

CALVIN, MYSTICAL UNION, AND SPIRITUALITY

Clive S. Chin*

Mysticism in John Calvin? This question comes somewhat as a surprise to those who are familiar with Calvin studies. In fact, the issue of mysticism in Calvin has prompted one writer to ask: "*Gibt es in der Theologie des Genfer Reformators einen 'mystischen' Grundzug, der seine oft—wie man meint—'gesetzlichen' Ansichten konterkariert?*"¹ Böttger's question raises not only the possible existence of a mystical strain, but also an inherent tension—between the warm, mystical side and the cold, logical side—in the Reformer's theology.

Indeed, older portraits of Calvin in the secondary literature of the past century have often depicted a cold, austere, rigid, logical dogmatician devoid of the experiential dimension of religious faith.² More recently, as if to correct this caricature and underscore the preferred softened portrait of a warm, personal, and experiential Calvin, a few writers make the bold claim to have identified alleged mystical strains in Calvin's theology. One particular strain concerns Calvin's use of the "*unio mystica*" element in his writings.³ This essay seeks to

*Rev. Dr. Clive S. Chin, Ph.D., is Full-Time Lecturer of Systematic Theology at TTGST. Prior to joining the faculty, he served as a pastor in the U.S.A. for over seventeen years. His research interests include Biblical theology, Prolegomena (theological methods), Reformation thought (Calvin), and Christian spirituality.

¹Paul Christoph Böttger, "Gott, der Brunnquell aller Güter: gibt es einen 'mystischen' Grundzug in der Theologie Calvins?" in *Reformiertes Erbe: Festschrift für Gottfried W. Locher zu seinem 80. Geburtstag*, ed. Heiko A. Oberman, Ernst Saxer, Alfred Schindler, and Heinzpeter Stucki, vol. 2 (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1993), 60.

²The publications are too voluminous to list here. For a helpful historiography on Calvin scholarship, see Richard C. Gamble, "Calvin as Theologian and Exegete: Is There Anything New?" *Calvin Theological Journal* 23 (November 1988): 186-87.

³Dennis E. Tamburello, *Union with Christ: John Calvin and the Mysticism of Bernard of Clairvaux* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1994); Bernard McGinn, "Mysticism," in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Reformation*, ed. Hans Hillerbrand, vol. 3 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 122; I. John Hesselink, "Calvin, the Holy Spirit, and Mystical Union," *Perspectives: A Journal of Reformed Thought* 13 (January 1998): 15-18; and Jae Sung Kim, "*Unio cum Christo*: The Work of the Holy Spirit in Calvin's Theology," (Ph.D. diss., Westminster Theological Seminary, 1998), 273-77.

clarify Calvin's meaning of this term in the historical and theological context of his writings, as well as its implications for his spirituality.⁴

MYSTICISM IN CALVIN

Before we turn our attention to Calvin, I would like to briefly survey the secondary literature, alleging mysticism in Calvin's use of *unio mystica*. McGinn, a scholar who has written extensively on the history of Western Christian mysticism, argues that Calvin's use of the term *unio mystica* in the *Institutes* (3.11.10) does constitute a mystical element. Noting that Calvin often describes this term as a spiritual marriage between Christ and the believer (2.8.18), McGinn characterizes this union as "an experience of faith."⁵ He does not, however, elaborate on its nature and Calvin's use of the term in the theological context of the *Institutes*.

In a more nuanced article, Hesselink rightly points out that Calvin's understanding of *unio mystica* is effected by faith on the part of the believer, and is articulated in the context of Calvin's soteriology. Hesselink agrees with Niesel that, for Calvin, the term "has nothing to do with the absorption of the pious mystic into the sphere of the divine being."⁶ Rather, the believer's mystical faith-union with Christ, made possible by the Holy Spirit, yields "new insights, deeper understanding, and specific direction for our lives."⁷

Similarly, Jae Sung Kim maintains that "union with Christ" is the important soteriological theme in Calvin's theology, where the Holy Spirit is treated as the agent applying secretly the work of redemption in the hearts of believers to unite them with Christ.⁸ The nature of the believer's union with Christ includes: (1) its incomprehensibility (that is, its invisibility, inconceivability, and ineffability),⁹ and (2) its spiritual characteristic as opposed to a physical union.¹⁰ Although both

⁴See, also, Clive S. Chin, "*Unio Mystica and Imitatio Christi: The Two-Dimensional Nature of John Calvin's Spirituality*," (Ph.D. diss., Dallas Theological Seminary, 2002).

⁵McGinn, 122.

⁶Hesselink, 18. Cf. Wilhelm Niesel, *The Theology of Calvin*, trans. Harold Knight (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1956), 126.

⁷Hesselink, 18.

⁸Kim, 134-55.

⁹Ibid., 136.

¹⁰Ibid., 143.

Hesselink and Kim are helpful in that they clarify Calvin's use of *unio mystica* in the soteriological context of his theology and its concomitant doctrine, the role of the Holy Spirit in the believer's life, they do little to explain how this theme plays out in Calvin's spirituality.

Perhaps the fullest and most striking study on Calvin's notion of *unio mystica* and its impact on his spirituality is offered by Dennis Tamburello. In a recent work, Tamburello compares Calvin's notion of *unio mystica* with that of the Cistercian abbot and mystical writer, Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153). Tamburello's thesis is that there are many similarities or parallels between Calvin and Bernard on the doctrines of anthropology, justification, and, above all, *unio mystica* to make a strong case for mystical strains in Calvin's theology. Tamburello maintains that, although mystical strains are present in his thought, Calvin is not a mystic in the sense that he does not regard very highly the role of contemplation in the Christian life. However, what validates or drives Tamburello's assessment of mystical strains in Calvin is his insistence that the definition (or redefinition) of mysticism is much broader than contemplation.¹¹

The purpose of Tamburello's study is to counter the traditional views of Calvin as a theologian who is hostile to mysticism, an attitude that seems to be most obvious within the Reformed tradition.¹² After all, Calvin did have some "choice" words to say in the *Institutes* about a few mystical writers. In a letter to the Reformed congregation at Frankfurt, Calvin refers to the *Theologia Deutsch* only to exhort his reader "in the name of God to flee like the plague all those who try to infect you with such trash."¹³ He also did not hold in high regard Pseudo-Dionysius, who has done nothing more than "divert the ears with chatter"; whereas the theologian's task is "to strengthen

¹¹Tamburello, 104. See, also, idem, *Ordinary Mysticism* (New York: Paulist, 1996).

¹²For example, see Georgia Harkness, *Mysticism: Its Meaning and Message* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1973), 124; Albrecht Ritschl, *The Christian Doctrine of Justification and Reconciliation*, ed. H. R. Mackintosh and A. B. Macaulay, vol. 1 (New York: Scribner's, 1900), 113; and Wilhelm Kolffhaus, *Christusgemeinschaft bei Johannes Calvin: Beiträge zur Geschichte und Lehre der Reformierten Kirche* (Neukirchen, Germany: Buchhandlung des Erziehungsvereins, 1939), 126-33.

