

Introduction

DNA

Fifty years ago, in 1959, I entered a Canadian university in Halifax, Nova Scotia, as an undergraduate student in Arts and Science. My pre-theology degree at Dalhousie University would include some sciences and broad programs in understanding how the world works, as well as Greek, Latin, English Literature, Philosophy, History and Psychology, a four year honors program in the Faculty of Arts and Science. This was intended to prepare one for the rigors of theological study, which was still then referred to as “the queen of the sciences,” offered only in colleges, seminaries and faculties of Theology or Divinity, quite separate from the rest of the academic community.

There was then no Department of Religious Studies at Dalhousie, or at any other university that I knew of, and there were certainly none of the courses on Islam that are attracting so much attention now. That trend to Religious Studies is now a reality in the Faculty of Arts and Science of practically every respected university of the twenty first century, but back then at Dalhousie, there was a lone half course called *Introduction to the English Bible* in the English Department, and so I signed up.

On the first day Professor Corston introduced the notion that we do not know who wrote the opening books of the Bible, but I drew to his attention that my copy of the King James Authorized Version of the Bible opened with the title of *The First Book of Moses, called Genesis*. He wanted the class to use the Revised Standard Version, which was then practically hot off the press as the first of a generation of new versions, but he was distressed to note that the RSV too began with *The First Book of Moses, commonly called Genesis*. He insisted that this addition of one word was significant and predicted (correctly, it turned out in the New Revised Standard Version of 1989) that future translations would be simply called *Genesis*.

He seemed rattled by my presumptuous and impertinent interjection, and he did not do as well as he might have in explaining the multiple authorship of this communal document and the several that followed. He proceeded to wade through the rest of the Old Testament text without calling the authorship much into question. The good professor fared ever so much better when we reached the New Testament, with the aid of a four-color chart, about a square meter or square yard in size, depicting the four main sources of materials in what are called the “synoptic” gospels, or gospels that “look-alike,” Matthew, Mark and Luke. We could see clearly how one copied from another,

which one had to be the first to be written, and how Luke probably spoke for the others in acknowledging that his material was obtained from various sources and eye-witness interviews, which he then edited together.

I was beginning to learn, and by this time John Corston and I had become quite friendly, so I said to him, “Don’t you wish you had that kind of chart to illustrate the opening books of the Old Testament?” His reply was a direct challenge. “You are going into theology after you leave here. You should construct such a chart and eventually submit it as your thesis project.” I thought I might just do that, so while the idea was fresh, and to prepare for the coming exam, I produced my first draft of the diagram over the Christmas break at my grandparents’ home in 1959 with a pen and a ruler, an Underwood typewriter and some children’s crayons.

In 1963 I enrolled in theological studies in the Faculty of Divinity at McGill University in Montreal to study for the Master of Divinity degree in preparation for ordination for ministry in the United Church of Canada. Naturally, both Old Testament and New Testament courses were on the curriculum for every year, and in first year we also took Hebrew and Greek language studies, Church History and an introduction to Systematic Theology. “Comparative Religion” was an optional extra in the final year for those who might be interested.

The study of “Hebrew Scriptures,” as the Old Testament is now called in many places, included an introduction to the various techniques used for critical analysis of the texts of Scripture. We were taught form criticism, historical criticism, textual criticism, source criticism, redaction criticism, literary criticism and canonical criticism, all the investigative techniques that would give the students information and insights we were

expected to digest and to later reproduce in the context of congregational life through preaching and Bible study that would engage the wider church in helpful ways.

These critical techniques were roughly split into categories known as “Higher Criticism,” which is the study of sources, historical contexts and literary methods used by biblical writers, and “Lower Criticism,” which includes the critical examinations of the actual wording of the finished product, the Bible as we have it. We eventually learned of narrative criticism, psychological criticism, socio-scientific criticism, feminist criticism, rhetorical criticism, and post-modernist criticism. These disciplines gave us perspectives of the Bible from behind the scenes, between the lines and from the *Sitz im Leben*.

