

**Wittmer, Michael E.**

*Don't Stop Believing: Why Living Like Jesus is Not Enough.*

Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2008. Pp. 228. Paper. \$14.99.  
ISBN 9780310281160.

Nick Norelli

Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth  
New Jersey

When Andrew Rogers approached me about reviewing this book I jumped at the chance to do so because it addresses a topic that I'm very interested in. At its heart *Don't Stop Believing* is a layman friendly treatment of the Orthopraxy vs. Orthodoxy debate viewed in light of cultural (i.e. modern & postmodern) and theological (i.e. conservative & liberal) differences. Wittmer is a self-confessed conservative postmodern Christian and seeks a mediated position where good works don't trump good doctrine and vice versa. This is very similar to my own position although I don't know that I could be labeled postmodern in any sense of the term.

The book is broken up into an introduction, twelve chapters, all of which are very manageable coming in at between 10-17 pages, and finally an epilogue. I'll get my end notes complaint out of the way early on in this review; there are end notes and what's worse is that Scripture references appear in them! I don't understand this method, really, I don't. If you must use end notes then use them, but it wouldn't hurt to put Scripture references in parentheses in the text itself. Alright, onto the review.

In the introduction Wittmer gives a very brief primer on Modernity which he views as synonymous with the Enlightenment, and Postmodernity which he describes as retaining modernity's "*emphasis on human reason, but [being] much humbler about what our minds can discover.*" (13) Conservatism and Liberalism are also given very brief descriptions that boil down to Liberalism veering toward the side of *reason* and Conservatism veering toward the side of *revelation*. But in the midst of it all Wittmer is careful to point out that not all postmoderns are theologically liberal, himself included, and it's from this perspective that he examines some traditional doctrines along with the postmodern objections against them.

In chapter 1 Wittmer wants to show that as Christians we can't remain stagnant in our beliefs, indeed, we must continually reexamine them to see if they need to be maintained, tweaked, or jettisoned completely. Fair enough, I don't think that keeping a constant eye

on what we believe should be a problem, as long as we realize that we're rarely as original as we tend to think we are. The chances are that anything we come up with has already been thought of, and then we have to ask why it didn't stick back then. Basically this chapter is the segue into the various doctrines that Wittmer examines, and it's where he shows that conservative modernists tend to be too rigid and intolerant while postmoderns tend to be too loose and overly tolerant. *"This book seeks to avoid the most extreme forms of both conservative and postmodern Christianity and hit the sweet spot of appropriate tolerance."* (29)

In chapter 2 Wittmer asks the question "must you believe something to be saved?" He looks at the writing of postmoderns such as Brian McLaren who believes that *"God judges people on the quality of their works rather than what they believe,"* and Spencer Burke who takes the position that *"everyone begins life accepted by God, and we stay in his grace unless we opt out."* (33) Wittmer rightfully disagrees and believes as the Bible teaches, that we need *both* belief *and* action (see e.g. 1Jo. 3:23). He distinguishes between doctrines that we:

1. Must believe: I am a sinner; Jesus saves me from my sin.
2. Must not reject: Trinity; Dual natures of Christ; Historical truth and significance of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection.
3. Should believe: Perfections of God; Humans are the image of God; Bible is God's Word; Biblical story of creation, fall, redemption, and consummation; Church is Christ's body.

I'd differ in that all of the #2 doctrines must be believed, which is essentially what it means to not reject them, although I'd qualify that by saying that an advanced understanding of them is not necessary. But Wittmer closes the chapter by saying that *"Being good is not good enough. We must know and believe something — the basic facts about salvation — to be saved."* (42) And of course in this he is surely correct.

In chapter 3 Wittmer asks "do right beliefs get in the way of good works?" He outlines the conservative tendency to acquire knowledge and information without really acting on it and he says that he appreciates postmodernism's emphasis on the "turn *to* practice" but wonders why we must "turn *from* doctrine to get there." (45) Here he discusses inclusivism in postmodernism, especially the Emergent Church, and how doctrines and doctrinal statements are seen as barriers that keep people out. He quotes LeRon Shults to the effect that Jesus didn't have a statement of faith and creating such statements is akin to linguistic idolatry. Peter Rollins is represented as saying that there's basically nothing to know or believe other than we're Ikons of God with holes in the center just begging to be filled, and since there's nothing to know or believe we then turn to how we live.