¹³John Calvin, *Ioannis Calvini Opera quae supersunt omnia*, ed. Wilhelm Baum, Edward Cunitz, and Edward Reuss, 59 vols. (Brunswick: Schwetschke, 1863-1900), 47.442.

consciences by teaching things true, sure, and profitable.”¹⁴ Finally, Calvin’s polemic against Andreas Osiander’s notion of “essential righteousness” certainly serves as a stern critique of mystical notions of ontological “absorptions into God.”¹⁵

Tamburello’s examination of Calvin’s notion of *unio mystica* centers on two texts in the *Institutes*: 3.11.10 and 2.12.7. Here, Calvin introduces important elements for his description of the nature of this union, such as “engrafting,” “putting on Christ,” “participation,” and “communion.” In harmony with most scholars (particularly Kolffhaus) who are cautious to admit mysticism in Calvin, Tamburello rightly describes *unio mystica* as a spiritual, yet real, union between the believer and Christ. Although Calvin does speak of the believer having a share in the “substance” of Christ (Eph. 5:30), Tamburello makes the important observation that Calvin is not referring to a gross mixture of substances. Rather, this is a spiritual, real union because it is the power of the Holy Spirit who engrafts the believer to Christ’s body.¹⁶

Tamburello concludes his study with a list of agreements between Bernard and Calvin on *unio mystica*. The similarities or parallels include: (1) union is the total effect of grace, not of works; (2) the nature of union is spiritual and does not involve blending of essences; (3) union is a unity of wills with the cognitive component of faith; (4) union involves unselfish and active love directed toward God and neighbor; (5) union results in an experiential knowledge of God; (6) union contains a Trinitarian element; (7) union occurs in the context of the church and sacraments; (8) union will be consummated in the final resurrection as sanctification is a lifelong process of growth; and (9) union uses the image of the spiritual marriage.¹⁷

While Tamburello should be commended for his valuable contribution to Calvin studies, his work is not without methodological problems. First, Tamburello’s use of Jean Gerson’s definition of mysticism as the reference for his comparative study of Bernard and Calvin is anachronistic simply because Gerson belonged neither to the time of Bernard, nor the context of Calvin. Gerson states, “Mystical

¹⁴Idem, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, trans. Ford Lewis Battles, ed. John T. McNeill, 2 vols. (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1960), 1.14.4.

¹⁵Ibid., 3.11.

¹⁶Idem, *Commentary on Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians*, trans. John Owen (Edinburgh: The Calvin Translation Society, 1843), 209.

¹⁷Tamburello, *Union with Christ*, 105-6.

theology is experiential knowledge of God attained through the union of spiritual affection with Him. Through this union the words of the Apostle are fulfilled: 'He who clings to God is one spirit with Him (1 Cor. 6:17).'¹⁸ Tamburello's use of Gerson's definition of mysticism is simply too broad in that it can encompass any affective experience with God. When the umbrella is that broad, one can hardly be surprised to find that both Bernard and Calvin can fit quite comfortably under it, while more eccentric or radical mystics would be excluded from this definition. Affective experience is certainly just one dimension of mysticism.

The second methodological problem concerns Tamburello's seeming lack of sensitivity to Bernard and Calvin's respective historical and theological contexts. What does it mean, for example, that Calvin stresses faith as essential to *unio mystica* as opposed to Bernard who understands love as fundamental? Is Calvin's understanding of engrafting into Christ really the kind of union of which the medieval mystics, including Bernard, speak? These questions point to a basic problem when it comes to comparing two personalities who lived and wrote in very different times, settings, and contexts. Bernard articulated his notion of *unio mystica* in the context of monasticism and asceticism. Pennington writes, "If mystical experience is the key element in Cistercian fathers such mysticism could not exist without an experience of ascetical living. One must be in touch with the depths of human misery in order to be properly disposed to ascend to the heights of union with God. The mystical writings will be intelligible only if we first understand the ascetical pages that go before them and prepare for them."¹⁹ Calvin, on the other hand, despised monasticism and articulated his notion of *unio mystica* in the soteriological context of his polemic against Osiander.

¹⁸Jean Gerson, *Selections from "A Deo exivit," "Contra curiositatem" and "De mystica theologia speculative,"* ed. and trans. Steven Ozment (Leiden: Brill, 1969), 48-49, and quoted by Tamburello, *Union with Christ*, 11.

¹⁹Basil Pennington, "The Cistercians," in *Christian Spirituality: Origins to the Twelfth Century*, ed. Bernard McGinn, John Meyendorff, and Jean LeClercq (New York: Crossroad, 1986), 208-10.

CALVIN ON UNION WITH CHRIST

By way of noting the differences between Bernard and Calvin on *unio mystica*, we hopefully gain a better idea of what Calvin did not mean by his use of the term. We are now ready to examine his meaning of the term in its historical and theological context.

The confusion over meaning has to do, in part, with Calvin's use of terminology. Wendel makes an important observation that through his positive use of the term "substance" in his explanations on the nature of the believer's union with Christ, Calvin came dangerously close to the notion of a substantial union of the believer with Christ.²⁰ However, Calvin became more cautious and precise with his wording after he had read some of Andreas Osiander's writings in 1550 or 1551. Osiander advocated the believer's mystical, physical, or substantial union with Christ. It was not until the 1559 edition of the *Institutes* that Calvin clarified the technical meaning of *unio mystica* as not involving any fusion of substances.

Calvin's Polemic Against Osiander

Among the many factors that prompted Calvin to revise his *Institutes*, the definitive 1559 edition offers a window into the theological controversies and pastoral concerns of his day, in particular, the polemic against the mystical speculation of Osiander (1498-1552).²¹ Although Calvin's disagreement with Osiander focused on the overall doctrine of justification and the definition of the *imago Dei*, a product of this conflict sheds light on Calvin's distinct understanding of the nature of *unio mystica*.

²⁰In Francois Wendel, *Calvin: Origins and Development of His Religious Thought*, trans. Philip Mairet (New York: Harper and Row, 1963), 235-39, the author cites a number of passages from Calvin's commentaries (including John 17:21; Eph. 5:29-30; 1 Cor. 6:15) and various editions of the *Institutes* (e.g., 3.2.24 [1545]; 3.11.10 [1559]) where this occurs.

²¹The literature on Osiander's theology is rather limited. See James Weis, "Calvin Versus Osiander on Justification," *The Springfielder* 29 (Autumn 1965): 31-47; Patricia Wilson-Kastner, "Andreas Osiander's Theology of Grace in the Perspective of the Influence of Augustine of Hippo," *Sixteenth-Century Journal* 10, no. 2 (1979): 73-91; and David Steinmetz, *Reformers in the Wings* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977), 91-97.

Osiandris

As a younger contemporary of Luther, Osiander was a Lutheran Reformer of Nuremberg and then of Königsberg. He later became a professor of theology at Königsberg. Many of his contemporaries, including Calvin, objected to Osiander's views on justification and grace, claiming that: (1) he was a papist in disguise; (2) he denied the forensic interpretation of justification; (3) his notion of the indwelling of essential righteousness eliminated free will; (4) he misunderstood both the relationship between the natures of Christ and that among the persons of the trinity.²²

Regardless of how Osiander may or may not have been misunderstood by his opponents, his theology, often referred to as "Osiandris," was indeed unique. First, Osiander understands justification, in its most basic form, as the indwelling of Christ in the soul by faith. That is, justification is the leading of the soul from sin, which is death, to the life found in God. Through faith (*fiducia*), God justifies the individual by reviving the soul through the indwelling Christ. Justifying faith is not a created effect which God places on us or a reality extrinsic to the person. Rather, it is the effect which God gives or places in believers at the same time he is indwelling the soul. In other words, justification and vivification are indistinguishable, according to Osiander.²³

The divine indwelling of Christ in the believer leads to a second aspect in Osiander's doctrine of grace. In contrast to Luther who believed that salvation is accomplished by Jesus Christ's divinity and humanity, Osiander asserts that it is only through the divinity of Christ indwelling in us that we are saved. In that way, the indwelling Christ is God's actual infusion of an "essential" righteousness in believers, which justifies them.²⁴ This deep relationship or reality is described by Osiander as "union with Christ," where believers are "being made partakers of the divine nature."²⁵

The view of being made partakers of the divine nature has strong implications for a third aspect of Osiander's theology, the believer's sanctification and Christian living. Osiander asserts here that the

²²Wilson-Kastner, 87.

