

BELIEVERS CHURCH BIBLE
COMMENTARY

WRITERS HANDBOOK



Believers Church Bible Commentary Editorial Council

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Series Foreword

The Believers Church Bible Commentary series makes available a new tool for basic Bible study. It is published for all who seek more fully to understand the original message of Scripture and its meaning for today—Sunday school teachers, members of Bible study groups, students, pastors, and others. The series is based on the conviction that God is still speaking to all who will listen and that the Holy Spirit makes the Word a living and authoritative guide for all who want to know and do God's will.

The desire to help as wide a range of readers as possible has determined the approach of the writers. Since no blocks of biblical text are provided, readers may continue to use the translation with which they are most familiar. The writers of the series use the New Revised Standard Version and the New International Version on a comparative basis. They indicate which text they follow most closely and where they make their own translations. The writers have not worked alone, but in consultation with select counselors, the series' editors, and the Editorial Council.

Every volume illuminates the Scriptures; provides necessary theological, sociological, and ethical meanings; and in general makes "the rough places plain." Critical issues are not avoided, but neither are they moved into the foreground as debates among scholars. Each section offers "Explanatory Notes," followed by focused articles, "The Text in Biblical Context" and "The Text in the Life of the Church." This commentary aids the interpretive process but does not try to supersede the authority of the Word and Spirit as discerned in the gathered church.

The term *believers church* emerged in the mid-twentieth century to define Christian groups with direct or indirect connections to the Radical Reformation, a distinctive faith expression that arose in Europe during the sixteenth century. These believers were concerned that the church be voluntary and not be aligned with political government. *Believers church* has come to represent an identifiable tradition of beliefs and practices that includes believers (adult) baptism; a voluntary fellowship that practices church discipline, mutual aid, and service; belief in the power of love in all relationships; and a willingness to follow Christ by embracing his cross as a way of life. In recent decades the term has sometimes been applied to church communities informed by Anabaptism, evangelicalism, or pietism, such as Brethren Church, Brethren in Christ Church, Church of the Brethren, Mennonite Brethren, and Mennonites, as well as similar groups. The writers chosen for the series speak from within this tradition.

Believers church people have always been known for their emphasis on obedience to the simple meaning of Scripture. Because of this, they do not have a long history of deep historical-critical biblical scholarship. This series attempts to be faithful to the Scriptures while also taking archaeology and current biblical studies seriously. Doing this means that at many points the writers will not differ greatly from interpretations that can be found in many other good commentaries. Yet these writers share basic convictions about Christ, the church and its mission, God and history, human nature, the Christian life, and other doctrines. These presuppositions do shape a writer's interpretation of Scripture. Thus this series, like all other commentaries, stands within a specific historical church tradition.

Many in this stream of the church have expressed a need for help in Bible study. This is justification enough to produce the Believers Church Bible Commentary. Nevertheless, the Holy Spirit is not bound to any tradition. May this series be an instrument in breaking down walls between Christians in North America and around the world, bringing new joy in obedience through a fuller understanding of the Word.

A Brief History of the BCBC Project

The idea of a commentary produced by the believers church came from Ben Cutrell of Mennonite Publishing House in 1977. This idea was tested with the Mennonite Publication Board, the General Board, and the other program boards of the Mennonite Church later that year. It was also tested in a combined meeting of Inter-Mennonite seminaries and college Bible faculties the same year. Later that year a comprehensive proposal was prepared which promoted the idea of twelve volumes of 4,390 pages and a budget of one million dollars. The proposal was not accepted.

In the fall of 1978 the Mennonite Publication Board accepted a more modest proposal in which writers would be remunerated through a regular royalty arrangement and it was not assumed all books of the Bible would be covered. An ad hoc committee met in early 1979 and worked further on the proposal. This was followed by the publication board deciding to invite other Anabaptist groups in the believers church tradition to join in and make it an inter-Mennonite project.

On June 2, 1980, a Commentary Selection Committee met. Persons present came from the Mennonite Church, General Conference Mennonite Church, Brethren in Christ Church, Church of the Brethren, and Mennonite Brethren Church, along with some persons from Mennonite Publishing House. They worked on administrative plans for the commentary project. On December 12, 1980, representatives from the five denominations met again and agreed that there should be an Old Testament Editor, a New Testament Editor, and an Editorial Council with one representative from each of the participating denominations. Herald Press would be the publisher. Much of the success of this meeting came as a result of the good work Ben Cutrell had done on the project since the prior meeting. Thereafter the Editorial Council has met yearly.