These postmoderns argue that love includes rather than excludes so we're to first and foremost love others by including them regardless of belief. But Wittmer's counter is again effective in his arguing that true love seeks the best for the other, and if wrong beliefs are not in the other's best interest then loving them demands exclusion. Wittmer insists that:

[A]gainst the postmodern view that beliefs get in the way of good behavior, the specific, historic doctrines of the Christian faith supply the best — dare I say only — rationale for a life of love. We need a model and a motive to love others, and the Christian view of the triune God and salvation by grace supplies both. If we downplay these historic doctrines, striving to rise above them in an attempt to include people with more diverse beliefs, we will undercut the ground for good works. The result will be less love, not more. (54-55)

I certainly agree that doctrine should drive behavior, but I'm less convinced that we need God as a model rather than as a commander-in-chief. In other words, if God commands us to love one another then that should be enough, we don't need to appeal to God's intra-Trinitarian love in order to have a base for following the command. This is no doubt the result of Wittmer's social Trinitarianism which I found somewhat annoying with descriptions of God as "*a fellowship of friends, a community of self-giving lovers.*" (49)

His social view of the Trinity also lended itself to some questionable interpretations of Christ's passion and amounted to what basically seemed a denial of God's impassibility. He says that the crucifixion must have been "*even more excruciating for the Father*" asking "*what father can stomach the suffering of his child?*" (49) Without launching into a diatribe here I'll just say that God the Father can stomach it because he's impassible. The Son's suffering and emotional exhibitions are a result of the incarnation and the joining of humanity to his deity, which is obviously something peculiar to the Son alone. Perhaps on this point I'm too conservative and modern.

In chapter 4 Wittmer asks the question "are people generally good or basically bad?" This seems to be a pretty straightforward question with a pretty straightforward answer, but the problem is that conservatives and postmoderns answer this question completely differently. To state things simply, there is an antithesis between the Christian and non-Christian where their foundational beliefs will result in radically distinct worldviews although there may be certain points of similarity. Conservatives tend to stress the *difference* to one extreme while postmoderns stress the *similarity* to the other. Where both groups recognize God as Creator, postmoderns see this as sufficient for salvation while conservatives see the need of God as Redeemer as well.

Wittmer looks at the writing of Spencer Burke and Tony Jones who both agree that there is too much emphasis on sin and not enough emphasis on grace in traditional Christianity. Burke says that grace is "*not conditional on recognizing and renouncing sin.*" (60) Jones criticizes the metaphor of a chasm called 'sin' separating God and man where the cross of Christ is the only bridge across saying, "*What kind of God can't reach across a chasm? Chasms can't stop God!*" (60) Wittmer rightly points out that in the metaphor God is reaching across the chasm, through the cross! What follows is a brief discussion on Augustine, Pelagius, original sin, and common grace.

Wittmer sees three distinct kinds of goodness in all people thanks to God's common grace: (1) mere morality, (2) ethical goodness, (3) cultural goodness. Wittmer comes out on Augustine's side of the original sin debate and sees the doctrine of total depravity as biblical and as that which "*resonates with [his] experience.*" (67) Accordingly, "*this strong sense of sin enlarges the size of grace.*" (67) And while Wittmer believes that even **his** "*best moments are marred with impure motives*" (67) I'm afraid I'll have to disagree with him that "*our every act is sinful*" and that until the next life **we'll** never be able to do an "*entirely good deed.*" (67) This seems to run contrary to 1Corinthians 3:10-15; Ephesians 2:10; Romans 2; where genuinely good works appear to be intended. But I return to agreeing with Wittmer when he concludes that:

Against postmodern innovators, our sinful condition requires regeneration, which in turn requires a knowledge of the gospel. We need to know the truth about Jesus because we need to be saved, and we need to be saved because we are sinners. (69)