²³Ibid., 81.

²⁴Ibid., 82. Cf. Weis, 34.

²⁵Wilson-Kastner, 83.

Godhead is the divine essence of one's sanctification. One must actually be regenerated (that is, made righteous to some degree) in order to be justified. Osiander's view of sanctification can be described as being quite "Augustinian"; whereby one's transformation by grace is real, enabling the believer to do works which are truly good in themselves.²⁶

The Early Reformed Doctrine of Justification

Calvin's polemic against Osiander involves these three aspects and their ramifications. Before describing Calvin's response to Osiander's theology, it would be helpful to understand the development or derivation of Calvin's doctrine of justification as it relates to his notion of *unio mystica*. Two significant developments can be enumerated here. First, in his polemic against Osiander, Calvin developed an explicit doctrine of forensic justification.²⁷ Calvin's understanding of justification as "to acquit of guilt him who is accused" certainly has a legal connotation.²⁸ That means the believer is made righteous in justification, not on account of his own (or an infused) righteousness, but on account of the righteousness of Christ from without.

The notion of a righteousness from without can be attributed to Luther who, after he departed from the *via moderna* in 1515, developed a major theological breakthrough (his *theologia crucis*), insisting that a person cannot initiate the process of justification. Herein lies the root to his subsequent theology of justification by faith and his unique notion

²⁶Ibid., 86. Cf. Weis, 34.

²⁷*Institutes* 3.11.11. Jonathan H. Rainbow contends that neither belief in *sola gratia*, *sola fides*, or the righteousness of God qualifies a person as a Protestant. They key defining feature of the Reformation doctrine of justification is the idea of imputation. Cf. "Double Grace: John Calvin's View of the Relationship of Justification and Sanctification," *Ex Auditu* 5 (1989): 101. According to McGrath, there is a "broad consensus" among theologians regarding the salient elements that distinguished the Protestant Reformation from medieval Roman Catholicism. They include: (1) the understanding of justification as a forensic declaration, a change in the sinner's status rather than in the sinner's nature; (2) a systematic distinction between justification and sanctification; and (3) the identification of the alien, imputed righteousness of Christ as the immediate, efficient cause of justification. Cf. Alister E. McGrath, *Iustitia Dei: A History of the Christian Doctrine of Justification*, 2d ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 182.

²⁸*Institutes* 3.11.3.

of *iustitia Christi aliena*.²⁹ Believers, according to Luther, are justified by laying hold of a righteousness that is not our own, the *iustitia Christi aliena*, but it is mercifully “reckoned” to us by God. In the initial phase of his reforming efforts, he did not have what would eventually be known as a strict concept of *iustitia imputata*. Luther’s anthropological presuppositions, however, necessitated that justification be conceived extrinsically.³⁰ For Luther, the righteousness of God emphasized the humility of the heart, which stood at the center of the Christian life. Humility, the opposite of pride, requires perfected self-knowledge, a theme he undoubtedly learned from Bernard.³¹ For Luther, when believers are united to Christ by faith, Christ’s *proprietas* of righteousness becomes our *possessio*. At the same time, our *proprietas* of sin becomes the *possessio* of Christ. By faith, Christ takes away our sin and makes this exchange possible.³² This distinction seemingly anticipates the irreconcilable “impartation” and “imputation” concepts. The setting was laid for Philip Melanchthon, Luther’s close friend and associate, to develop a formal concept of the imputation of righteousness to the believer.

It was Melanchthon who formulated a doctrine of forensic justification, which became normative in Protestantism. The concept of “imputation,” however, was not unique to Melanchthon. It was Erasmus who first used a forensic concept of *acceptilatio* (the verbal remission of a debt without payment) in his 1516 New Testament as an illustration of the meaning of the verb *imputare*.³³ This insight on the origins of this concept would certainly account for Melanchthon’s emphasis on forensic justification in his writings. It is clear, on the one hand, that Luther is credited with the idea of the extrinsic character of justifying righteousness, which is foundational to the notion of forensic

²⁹McGrath, *Iustitia Dei*, 197-98; idem, *Luther’s Theology of the Cross* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1985). McGrath’s view of Luther’s *theologia crucis* as a breakthrough must be balanced by the perspective that Luther was, to a certain extent, indebted to medieval piety. See Walther von Loewenich, *Luther’s Theology of the Cross*, trans. Herbert Bouman (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1976), 50, 159-65, where von Loewenich acknowledges medieval mysticism’s influence on the younger Luther.

³⁰McGrath, *Iustitia Dei*, 201.

³¹von Loewenich, 132-33.

³²Heiko Oberman, “‘*Iustitia Christi*’ and ‘*Iustitia Dei*’: Luther and the Scholastic Doctrines of Justification,” *Harvard Theological Review* 59, no. 1 (January 1966): 19-26.

³³McGrath, *Iustitia Dei*, 211.

justification. On the other hand, the origin of the notion of forensic justification, or the idea of a legal imputation of righteousness, is attributed to Erasmus in his use of *acceptilatio* as his analogical explanation of the term *imputare*. More importantly, it was Melanchthon who conceived a proper understanding of forensic justification by linking Erasmus' interpretation of imputation with Luther's notion of *iustitia Christi aliena*.³⁴ The identification of the alien, imputed righteousness of Christ serves as the immediate cause of justification.

The early development of the Reformed doctrine of justification can be attributed to Calvin, who articulated an explicit doctrine of forensic justification as early as the 1536 *Institutes*. Following the Erasmian humanistic tradition of his predecessors, such as Zwingli and Bucer, Calvin's discussion on imputation parallels Erasmus' *Novum Instrumentum Omne* (1516).³⁵ According to Calvin, believers are justified when they are accepted by God as if they were righteous. Most likely, though, Calvin adopted Melanchthon's incorporation of the Erasmian term, "imputation," into his concept of justification. Calvin certainly does not hesitate to assert a strong doctrine of forensic justification in his polemic against Osiander.³⁶ Calvin's understanding of justification as purely forensic or the imputation of an alien righteousness from without can, therefore, be properly understood as having its roots in Lutheranism, and ultimately, in Erasmian humanism.³⁷

Second, in his polemic against Osiander, Calvin focuses on the *acceptatio divina*, a notion which resembles that of the *via moderna* and the *schola Augustiniana moderna*. As there is no basis in humanity for God's divine acceptance of us, our righteousness in justification is always *extra seipsum*; the believer's righteousness is always *non in nobis sed in Christo*.³⁸ Although Calvin may have been influenced by Melanchthon in this regard, he, nevertheless, preserves an important aspect of Luther's understanding of justification, the believer's personal

³⁴Ibid., 218.

³⁵Ibid., 223.

³⁶*Institutes* 3.11.2.