In 1981 the Editorial Council agreed on the name, *Believers Church Bible Commentary*. The Editorial Council outlined its task, defined the work of the Editors, agreed writers should have consultants, and Herald Press would assume financial responsibility and carry out the details of publishing the series. About sixty potential writers were identified. Elmer A. Martens was appointed OT Editor and served as Editor from 1981 to 2003.

In 1982 Howard H. Charles was present as the NT Editor. A draft of a common introduction was reviewed. Elmer Martens had spent an extended period of time at Union Theological Seminary in Richmond, Virginia, researching commentaries and came to the meeting with a proposal about how the Believers Church Bible Commentary should be written. Unique to this proposal were three major elements: Explanatory Notes, Text in Biblical Context, and Text in the Life of the Church. Martens was assigned the task of writing the Jeremiah commentary. The Editorial Council reviewed guidelines for writers and assigned books to some writers to prepare samples for review. It was agreed the writing should be on the twelfth grade level for use across the church by pastors, Sunday school teachers, and small Bible study group leaders.

In 1983 there was more clarification of the guidelines for writers. In 1984 it was agreed that 250 to 325 pages was to be the target length of each volume. Throughout the process the Editorial Council agreed critical issues should be kept in the background.

In 1986, Jeremiah, the first commentary of the series, was published. In many ways this commentary became a guide for other writers in terms of layout, readability, essays, etc. Allen Guenther served as Editor of this one volume. The Editorial Council stated, “this commentary series focuses attention on the canonical text rather than the pre-text of sources. . . . The exposition should proceed with nontechnical language rather than the scholarly shorthand.” It was noted Text in the Life of the Church should include pastoral concerns, history of interpretation, and application in the life of the church. “The whole of church history is to be taken into account, with focus on important moments in understanding the text, especially Anabaptist and discipleship understandings.” Other samples were assigned and/or reviewed, and writers were asked to write their assigned commentary.

In 1987 Paul M. Zehr was asked to chair the Editorial Council in the place of Harold Bauman, who had ably served as Chair from the beginning. In 1989 Howard H. Charles asked to be replaced as NT Editor due to health reasons and Willard M. Swartley was selected as NT Editor and served from 1989 to 2001.

In 1990 a representative from the Brethren Church joined the Editorial Council, giving the project six denominations (Mennonite Church, Mennonite Brethren Church, General Conference Mennonite Church, Brethren in Christ Church, Church of the Brethren, and Brethren Church). In 1991 the Matthew commentary, written by Richard B. Gardner, was published.

Between 1991 and 2004 a total of 17 volumes were published (8 OT, 9 NT). Genesis was translated into Russian. With the publication of Exodus (2000), Ephesians (2002), and Romans (2004), the reading level of the commentaries moved higher. The Editorial Council agreed the reading level should move from grade twelve to first and second year college level.

In 1992, through the generosity of a Schowalter Foundation grant, a special BCBC workshop for writers was held at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Indiana. Resource persons were Willard Swartley, Elmer Martens, Katie Funk Wiebe, C. J. Dyck, and S. David Garber. Attention was given to biblical interpretation issues, Text in Biblical Context, and Text in the Life of the Church as well as writing style. In 1996 and 1997, seminars were held across the church promoting the commentary series.

In 2002 Willard Swartley asked to be relieved of the NT Editor work due to health concerns. Gordon Zerbe, from Canadian Mennonite University in Winnipeg, was appointed NT Editor, and in 2006 Loren Johns of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary replaced him in this role. In 2003 Elmer Martens asked to be replaced, and Douglas B. Miller of Tabor College was appointed OT Editor. There has been some change in Editorial Council members in recent years. With the merger of the Mennonite Church and the General Conference Mennonite Church and the resultant change to Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Church USA, there is now one representative from each of these two denominations. The names of the Editors and Editorial Council members are listed in each volume of the BCBC that is published. At its 2004 meeting the Editorial Council and Herald Press honored Elmer Martens and Willard Swartley for their work on the commentary series over the years. In 2006, the Council celebrated the series’ twentieth volume (10 from each testament) and renewed its commitment to bring the entire project to completion.