In chapter 5 Wittmer asks "which is worse: homosexuals or the bigots who persecute them?" He begins by surveying the biblical evidence that appears to come against homosexuality, i.e., Genesis 1-2; Leviticus 18:22; 20:13; 1Corinthians 6:9; and Romans 1:26-27. He gives the traditional interpretations of these passages and then pro-homosexual responses/objections to them. Wittmer comes out favoring the traditional conservative view of these passages as the most straightforward reading. He identifies homosexuality as "*part of the brokenness of the Fall and no worse than many other sins*" but goes on to suggest that "*rather than act on our brokenness, declaring that we must be true to ourselves, which cannot change, why not offer our brokenness to God?*" (76) He points out the common agreement among members of both sides of the debate that we must love homosexuals and show them the same compassion we would anyone else, but he rightly asserts that mustn't abandon our morality in doing so.

In chapter 6 our attention is turned to the atonement and the question at hand is "is the cross divine child abuse?" Wittmer looks at four views of atonement with a strong emphasis on two, i.e., Penal Substitution and Christus Victor. The other two to get a brief mention are Moral Influence and Moral Example. Unfortunately there was no reference to the Governmental theory of atonement which I believe has the best explanatory power of any single view. But after noting deficiencies with Penal Substitution (e.g., too limited, too individualistic, too soft on sin) Wittmer goes on to suggest that we need a mix between Penal Substitution and Christus Victor. He says:

Christus Victor presents the big picture—Jesus came to wrest the world from the death grip of Satan, while penal substitution supplies the turning point of this story. Penal substitution is the heart of Christus Victor, for it explains how Jesus accomplished his mission. (92)

My problems with Penal Substitution are legion and I don't see mixing the Christus Victor view with it as explaining away the difficulties. If God exhausts his wrath on the Son then there is no real mercy shown in salvation. If the Son pays for our sins then

which sins did he pay for? All of them? Does that include past, present, and future sins? If so then is not the logical conclusion either universalism or limited atonement? I don't believe that Wittmer accepts either (at least not from my reading of this work). If the Father really does turn his back on the Son then is there not a rift in the Trinity? Wittmer answers that there can be no division in the Trinity in one paragraph but in the next seems to indicate a belief that the Son was genuinely forsaken (88). How exactly does this work?

And in his closing I noticed an inconsistency between this chapter and chapter 4. Wittmer says:

Christus Victor also corrects the tendency of penal substitution to go soft on sin. By itself penal substitution may encourage a sinful lifestyle, for who cares if sin is present so long as its penalty is removed? But Christus Victor reminds us that deliverance from the presence of sin—not just the penalty—is a vital part of the gospel. We can't easily participate in Christ's victory if we remain bound to our sin. Anyone not making progress against sin should wonder whether he or she has truly joined the kingdom of God. There is no room for cheap grace here. (94)

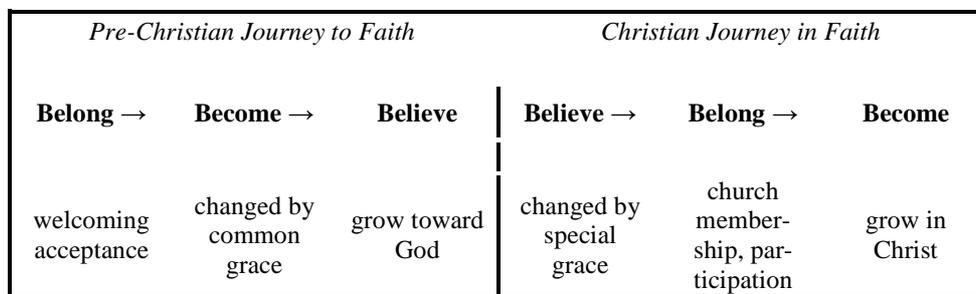
While I applaud this paragraph for what it says, I don't see how it jives with the statements from chapter 4 about impure motives and our every act being sinful. The language of chapter 4 doesn't seem like the language of victory that we see in chapter 6. But even if I disagree with his theory of atonement I can still agree with the first half of his concluding point. In the end he says that "*conservatives have tended to reduce the work of Christ to an overly narrow gospel—say a prayer and the penalty of your sins will be forgiven.*" (94-95) Well said.

