way to deal with it to address them collectively? If people wanted to know which particular author said something, they can just look at the

beginning of the relevant WSB chapter...? Apologies if I've misunderstood your comment above...

4 hrs · [Like](#) · 1



Ian Powell ((Written on iPhone - sorry)) This question of how to speak of an edited book or parts of it, and this one in particular, is a little complex.

Some very good points there Dani - it seems to me.

But about referring to the book's Source, as a whole via abbreviation MM.

A year or so back Tony P, the Publishing Editor of MM (MMS "main man"?) told us on Facebook - be patient, be patient, we the reading public, John and others would have to wait for a considered response from ... ?

Absolutely Right and fine. We would wait for the response that would deal with Dickson's arguments.

So This was always more than a book, that say Claire or Lionel chose to write and get published.

It is a result, quite rightly, of a carefully constructed team (obviously and quite OKly) and errors can be fairly tied back to the ultimate source, drivers and editors,

Errors of fact, or poor scholarship can be fairly directed to the individual chapter writer, or to the primary cause and overseers, ie to the editors/publisher.

To go back to the earlier suggestion of two types of politeness, it seems generally easier not to query an individual, especially unfortunately here, where many are friends and close neighbors and certainly family and comrades. Very difficult business with many considerations

4 hrs · [Like](#) · 2



Ian Powell Also this idea of some political thing seems utterly groundless to me
baffling

4 hrs · [Like](#)



Dani Treweek Hey Greg,

No - I'm not saying any of that. (Please read my comments about being happy to be associated with - and in fact agreeing with - Claire's argument). All I am saying is that the universal convention in critiquing an individual's writing (which is what Chapter 3 of WSB is) is to address them individually because they are the one who is responsible for that writing. Anytime someone agrees to publish something they have written, they recognise that they are opening their work up for critique. There is nothing 'personal' about having your work critiqued on its own merits. It's just par of the course of being a published author.

As I mentioned in my earlier comment, in seeking to avoid the non-existent problem (see above) of making things too personal, John has unhelpfully created a bigger problem - he has made things seem too political. What has been implicit throughout discussions in the last few weeks/months has now become explicit on this thread - it is the well-known Sydney publishing house with strong links to Phillip Jensen that is at fault here, that is being mischievous, using

deliberate misrepresentation, intellectual foul play and so on. It's 'them' (or 'us') against 'John'.

This is unhelpful, serves no one well and is not at all conducive to thoughtful and reasonable discussion about John's actual thesis and the published critiques that a handful of individuals have made about his thesis.

4 hrs · [Like](#) · 2



Greg Lake Yeah ok. Thanks for taking the time to clarify (read: explain it to the slow-pokes like me). I look forward to hearing John's response/explanation. With what you've explained, it does seem to make a lot of sense... Thanks!

For the record, despite what everyone is saying, those of you (authors) who have engaged with John here and on the blogs always seem to have done so with grace. As someone who engages on other issues (not so much theologically), it is so refreshing that the 'us' and 'them' in this debate still seem to be so much more united than the average 'us' and 'them' situation in the wider public. But I guess that's what comes from knowing a guy like Jesus 'ey?!

4 hrs · [Like](#) · 3



Greg Lake (See how I lumped 'those of you' together like that?)

4 hrs · Edited · [Like](#) · 2



Jason Hobba Dani Treweek - why should we, or John, 'take care' with Wegenast (as opposed to every scholar)? I take it that a special form of 'care' - i.e., the type that avoids use of Wegenast in support of a thesis - is the kind of 'care' intended.

That kind of value judgment is not particularly useful or good academic practice. It's evident in the pejorative use of 'liberal' in application to Wegenast's supposed views on the authorship of the Pastorals in the NIDNTT article. Whether or not Dr Smith intended it, that kind of use of 'liberal' is intended to damn by association. It's not very charitable to John to do so. Further, to say that it is "fashionable" to view the Pastorals as non-Pauline really belittles any of the extensive reasons and arguments set forward by scholars who view them as non-Pauline. Of course, there are good reasons not to accept their argument and instead to see Paul as the author of the Pastorals. But calling their position "fashionable" is not one of those reasons. Is the reader then supposed to infer that John, too, is among the "fashionable" because he takes - perhaps for slightly different reasons than Wegenast - the conclusion that "to teach" refers to the handing down of gospel tradition? For example, what difference might it make to accept the Pastorals as Pauline, but to see in them a greater concern for consolidating apostolic tradition?