Reviews of the commentaries have been quite positive both from within the church and from the larger scholarly world. Herald Press also receives strong positive feedback from the church on the published volumes.

Paul M. Zehr
11/04; rev. 11/06; 9/10

Philosophy, Structure, and Relationships of the BCBC Project

1. Rationale and Purpose

As a people of the Bible, members of the believers church claim that our distinctive understanding of Christian faith and life flows from the Scriptures. Consequently a Bible commentary within this tradition will move to support this claim.

Within the believers church tradition the church is envisioned as a voluntary community of love. It consists of persons claimed by Christ's love who commit themselves to follow their Master in worship and discipleship, in fellowship and nurture, in separation from the world and the obedient response to "go into all the world and make disciples of all nations."

The ethical vision of the believers church grows out of an active love. It includes sharing possessions to meet the needs of others. It assumes a readiness to serve. It places high value on human life. It is rooted in the reconciling work of God and issues in the call to be a reconciling people.

The believers church perspective on the Bible obligates every Christian to study the Scriptures for the purpose of meeting God in them and to discover and practice the will of God. Such study will be individual and corporate. Insights are shared with the body, resulting in obedience to the truth. Christians search the Scriptures aware that God's truth cannot be plumbed. Consequently, they bring to the Bible an attitude of expectation and openness. The commentary, therefore, is to encourage further reflection and study. This will occur implicitly, for example, through narratives of faithful living and raising questions, and more explicitly through such means as suggestions for fruitful issues to pursue. The commentary is intended to generate interest, inquisitiveness, and excitement toward further understanding and application of the biblical message.

The rationale for the proposed commentary springs from these contributions and perspectives of the believers church regarding the church and its mission, ethics, and the Scriptures.

- 1.1 Therefore the purpose of the Believers Church Bible Commentary is to:
 - 1.1.1 Clarify and strengthen the believers church understanding of its biblical foundation.
 - 1.1.2 Pass on the heritage of faith to succeeding generations. The production of such a commentary is timely inasmuch as there are now sufficient mature Bible teachers among us to complete the task.
 - 1.1.3 Share the believers church perspectives on the essential teachings of Scripture and the resultant faith responses with the wider church. While the intention is not to search the Scriptures for themes that are characteristic of the believers church tradition, there is a felt need to highlight themes that are central yet do not receive sufficient or balanced treatment in the commentaries of other Christian traditions. These include the believers concept of the people of God, the peace and reconciliation theme, and the call to mission and service as an integral part of the Scriptures ("Guidelines," 3rd revision, 1983).

- 1.2 At the commentary workshop in Elkhart (1992) the following distinctives of these commentaries were named:
 - 1.2.1 They stand in the Anabaptist tradition. The series is to be a witness to the Anabaptist viewpoint in tenor as well as in “topics” (people of God, community, discipleship, peace, service/mission, etc.), but should not be parochially “in-house” (see the Series Foreword).
 - 1.2.2 They reflect a community hermeneutic. Input is given by lay readers, peer readers, and especially the Editorial Council, which represents various denominations and points of view.
 - 1.2.3 They place emphasis on theology.
 - 1.2.4 Their level of writing is popular.
 - 1.2.5 They are written for the church.

2. Target Readership

The commentary should be written at a college freshman reading level. The expected primary users of this commentary are:

- 2.1 Leaders and teachers of believers church congregations in North America. This would include, for example, pastors, teachers of Sunday school classes, Bible study group leaders, and persons educated in professional areas other than theology and Bible.
- 2.2 Any person or group with serious interest in Bible study. It shall provide resource material that does not assume highly technical or scholarly Bible study skills on the part of the reader.
- 2.3 College students and perhaps also those in senior high school.
- 2.4 Youth and adult Christian education classes.
- 2.5 Bible institute students.
- 2.6 International leaders of churches in the believers church tradition.
- 2.7 Persons interested in the foundations of faith and interpretive approach of the believers church.

3. Concept

- 3.1 Presupposition 1: The role of the Believers Church Bible Commentary is to aid the interpreting process, not to provide the final word in understanding Scripture.