³⁷Rainbow, "Double Grace," 100-1. Cf. Alister E. McGrath, "Humanist Elements in the Early Reformed Doctrine of Justification," *Archiv für Reformationgeschichte* 73, no. 1 (1982): 14-15.

³⁸*Institutes* 3.11.23.

union with Christ, which Melancthon did not incorporate in his theology. In particular, Calvin speaks of the believer's being grafted into Christ, so that the concept of "incorporation" (being in Christ) becomes central in his understanding of justification. The *iustitia Christi*, on the basis of which a person is justified, is treated as if it were the believer's possession within the context of the intimate personal relationship of Christ with the believer.³⁹ In this respect, Calvin's positing of the idea of justification on the basis of mystical union surpasses the Lutheran idea of mere imputation. Luther's notion of mystical union, though present in his writings, was never developed in his theology.⁴⁰

The uniqueness and development of Calvin's doctrine of justification, along with his response to Osiander, must be viewed in the context of the development of the doctrine of justification within the Reformed church. On this matter, Erasmian humanism's influence on the origin of the Reformed church was decisive. Erasmus' moral understanding of justification had tremendous influence on Zwingli, Bucer, and Farel. Erasmus' *locus iustificationis* is, of course, the cross of Christ. By this, however, Erasmus reveals his continuity with the *devotio moderna*, rather than anticipate Luther's *theologia crucis*. His understanding of justification focuses more on moral aspects of the Christian life, in which regeneration assumes a higher priority over justification.⁴¹

Zwingli, a proponent of Erasmus' *philosophia Christi*, regards justification primarily from a humanist standpoint with its emphasis on moral and ethical integrity in opposition to religious ceremonies and ecclesiastical rituals.⁴² Upon a closer examination of his theology, he actually uses the term, "justification" rarely, preferring to speak of "regeneration." It is also clear that his understanding of justification depends on regeneration.⁴³

³⁹McGrath, *Iustitia Dei*, 224.

⁴⁰*Ibid.*, "Humanist Elements in the Early Reformed Doctrine of Justification," 15.

⁴¹*Ibid.*, 6-7.

⁴²McGrath, *Iustitia Dei*, 220; G. R. Potter, *Zwingli* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 15, 43; Ulrich G  bler, *Huldrych Zwingli: His Life and Work*, trans. Ruth C. L. Gritsch (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986), 39-40.

⁴³McGrath, "Humanist Elements in the Early Reformed Doctrine of Justification," 8.

While inclining toward Erasmian moralism, Bucer combines a forensic understanding of justification with a doctrine of moral justification. The primary aspect of justification involves forgiveness of sin and imputed righteousness. A secondary aspect of justification involves moral justification or a believer being made righteous. Thus, moral action is placed under the heading of justification; whereas, others before him assigned it a place under the heading of regeneration or sanctification. Bucer's unique rearrangement is understood to be a distinct element in his *ordo salutis*. Unlike later Reformed theologians such as Calvin, Bucer does not include sanctification in the *ordo salutis*. Thus, in essence, what Calvin terms as sanctification, Bucer terms as "secondary justification."⁴⁴ Undoubtedly, Bucer's understanding of justification allows for the Roman Catholic notion of inherent righteousness.

If Calvin were dissatisfied with Bucer's moral idea of justification, it is ironic that the source for his correction found its basis in Erasmian humanism, the very tradition to which Bucer was indebted. However, Calvin's solution for the decidedly moralistic tone of Bucer's doctrine of justification was to replace Bucer's "secondary justification" with sanctification and interpret both justification and sanctification as distinct aspects of the believer's incorporation into Christ in a mystical union.⁴⁵ While Bucer speaks of an *iustificatio duplex* and rightly understands the inseparability of justification and sanctification, Calvin, the inheritor of this theme, prevents the undermining of the forensic character of justification.⁴⁶

The main discontinuity between medieval and Reformation religious thought is in the understanding of justification as a forensic concept distinct from regeneration. The origin of this new concept was first seen in Melancthon, who received it from Erasmus' *Novum instrumentum* of 1516. Through this important source, the distinguishing feature of the Protestant doctrine of justification owes its

⁴⁴Idem, *Iustitia Dei*, 222. See, also, idem, "Humanist Elements in the Early Reformed Doctrine of Justification," 10-17.

⁴⁵Ibid., 14.

⁴⁶Willem van't Spijker, "The Influence of Bucer on Calvin as Becomes Evident from the *Institutes*," in *John Calvin's Institutes: His Opus Magnum*: Proceedings of the Second South African Congress for Calvin Research, July 31-August 3, 1984 (Potchefstroom, South Africa: Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education, 1986), 127-32.

inspiration to Erasmian humanism, the very tradition from which Calvin sought to distance himself. Indeed, the doctrine of justification associated with the Lutheran and Reformed confessions constitutes a genuine *nova*.⁴⁷

Calvin's Solution to Osiandris

In view of this brief background on the development of Calvin's understanding of justification, we are now prepared to examine his polemic against Osiander. Specifically, Calvin takes issue with Osiander for his alleged advocacy of a Manichaen notion of sanctification, the possession of a part of divine substance as the means of holiness. More importantly, Calvin attacks Osiander's understanding of imputation of justice to be the indwelling of the essential righteousness of Christ in the believer.⁴⁸ That is, Osiander believes that Christ's divinity becomes a person's essential righteousness when the Word is received in Faith. Calvin's critique is that Osiander views justification not only as "imputed" righteousness, but also as "infused" righteousness. Osiander argues that God justified, not by pardoning, but by regeneration. He scoffs at those who understand justification as a legal term because a believer must actually be righteous. Osiander is particularly concerned with the believer's obedience to Christ in view of the indwelling Christ within him.⁴⁹ As such, Osiander regards God's righteousness as both imputation and transformation. Calvin adamantly rejects the notion of "double righteousness" in justification.

For Calvin, justification is by the imputation of Christ's righteousness alone. The benefits of justification, that is, sanctification and personal holiness, are different in that no spiritual works can be accounted for the power of justification through faith.⁵⁰ However, Calvin is willing to agree with Osiander that the believer is united with Christ in salvation, and that faith by itself does not justify, but only

⁴⁷McGrath, "Forerunners of the Reformation: A Critical Examination of the Evidence for Precursors of the Reformation Doctrines of Justification," *Harvard Theological Review* 75, no. 2 (1982): 240-42. McGrath points out that Oberman's thesis of "forerunners of the Reformation" may not apply to the doctrine of justification. Among the key discontinuities between the medieval period and the Reformation is the understanding of justification as a forensic concept.

⁴⁸Weis, 40.

⁴⁹*Ibid.*, 35.

⁵⁰*Institutes* 3.11.14.

Christ receives in faith.⁵¹ Having acknowledged this, Calvin vehemently disagrees with Osiander's views regarding: (1) ignorance of the primary nature of justification as the forgiveness of sin, and (2) mingling of the divine nature with the human one in mystical union.⁵² Kastner posits: "It seems to be this mingling of natures which is Calvin's central objection to Osiander's theories."⁵³

To be sure, Calvin's polemic against Osiander's mystical inclination concerns the nature, rather than the reality, of the union of Christ with the believer.⁵⁴ To Calvin, Osiander understands the union to be physical, a commingling of Christ (*commixtio substantiae*) with believers.⁵⁵ Calvin, however, regards the believer's union with Christ to be spiritual. Moreover, Calvin takes issue with Osiander's view of essential righteousness which, allied with his Lutheran doctrine of ubiquity in the Lord's Supper, sets forth a concept of justification that depends upon a mixture of the divine and human essences. In Calvin's judgment, Osiander confused regeneration and justification.⁵⁶ How, then, does Calvin regard the relationship of justification to good works? Osiander teaches that God justified not only by pardoning, but by regeneration.⁵⁷ That is, a pure understanding of a forensic, imputed righteousness necessarily undermines Christian ethics or morality. How can believers be reckoned righteous, if they are not righteous or holy in actuality?

