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**REVISIONING EVANGELICAL
THEOLOGY: AN EXPLORATION,
EVALUATION AND EXTENSION OF
THE THEOLOGICAL METHOD OF
STANLEY J. GRENZ**

Brian S. Harris
B.Soc.Sc B.Th B.Th(Hons) M.Th

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ABSTRACT

In spite of the rapid growth of evangelicalism there is a paucity of reflection on its theological method. The transition from modernity to postmodernity, with the accompanying call for a postfoundationalist rather than a foundationalist method, has provided additional challenges to evangelicalism. Canadian theologian Stanley J. Grenz has proposed a model for evangelical theological construction that utilizes scripture, tradition and culture as the sources for theology, and the Trinity, community and eschatology as its focal motifs. He supplements these with the belief that the Spirit guides the church, and that the community of faith will therefore be pneumatologically guided as it communally attempts to discern truth in a changed context. Grenz believes that his theological method moves beyond foundationalism as it appeals to a trio of interacting sources, rather than to the single source of scripture.

In exploring and evaluating Grenz' theological method, this thesis tests the research proposition "that Stanley Grenz' theological method effectively revisions evangelical theology." To ascertain the validity of the proposition, it utilizes four evaluative questions which explore the originality, theological coherence, appropriateness and effectiveness of Grenz' method for evangelical theology. The application of his model in his text, *Welcoming but Not Affirming*, serves as a test case to determine the implications of his method.

Concluding that Grenz' model makes only a modest contribution towards revisioning evangelical theological method, the concluding chapters of the research explore ways to supplement Grenz' model to allow a stronger affirmation of the research proposition. Utilizing Wolterstorff's concept of control beliefs, it proposes that Grenz' model would be more effective if he added a control belief to guide his theological construction, and motivates for adopting the control belief *the gospel liberates*. In addition, it argues that Grenz' three focal motifs for theology need to be preceded by the gathering motif of the cross, arguing that if seen outside of this gathering motif, the motifs of Trinity, community and eschatology lack adequate substance.

Noting the often acrimonious context in which theological revisioning takes place, the research ends with a plea for the empowerment of imagination in theological construction.

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ABBREVIATIONS

BFM: The Baptist Faith and Message

ETS: Evangelical Theological Society

UFMCC: Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Church

CONVENTIONS FOLLOWED

Apostrophe s after z: This most frequently applies to Grenz' name. In this research the s is not added unless material is being quoted, in which case the decision of the original author is retained.

Bibliography: I have limited myself to works actually cited in this research. While it would have been possible to list literally hundreds of additional texts and articles that have in some way been formative for this project, it is not possible to be fully objective as to where such a record should start or end, so I have opted for the formula of listing only that which is referred to.

Bibliographic style: The Turabian Bibliographic style, as implemented by Endnote 7, is used.

Capitalization: The capitalization of certain terms (e.g. scripture) is discretionary. Where discretionary, capitals are not used in this research unless material is being quoted, in which case the decision of the original author is retained.

Gender inclusive language: Where practical, gender inclusive language is used. While recognising the dangers of ascribing gender to God, the schema of Father, Son and Holy Spirit is followed, rather than alternate suggestions (e.g. Creator, Redeemer and Sanctifier). Where material is quoted, the decision of the original author is retained.

Quotations: Quotations of 40 words or longer are indented.