The content is not to be overtly prescriptive or creedal. But this does not exclude the Writer’s taking and stating his or her position or interpretation. The style shall be dialogical in character, acknowledging the diversity of viewpoint and emphasis within the canon and in the church, past and present. A polarizing style must be avoided. The context and style shall reflect the pilgrim nature of God’s people. We wish to avoid dogmatism and rigidity and encourage openness while holding firm convictions.

The BCBC is to be an independent work. It will not replace curriculum or Bible study guides which may quickly become dated. It will place the weight on exposition rather than application, though it will include the latter.

The exposition of this commentary will be by pericopes or groups of pericopes rather than in a verse-by-verse form. While the Writers are expected to bring the full gamut of expository skills to the analysis of the text, the focus rests on the content in its present mode rather than with the prehistory of the text, putative sources, or form-critical structures or analyses. Critical methodologies should not be in the foreground, but they are appropriate inasmuch as they illuminate the meaning of the text and build faith.

The content will consist of six types of comments:

- 3.1.1 Theological, sociological, ecclesiological, and ethical interpretation.
- 3.1.2 Illumination of Hebrew and Greek texts. Transliterations will be kept to a minimum.
- 3.1.3 Historical and cultural backgrounds.
- 3.1.4 The literary structure of the material as this is significant for interpretation.
- 3.1.5 The use and interpretation of OT texts in the NT and the meaning of the larger contexts of the pericopes or units of text.
- 3.1.6 Practical, homiletical, and devotional dimensions.

The major emphasis of this project shall be on the first. The subsequent five points should be included whenever they contribute to the type of comment listed under the first. The commentary is to evince knowledge of secondary literature with occasional references to such. The practical, homiletical, and devotional dimensions (3.1.6) should be included as the text elicits them. Care must be taken not to date the commentary with the comments regarding application.

- 3.2 Presupposition 2: The approach of a commentary shall recognize the perspectives of the believers church tradition as fruitful but not limiting in the interpretive process.

The work shall stand within the believers church tradition and recognize distinctive contributions of this tradition to the understanding and use of Scripture. The compilation of all biblical references in Dirk Philips, Menno Simons, and *Martyrs Mirror* by Yoder-Hochstetler (*Biblical References in Anabaptist Writing*, Aylmer, Ont: Pathway Publ.) is a useful source, as are the Scripture indexes contained within the Radical Reformation series volumes.

- 3.3 Presupposition 3: The interpretative process occurs through the work of the Holy Spirit and within a hermeneutical community.

In the believers church tradition the exegete works in concert with others—his or her exegetical peers as well as those for whom the interpretation is intended. This involves, at the very least, a testing process.

Each Writer will work with a group or sampling of informal consultants. The Editors will suggest the types of consultants which could profitably be used. These would include representatives of the target readership, someone from another culture, and senior church leaders.

A second level/stage of consultants will be the Writer's peers, who critically test the completed manuscript for readability, breadth, inclusiveness, thoroughness, felicity in interpretation, and consistency with the stated objectives of the commentary.

- 3.4 Presupposition 4: The Scriptures are divinely inspired and the authoritative testimony of God's revelation, displayed most perfectly in the person, ministry, and teachings of Jesus Christ.

4. The Commentary Writer

The most crucial decision the Editorial Council makes is when it selects and approves a Writer for the series. The Editors (OT and NT) take the lead in contacting potential Writers and inviting them to submit a vita. Writers are then selected by the Editorial Council. It is expected that most Writers will be chosen from among the believers church, with a majority from North America. The criteria for choosing a Writer are as follows:

- 4.1 Ability to work on all six types of comment (Sec. 3.1)
- 4.2 Support of the theological perspectives described above (Secs. 1 and 3) and demonstrated commitment to the believers church theological perspectives in relationship to the scholarly thought in the area of his or her commentary assignment.
- 4.3 Involvement in congregational life; willingness to write for theologically untrained church leaders; and commitment to serve congregations in biblical interpretation.
- 4.4 Ability to write clearly and simply and to communicate scholarly insights through nontechnical concepts, vocabulary, and style.
- 4.5 Maturity in Christian faith and concern for the edification of the body of Christ.