The terms were mostly in German from the Protestant scholars who developed these techniques in the hundred years previous at theological schools in Tubingen, Strasburg and elsewhere. The *Sitz im Leben*, for example, was the sociological situation or “life setting” of the Biblical writers in which we could see the Holy Spirit operating in a way that would help us someday better communicate that spirit to congregations.

The first thing to get over was the fact that they call this subject “Biblical Criticism.” It turns out that we were not to criticize the Bible, but to critique it – that is, to analyze it, in appreciating the difference between parables and history, or identifying the parts of the New Testament that are quotes from the Old Testament and appreciating the significance of that fact. I never understood why they did not just call it “Biblical Analysis,” but “critique” seems to have that sense, perhaps based on German usage. Once again, the greatest challenge for most of us as students was to grasp the multiple authorship, or the several sources, of the *Pentateuch*, the first five books of the Old Testament, in any way that was coherent, comfortable and spiritually significant, as well

as being convincing intellectually and responsive to what was clearly a respectable and important field of scientific research.

New Testament studies seemed easier to grasp, partly because fluency in Greek was then a normative entrance requirement at McGill's Faculty of Divinity, and because much of the research had been done by British scholars in English using technical terms we could understand like *manuscript*, *pedigree*, and *transmission*, or Greek words that have found their way into English, like *parable*, *gospel* and *synagogue*. The professor, Dr. George Johnston, was in the habit of speaking to the class in Greek, but we got a break when he referred to technical terms in English.

The best break, however, occurred when out came the four-colored chart, *A Diagram of Synoptic Relationships*. I breathed a sigh of relief, as did a few others who were already familiar with what we regarded as a kind of "Coles Notes" (Cliff's Notes in the USA) explanation for dummies. It was provided to us by Professor John Kirby, Johnston's assistant, who taught advanced New Testament Greek and who ran the student research program. Kirby assured us that the chart was 100% valid as an authentic research tool.

This chart produced by Allan Barr of Edinburgh, published by T&T Clark in 1938 as *A Diagram of Synoptic Relationships*, enables students to grasp and at least discuss the synoptic problem intelligently. It reduces an overwhelming welter of information to a colorful model that intelligent twelve-year-olds in confirmation class can understand, as I have since learned, and does so in a manner that is intriguing, engaging, and spiritually fruitful.

In one column, Barr's chart shows the material by Mark, chapter-by-chapter and story-by-story, in pink. Beside it are two longer columns for the gospels of Mathew and Luke, both of whom had obviously copied all of Mark's material but, judging by important omissions, had not seen each other's work. Material unique to Matthew's gospel is shown in white, and Luke's in yellow.

It is also immediately clear that a significant amount of material, shown in blue, is copied sometimes word for word from another document possessed by the authors of both Matthew and Luke. They both had Mark's gospel, and neither had each other's work, so it is clear that they both also possessed another early document, a collection of sayings of Jesus that Mark had not possessed during his publication of the gospel that bears his name. This is the document known among scholars around the world as "Q," from the German *Quelle*, meaning "source," and it is one of the more exciting treasures uncovered by this kind of forensic investigation of New Testament materials.

With the help of the chart, we can clearly see Mark's presentation, probably produced in Rome, apparently Peter's collection of stories of Jesus, produced very soon after the martyrdom of that saint. We can see Matthew's agenda in aiming his unique material at readers in the Jewish Diaspora, Luke's material intended for gentile readers in the non-Jewish world, and the Q activities and stories of Jesus, cherished by the very early church, possibly originating in Jerusalem or Antioch, at the other end of the Mediterranean, since the Q collection appears unknown to Mark at Rome. Perhaps Q was written as a supplement to Mark, or even a rival collection of the sayings of Jesus from Jerusalem as an early church headquarters rivaling or surpassing Rome at that time.

This classic *Diagram of Synoptic Relationships* has been republished more than twenty times, and while some theological schools decline to use it now because of advances in scholarship since then, many still find it helpful as a landmark in the history of critical analysis and a watershed tool in mastering the techniques required in this discipline. This engaging resource has an enduring place in theological education, lay and professional, and remains easily available from the publishers, T&T Clark, through Amazon.com or any theological bookstore.