Calvin answers Osiander's rejection of imputed righteousness with his distinct notion of "double grace" (forensic grace and transforming grace or justification and sanctification) held in tandem.⁵⁸ The believer is reckoned righteous and reconciled to God through Christ's blamelessness. In parallel to this reality, the believer is also sanctified or transformed by Christ's spirit that he may cultivate holiness. It is from this basis that the Christian good works flow. As one can see, sanctification, for Calvin, does not grow justification as if it were a branch growing from its root. Rather, the faith which appropriates

⁵¹Ibid., 3.11.5-12.

⁵²Ibid., 3.11.10-12.

⁵³Kastner, 88.

⁵⁴McGrath, *Iustitia Dei*, 224; and Weis, 39.

⁵⁵*Institutes* 3.11.5, 10.

⁵⁶Weis, 41. Cf. *Institutes* 3.11.5, 6, 10.

⁵⁷Rainbow, 101.

⁵⁸Weis, 38, 42.

imputed righteousness also appropriates the transforming grace of the Holy Spirit.⁵⁹ God's grace for regeneration is distinct but never separated from his grace of imputation.⁶⁰ The two aspects of God's grace do not overlap but they always parallel each other. Moreover, Calvin's notion of "double grace" is distinct from Osiander's notion of "double righteousness" in that Calvin rejects "infused righteousness" as a basis on which God justifies. Calvin is willing to describe God's transforming work "grace," but not "righteousness."⁶¹ For Calvin, justification and sanctification are not root and branch, but two distinct branches from a common root: the believer's union with Christ.⁶² According to Calvin, sanctification is salvation just as much as justification is salvation. Believers are accepted by God because they are engrafted into Christ by faith, not because of any infused righteousness.⁶³

The correlation between justification and sanctification is indeed a distinct aspect of Calvin's soteriology, one which he formulated to rectify the abuses of Osiander's mystical theology. The ingenuity of Calvin's correlation theologically achieves the following: (1) it protects the integrity of imputed righteousness in justification, (2) it avoids Osiander's charge of antinomianism, and (3) it reflects Christ's work to both save and transform believers into his own holy stature.⁶⁴

In the concept of mystical union with Christ, Calvin holds in tension the objective givenness of this theme and its subjective appropriation while refusing to separate the two. Christ does not give himself to the believer in an objective justification only. He also communicates subjectively in sanctification. He unites himself to the believer in a spiritual and mystical union. In the mystical union, the *insitio in Christum*, justification and sanctification are closely joined together. To believe in Christ is also to receive him.⁶⁵

The strength of Calvin's understanding of the doctrine of salvation, thus, becomes clear in that it is conceived Christologically by

⁵⁹*Institutes* 3.2.8.

⁶⁰*Ibid.*, 3.3.1.

⁶¹Rainbow, 102.

⁶²*Ibid.*, 103.

⁶³*Institutes* 3.13.4, 5.

⁶⁴Rainbow, 104.

⁶⁵Marcel, "The Relation Between Justification and Sanctification in Calvin's Thought," 136.

integrating justification and sanctification. Through this integration, Calvin jettisons not only the moral concepts of justification associated with Zwingli and Bucer, but the notion of the believer's physical union with Christ (*commixtio substantiae*) associated with Osiander.⁶⁶ The ingenuity of this development is Calvin's ability to justify his emphasis upon *iudicium Dei secundum veritatem* through the application of the principle of the *unio mystica* between Christ and the believer, as well as the federal relationship between them, so that the *iustitia aliena* of the former may be imputed to the latter.⁶⁷

The Nature of *Unio Mystica* in Calvin's Theology

Calvin's notion of *unio mystica* is much more than the moralism of Erasmus, Zwingli, and Bucer. This concept, as clarified in Calvin's polemic against Osiander, is formulated in the matrix of biblical theology, and articulated in his defense of the distinct, yet inseparable relationship between justification and sanctification. For Calvin, *unio mystica* can be considered a new, scripturally-based, theological metaphysics in rejection of a moralistic understanding of justification. Calvin's doctrine of *unio mystica* is one of the most consistently defining features of his theology and ethics, if not the single most important teaching which animates the whole of his theology.⁶⁸

What is the nature of *unio mystica*, according to Calvin? Two levels of this union can be identified. The second or consequent level of union presupposes the first. This includes the incarnation, the hypostatic union of the eternal Word with humanity which believers share with all other people. The communication of properties applies to this level, the hypostatic union. This level of union is the primary subject of discussion in Calvin's theology.⁶⁹

⁶⁶McGrath, *Iustitia Dei*, 224.

⁶⁷*Ibid.*, 231-32.

⁶⁸D. Willis-Watkins, "The *Unio Mystica* and the Assurance of Faith According to Calvin," in *Calvin: Erbe und Auftrag: Festschrift für Wilhelm Neuser zu seinem 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Willem van't Spijker (Kampen: Kok, 1991), 78; Charles Partee, "Calvin's Central Dogma Again," *Sixteenth-Century Journal* 18 (Summer 1987): 191-99; and Brian G. Armstrong, "Duplex cognitio Dei, or? The Problem and Relation of Structure, Form, and Purpose in Calvin's Theology," in *Probing the Reformed Tradition*, ed. Elsie Anne McKee and Brian Armstrong (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1989), 135-53.

⁶⁹*Institutes* 2.13-14.

The second level comes about through the agency of the Holy Spirit, who is the bond which unites believers with Christ.⁷⁰ The marvelous exchange by which what is Christ's becomes ours applies to this level of union. At this level of union, Christ is joined with members of his body.⁷¹ We do not, therefore, "contemplate him outside ourselves from afar in order that his righteousness may be imputed to us; because we put on Christ, we are engrafted into his body, and he deigns to make us one with him."⁷² Furthermore, Calvin states, "Our engrafting signified not only our conformity to the example of the cross but also the secret union which we grow together with Him, in such a way, that He revives us by His Spirit, and transfers His powers to us."⁷³

It is true that Calvin uses potentially misleading terminology in describing the believer's union with Christ. In commenting on Ephesians 5:30, Calvin maintains that the spiritual union which believers have with Christ is not a matter of soul alone, but of body also, so that we are flesh of his flesh.⁷⁴ Moreover, while Calvin is willing, on occasion, to use the term "substance" in a positive sense (1 Cor. 6:15),⁷⁵ his refutation of Osiander precludes the view of ontological identification of believers with Christ. Calvin clarifies his position by insisting that the union with Christ is effected, not by the inflowing of substance, but by the grace and power of the Spirit. Thus, one could conclude that, for Calvin, the believer's mystical union with Christ is not mystical in the sense of moral imitation, nor substantial in the ontological sense, but real in a genuine, spiritual sense.⁷⁶ Indeed, the nature of this union is not adequately explained by Calvin because it is an ultimate mystery of the Christian faith.

