

**While Yet the Morn Is Breaking**

*Johannes Mühlmann (1573–1613); tr. Catherine Winkworth (1827–1878)*

While yet the morn is breaking,  
I thank my God once more,  
Beneath whose care awakening,  
I find the night is o'er;  
I thank Him that He calls me  
To life and health anew;  
I know whate'er befalls me,  
His care will still be true.

O gracious Lord, direct us,  
Thy doctrine pure defend,  
From heresies protect us,  
And for Thy Word contend,  
That we may praise Thee ever,  
O God, with one accord,  
Saying: The Lord our Savior  
Be evermore adored!

O grant us peace and gladness,  
Give us our daily bread,  
Shield us from grief and sadness,  
On us Thy blessings shed;  
Grant that our whole behavior  
In truth and righteousness  
May praise Thee, Lord our Savior,  
Whose holy name we bless.

And gently grant Thy blessing,  
That we may do Thy will,  
No more Thy ways transgressing,  
Our proper task fulfill;  
With Peter's full affiance  
Let down our nets again;  
If Thou art our Reliance,  
Our toil will not be vain.



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## ΤΩ ΚΡΟΝΟΥ ΚΑΙΡΩ

### *In the Nick of Time*

#### **Almost Ready**

*Kevin T. Bauder*

My latest writing project is now in the final stages of proofreading and review. It should be in the hands of Central Seminary Press by next week, ready for typesetting and publication. The timeline for its release will, I hope, be measured in weeks rather than months.

This release will also include another title. It will be the second edition of my little book on *Finding God's Will*. For the first edition we published only a couple thousand volumes, and they disappeared more quickly than we could have imagined. Because we were a bit unhappy with the cover design, we chose not to reprint it as it stood. Furthermore, since we were doing a redesign, I took advantage of the opportunity to update the book and to include a new chapter.

*Finding God's Will* tries to chart a middle course between those who believe that God offers no individual direction for believers and those who follow their latest emotional burp as if it were God's will for their life. The book maps out a procedure to discover how God is leading in one's life, particularly when it comes to making big choices. I take the position that God does have an individual direction for the believer, and that He does lead believers, but that His leading never rises to the level of new revelation and that it is not a matter of subjectively listening for God's voice. I insist that God leads His children through wisdom, and He does this providentially.

I begin by trying to dissuade readers from seeking God's will through signs and "fleeces," through listening for God's voice (whether inner or outer), or through taking Bible verses out of context. Instead, I encourage believers to begin by submitting to all of God's will that they find revealed in Scripture, by doing all to the glory of God, by fulfilling their duties, by bathing their decisions in prayer, by informing themselves about their choices, by seeking godly counsel, by considering their circumstances, by accounting for their inclinations, by developing a sense of vocation, and by understanding what role the peace of God plays. I also caution brothers and sisters about "buyer's blues," and I provide counsel about what to do when they know they've made a bad decision. In an appendix I summarize these steps in the form of a worksheet, and in a separate appendix I address the question of what a call to ministry looks like.

The goal in *Finding God's Will* is to provide ordinary Christians with a manual that will walk them through the process of making decisions well. The book is easy to read and to understand. A pastor should be able to hand this book to any church member who is struggling with a decision. Working through the book will help that brother or sister. The book is also structured for use in Sunday School classes or home Bible studies, and it includes questions for reflection and discussion.

The other book—the new one—is entitled *Communion and Disunion*. It is a discussion of ecclesiastical fellowship and separation. These are not areas that every believer thinks about every day, but they are important areas that Christians and churches must address periodically.

Over the past thirty years, separation has been the topic that I have been asked to address most frequently. I have published journal articles and book chapters on the subject. I have written papers in formal and informal settings. I have delivered lecture series and preached sermons. What this book does is to gather several of those papers and addresses in one place.

Perhaps I should clarify one thing: when I say that the book is about ecclesiastical fellowship and separation, I do not mean that it is only about what churches do. What I mean is that our understanding of fellowship and separation must be grounded in a right understanding of the church if it is going to be biblical. Crucial to all decisions about Christian fellowship and separation is a correct vision of what the church is and who is included in it.

*Communion and Disunion* is also written for ordinary readers. No seminary training is necessary to follow the argument. It is also written with two readerships in view. On the one hand, I hope to help fundamentalists think through their doctrine of separation, which I believe is substantially correct but often poorly understood and sometimes badly applied. On the other hand, I hope to encourage non-fundamentalist evangelicals to adopt a more robust understanding of church unity and fellowship, an understanding that would result in a conscious appropriation of separatist categories. In short, if you are a separatist, I want to help you become more thoughtful. If you are thoughtful, I would like to help you become more of a separatist.

The likely result, of course, is that I shall encounter disagreement from both sides, and that is fine. I do not pretend to speak the final or authoritative word on this topic. The book is not a rigorous, scholarly treatment of fellowship and separation (such a treatment does not yet exist). Possibly, somebody may even convince me that I am wrong in important ways. But I think this is a conversation that needs to be advanced. Both fundamentalists and other evangelicals need to devote serious attention to the biblical and theological categories in which they talk about fellowship and separation. I will be pleased if the book stimulates conversation. I will be doubly pleased

if it gets fundamentalists and other evangelicals to talk to each other about the subject.

Central Seminary Press is a function of Central Baptist Theological Seminary of Minneapolis. An in-house press of this sort always raises the possibility of less-than-rigorous standards when publishing materials from our own faculty. We try to mitigate that danger by seeking competent outside readers to review our materials before they go to press. *Finding God's Will* has cleared that hurdle and is now awaiting typesetting. *Communion and Disunion* is in the hands of final reviewers and awaits their comments. The process should be complete by the end of Thanksgiving week, and both books will be going into typesetting soon.

So keep your ears open. You will probably hear more about these books before the end of the year.



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This essay is by Kevin T. Bauder, Research Professor of Historical and Systematic Theology at Central Baptist Theological Seminary. Not every one of the professors, students, or alumni of Central Seminary necessarily agrees with every opinion that it expresses.

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