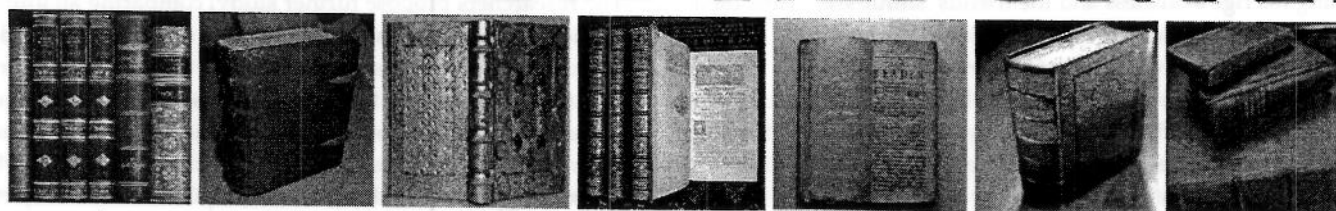


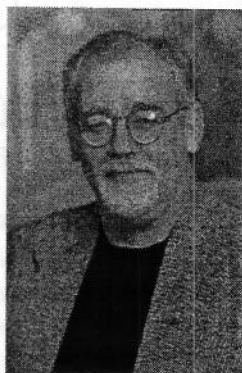
# RESEARCH REPORTER



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APU Office of Faculty Research

*"What Job receives is not vindication, but a vision of God that forces his concern with self-justification to recede to the background..."*



**In Memoriam:**

## Dr. Gerald Wilson

The late Gerald H. Wilson, Ph.D., Professor of Old Testament and biblical Hebrew, strongly believed in empowering his students and others who take the Bible seriously by teaching them a hermeneutical approach to the Scriptures that can give them confidence that their interpretations are well founded and worthy guides to their theological and ethical choices in life. Dr. Wilson's methodology is clearly and succinctly presented in his "Hermeneutics: Why Do We Have to Interpret Scripture Anyway?" (*Christian College, Christian Calling: Higher Education in the Service of the Church*, ed. Steve Wilkens, Paul Shrier, and Ralph P. Martin, New York: AltaMira Press, 2005, 39-53); his hermeneutical approach to the book of Job is demonstrated in his forthcoming article in the *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*: "Preknowledge, Anticipation, and the Poetics of Job."

### Hermeneutics

Dr. Wilson organized his first essay around ten "factors" which must be considered when interpreting a passage of Scripture: linguistic, literary, translational, historical, cultural, contextual, unity, parameter, incarnational, and canonical. A reader sensitive to language understands that the Bible's "language . . . is inherently ambiguous and requires more than superficial attention" (40). This affirmation from a compassionate professor of biblical Hebrew reveals his respect for both the text and his students who might prefer simple, shallow approaches to the Bible.

Dr. Wilson also wants readers of the Bible to know about "the specific forms of symbolic language, literary structures, and written genres of the biblical literature" (42). Further, he reminds them that "[t]ranslations are always interpretations of the original" (43); he recommends comparing many translations of the text. In order to grasp the full significance of the text, its historical context must also be researched — "the historical context described in the narratives of

the book, and the historical setting to which the narrative speaks" (44). Along with historical context, serious readers must also study the culture out of which the biblical texts emerge, for "[w]ithout such cultural understanding, we are constantly in danger of importing our own ideas where they do not apply" (45).

Dr. Wilson then introduces a kind of hermeneutic circle whereby a part of scripture must be viewed in terms of the canonical biblical whole: "each sentence must be considered within the larger literary unit or *pericope* of which it is a part; each pericope must be read against the whole chapter in which it occurs; and chapters have meaning within the book in which they are found" (46). He remains convinced, despite inherent tensions, that "together all the individual pieces of scripture provide us with a unified understanding of the nature and purposes of God; we can construct a theology of the whole Bible" (47).

On the other hand, some interpretive tensions within the Bible may require ongoing study. "How do we hold Proverbs' assumptions that God gives blessing and prosperity to the righteous together with Job's clear testimony that the righteous often suffer inexplicably?" (48). Dr. Wilson confesses, "often our natural tendency is to resolve the tension either by explaining it away or by rejecting one of the offending opposites. This, however, makes us the master of scripture rather than allowing it to master us. I would much rather have a word of God that is my authority than assert my own authority over the word of God!" (48). His "Preknowledge, Anticipation, and the Poetics of Job" is one step further into exploring this particular tension.

### The Book of Job

In this sophisticated article, Dr. Wilson shows the hermeneutical effects of first reading the book of Job and then *rereading* it: these can be different experiences. Unlike Job's friends, the reader has "preknowledge" (along with God, Satan, and the narrator) that Job is sinless, and his "faithful endurance" preserves this holiness to the end of the book. Hence, the accusations of Job's "friends" reveal to the reader "mistaken conclusions based on an inadequate worldview associated with a tit-for-tat form of retribution." Dr. Wilson emphasizes that the "book in its present form cannot be concerned to explore the reasons for innocent suffering." Its focus is on Job's "enduring faithfulness."

In addition to "preknowledge," the reader experiences "anticipation" which "sensitize[s] the reader to particular issues and . . . prepare[s] the reader to recognize significant themes or developments when they arrive." Some of these key issues are "Job's restoration to family and possessions," his power to pray for his friends, his renewed health, his confrontation with God, including God's grilling questions, and his friends' future. Dr. Wilson shows the irony the reader may experience when *rereading* this book: the friends' pleas to Job to submit to God as a repentant

sinner in order to have all that he has lost be restored end up with their realizing that God does indeed turn around Job's losses while affirming his righteousness and the friends' sinfulness. Thus their theory of retribution for the repentant sinner evolves into restoration of losses to the man of integrity.