Meanwhile, back at McGill, Professor Stanley Frost in the classroom, and Dr. Willard Oxtoby in the research lab, were trying to get through to the students regarding the authorship and communal folk sources of the Old Testament Pentateuch. Strands of materials, oral campfire stories written down at various times, songs and poems, prayers and hymns, sources as diverse as authors working alone and committees of editors . . . who could grasp all this confusion . . . and who would want to try? It was easier to keep insisting that Moses wrote the whole thing, as some students attempted to do, only to be forced to deal with internal textual evidence to the contrary.

This branch of biblical scholarship, as presented to the first year students, was encompassed by the *Four Document Hypothesis*, produced in Germany in 1884 by Julius Wellhausen, and often simply called *The Documentary Hypothesis*. His thesis presented the Pentateuch as a carefully edited compilation of writings based on campfire stories about Moses and the Exodus from Egypt from the northern tribes of Israel, folk memories of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob from the southern tribes of Judah combined with urban legends of David from Jerusalem, a later summary of the law presented as speeches by Moses, and a final layer of material by the priestly editors, who, according to

Wellhausen, pulled the whole thing together and gave it the theological meaning and significance intrinsic to the experience of humanity in that ancient time and place.

With insights from Professor Frost, the students developed an understanding of this material as the Word of God in which the whole people of God had a role in the inspiration that lay behind the material, a role in its transmission and a function in its application. But sorting the material in the lab with Dr. Oxtoby meant going over it again and again, with our faltering Hebrew, using scissors and paste to reconstruct the sources or “documents” known as J (southern), E (northern), D (deuteronomical) and P (priestly).

The research lab was established sixty years ago when the original Dead Sea Scroll manuscripts were paid for by McGill, Manchester, and Heidelberg Universities, by the McCormick Theological Seminary in Chicago and by the Vatican Library, all of whom only finally acquired early second generation copies, but these were enough to enable students at McGill to appreciate the latest scientific research into the origins of our Bible. McGill also owns a fragment of the Chester Beatty papyrus, the earliest fragment of John’s gospel found in the Egyptian desert, and other treasures – the kind of true “relics” of early Christianity that deeply move even Protestant students.

But our experiences in the lab left all of us dreading the final examination in Old Testament. If only there were a four-color chart like the one that made everything plain in New Testament Studies. I was not cut out to be a scholar of the Old Testament or the New, but I determined there and then to complete the chart which I began years earlier at my grandparents home, for my own use at least. My classmates were delighted and Dr. Frost, on the eve of his retirement, smacked his head in feigned frustration that he had never thought of producing such a tool. Aware of my limitations, Frost offered

permission for me to use any or all of his written source list, a table which formed the appendix of a textbook he had just written on the subject. I sketched out the more detailed diagram for myself and others in preparation for the exams and planned to flesh it out further for possible publication as soon as I had time.

Then forty-five years of congregational ministry intervened. Every time I taught an introductory Bible class in a community college or congregation, I wished a better version of that chart was available. Half a dozen seminarians have come to me over the years in utter frustration over learning the techniques of critical analysis. I showed them the Barr chart for the opening books of the New Testament, if they had not seen it, and my own rough sketch of a similar tool for the first five books of the Old Testament, and they understood it.

Having recently retired from the pulpit vocation to focus on writing, an “avocation” all these years, my first task has been promotional tours of my 2007 book, *Noah's Other Son, Bridging the Gap Between the Bible and the Qur'an*. That book takes the Qur'anic story of Noah's youngest son, Canaan, who drowns as a consequence of ignoring the warnings of his father, as perhaps a parable for our times when important warnings about the environment, pandemics, conflict and poverty are ignored.

In response to a challenge from Salman Rushdie, contained in the foreword to that book, several chapters of *Noah's Other Son* are partly dedicated to the task of illustrating the techniques of critical analysis of Scripture for the benefit of Muslim readers – so that we can begin bridging the gap from both sides. On the lecture circuit these chapters on Biblical criticism have proven to be of immense interest, not least to Muslim audiences. I illustrated the points with the help of the New Testament *Diagram of Synoptic*

Relationships, but, again, no fully adequate Old Testament diagram was available, far less one that might help chart the component parts of the Qur'an, as called for by some of the Muslim readers of *Noah's Other Son*.