If a Writer has been identified and tentatively approved by the Editorial Council, the Council requests a sample of commentary writing from the candidate and then takes action on the appointment (requesting revisions, conditional acceptance, appointment). The sample should follow the guidelines set for the series, conform to the respective lengths of the four sections, and reflect a writing style in accord with the target audience set for the project. A "preliminary working bibliography" should be submitted along with the sample.

At all times, the primary relationship is between the Writer and the Editor. This is basically a trust and confidence relationship that works best if trust is cultivated so that the Writer responds to the Editor's queries, based on the wisdom of the Editorial Council.

There are four main points at which the Editorial Council speaks to the Writer, all through the Editor or Council Chair:

- a. Making a decision on a Writer (by consensus or by vote)
- b. Responding to a sample chapter
- c. Responding to the complete manuscript
- d. Making decisions on an edited manuscript (by consensus or vote)

At both the first and the last stage the Editorial Council decides for or against a proposed Writer or manuscript. The rest of the process is one of consulting: fraternal, professional, and churchly respect.

5. The Editors

It is the task of the OT and NT Editors to work closely alongside the Writer to accomplish a believers church theological perspective on the text. The purpose of the series is to provide a believers church reading of the Scriptures. These are the reader and market expectations—hence the editorial review process involving various denominational representatives and sponsorship, quite beyond what one might usually find in such a project. During the late twentieth century, Anabaptist interpretation gained stature as a theological stream in the larger Christian world, much as one might respect Reformed, Lutheran, or Catholic interpretations.

In the decades since this project began, pluralism has increased among the sponsoring denominations. This diversity also characterizes the larger Evangelical world, hence the breadth of interpretations now published by Evangelical publishers such as Baker, Eerdmans, and InterVarsity, and the breadth of interpretation within the Evangelical Theological Society itself. As publishers, this diversity is our context. The Old Testament and New Testament Editors nurture the commentary series to reflect Anabaptist interpretations, and it should not violate any of our denominational confessions of faith. But within that range, the commentaries seek to reflect and speak to the current diversities in today's church without being captive to them.

6. The Editorial Council

From the first, an Editorial Council was organized to represent the participating denominations, now Brethren Church, Church of the Brethren, Brethren in Christ Church, Mennonite Church USA, Mennonite Church Canada, and Mennonite Brethren Church. The Editorial Council appoints Writers and Editors and processes manuscripts en route to publication. The publisher of the series is Herald Press. A representative of the Press participates regularly in conversation with the Council.

The Council monitors the appropriate balance between the individual Writer and the churches' voice. BCBC commentaries "represent a hermeneutical community's efforts in interpreting the biblical text, as led by the Spirit" (part of the original series foreword). This in itself is a part of the distinction of the believers churches. Anabaptist writers also have distinct voices within this community.

John Howard Yoder probably did more than any other writer or scholar in popularizing the term “hermeneutical community,” and Yoder would send drafts of his writings to many people for testing. Yet Yoder’s writing and interpretation also had a singular tone and voice, quite different from the writing of a confession of faith or editorial in which one gives up claims to individual voice.

The Editorial Council provides the churches’ voice in the selection of the Writer, responding to sample chapters, responding to the entire manuscript, and final approval or disapproval of the entire manuscript. It has the ultimate and most important decisions, but it respects the role of the Writer and the Editor and may not agree with all parts of the manuscript. The Editorial Council does not attempt to write, edit, or rewrite the manuscript, however much an individual Council member may agree or disagree with some aspects of the manuscript. It gives counsel to the Editor and issues queries at appropriate times, but ultimately approves or disapproves a manuscript with the unique voice of the Anabaptist Writer. It seeks an appropriate balance between the voices of the Writer and the community.

Taken from the original “Guidelines” for the BCBC project (1982, 3d revision 1983) with contributions by Elmer Martens, Gordon Zerbe, and Levi Miller 11/01; 11/03; 11/04; 11/06; 9/10