In chapter 7 Wittmer asks "can you belong before you believe?" The difference between conservative and postmoderns on this issue is one of order: conservatives typically require *belief* in Christ (which is the most important thing) before *belonging* to the community (which is seen as ultimately unnecessary in the grand scheme of things) which should result in *becoming* more Christlike (although many conservatives think that saying the 'sinners prayer' is enough). Postmoderns stress that people should be accepted (i.e., made to feel as if they *belong*) into the community which allows them to "*embark on their journey of becoming. Becoming is important to postmodern innovators, especially becoming the kind of person who creates an inclusive, tolerant, and safe place for others to belong.*" (99) Belief comes in at a distant third and as Wittmer showed in earlier chapters (2 & 3), many postmoderns see set standards of belief as divisive and even unloving.

Wittmer see the reason for this difference in order as differing diagnoses of the human condition. "*Conservatives tend to focus on the Fall*" (101) while "*Postmodern innovators emphasize Creation.*" (102) The conservative sees the sinful condition and recognizes the need to repent in order to be converted. Once conversion takes place they "*intuitively recognize that they differ from others who have not, and so they tend to view*

their community as an exclusive fellowship with clear boundaries between the church and the world.” (101) The postmodern on the other hand views people “more as seekers than sinners—or as Frost and Hirsch say, at least ‘see everyone as equally fallen’—which leads them to emphasize our common journey rather than our need for dramatic conversion.” (102)

The postmodern emphasis on commonalities and inclusion runs the risk of removing the distinctiveness of Christianity and “redefining Christianity into a mirror image of twenty-first century postmodernism” (103), a similar mistake to one that Wittmer says modernism made. In the end Wittmer doesn’t believe that either paradigm is adequate by itself. “The postmodern order of belonging before believing is too permissive” (103) while “[t]he conservative sequence is often stifling and oppressive.” (104) Wittmer advocates a combination of the strengths so that they cover the weaknesses of each view. The figure below represents Wittmer’s proposal.



In chapter 8 the question at hand is “does the kingdom of God include non-Christians?” Wittmer opens saying:

Until recently it was easy for conservatives to hold this straightforward view of salvation. We sent missionaries around the world and witnessed to our friends nearby because we feared that anyone who did not repent of their sin and trust Jesus would spend forever in hell. But now a growing number of Christians are not so sure. (107)

He quotes Billy Graham to the effect that he didn’t know if non-Christians would make it to heaven because those decisions were God’s to make. Many postmoderns move past this stance and claim that non-Christians will be in the kingdom, and some, such as Brian McLaren even suggest that they’ll make better citizens than Christians!

He goes on to describe (1) Universalism, (2) Pluralism, (3) Inclusivism, and (4) Exclusivism. He notes that most postmoderns haven’t embraced universalism just yet. McLaren sees God’s plan as an “opt-out plan, not and opt-in one.” (109) Spencer Burke follows a similar train of thought saying that “we’re in unless we choose to be out.” (110) Wittmer continues saying that “[f]ew if any postmodern innovators admit to believing in pluralism.” (110) He’s surely right when he notes the problem of pluralism as:

[I]gnor[ing] God's revelation in Jesus Christ. If Jesus Christ accurately reveals God, then other religions are incomplete at best and, where they differ from Jesus, plainly wrong. Any pluralist who embraces these religions as viable alternatives is not a Christian in any historical, intelligible sense of the word. (111)

Inclusivism on the other hand represents the postmodern position and is also being embraced by a rising number of evangelicals. These folks argue that people are saved through Jesus without ever having to hear about, know, or believe in Jesus. The (traditional) inclusivists begin with God's love and general revelation and move on to arguing that a loving and gracious God would not damn people who have never heard the gospel. Right living is more important than right belief according to inclusivists. But as Wittmer has already shown, certain postmodern innovators have gone beyond the traditional position and lowered the bar so as to say that everyone is in unless they choose to be out.