Both *Noah's Other Son* and this sequel, with its completed diagrams, were designed, for general Jewish, Christian and Muslim readers in these new times, as well as for use in the new discipline of Interfaith Studies in undergraduate Departments of Religion, and in seminaries by those preparing for professional ministries. The hope is that the application of the techniques of critical analysis to the cherished Muslim Scripture, the *Holy Qur'an*, might also assist in the exciting developments currently underway in the Islamic world. This is a sensitive matter that I attempt to address appropriately in both books.

These two books also attempt to show that Islam has significant offerings to contribute to the Judeo-Christian community as part of what we might call "the dysfunctional family of Abraham, Sarah and Hagar." The Muslim contribution may perhaps include some recovery of personal modesty in a sex obsessed society, and possibly a renewal of a sense of sheer holiness in certain religious communities which are currently focused on social justice – a focus which, in Islamic opinion, may only bring the desired results if it is in response to an encounter with the Divine, an area of some possible agreement.

However, and by far, the greatest contribution of Islam to the Christian and Jewish communities may come from insights in the field of biblical studies derived from the Qur'an, as lore from the ancient Middle East pours forth to shed light on biblical mysteries. Jews and Christians have only just recently "discovered" the Qur'an, hidden

from them all these years because of their own prejudices, and its value in the next fifty years should exceed the importance of the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Nag Hammadi Library in the last fifty. High-level conferences and seminars are being proposed on the very topic of “What the Qur’an Reveals About the Bible.” I was recently privileged to be invited to moderate an initial such conference sponsored by The Riverside Church in New York City with the support of the surrounding seminary communities and scholars from all over North America and abroad.

This specific field requires a common technical language, provided to Muslims by adoption of Jewish and Christian critical techniques, a process to which studies such as this book can contribute at an elemental level. The inclusion of the diagram charts of the Old and New Testaments, and a prototype of the third for the Qur’an, is another attempt at developing common tools. Documentation of these scholarly trends among Muslims is provided in the concluding chapters of this work, Part Three. There we also acknowledge the long centuries of intense scholarly endeavor in Islam where scholars employ techniques of their own and of a different order, methods of scriptural study and analysis that may prove to be an exciting boon to the rest of Abraham’s family in the current climate of mutual respect among academics. This sharing is a two-way street. For example, the very latest discipline among Jews and Christians is what is called “rhetorical criticism,” a subject to which we shall return, but which has been well established among Muslim scholars for centuries. For their part, Muslim are increasingly adding to their repertoire what they choose to call “forensic” critical techniques adapted from Christians and Jews.

Such conversations within this family represent a major enterprise in the theological community these days. As mentioned, when I was in seminary, “Comparative Religion” was an optional elective subject for those who were interested. Now we call it “Interfaith Studies” and it is an urgent necessity for students, as well as ministers and lay people alike in every community. The objectives include making a significant contribution to world peace through increased religious tolerance and spiritual unity, and individual growth in understanding of each person’s own faith in a larger context. In seminary days I could never have imagined how Comparative Religion / Interfaith Studies could provide an impetus to complete my life long ambition to produce my chart diagram of the Pentateuch.

In book launches for *Noah’s Other Son* in several countries, and on the lecture circuit through the United States and Canada, discussions of the chapters on biblical criticism produced frequent acknowledgment that critical analysis of the sacred texts by Christians and Jews has not resulted in a diminution of the status of their Scriptures, as initially feared by more timid believers. Rather, the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls and the analysis of their contents, and the unearthing of the Nag Hamadi Library, with its *Sitz im Leben* of the early church, have actually led to an enhancement of the status of Scripture and an authentication of the integrity of the texts. There are parallels in the Muslim world that we will examine. As noted, the learning a second or third language does not diminish one’s ability or love for one’s mother tongue, and Jews, Christians and Muslims in many quarters are becoming more adventurous and courageous in interfaith studies, appreciating each other’s offerings without the necessity of defensively making points at every turn.