Overview of the Editorial Process

1. The Old Testament and New Testament Editors invite specific people to consider writing for the series and solicit their interest in the project.
2. If a person expresses interest, he or she is invited to submit a vita and statement of interest, which the Editor in turn presents to the Editorial Council.
3. The Council takes action to invite a sample from a writer/candidate.
4. The sample to be submitted is to follow the guidelines set by the Editorial Council regarding respective lengths of the four major sections and to reflect a writing style in accord with the target audience set for the project. A “preliminary working bibliography” for the commentary should be submitted along with the sample.
5. The sample may be submitted to the Editor for initial feedback before submission to the Council. When submitting to the Council, the Council responds by accepting it, rejecting it, or asking for revisions, which implies conditional acceptance.
6. The Chair of the Council informs the Writer of the decision and actions taken by the Council.
7. The Editor follows up the Council Chair’s letter to the Writer-candidate with a letter that conveys specific points of counsel for further work on the sample and larger manuscript.
8. The Writer takes responsibility to identify three consultants for the project. These are: (1) a layperson (often from his/her own congregation), (2) a complementary gender/cross-cultural person, and (3) a theological peer. (See the “Response Guide” in this handbook.) Criteria for the Peer Reader are as follows: (a) good scholar (who has published in the area); (b) connected to the church; and (c) if not a member of a BCBC partner denomination, should be a good conversation partner with the Anabaptist tradition. The candidate is to submit three names for a theological peer to the Editor, who in turn presents them to the Council. The Council acts to appoint the theological peer, and the Editor informs such persons of the same. Persons serving in this capacity shall receive a complimentary copy of the volume when it is published.
9. During the process of writing the commentary, the Writer is to submit another portion of work (60 to 70 pages) to the Editor at least once—perhaps twice—before the first draft is completed. The same submissions are to go to the consultants as well, in order to get their feedback.

10. When the manuscript is complete, the Writer submits a complete electronic copy to the Editor. The Editor sends electronic copies to the Herald Press Editor of the project, to members of the Council, and to the Peer Reader.
11. Taking into account the comments from the Peer Reader and its own deliberations, the Editorial Council takes action to approve the manuscript or to call for specific revisions (which implies acceptance of the manuscript as such).
12. A letter from the Chair of the Council is sent to the Writer informing him or her of the Editorial Council's decision.
13. The Editor also writes to the Writer to convey the specific content of the feedback to the manuscript received during the Editorial Council's deliberations.
14. If it has not done so previously, Herald Press now sends a "Publishing Contract" to be signed by both the Writer and the Editor. Royalties are divided between the Writer (80%) and the Editor (20%). Indices are produced at the Writer's expense (cost subtracted from the Writer's royalties).
15. The next submission of the manuscript is to the Editor who then determines whether additional work is to be done or whether it can be sent to Herald Press for the copy editing stage.
16. The initial Copy Editor will read carefully through the manuscript, making both style and content suggestions for improvement. When completed, the Copy Editor sends this compilation to both the Editor and Writer for review.
17. The Writer will revise in response to the Copy Editor's comments and questions, though the initial Copy Editor will not see the document again. When the Editor is satisfied that the manuscript is ready, the Editor submits it to Herald Press to be typeset.
18. The manuscript is typeset and undergoes another round of copy editing. Herald Press then sends a PDF of page proofs to the Writer and to the Editor, both of whom make comments. At this stage, only error corrections and other minor changes may be made. The Press further revises the manuscript and creates the indexes.
19. During this time the commentary maps are arranged with the Writer, Editor, and Press. The Press also requests detailed information from the Writer who completes the Author Information Form. The Press begins promoting the book in various ways and through various outlets.
20. When manuscript details are finalized to the satisfaction of the Writer, Editor, and the Press, the commentary is published. Copies are sent to the Writer, Editor, Peer Reader, Editorial Council, and others for critical review.