When Wittmer turns to exclusivism<sup>1</sup> he speaks of both 'hard' and 'soft' forms of it. *"Hard exclusivists unabashably announce that the unevangelized cannot be saved, while soft exclusivists hold out various degrees of hope. Soft exclusivists concede that it is theoretically possible for anyone to rightly respond to general revelation, and if they do, God will find a way to get them the special revelation they need to be saved..."* (115) Wittmer sees a middle way as saying that although non-Christians are excluded from the kingdom of God due to their beliefs (or lack thereof), this does not mean that they cannot contribute to the kingdom, even if indirectly. A direct contribution will be motivated by love for Christ but an indirect contribution will produce the same result even with an ulterior motive. He recognizes that this might be *"slim solace"* (119) if they remain outside of the kingdom, but this sets up the next chapter on what we should believe about hell.

In chapter 9 Wittmer turns to the dreaded topic of hell asking "is hell for real and forever?" He begins by noting that conservatives are so fixated on the afterlife that their life on Earth takes a backseat to it. Postmoderns on the other hand are concerned with the here and now and see hell as *"devalu[ing] all other values."* (121) He recounts a story from Brian McLaren's book *The Last Word and the Word After That* in which McLaren basically argues (via a fictional dialogue) that Jesus didn't believe in a real hell and used it as a rhetorical device against the Pharisees. Wittmer asks why the discussion on hell should be limited to Jesus' words alone and not take into account John's detailed description in Revelation 19-20. He also says that *"even if we do limit ourselves to the sayings of Jesus, we are still struck by the volume and detail of what Jesus said about hell."* (123)

---

<sup>1</sup> In this section (114-15) Wittmer makes a claim that I found peculiar with regard to Muslims. He basically says that even if Muslims fail to keep the five pillars of Islam that they may assume that God is pleased with them if they are moral. This runs contrary to the general objection against Islam's soteriology as not promising assurance to Muslims because they can never accurately count their good vs. evil deeds in order to know which will tip the scales on the day of judgment. It almost sounds like Islamic 'eternal security' which is something I've not come across before.

In McLaren's story hell is merely symbolic of "waste, decay, regret, and sorrow" (125) which is why Jesus used the term Gehenna (a garbage dump) when talking about it. Everlasting punishment is relegated to being disappointed in ourselves and McLaren's character says that "fire and brimstone ... are mere metaphors.... mere word pictures to help us imagine what it would feel like to come clean, to face the truth, to be found out, in the presence of God.... Nothing could be more serious than that." (126) Wittmer's response is especially poignant:

I am not as optimistic that autonomous sinners will ever fully "come clean" and "face the truth" about themselves. [...] Sinners curved in on themselves will always find a way to exonerate their behavior. (126)<sup>2</sup>

The remainder of the chapter is spent showing that Jesus never corrected the Pharisees for their belief in hell, that Scripture and tradition support the interpretation of everlasting punishment in hell, that God doesn't send anyone to hell against their will, and that hell is serious business that we shouldn't take lightly and it's something that we should certainly never rejoice in.

Chapter 10 is about epistemology and asks "is it possible to know anything?" While being about the same length as most of the chapters in this book, this one read much quicker. Wittmer contrasts the modern and postmodern perspectives on truth and focuses much less on conservative and postmodern differences. Unless I've read him wrong, he doesn't seem to be making the point that conservatives are synonymous with modernity here. Basically modernity spawned the belief that whatever was true could be proven either rationally or empirically. The problem is that this led to a denial of God on the part of many modern thinkers because such 'proof' doesn't exist for God. There were two modern Christian responses: (1) Schleiermacher grounded belief in God in religious experience, but this was subjective so when different religions articulated different experiences they were speaking of the same God. (2) Charles Hodge, A. A. Hodge, and B. B. Warfield conceded that it was right to believe in only what can be proven, but asserted that modern thinkers were wrong in saying that there was no proof for God. They developed logical arguments for the existence of God.<sup>3</sup>

Postmoderns on the other hand are basically agnostic, claiming that we as finite creatures can't possibly be so arrogant as to assume that we can know anything objectively about a God who is infinitely greater than us. They emphasize the "subjective, local, and relational nature of knowledge.... correctly observ[ing] that everything we see and hear is filtered through our unique perspective. We are unable to get outside of our skin and

---

<sup>2</sup> He uses as examples Richard Nixon, Bill Clinton, and a young man who was caught on television trying to have sex with a minor. In every case the guilty party spun the situation so as to deny their true guilt.