Written to accompany the publication of my Old Testament diagram at last, this book is a spin-off sequel of *Noah's Other Son* in many ways, and a few sections of the material are lifted directly from the text of that book. I described Barr's New Testament diagram in that book and I tried to help people imagine the material now depicted on my Old Testament diagram, just to make the explanations clear. In lectures and media events I have used the Barr diagram, and I have tentatively shown my rough prototype of the Old Testament diagram. This project, begun so long ago, is now complete, even as it hints at more to come and invites the participation of Muslims and others of goodwill in regard to a prototype of a similar diagram of the Qur'an produced within these covers and on the related website. If you noticed instinctively that the *Diagram of Sources of the Pentateuch* is truncated on the front cover, you are a scholar. May I suggest humorously that if you did not realize that the last fifteen chapters of both Genesis and Exodus have been cut off, perhaps you are still a student.

Having completed this fifty year project, I offered it with this text to several of my previous publishers requesting a format large enough to put a square meter chart on a double folded dust jacket, or the cover of a "coffee table" style of publication. T&T Clark offered permission for Barr's *Diagram of Synoptic Relationships* to go with it as a centerfold, but few could imagine successful sales prospects for my oversized dream.

I finally found a publisher in New York who agreed to use what we called the *Rand McNally Road Atlas* format, just when my current West Coast publisher came up with a better proposal that combined a traditional publishing format with images available on the internet. We decided on small facsimiles of the forensic diagrams of the New Testament and Qur'an for the back cover to give the idea, and a shortened, even tiny

but readable, facsimile of the *Diagram of Sources of the Pentateuch* on the front cover. We combine this with permission for every purchaser to download the full chart in whatever size suits them for reading, study or lecturing.

For those who are interested and have the ability, possibly every reader these days, a very useful chart size is 11 inches by 17 inches. This can be printed off in color by many home computers or downloaded and redirected to one's neighborhood copy shop. Legal paper, eight and a half by fourteen also works quite well but is harder to read. The image is available to whoever acquires a copy of the book. One presumes that clergy, theological students and congregational members are unlikely to steal my intellectual property without buying or obtaining a book. Please visit me at BrianArthurBrown.com to obtain a free download copy of the *Diagram of Sources of the Pentateuch* and related matter.

In certain respects, Christians and Jews in the twenty first century are now in a "post-critical" phase of Bible studies. Having accepted and digested the critical contribution, they are moving on in a deeper appreciation of the meaning of the scriptural message and applying it. But critical analysis is still of importance. Just as the Protestant Reformation was followed by the Catholic Counter-Reformation, Bible study in the current post-critical era will always be influenced by biblical criticism, a development of such magnitude and such significance that theological students, and now also lay people, will need and desire to master it, along with our Muslim colleagues in relation critical analysis within their own context.

This book, with its diagrams, should therefore be of value to Christian and Jewish laypeople and students who need a simplified tool to master this discipline before moving

on in the post-critical quest for meaning. It may be of special value in illustrating critical techniques within the Muslim community which, in certain respects, is just now entering another critical era of its own. Non-Muslim readers will find the inclusion of the Qur'an in this study of interest from the interfaith perspective. The Qur'anic material also provides Christians and Jews with an independent non-biblical illustration of forensic criticism, validating the techniques from an objective viewpoint for the rest of us, techniques which may facilitate the outpouring of new information and new understanding from this source.

It is the Turkish use of the phrase, "Forensic Science," to describe their use of critical techniques that gave me the title for this book. If such a title seems overly scientific, perhaps this discipline should adopt that cachet once again to illustrate its importance in an age which still nurses a scientific hangover from the more secular, technological and scientific twentieth century, when religion, spirituality and global ethics were not the front-page news they are today. Muslims have little difficulty taking their religion that seriously.

We have come to the realization that, if the Scriptures do indeed hold truth, and their message is valid, then we have nothing to lose and possibly much to gain from critical analysis. That has been the experience of Christians and Jews over the last hundred years, as I argued first in my recent book, *Noah's Other Son*. This is a cause of excited amazement by Muslim scholars and students today. But to me the most unexpected response to those chapters on the techniques of critical analysis is the response from Christian lay people, seminary students and even ministers. "I took that in

seminary, but I never really understood it until now,” was the comment of more than one ministerial colleague.