⁷⁰Willis-Watkins, 78-79. Cf. *Institutes* 3.1.1.

⁷¹*Ibid.*, 3.2.24.

⁷²*Ibid.*, 3.11.10.

⁷³Commenting on Rom. 6:5, Calvin writes: "*quia insitio non exempli tantem conformitatem designat, sed arcanam coniunctionem, per quam cum ipso coaluimus, ita ut nos Spiritus suo vegetat, eisu virtutem in nos transfundat,*" in *Iohannis Calvini Commentarius in Epistolam Pauli ad Romanos*, ed. T. H. L. Parker (Leiden: Brill, 1981), 122.

⁷⁴*Idem*, *Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul to Galatians and Ephesians*, trans. William Pringle (Edinburgh: Calvin Translations Society, 1843), 323.

⁷⁵*Idem*, *Commentary on the Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians*, trans. William Pringle (Edinburgh: Calvin Translation Society, 1843), 216-17.

⁷⁶Charles Partee, "Calvin's Central Dogma Again," *Sixteenth-Century Journal* 18 (Summer 1987): 197-98.

IMPLICATIONS FOR CALVIN'S SPIRITUALITY

The investigation into the nature of Calvin's spirituality is complicated, in part, by the term "spirituality," which resists precise definition.⁷⁷ To avoid possible confusion, Hall prefers the term "piety" rather than "spirituality" to describe the Reformed notion of the spirit-filled life because the former focuses on a person's behavior as regards the duties and obligation inherent to religion. The latter, which focuses on "an individual's interior search for meaning and wholeness," is imported from post-Vatican II Roman Catholicism and outside the mainstream of the Reformed faith.⁷⁸ For the highly educated and very practical Reformers, Roman Catholic spirituality is simply too individualistic in its orientation and lacks any clear societal or ethical referent. Hall concludes:

While Reformed piety assumes and requires a deeply personal commitment, its primary focus has always been corporate and social, rather than individual. It is inherently skeptical of any individual religious experience of a mystical or ecstatic sort (including "enthusiasms" of past awakenings and revivals) that cannot be subject to scrutiny and Scripture.⁷⁹

Hall's remarks are important in that they raise not only the issue of the Reformed tradition's relationship to mysticism, but they also beg the question of the nature of Calvin's spirituality. How does Calvin's notion of *unio mystica* shape his spirituality? Specifically, what sort of implications can be drawn from our findings?

Calvin's Emphasis on Epistemology

First and foremost, there is a prominent epistemological element in Calvin's spirituality that should not be overlooked. The notion of *unio mystica* is foundational to Calvin's doctrines of justification, sanctification, and his understanding of the Holy Eucharist. In the past,

⁷⁷Alister E. McGrath, *Christian Spirituality* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), 1-6. For McGrath, "Christian spirituality concerns the quest for a fulfilled and authentic Christian existence, involving the bringing together of the fundamental ideas of Christianity and the whole experience of living on the basis of and within the scope of the Christian faith." See, also, John Bolt, "Reflections on Reformation Day: The Spirituality of John Calvin," *Christian Renewal* 2 (October 24, 1983): 2.

⁷⁸T. Hartley Hall, "The Shape of Reformed Piety," in *Spiritual Traditions for the Contemporary Church*, ed. Robin Maas and Gabriel O'Donnell (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1990), 202.

⁷⁹Hall, 213.

scholars have, in various ways, highlighted different aspects of Calvin's spirituality. For example, Richard interprets Calvin's spirituality in the context of the *devotio moderna*, a late medieval lay mystical movement that held an anticlerical sentiment and aimed at reforming the spiritual life of the church.⁸⁰ In view of this orientation, Calvin's spirituality is described as an individualistic phenomenon over against the corporate dimension characteristic of Reformed spirituality.

In a series of important studies, Bouwsma describes Calvin as a figure of Renaissance humanism who personified the "crisis of knowing" in the sixteenth century. As such, Calvin resisted in promoting a set of dogmas, and preferred to viewing the Christian faith as a way of life or practical piety.⁸¹

In his comparison between Calvin's spirituality with Anabaptist spirituality, Gamble identifies Calvin's spirituality as "the Christian's response to God's actions."⁸² This is expressed primarily in the believer's commitment to imitating Christ, especially in regard to the Christian's attitude toward the world and suffering.⁸³ Gamble also argues for Calvin's unique view on the role of church discipline as a safeguard to the Christian's holy conduct.⁸⁴

Most recently, the pastoral intent in Calvin's spirituality has come to the forefront, as McKee describes it as fundamentally ethical in nature.⁸⁵ While McKee does acknowledge the role of *unio mystica* in salvation, the concept is not given adequate discussion as the important theological orientation to Calvin's spirituality.⁸⁶

⁸⁰Lucien J. Richard, *The Spirituality of John Calvin* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1974).

⁸¹William J. Bouwsma, "John Calvin's Anxiety," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 128, no. 3 (1984): 47-57; idem, "The Spirituality of John Calvin," in *Christian Spirituality II: High Middle Ages and Reformation*, ed. Jill Raitt, vol. 17 (New York: Crossroads, 1987), 318-33; idem, "The Quest for the Historical Calvin," *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 77, no. 1 (1987): 47-57; and idem, *John Calvin: A Sixteenth-Century Portrait* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988).

⁸²Richard C. Gamble, "Calvin and Sixteenth-Century Spirituality: Comparison with the Anabaptist," *Calvin Theological Journal* 31, no. 2 (Nov. 1996): 341. See, also, Lewis Ford Battles, ed., *The Piety of John Calvin: An Anthology Illustrative of the Spirituality of the Reformer* (Grand Rapids, MI: 1978).

⁸³Ibid.

⁸⁴Ibid., 341-47.

⁸⁵Elsie Anne McKee, ed. *John Calvin: Writings on Pastoral Piety* (New York: Paulist, 2001), 5.

⁸⁶Ibid.

I contend that Calvin's theology was, according to sixteenth-century standards, a system of theology or a formal instruction in the Christian religion which was dogmatic, polemical, and pastoral. It is simply not helpful to declare (contra Bouwsma) that Calvin was incapable of writing a system of theology, that his spirituality was merely a practical or pastoral theology, that it was a theology of piety, or that it was a theology of rhetoric. Calvin's theology was certainly pastoral, and it contained elements of piety throughout. Moreover, it virtually never lost sight of the rule of classical rhetoric. However, it also manifested profound dogmatic concerns throughout.

In view of Calvin's positing of *unio mystica*, it is clear that this concept serves as the epistemological basis on which the appropriation of his spirituality is built. Gamble writes, "the believer is united to Christ, and this union produces a desire to reflect back the righteousness of Christ."⁸⁷ Moreover, Gamble states:

Calvin saw the motive for the Christian life to be twofold: God commands the Christian to be holy and has himself provided redemption for that holiness through the work of Christ. The work of Christ has not only paid the price of human sin but has provided the positive example of how a Christian should live. Those actions on God's part (the command and the example to follow in Christ) provide the foundation for the necessity of the Christian's striving for holiness.⁸⁸

Calvin's notion of *unio mystica* indeed illustrates the consistency with which he links the epistemological and ontological dimensions of his spirituality, thereby integrating theology and piety—in other words, mind and heart.