Dr. Wilson shows Job's integrity to be far superior to his peers, for he values it more than his life, family, or possessions: "The issue for Job increasingly becomes whether he will be recognized in death to be a person of righteousness or *integrity* [someone whose 'thought, word, and deed are congruent']." Dr. Wilson continues, "What is at stake here is whether humans will remain righteous—continuing to 'fear God'—when their very motivations for doing so are misunderstood, misinterpreted, and misrepresented."

Dr. Wilson concludes his article by noting that Job never receives the full vindication from God that he desires until after he "has laid down his quest and submitted to the freedom and power of God [sic]. What Job receives is not vindication, but a vision of God that forces Job's concern with self-justification to recede to the background of oblivion. . . . Seeing God is enough!"

—Carole Lambert

### Education

#### **Latino Involvement in Student Learning**

Dr. Susan Warren, Professor of Education, along with Dr. Anita Quintanar from Claremont Graduate University, take a look at the reasons for parental involvement in schooling among Latino families. A great deal of research has shown that such parental involvement is the best guarantee of student success. Yet certain ethnic groups require careful attention, given the diversity of views on the way individuals relate with institutions. Teachers and administrators can inadvertently shut parents out through their conduct and unreasonable expectations. Through a variety of interviews with Latino parents and grandparents who are involved with their children's schooling, the researchers bring out the cultural needs that must be met for more of this particular group of parents to become involved. In addition to such basics as a volunteer room and parent/teacher meetings, Latino parents volunteer when teachers and administrators know how to respect *pendiente*—the general sense of parental concern for a child's well-being, as well as *confianza*, or the need for a clear understanding that teaching children is a joint home/school relationship. It is an awareness of this connection between parents and teachers in their common vision of what is best for the child that contributes to the strongest growth. "Voices from the School Community: Latino Parent Volunteers Talk about Parent Involvement in Schooling," appeared in the 2005 issue of the *Journal of Urban Learning, Teaching, and Research* (49-64). —Kevin Walker

### Social Work

#### **Reverence for Elders**

Dr. Sally Bell, Mary Rawlings, and Barbara Johnson, in the Department of Social Work, discuss the growing need for an emphasis on geriatric training of social workers. The elderly population is expected to double in the next twenty years; yet the preparedness of social work students to address their unique set of needs will have to be increased. How might university social work programs address this? The researchers studied the effects of a gerontology-infused curriculum on student skill levels, attitudes, and general knowledge about older adults. Through the infusion of aging content throughout the curriculum, skill levels improved

significantly; attitudes improved slightly, but did not attain statistical significance; knowledge also did not change significantly. The researchers propose further study, comparing an infused curriculum model with a well-designed single course model. Also, attention to successful social workers in this area would bring out important role models for students, thus upholding the duty to serve older people—not to mention the joy that comes from having reverence for age. "Assessing Skills, Attitudes, and Knowledge in Gerontology: The Results of an Infused Curriculum Project," appeared in the Fall, 2005 issue of *The Journal of Baccalaureate Social Work* (26-37). —Kevin Walker

## **RESEARCH COLLOQUIA**

### *"Overcome evil with good"*

—Romans 12:21b

Wednesday, Jan. 18, 2006, in the LAPC

At our first 2006 Colloquium, Dr. Paul Shrier and Dr. Kevin Reimer will explore how "goodness" can be cultivated theologically and psychologically. This topic is important to all Christians but especially to parents. Dr. Shrier will speak about "practical theology"—how the ideas of Christianity can be translated into practice—while Dr. Reimer will demonstrate that specific patterns of altruism can be encouraged in adolescents and can make a difference in their families and communities.

Paul Shrier will be speaking from his article coauthored with B. J. Oropeza, "Practical Theology: A Bridge across the Divide?" from *Christian College, Christian Calling: Higher Education in the Service of the Church*, ed. Steve Wilkins, Paul Shrier, and Ralph Martin (Alta Mira, 2005). Kevin Reimer will be speaking from his article coauthored with D. Wade-Stein, "Moral Identity in Adolescence: Self and Other in Semantic Space" published in *Identity: An International Journal of Theory and Research*, 4 (2004): 229-249.

## **APU FACULTY RESEARCH**

*The Office of Faculty Research and the Office of Sponsored Research and Grants work to assist APU faculty with their research and dissemination endeavors, provide external research funding, and promote an academic climate that celebrates and strengthens the Azusa Pacific University community of Christian scholars and researchers.*

#### **Office of Research Personnel:**

Director, Office of Research: Dr. Carole Lambert

([CLambert@apu.edu](mailto:CLambert@apu.edu))

Consultant, Office of Research: Dr. Beverly Hardcastle Stanford

([BStanford@apu.edu](mailto:BStanford@apu.edu))

Director, Office of Sponsored Research and Grants: Dr. Luman

Wing ([LWing@apu.edu](mailto:LWing@apu.edu))

Grants Services Specialist: Kevin

Walker ([KMWalker@apu.edu](mailto:KMWalker@apu.edu))

Administrative Assistant: Lydia Tracy

([LTracy@apu.edu](mailto:LTracy@apu.edu))