I believe my success in communicating the essence of the critical approach to biblical analysis has been due to the constant vision of the chart, *A Diagram of the Sources of the Pentateuch*, in my mind’s eye, produced now and included on the cover of this publication and its associated website, after careful vetting by well known and respected experts acknowledged elsewhere. The material it represents from the Hebrew Torah is offered in a presentation of techniques that can be grasped and employed now by Jews, Christians and Muslims alike.

For example, Jews say, “The Messiah is coming,” and Christians assert, “Here He is” and Muslims believe, “Yes, that was Him and he is coming again,” and the three phases of critical analysis confirm and make plain the core elements of messianic theology as held in the three branches of the family. That is not the subject of this book, but it is expected that readers will be able to go further in such investigations and comparisons of their own.

After some initial presentations of *Noah’s Other Son* on the lecture circuit, Muslim students associations have invited me back to various American colleges for dialogues on stage with their favorite Imams, going right to the heart of these matters. And having initially done a Muslim book launch in the midst of the large Islamic community in the West Indies, I was asked to return to do programming on the Islamic Television Network based in Trinidad, illustrating the whole idea of deepening the common understanding of the Old and New Testament texts with the aid of the two diagrams. The Barr diagram of the opening chapters of the New Testament and a full

color presentation of my own diagram of the opening chapters of the Old Testament now make excellent visual aids for my presentation on TV. My prayer is that such resources may also enhance the Muslim understanding of their beloved *Qur'an*, as Jewish and Christian critical techniques become accepted in Islam, resulting in a similar diagram of benefit to us all.

In the future, with the assistance of Muslim scholars, I anticipate the completion of just such a diagram illustrating the different emphases of those chapters in the Qur'an that were produced in Mecca, as compared with those produced in Medina. In an analysis of the Divinely inspired poem / psalm recitations given by God to Muhammad in the Cave of Hera and over the years, it is clear that many relate to his earlier caravan experiences. If indeed, like God's use of Muhammad's knowledge of the Arabic language, Allah was also addressing material not totally foreign to Muhammad, the new Muslim chart might compare the revelations relating to Muhammad's divinely inspired understanding of Gnostic material and that of Nestorian Christians in Syria, his Persian encounters among the Zoroastrians and again, further down the Arabian peninsula, experiences with the desert monotheists known as the Hanifs. In addition, one color would identify those passages in the Qur'an that have parallels with the Jewish Old Testament, and another would delineate those clearly paralleling (or correcting, in the Muslim view) passages in the Christian New Testament.

There is nothing for orthodox Muslims to fear from such an enhanced appreciation of the text of the Qur'an, and nothing *per se* that challenges the belief that the inspiration for this material came to Muhammad with every detail straight from God through the angel Gabriel. We all have much to learn in these connections in an era of

respectful Interfaith Studies. Muslims may grow in appreciation of the way God used the gifts he had already given to the Prophet, his mother tongue and his caravan experiences for example. Other members of Abraham's family may at last appreciate the miracle of revelation that the Qur'an represents to Muslims, to whom it seems clear that much of what Allah revealed perfectly in the Qur'an may have been revealed earlier to Jews, Christians and even Zoroastrians and others, and preserved by them in faithful or even garbled form in their own Scriptures.

Meanwhile, theological education has changed in more ways than merely universities switching from anemic Faculties of Theology to robust Departments of Religious Studies. Students preparing for ministry are not now required to be fluent in biblical languages, since half or more now enter theology in a mid-life switch from another career, or in retirement, in the case of Islam in North America. Many of them have undergraduate degrees or previous careers in disciplines like education, engineering and commerce, rather than specific pre-theology subjects, all of which may benefit the congregations they serve in our new times. This does not mean that there is no place for a scientific approach in theology, and it does not mean that such candidates for ministry need not be as well prepared as previously. They may be better suited for ministry in many respects, though they will always require the basics as represented by this introduction to the critical analysis of Scripture.