Calvin's Use of *Pietas*

Second, the epistemological element of Calvin's spirituality is also manifested in his use of the term *pietas*. This term, translated as "piety" or "godliness," is frequently used by Calvin to describe the attitude and action directed to the adoration and service of God.⁸⁹ Calvin's critique of idolatry in the church, his use of the term *pietas*, and his effort to integrate theology with piety all indicate that he held learning in high esteem and placed himself, to a great extent, in the tradition of

⁸⁷Gamble, "Calvin and Sixteenth-Century Spirituality," 337.

⁸⁸*Ibid.*, 338.

⁸⁹McKee, 4.

Renaissance humanism.⁹⁰ Calvin writes, "Having therefore received some taste and knowledge of true piety I was suddenly fired with such a great desire to advance that even though I did not forsake the other studies entirely I nonetheless worked at them more quickly."⁹¹

Richard argues that Calvin's integration of theology and spirituality began with the influence of Erasmus and resulted in a *docta pietas*.⁹² In contrast to the *devotio moderna's* use of the term *devotio* for the spiritual life, which suggests external practice, Calvin preferred the Erasmian term *pietas* because of its emphasis on inner or interior life.⁹³ The meaning of the term concerns the enrichment of the spiritual life by focusing on gentler qualities, such as compassion, patience, longsuffering, forgiveness, humility, and self-effacement.

Calvin's adoption of Erasmian humanism can be seen in his use of the term *pietas* in the earliest codification of the *Institutes* in 1536. Calvin notes in the introduction, "My purpose was solely to transmit certain rudiments by which those who are touched with any zeal for religion might be shaped to true godliness (*foramentur ad pietatem*)."⁹⁴ The epistemological dimension in Calvin's use of the term is described by Lee as follows: (1) to recognize that there is one true God; (2) to know God as he manifests himself; (3) to know God as creator, sustainer, ruler, guide, protector and judge of the universe, (4) to know God as our heavenly Father and Lord through Jesus Christ; (5) to know God as the author and fountain of every good; (6) to know that we owe everything to him; (7) to know that we must seek and await all things and seek help only from him, and (8) with this knowledge, to fear and revere God; (9) to submit ourselves to and depend upon God; (10) to trust in and pray to God; (11) to thank and adore God; (12) to worship; (13) to love and to serve God; and (14) to do all of the above sincerely and gladly, from the heart.⁹⁵ It is evident from this summary that Calvin's understanding of *pietas* involves a strong emphasis on

⁹⁰Ibid., 92-93.

⁹¹John Calvin, "Preface," in *Commentary on the Psalms*, trans. James Anderson, vol. 1 (Edinburgh: Calvin Translation Society, 1841), 5.

⁹²Richard, 73.

⁹³Ibid.

⁹⁴*Institutes*, 1.

⁹⁵Sou-Young Lee, "Calvin's Understanding of *Pietas*," in *Calvinus Sincerioris Religionis Vindex: Calvin as Protector of the Purer Religion*, ed. Wilhelm Neuser and Brian Armstrong, Sixteenth-Century Essays and Studies, vol. 36 (Kirkville, MO: Sixteenth-Century Journal, 1997): 227-34.

knowing God with a corresponding focus on responding to him in accordance with that knowledge. The knowledge of God is revealed in the Word of God, and is foundational to the Christian life.

The Renewal of Contemporary Evangelical Theology

Third, consider how the epistemological dimension in Calvin's spirituality can serve as an instructive key for Christian renewal today. Theologians have lamented for the last couple of decades over the erosion and demise of Christian theology.⁹⁶ According to Gamble, this unfortunate trend is responsible for the spiritual malaise of the church today, especially in North America.⁹⁷ Gamble chides the church for abandoning the sufficiency of the Bible by turning to secular psychology for help and accommodating Christian worship to a form of "entertainment." Other signs of this disturbing trend include Evangelicalism's so-called "conformity" to secularism, as manifested by the church's flirting with materialism and the academy's preoccupation with reputation, even at the price of sacrificing the doctrine of inerrancy at the altar of academic respectability. All this, according to Gamble, demonstrates that Evangelicalism has become "mindless" and has adopted a deadly pragmatism, as well as an insidious antinomianism that will eventually destroy the movement. Gamble boldly asserts that "without a revival of reformed theology, evangelical theology will destroy itself."⁹⁸

SUMMARY

Granted, Gamble's assessment of the current state of Evangelicalism, especially in its American varieties, is certainly debatable. However, what Gamble is implying is that there is a definitive epistemological element in Reformed spirituality, dating

⁹⁶The most trenchant critiques have primarily come from Reformed circles. For example, see David F. Wells, *No Place for Truth: Or Whatever Happened to Evangelical Theology?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1993); idem, *God in the Wasteland: the Reality of Truth in a World of Fading Dreams* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1994); and Os Guinness, *Fit Bodies Fat Minds* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1994).

⁹⁷Richard C. Gamble, "Reformed Theology and its Relevance to Evangelical Theology," *Bible and Theology* 31, no. 2 (2002): 85-90.

⁹⁸*Ibid.*, 85.

back to Calvin. Therefore, without a renewal of such a biblical epistemology—one that is intellectually rigorous, salutary in effect, and serves as the basis for Christian ethics—Evangelicalism, as some know it, has a bleak and uncertain future. Perhaps my argument for the significance of the epistemological element in Calvin's spirituality can serve as a timely corrective to Evangelicalism's alleged erosion of biblical truth and sound theology.

To be sure, Calvin's notion of *unio mystica* was the Reformer's solution to overcome Osiander's mystical teachings. What Calvin meant by *unio mystica* or "union with Christ" did not involve any suggestion of a gross mixture of substances between Christ and the believer. For Calvin, it was a spiritual, yet real union. More importantly, the concept was foundational for Calvin's formulation of his doctrines of justification and sanctification. Calvin's correlation of these two distinct yet inseparable doctrines represents a unique contribution to the Reformed faith. The ingenuity of Calvin's theology was his ability to preserve the integrity of the Protestant Reformation's distinctive doctrine of the imputation of righteousness in justification and avoid Osiander's charge of antinomianism at the same time.

Calvin's notion of *unio mystica* serves as the epistemological basis for the ontological dimension of his spirituality. His spirituality, which was essentially ethical in nature, can be helpful for the Evangelical church today not only for the renewal of personal and corporate faith, but serve as a powerful, necessary witness to an unbelieving world.