<sup>3</sup> Wittmer doesn't go into details as to what these arguments were exactly, and since I'm not well read in either of the Hodges or Warfield, I wonder how they differ (if at all) from Aquinas' arguments for the existence of God.

*see the world in the raw, but we must interpret whatever we know.*" (137)<sup>4</sup> So while modernity was overconfident, postmodernity lacked confidence.

Wittmer sees a better alternative to either approach, a "*more biblical way between these two extremes, one that is appropriately modest yet claims to know specific truths about God and his world.*" (140) Whereas both moderns and postmoderns begin with themselves, i.e., with what *their* minds can prove. "[M]oderns naively suppose that they can prove a lot [and] postmodern innovators recognize that our limited minds cannot prove anything." (140) Wittmer suggests that we start with God and he answers the charge of fideism with an appeal to Romans 1:18-20. The bottom line is that everyone has an innate knowledge of God's existence whether or not they want to admit it. But how does anyone know that what Romans 1:18-20 says is true? This is the topic to be taken up in the next chapter.

In chapter 11 Wittmer turns to the subject of Scripture itself and asks "Is the Bible God's True Word?" He notes that postmodern innovators reject the Bible as the ultimate authority and rather opt to see the Spirit speaking through the Bible as the ultimate authority. He presents four arguments (148-50) against the doctrine of biblical inerrancy that postmoderns use and then presents a conservative response in defense of inerrancy (150-56). Those arguments are:

1. Inerrancy places the words of Scripture above God and amounts to bibliolatry. Those who insist on inerrancy worship the words rather than God.
2. Inerrancy is compromised by modern philosophy and seen as outdated. Biblical inerrancy was simply a reaction to modern liberals grounding their beliefs in religious experience.
3. Inerrancy is unbiblical in that Scripture never declares itself inerrant. "*Scripture's faithfulness does not depend on every jot and tittle being scientifically true, for the truth of Scripture transcends what science can prove.*" (149)
4. Inerrancy is compromised by modern science and history because as an ancient text it cannot hold up to the precision and accuracy expected in modern historical and scientific inquiry.

Wittmer's responds to #1 saying that he's never met anyone who places the Bible above God and that conservatives read the Bible "*like a lover who reads and rereads letters from his beloved.*" (150) They are well aware that there is more to God than what is in the Bible, but they are equally aware that there is no less.

---

<sup>4</sup> This is an example of what I meant when I said that Wittmer doesn't seem to be saying that conservatives are synonymous with modernity. From my recent reading of Greg Bahnsen, this is the very heart of presuppositional apologetics, i.e., the very fact that no one is neutral and every worldview operates according to certain foundational presuppositions. Everything gets filtered through these presuppositional lenses. So this perspective is certainly not unique to postmoderns. See e.g., Gary DeMar, ed. *Pushing the Antithesis: The Apologetic Methodology of Greg L. Bahnsen* (Powder Springs, GA: American Vision, 2007), 43ff.

He counters #2 & #3 by saying that inerrancy isn't really a modern idea although it was articulated in modern times as a response to heresy. This is, after all, the usual case with Christian doctrine. And as far as Scripture not stating that it's inerrant, it doesn't have to, it can be deduced from other arguments. He presents a common syllogism, i.e., The Word of God is without error → The Bible is the Word of God → Therefore the Bible is without error. (153)

The answer to #4 runs along the line of saying that what the ancients perceived as factual was more broad and general than what we believe as factual. They weren't operating according to the same standards that we are and it would be anachronistic and wrong to demand that they speak with the same specificity that modern scientists and historians do. So when there are variations in the Gospels they aren't really errors since they make the same basic point.