For example, St. Andrew's Theological College in Trinidad, a small seminary where I teach in the Spring Semester at present, has sixty-four students in training for ministry, 4 Anglican, 2 Methodist and 58 Presbyterian at this moment. Of these students, 17 are in full time degree programs leading to ordination, the majority coming into

theology from other professions. Forty-seven others are in part time diploma courses, during which they maintain positions in other jobs and professions. They all need a thorough grounding, and I hope the publication of this chart illustrating the sources of the Pentateuch may be welcomed with this explanatory text by them and by professors and students in seminaries and colleges around the world. It is of value in both undergraduate and professional theological studies, as a short course summary of the techniques of biblical criticism suited to the variety of ministerial training tracks now available.

In dedicating this book to a class of seminary students and also to a congregational study group, I hope to make another point. The life of the whole church has changed in a similar way. Through the twentieth century, church life in Christian denominations of the Protestant Reformation was centralized, or “centripetal” in momentum, with energies and money flowing toward “head office” and institutions associated with centralized agendas. Roman Catholics and Orthodox Christians have always had that centralized perspective. Synagogue and Mosque have never shared it, having national offices that act more as clearinghouses for dynamic local organizations. However, to the consternation of some, leadership of the North American Christian mainstream is shifting from a head office mentality to a grassroots style in mission, money and personnel, as well as other activities, including theological training, in a decentralized centrifugal way of operating across the denominations. For those who survive this massive shift, congregations now need at least a semi-professional level of resources available to members becoming lay workers, and I hope this book can provide something significant in that direction.

Anticipating this trend throughout my ministry, while teaming with a number of sterling ordained colleagues, I shared in the training of over a dozen lay workers for full time lay ministry. Our congregations benefited enormously from the gifts of those whose lay ministries are becoming part of a new norm in the twenty first century. Most Christian denominations are acknowledging this with new semi-professional designations recognizing the roles of such workers. Islamic schools and seminaries abound throughout the world, but formal training for Muslim clergy also resembles this twenty first century variety of approaches, in which recognition of gifts for ministry is at least as important as the formal, and less formal training. Many Sunni Imams in North America have retired from engineering, medicine, teaching and other professions, and get their training for local ministries on the job.

Half of my locally trained lay workers eventually went on to formal training in traditional seminaries, but the point is that theological education is increasingly undertaken in a variety of settings and resources need to be designed with this in mind. The apprenticeship model for training clergy has a long and honored history, which may now be integrated with the programs in the new robust Departments of Religion, frequently housed in the beautiful old seminary buildings on campus. Indeed the seminary style of special training may function as a graduate school of these same departments, offering what is required for ordination in the denominations, specifically those historically associated with particular universities, but not limited to them. These facts are important enough to call for resources to be available in the style and in the format of this book.

This study of *Forensic Scriptures* and its *Diagram of Sources of the Pentateuch* are thus well suited to clergy and laity in churches, synagogues and mosques (or “masjids” as many prefer), as well as by erstwhile professional scholars in the seminaries of Judaism, Christianity and Islam. They have been incubating in that context for nearly half a century and they appear now as aids for the growing masses of “amateur” (for the “love” of it) theologians who are increasingly leading church, synagogue and masjid in the study of God’s Word. This is not *Biblical Criticism for Dummies*, because this study presumes a thorough and intimate knowledge of the Scriptures on the part of students and readers, even those who did not notice the truncation of Genesis and Exodus on the front cover.

Like the *Diagram of Synoptic Relationships*, the *Diagram of Sources of the Pentateuch* is basically a snapshot of a watershed turning point in research, an historical point from which so much more insight was derived in a field that is still developing. In itself, Wellhausen’s *Documentary Hypothesis* does not represent every twist and turn of contemporary scholarship, which continues to emerge. However, for purposes of this investigation, we will overlay the diagram with some of the very latest insights at the beginning of the twenty first century as explained in the chapters which follow, and apply the same to the embryonic *Diagram of Revelations of Allah in the Holy Qur’an*.