Guidelines for BCBC Writers

1. Basics on the Manuscript

- 1.1 Length. An allowable range for the commentary's word length is specified in the contract with Herald Press, including the maximum length beyond which the Writer needs approval from the Editorial Council. For volumes in which several biblical books (and perhaps Writers) are represented, the contract shall supply details about respective word lengths. Most published BCBC volumes fall between 300 and 500 pages in length. For estimation purposes, a full published page in the body of the work contains approximately 450 words. Dividing the number of words in a complete manuscript by 400 yields a (very) rough estimate of the number of published pages prior to the indexes.
- 1.2 The manuscript is written at first-year college comprehension level.
- 1.3 The writing style should be bright and lively rather than plodding. Bible references and other citations should be placed at the end of the sentence. Avoid sentences that begin, "In v. 4 Paul shows . . ."
- 1.4 The Scripture versions that the Writer should track are the following: NRSV, NIV 2011, and others (sparingly) as the Writer considered significant. The biblical text will not be printed in the commentary. The Introduction will identify the versions that have been used on a comparative basis. Each Writer will identify either the NRSV or NIV (2011) as *primary* in the exposition. He or she will also track the other of the two for translation differences. Writers may make their own translations where the exposition of the text requires it (designated AT for Author's Translation).
- 1.5 The format for the volumes is as follows: Title Page, Dedication Page, Abbreviations, Table of Contents, Series Foreword, Author's Preface, Introduction, Commentary Proper (Preview, Outline, Explanatory Notes, Text in Biblical Context, Text in the Life of the Church), Detailed Outline of the Bible Book(s), Essays, Maps, Appendixes (if any), Bibliography of Works Cited, Selected Annotated Bibliography (approx. a dozen books), Index of Ancient Sources, and a page of information about the Author.
- 1.6 Introduction. The introductory section should give some basic information about the biblical book's author/editor(s), the times, the audience, and special features. Sections on the "Message," "Biblical Theology," and/or themes of the book are helpful to encourage the interest of the reader. Composition, historical-critical questions, and other more technical matters may be addressed briefly in the Introduction, but any expansive treatment, if thought desirable, is best treated in an essay at the end of the book. The opening sentences should be carefully crafted to draw the reader into both the biblical book and the commentary.
- 1.7 Commentary Proper (parts of a Bible chapter, or several chapters, depending on the biblical book). The commentary should include an Overview for larger Scripture blocks (designated a "Part"), if any.
 - 1.7.1 Preview (5–10% of space allocation). In a few paragraphs the reader is to be given an overview of the material found in the unit under discussion. Preferably it would begin with a "hook" that connects the reader with the

topics that will be treated in the EN, TBC, and/or TLC. It offers indications as to what kind of material will be found in the “segment,” explaining how this “segment” fits into the flow of the book. Items to include, as appropriate:

- a “hook” of theme or themes
- an overview of themes of the segment
- statement of literary type/form
- statement of historical setting
- the relationship of the section to its context (preceding and following)

- 1.7.2 The Outline serves as the skeleton for the Explanatory Notes and follows a defined format for the placing of the verse references (for examples see printed volumes). Normally only two levels, rarely three.
- 1.7.3 The Explanatory Notes (50–60% of space allocation) should explain (1) items that are unclear to readers, (2) insights from word, rhetorical, historical, archaeological, social, and/or syntactical analysis, etc. Matters of historical source criticism are not to be foregrounded; where appropriate, information can be given in supplemental essays. A detailed verse-by-verse examination is not desired. Rather, utilizing the proposed outline, Writers are encouraged to proceed through the text discussing the material and issues raised. The reader will be helped by (1) italicizing any words/phrases from the biblical text, and (2) verse references to the biblical text (e.g., vv. 2-3). Adding charts or line drawings not only break up pages and pages of print, but also assist the reader greatly. Consider occasionally adding comment from another scholar, or in discussion of variant views, reference names and works (using in-text citation).
- 1.7.4 The Text in Biblical Context section places the burden/message of the immediate text into the wider context of book, literary corpus, and canon. Brief essays should be given a heading; the aim is to point the way toward a biblical theology of the material. Here there should be one to three mini-essays (with headings) that pick up motifs or themes within the passage and that show how these themes are expanded or qualified elsewhere in the Bible, whether OT or NT. One may think of this section as an intertextual biblical theology, a memory jogger for the pastor/reader via discussion and references.
- 1.7.5 The Text in the Life of the Church section is the insignia of the series and has received favorable comment in reviews. As with TBC, this section has one or more brief essays per “segment,” each with a heading. Here the Writer can focus on (1) how the text has been interpreted in the life of the Christian church over two millennia (notably Anabaptist usage, but not limited to this); and (2) how the text might apply to the current church (without examples that might quickly become dated); the global context should be kept in mind. The Writer should suggest springboards for preaching and/or teaching. Moralizing detail or too local (temporal and cultural) applications should be avoided, as should the assumption that the commentary reader belongs to the same denomination as the writer. The commentary should be more theological than historical or moralistic. Each TBC and TLC essay should range between 200 and 650

words, and together might comprise 30-35% of space allocation. Issues that deserve a longer essay should be saved for those in the back of the commentary, with perhaps a brief treatment in TBC or TLC. Scripture indexes available to sixteenth-century Anabaptist writings are available on the Herald Press website.

