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EVANGELICAL  
THEOLOGICAL  
METHOD

FIVE VIEWS

CONTRIBUTIONS BY

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## Is there a *right* way to approach theology?

*The question of methodology is increasingly one of interest among theologians, who recognize that the very manner in which we approach theology informs both the questions we ask and the conclusions we reach. This volume in IVP's Spectrum Multiview series brings together five evangelical theologians with distinctly different approaches to the theological task.*

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**Sung Wook Chung** (DPhil, University of Oxford) is professor of Christian theology at Denver Seminary. He is the author of *Admiration and Challenge: Karl Barth's Theological Relationship with John Calvin* and other books on trinitarian theology, eschatology and apologetics. He is also the editor of several books, including *Karl Barth and Evangelical Theology: Convergences and Divergences*.

**Codifying God's Word: Bible doctrines/conservative theology:** "Sung Wook Chung presents a contemporary account of the Bible doctrines or propositional approach to theological method. He argues that the immediate goal of theology is to grow in the knowledge of God and that the way to achieve that goal is a systematic and topical investigation of Scripture. Successful theology ultimately enables the Christian to glorify God through a life of loving faithfulness. Applying this method to Christology, Chung identifies and interprets the relevant passages of Scripture. He then recommends bringing the biblical data related to Christology into conversation with the wider field of biblical scholarship and historical contributions and developments of the doctrine."

**Victor Ifeanyi Ezigbo** (PhD, University of Edinburgh) is professor of systematic and contextual theology and chair of the Biblical and Theological Studies Department at Bethel University. He is the author of *Re-imagining African Christologies: Conversing with the Interpretations and Appropriations of Jesus in Contemporary African Christianity* and *Introducing Christian Theologies: Voices from Global Christian Communities* in two volumes.

**God in human context: Contextual theology:** "Victor Ifeanyi Ezigbo defines and describes the method of contextual theology. Applying this method, he begins with the cultural context of Nigerian Christianity. In Nigeria, Christianity is both popular and integrated with indigenous religious beliefs and practices. While recognizing the legitimacy of the spiritual aspirations and concerns that arise among Nigerians, Ezigbo draws on biblical and historical christological categories of Jesus as revealer of divinity and humanity to resolve them. Focusing on points of doctrinal belief per se, however, is not the goal. Showing that Christian beliefs about Jesus Christ speak to the human concerns that arise in particular cultural contexts is the goal of contextual Christology."

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missiology at the Evangelische Theologische Faculteit in Leuven, Belgium; theologian-in-residence at Second Presbyterian Church in Indianapolis; and general coordinator for the Gospel and Our Culture Network in North America. He is the author of numerous articles and several books, including *Beyond Foundationalism: Shaping Theology in a Postmodern Context*; *The Character of Theology: An Introduction to Its Nature, Task, and Purpose*; *Barth for Armchair Theologians*; and *Manifold Witness: The Plurality of Truth*.

***Living God's love: Missional theology:*** "Theology, according to Franke, participates in the mission of the triune God. Navigating the dynamic relationships between God, gospel and culture is the task of theology. Enabling faithful mission in the world for God is the goal of missional theology. Turning to Christology, Franke begins by noting that traditional Christology not only privileges ontological and metaphysical categories but also assumes and reflects the cultural context of Christendom. Missional Christology, however, recovers a vision of Christ based on the life and ministry of Jesus. The mission of Jesus Christ informs missional Christology. Based on the diverse accounts of Jesus in the New Testament, Franke affirms that particular expressions of Christology are always contextual, and the way Christian communities embody their faith in Christ will reflect cultural context. Living in the way of Jesus by the presence of the living Christ, not technical doctrinal confession, is the purpose of missional Christology. Forming Christian communities in the way of Jesus should be the primary focus of Christology."

**Paul Louis Metzger** (PhD, King's College London) is professor of Christian theology and theology of culture and the founder and director of the Institute for Cultural Engagement: New Wine, New Wineskins at Multnomah University and Seminary. His books include *The Word of Christ and the World of Culture: Sacred and Secular Through the Theology of Karl Barth*; *Consuming Jesus: Beyond Race and Class Divisions in a Consumer Church*; *Exploring Ecclesiology: An Evangelical and Ecumenical Introduction* (with Brad Harper); and *Connecting Christ: How to Discuss Jesus in a World of Diverse Paths*.

***Confessing the faith: Trinitarian dogmatic theology:*** "Drawing on Karl Barth and the Reformed tradition, [Metzger] proposes a theological method shaped by the doctrine of the Trinity. Applying this method to the doctrine of Christ, Metzger makes three christological contributions from the domain of pneumatology. First, the role of the Holy Spirit in the life of Jesus gives historical grounding for his messianic consciousness that stands in continuity with the later christological dogmas developed in the creeds – e.g., Chalcedon. Second, pneumatology also provides a way to affirm both the uniqueness of Jesus as the union of the Son of God with human nature and the continuity of his Spirit-conditioned life with all human life in this world. Third, the Holy Spirit mediates the incarnate life of Christ to the church, which shapes the christological identity of the church without conflating Christ and church."

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*Trinitarian Theology*, as well as several other books on Jonathan Edwards's trinitarian theology and Pentecostal theology.

**Telford C. Work** (PhD, Duke University) is professor of theology at Westmont College. He is the author of *Living and Active: Scripture in the Economy of Salvation*; *Deuteronomy*; and *Ain't Too Proud to Beg: Living Through the Lord's Prayer*.

***Framers and painters: Interdisciplinary theology:*** "In his approach to interdisciplinary theology, Telford Work shows that interdisciplinary theological method reflects the approach of Scripture and apostolic sensibility. He develops the paradigm of framers and painters to articulate a model for disciplining theology in light of tradition, but also for encouraging creative adaptations of the Christian faith. He concludes by showing that an interdisciplinary approach to theology can bring the Christological categories of the Foursquare Gospel to bear on the church's response to homosexuality."

– Excerpts taken from "Method in Systematic Theology: An Introduction"