He concludes by saying that we must avoid either extreme, that is, focusing on the divine authorship to the exclusion of the human authors and vice versa. He sees a denial of inerrancy as undermining the entire faith saying:

Unless we have good reason to think otherwise, we are justified in believing that God's Word — because it is *God's Word* — does not err. And we must, for how can we believe any part of Scripture if another part is wrong? How can we trust the higher truths of Scripture if the lower claims are false? If we must believe the Word of God in order to be saved, then the inerrancy of Scripture plays a vital role in our salvation. It would be hard to have faith without it. (158)

While I agree with Wittmer that the charge of bibliolatry is overstated, I can say that I have encountered people who do place the Bible above God. I don't think that inerrancy can necessarily be charged as the reason for this and so I agree with his main point that inerrancy does not equate to Bible worship. Again, I agree with Wittmer's point that doctrine is articulated as needed, usually in response to heresy, but I disagree that the early Christians held to inerrancy or that such a concept would have been important or meaningful to them. I think this can be seen in their use of the LXX which was far from an inerrant translation of the Hebrew Scriptures. And the final point regarding precision is one that conservatives would do well to take notice of since they are often the ones who appeal to the Bible being factual in a modern sense with regard to matters of history and science.

But Wittmer's conclusions are problematic for me. For starters, it simply does not follow that if we can't trust one part then we can't trust the whole. All or nothing is a false dichotomy. I can trust that the *Autobiography of Malcolm X* is generally true and trustworthy even if Malcolm X made a mistake concerning a particular speech he made or the place in which he made it. I also find the question regarding "trusting the Word of God in order to be saved" troubling. We must trust in Jesus' life, death, and resurrection in order to be saved. This of course is recorded in Scripture, but it was preached and believed for decades before it was ever relegated to paper. Scripture is simply a means of

preserving the gospel and whether or not there are genuine historical scientific and historical errors in the Bible doesn't change his death and resurrection. I would say that inerrancy plays absolutely no role in our salvation and it is those types of statements that can lead to the charges of bibliolatry (not that I'd charge Wittmer with such).

In the final chapter Wittmer "*examine[s] [the] desire to transcend the polarized camps of liberal and conservative Christianity.*" (160) He looks at the past and recounts the rise of both modern liberalism represented by guys like Albrecht Ritschl & Adolf von Harnack, and modern conservatism represented by the likes of J. Gresham Machen. From there he looks to the present with postliberalism and postconservatism which he sees as both moving toward the middle of postmodernism, but then he notes that in this present we see the past. Wittmer goes back and summarizes the main points of his previous chapters and compares them to what J. Gresham Machen wrote over eighty years earlier in response to liberalism, showing amazing similarities along the way. The conclusion is that perhaps postmodernism isn't the new way forward that postmoderns think it is. He says, "*Their 'third way' is too much like the old way to become a new way*" (170) and then offers a better way forward.

Wittmer stresses a *both/and* paradigm over and against the *either/or* of both conservatism and postmodernism. This can be seen in Scripture where James emphasizes that faith without works is dead, but also where Paul emphasizes that works without faith are vain. The bottom line is that ethics require beliefs and beliefs require ethics, and when one is undermined they both fail.

All in all *Don't Stop Believing* is a wonderful treatment of this important topic. Wittmer's writing is approachable, conversational, and informative. While I can't agree with everything he says, I can agree with most of it, and I truly believe that his is a sober voice that has offered a straight way forward in this polarized debate; the *both/and* approach is truly a third way. I can't recommend this book highly enough to those interested in this debate, or even those looking for an introduction to postmodern thought. Wittmer's treatment is fair, judicious, and constructively critical. There's a genuinely pastoral tone to his work and this can be seen even further in the book's epilogue. As stated earlier, end notes were used and what's more bothersome is that they were used for the majority of Scripture citations. I don't understand this trend and I don't like it. Also, my copy (which is the galley to the book) contains no indices of any sort and no bibliography. I don't know if the published edition lacks these features or not, but I would have preferred for there to be at least a subject index. In the end though this is a solid volume that would be a welcome edition to anyone's library.