Having read again the Wegenast article to which John and Dr Smith refer, I cannot see how there is any decisive evidence that Wegenast accepts the Pastorals as deuterio-Pauline. To my mind, he is simply following the academic convention of his time in referring to the Pastorals as non-Pauline. But he never nails his colours to the mast on that one - in this article.

Again, having read the article, Dr Smith's claim -- that Wegenast engages in a circular argument about the meaning of "to teach" in the pastorals because of his "fashionable" view -- is altogether unconvincing. Assuming Pauline authorship, it is evident especially in 2 Tim that Paul is concerned for the preservation of apostolic tradition, which had become more fixed over time (in the same way that the Gospels show evidence of a fixed form of gospel tradition - e.g., Q). Paul's understanding of the gospel obviously grew over time - he did not simply receive his entire understanding on the Road to Damascus. So, if his understanding grew over time, and became consolidated (e.g., Romans vs Galatians) why would he not want that body of teaching to become consolidated and passed on to the next generation? If one were not to assume Pauline authorship, or to use the scholarly consensus of a Pauline disciple authoring the Pastorals, then there is even more reason to see in them a greater concern for preserving Paul's apostolic legacy. Strangely, Dr Smith provides no evidence to the contrary -- that is, that Paul's letters (including the Pastorals) *do not exhibit* a greater concern for the consolidation of apostolic tradition.

4 hrs · [Like](#)



Amanda Ballantyne Hi Dani. Your criticism of John's reference to 'the authors of WSB' would be a valid one if the comments had been published in a journal or book (at least an academic one) I'm not convinced that the same conventions apply to a blog post. Apart from anything else I would imagine that at least some of those reading the post would not be familiar with the 'style' of academic publications and might find references to 'Smith' or 'C. Smith' somewhat odd.

From your comments you seem to be saying you agree with Claire Smith's chapter so I was wondering on what basis you disagree with John's rebuttal. You may remember my position on this topic from college. If so you'll realise my position doesn't depend on the meaning of didasko.

4 hrs · [Edited](#) · [Like](#)



Ian Powell A brief comment I was playing with got out Forget it, please Thanks it was a cake half turned

2 hrs · [Like](#) · 1



John Dickson Dani, thanks for your thoughts. So far - it seems from the above - slightly more people prefer the impersonal 'WSB' or 'MM' rather than the author's name, so it's hard to decide, even with your well worded explanation. I do, however, accept your point that saying "authors (pl.) of WSB" when I really mean one author, is odd (even if there is an unusual camaraderie, bordering on back-slapping, amongst the authors of this book). I reckon that's one I should probably adjust. I also think I should use 'MM' less frequently, because obviously a lot of keen supporters of MM are hearing it as political, and I don't want that. That's a good enough reason to use it less. Still, the advice I received - mentioned earlier - to leave names out of it seems good to me, especially given the seriousness of my criticisms. I hope that gives a sense of where my head is at right this minute.

35 mins · [Like](#)



Richard Keith Colin Brown didn't choose to include Wegenast. What we know as NIDNTT is an English translation of a German work. Colin Brown was the editor of the translation work and inserted articles when he thought he needed to to reflect the difference between English speaking evangelical concerns vs Continental/German concerns. As JD makes clear in the blog Wegenast simply reflects a scholarly consensus on the role of tradition in the Pastoral epistles. Any argument that because of any liberal bias against Pauline authorship only strengthens JD's argument. And anything else is the genetic fallacy. This comes from someone we don't trust, therefore it isn't true. JD has already shown that Wegenast's view was held in evangelical circles decades ago. Nothing proves that JD is right. But his views aren't novel. They are scholarly consensus and widely held among many (most?) exegetes of the Pastoral epistles.