WORKS CITED

- Armstrong, Brian. "Duplex cognitio Dei, Or? The Problem and Relation of Structure, Form, and Purpose in Calvin's Theology." In *Probing the Reformed Tradition*, ed. Elsie Anne McKee and Brian Armstrong, 135-53. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1989.
- Battles, Lewis Ford, ed. *The Piety of John Calvin: An Anthology Illustrative of the Spirituality of the Reformer*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1996.
- Bolt, John. "Reflections on Reformation Day: The Spirituality of John Calvin." *Christian Renewal* 2 (October 24, 1983): 3.
- Böttger, Paul Christoph. "Gott, der Brunquell aller Güter: gibt es einen 'mystischen' Grundzug in der Theologie Calvins?" In *Reformiertes*

- Erbe: Festschrift für Gottfried W. Locher zu seinem 80. Geburtstag*, ed. Heiko Oberman, Ernst Saxer, Alfred Schindler, and Heinzpeter Stucki, vol. 2, 59-72. Zürich: Theologischer, 1993.
- Bouwsma, William J. "John Calvin's Anxiety." *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 128, no. 3 (1984): 252-56.
- _____. "The Quest for the Historical Calvin." *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 77, no. 1 (1986): 47-57.
- _____. "The Spirituality of John Calvin." In *Christian Spirituality II: High Middle Ages and Reformation*, ed. Jill Raitt, 236-51. New York: Crossroad, 1987.
- _____. *John Calvin: A Sixteenth-Century Portrait*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1988.
- Calvin, John. *Ioannis Calvini Opera quae supersunt omnia*. Corpus Reformatorum, ed. Wilhelm Baum, Edward Cunitz, and Edward Reuss, 59 vols. Brunswick: Schwetschke, 1863-1900.
- _____. *Johannis Calvin Opera Selecta*. Edited by Peter Barth and Wilhelm Niesel, 5 vols. Munich, Germany: Kaiser Verlag, 1925-52.
- _____. *Commentaries of John Calvin*. Translated by John Owen et al. 46 vols. Edinburgh: The Calvin Translation Society, 1843-55. Reprint, 22 vols. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1979.
- _____. *Institutes of the Christian Religion: 1536 Edition*. Translated and annotated by Ford Lewis Battles. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1986.
- _____. *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Translated by Ford Lewis Battles. Edited by John T. McNeill, 2 vols. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1960.
- _____. *Iohannis Calvini Commentarius in Epistolam Pauli ad Romanos*. Edited by T. H. L. Parker. Leiden: Brill, 1981.
- Chin, Clive S. "Unio Mystica and Imitatio Christi: The Two-Dimensional Nature of John Calvin's Spirituality." Ph.D. diss., Dallas Theological Seminary, 2002.
- Gäbler, Ulrich. *Huldrych Zwingli: His Life and Work*. Translated by Ruth C. L. Critsch. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986.

- Gamble, Richard C. "Calvin As Theologian and Exegete: Is There Anything New?" *Calvin Theological Journal* 23 (November 1988): 178-94.
- _____. "Calvin and Sixteenth-Century Spirituality: Comparison with the Anabaptist." *Calvin Theological Journal* 31 (November 1996): 335-58.
- _____. "Reformed Theology and Its Relevance to Evangelical Theology." *Bible and Theology* 31, no. 2 (2002): 75-90.
- Guinness, Os. *Fit Bodies Fat Minds*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1994.
- Hall, T. Hartley. "The Shape of Reformed Piety." In *Spiritual Traditions for the Contemporary Church*, ed. Robin Maas and Gabriel O'Donnell, 203-21. Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1990.
- Harkness, Georgia. *Mysticism: Its Meaning and Message*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1973.
- Hesselink, I. John. *Calvin's First Catechism: A Commentary*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1997.
- _____. "Calvin, the Holy Spirit, and Mystical Union." *Perspectives* 13 (January 1998): 15-18.
- Kim, Jae Sung. "Unio cum Christo: The Work of the Holy Spirit in Calvin's Theology." Ph.D. diss., Westminster Theological Seminary, 1998.
- Kolfhaus, Wilhelm. *Christusgemeinschaft bei Johannes Calvin*. Beiträge zur Geschichte und Lehre der Reformierten Kirche, Neukirchen, Germany: Buchhandlung des Erziehungsvereins, 1939.
- Lee, Sou-Young. "Calvin's Understanding of Pietas." In *Calvinus Sincerioris Religionis Vindex: Calvin as Protector of the Purer Religion*, ed. Wilhelm Neuser and Brian Armstrong, 225-39. Sixteenth-Century Essays and Studies. Kirksville, MO: Sixteenth-Century Journal, 1997.
- Marcel, Pierre C. "The Relation between Justification and Sanctification in Calvin's Thought." *Evangelical Quarterly* 27 (July-September 1955): 132-45.
- McGinn, Bernard. "Mysticism." In *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Reformation*, vol. 3, ed. Hans Hillerbrand, 119-124. New York: Oxford University Press, 1996.

- McGrath, Alister E. *Istitutia Dei: A History of the Christian Doctrine of Justification*. 2d ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986.
- _____. *Luther's Theology of the Cross*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1985.
- _____. *Christian Spirituality*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1999.
- _____. "Humanist Elements in the Early Reformed Doctrine of Justification." *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 73, no. 1 (1982): 5-19.
- _____. "Forerunners of the Reformation? A Critical Examination of the Evidence for Precursors of the Reformation Doctrine of Justification." *Harvard Theological Review* 75, no. 2 (1982): 219-42.
- McKee, Elsie Anne, ed. *John Calvin: Writings on Pastoral Piety*. Translated and introduced by Elsie Anne McKee. New York: Paulist, 2001.
- Niesel, Wilhelm. *The Theology of Calvin*. Translated by Harold Knight. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1956.
- Oberman, Heiko A. "'Iustitia Christ' and 'Iustitia Dei.'" *Harvard Theological Review* 59, no. 1 (1966): 1-26.
- Partee, Charles. "Calvin's Central Dogma Again." *Sixteenth-Century Journal* 18 (Summer 1987): 191-99.
- Pennington, Basil. "The Cistercians." In *Christian Spirituality: Origins to the Twelfth Century*, ed. Bernard McGinn, John Meyendorff, Jean LeClercq, 205-17. New York: Crossroad, 1986.
- Potter, G. R. *Zwingli*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976.
- Rainbow, Jonathan H. "Double Grace: John Calvin's View of the Relationship of Justification and Sanctification." *Ex Auditu* 5 (1989): 99-105.
- Richard, Lucien J. *The Spirituality of John Calvin*. Atlantic: John Knox, 1974.
- Ritschl, Albrecht. *The Christian Doctrine of Justification and Reconciliation*, ed. H. R. Mackintosh and A. B. Macaulay, vol. 1. New York: Scribner's, 1900.
- Steinmetz, David. *Reformers in the Wings*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971.

- Tamburello, Dennis E. *Union with Christ: John Calvin and the Mysticism of St. Bernard*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1994.
- _____. *Ordinary Mysticism*. New York: Paulist, 1996.
- Van't Spijker, Willem. "The Influence of Bucer on Calvin as Becomes Evident from the *Institutes*." In *John Calvin's Institutes: His Opus Magnum*, ed. B. J. van der Walt, 106-32. Potchefstroom, South Africa: Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education, 1986.
- Von Loewenich, Walther. *Luther's Theology of the Cross*. Translated by Herbert Bouman. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1976.
- Weis, James. "Calvin versus Osiander on Justification." *The Springfielder* 29 (Autumn 1965): 31-47.
- Wells, David F. *No Place for Truth: Or Whatever Happened to Evangelical Theology?* Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1993.
- _____. *God in the Wasteland: the Reality of Truth in a World of Fading Dreams*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1994.
- Wendel, Francois. *Calvin: Origins and Development of His Religious Thought*. Translated by Philip Mairet. New York: Harper and Row, 1963. Reprint, Durham, NC: Labyrinth, 1987.
- Willis-Watkins, D. "The *Unio Mystica* and the Assurance of Faith According to Calvin." In *Calvin, Erbe und Auftrag: Festschrift für Wilhelm Neuser zu seinem 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Willem van't Spijker, 77-84. Kampen: Kok, 1991.
- Wilson-Kastner, Patricia. "Andreas Osiander's Theology of Grace in the Perspective of the Influence of Augustine of Hippo." *Sixteenth-Century Journal* 10, no. 2 (1979): 73-91.