27 mins · Edited · [Like](#)



John Dickson Yes, indeed ^

15 mins · [Like](#)



Lionel Windsor Jason, as much as I love our discussions on other issues, I think almost everything you've said here muddies the waters.

(I had a longish post prepared to answer you but I think Facebook doesn't like the length so I'll break it up)...

9 mins · [Like](#)



Lionel Windsor 1) Claire did not say that it is "fashionable" to dispute the Pauline authorship of the Pastorals amongst NT scholars in general, as you imply. She said that it is "fashionable amongst more liberal scholars", which in no way belittles the work of anyone who is not a liberal scholar.

9 mins · [Like](#)



Lionel Windsor 2) The term "liberal" is not intended to damn John by association, nor is it merely a pejorative. It might appear that way if the term "liberal" appeared at the beginning of a blog post or Facebook comment. But it has appeared in an essay in a book, an essay which is intended to be read in its entirety, and which begins with a statement that John has been and still is a friend of Claire's. At this point, Claire is engaging in a careful argument to show why *Wegenast* is an unreliable witness for Dickson's case. Yes, this is because Wegenast is among "liberal" circles - but Claire does not use the term "liberal" as a mere pejorative nor to imply that Dickson is liberal. Neither is she saying that liberal scholars cannot be relied on in all cases. She is saying that Dickson should not be relying on this liberal scholar at this point because Wegenast's liberal assumptions have actually affected him at this very point.

9 mins · [Like](#)



Richard Keith by "his views" I meant, strictly speaking, his comments on the role of tradition in 1 Timothy for which Wegenast was used to support. NIDNTT is as mainstream as they get

9 mins · [Like](#)



Lionel Windsor 3) Unfortunately, you (I assume following John's lead) have misunderstood Wegenast's use of the term "deutero-Pauline". You (again, I assume based on John's blog post) seem to think Wegenast is using this term to refer to the Pastorals. I'm sorry to say it, but that's a basic reading error. By "those epistles which some scholars regard as Deutero-Pauline" (point (e)) Wegenast means 2 Thessalonians, Colossians and Ephesians. The Pastoral Epistles, for Wegenast, are in a class of their own and therefore given a separate point (f). This is obvious from Wegenast's article. Furthermore, this tripartite classification of the Pauline corpus (Wegenast's points d, e and f) is commonplace among scholars from a more "liberal" tradition. There are three categories amongst these scholars: 1) Undisputed Pauline (Rom, 1&2 Cor, Gal, Phil, 1 Thess, Phm), 2) Disputed Pauline, referred to by some as Deutero-Pauline but accepted by others (2 Thess, Eph, Col), and 3) Pastorals, usually regarded as non-Pauline and therefore in no need of hedging language. Saying that Wegenast regards the pastorals (point f) as among the "Deutero-Pauline"s (point e) is a basic error and is one of the numerous ways that John has misread the texts in front of him. Unfortunately John's misreading of Wegenast here seems to have influenced you as well - perhaps because John placed his interpretation of Wegenast *before* Wegenast's actual text, which perhaps predisposed you to interpret the text along John's incorrect lines.

9 mins · [Like](#)



Lionel Windsor 4) It's clear from these articles that Wegenast, as expected, doesn't view Paul as the author of the pastorals. On the one hand, Wegenast says that the historical Paul views the concept of tradition as fluid. On the other hand, he says that the Pastorals (for whom, notice, he always uses the passive voice and never attributes to Paul) view tradition (in this case linked to the word "teach") as fixed. This is a clear and vital difference between Wegenast's view of the real Paul and the author of the Pastorals. This difference is of key significance for Claire's argument about Wegenast:

8 mins · [Like](#)



Lionel Windsor 5) On the "circular argument": Claire is claiming that the general "liberal" construct which assumes that the pastorals are much more concerned than the real Paul with formalized, rigid tradition and the passing on of exact words predisposes them towards reading this construct into places where it does not necessarily appear. Thus we need to take care when we find a scholar such as Wegenast starting to see "traditioning" categories in the pastorals even in those places where the normal "traditioning" vocabulary is not used. Germane to the particular point Claire is making, we need to "take care" when we read a scholar such as Wegenast describe a term such as "teach" in the Pastorals as if it is in a special category and in terms that emphasise rigid, fixed, traditioning. It is what we expect Wegenast to say, given his particular predisposition, so it is not a very useful support for John's case.

8 mins · [Like](#)



Lionel Windsor 6) When you say: "it is evident especially in 2 Tim that Paul is concerned for the preservation of apostolic tradition, which had become more fixed over time" - Claire would agree wholeheartedly with the first part, but not with the second part, i.e. "which had become more fixed over time". Her evidence against the second part is her citation of Brown's article - citing the article is sufficient; she doesn't need to go into further detail for her argument to work.

How do I know that Claire would agree wholeheartedly that "in 2 Tim ... Paul is concerned for the preservation of apostolic tradition"? Because that's what she says earlier in her essay, where she carefully distinguishes the reality of "traditioning" concepts in the New Testament from the meaning of the verb "teach":

"Secondly, we need to clear away the misconception that a rejection of Dicksons' view is necessarily also a denial of the existence of traditions, and/or a denial of the oral spread of the early Christian movement. Neither of these things hangs on Dickson's theory.

There is ample evidence in the New Testament that there were traditions in the early Christian movement, and that these traditions were handed on and received, and preserved and guarded. In fact, there was well-recognized vocabulary for just these activities that is found both inside and outside the New Testament. Rejecting John's theory does not deny this; it simply rejects his claim that the word translated "teach" in 1 Timothy 2:12 is a limited technical term for such an activity."

And later, when discussing 2 Timothy 2:2:

"Paul's first concern is with the preservation of the apostolic message ... The second concern has to do with the ministry of God's word ... These twin concerns are reflected in the fact that Timothy's 'entrusting' was to be directed at a select few (the "faithful men") who could be relied upon to preserve the message. They in turn would teach the 'others', a different group from them, and one where reliability is not a prerequisite."

7 mins · [Like](#)



Lionel Windsor In conclusion: To repeat what I said earlier: it's vital for understanding Claire's essay, including this particular section on Wegenast, to remember what her main point is. Her key dispute is with the way in which John imports wholesale the semantic categories for "traditioning"--understood by John to mean passing on fixed words intact--into the term "teach". Remember that John in his books is not simply arguing that "teach" means "passing on and laying down traditions" in a general sense; rather he is arguing that it means passing on particular sets of words verbatim and intact - i.e. the "large collection of memorised sayings and stories about Jesus" along with "authoritative rulings and insights", in a way paralleled in the Pharisaic oral tradition.

Indeed, this is the key issue behind the later part of Claire's section on Wegenast--i.e. the part which John doesn't quote on his blog and which discusses the TDNT:

"Significantly, the article on didasko (and related words) in the other major English theological dictionary (Theological Dictionary of the

New Testament) does not identify any special or changed meaning for the word in its New Testament usage from its use in non-biblical texts, and says instead that "As concerns meaning, the term has the unambiguous sense of 'to teach', 'to instruct'" Also, this article does not see any special connection between didasko and 'traditions'. On the contrary, it consistently identifies the Scriptures, along with the apostolic message, as the content associated with this vocabulary in Acts and the Epistles, which in turn reflects an existing and longstanding connection between Scripture and didasko."

John missed this key thrust of Claire's essay in his earlier blog post on this very issue (i.e. the issue of whether his understanding is "novel") - and his failure to come to terms with Claire's main point substantially affects most of the other blog posts he has written on the topic, including this one. But, as I've also said, I don't think a blow-by-blow account against every incorrect element in John's blog posts is going to be particularly productive right now, especially since John's views on the nature of the connection between ancient teaching and modern preaching have been shifting anyway. So again I'll urge people to read Claire's essay--not just the bit on Wegenast, which is a relatively minor part of the essay--but the whole thing.

7 mins · [Like](#)