- 1.8 Detailed Outline. A full outline is published at the end of the book. Customarily the table of contents will build off the outline and should be consistent with it.
- 1.9 Supplemental Essays (not to total more than ¼ of the book's volume) are noted in the ms. by their titles in brackets, e.g., [*Wisdom, p. 123*]. Rather than repeatedly exploring a common theme (e.g., wrath of God) within the exposition, writers should note it briefly in the Explanatory Notes while referring the reader to a fuller discussion in an essay. Writers should consider drafting these in the course of their commentary writing rather than waiting to write them all after the entire commentary is completed. Essay topics may include methodology and other critical matters, thematic and theological issues, special terms in the text, historical and cultural issues, and anything else that demands extended treatment.
- 1.10 Bibliography. This section compiles a complete list of all sources cited in the commentary. Items listed in the bibliography are not required to be cited in the text. However, such uncited entries should be kept to a minimum. For format, check published commentaries and the *Chicago Manual of Style*.
- 1.11 Selected Resources are to help readers with valuable sources, especially by including annotations, optionally dividing the section into "Basic" and "Advanced" (or annotating to so indicate). This short list (about a dozen items) is in addition to the Bibliography but may include entries found there.
- 1.12 Two maps from the putative time of the text's composition or narrative era, a map of Palestine and a map of the ancient Near East (OT) or Mediterranean (NT) are typically prepared. The Writer should suggest sources from which these might be taken (including previously published BCBC commentaries). The Editor will collaborate with the Writer and the Press on these maps.
- 1.13 An index of ancient sources (biblical and other) will be prepared by the Press after galley pages are available.

2. Writing Suggestions

- 2.1 Initially work with your biblical book independent of other sources. Seek to develop your own "line on the book" (Elmer Martens), that is, your conviction about the message and contribution of this part of the Bible. By approach or thematic emphasis let the commentary exhibit something distinctive about the book. You will not be able to say all that might be said; there is neither time nor space to interact much with countervailing views, though some references to secondary sources are expected.
- 2.2 Research. A certain amount of research should be done before beginning to write. Just how much is distinctive to each Writer. Beware of the lure of reading and researching too long. When the Writer feels reasonably confident, it is time to begin. Set some time goals related to the big picture of how much time is available for the complete first draft, or whatever interim goal there might be. Set some progress goals (X number of chapters) and writing quantity

- goals (X number of words) per some unit of time. The Explanatory Notes are the heart of the commentary and almost always should be done first, either for a given section of the material or for the entire project. Then turn to the other sections of the manuscript.
- 2.3 Introduction. Let your first draft of the Introduction be a collection of your (at least) tentative conclusions or decisions about critical issues related to your biblical book. Do a draft of this as soon as possible, but do not feel pressure to put this into final form, either in content or in polish. Add sections and comments to it as you write other parts of the project. A draft of the Introduction can be a very helpful point of reference regarding the big picture questions as you comment on specific segments of text. The beginning of the (final version of) the Introduction should entice the reader to read the biblical book—and this commentary on it! Make this a priority for the opening sentence(s) and the opening paragraph(s).
 - 2.4 After outlining the book, it is helpful to decide the extent of the blocks that will be treated as the larger unit, that is, a section with its own Preview, Outline, Explanatory Notes, TBC, and TLC.
 - 2.5 Write a first draft of the whole without trying to be perfect. Later, material will be added or deleted, but a first draft can establish momentum; you will need it to determine how much space you have. Most Writers calculate by word count or page length how much space can be devoted to the segments.
 - 2.6 Writing style is a major consideration. Keep the target audience in mind. You are not writing for fellow academics. This commentary is for the church, not the academy, though Christian colleges have selected BCBC for class texts. Pastors, not all of whom have seminary education, together with reasonably knowledgeable laypersons, will be the main audience. Evocative imagery and readable English that is concise, crisp, and persuasive is not only desirable but necessary. A reader should be carried along, invited, so to speak, to read beyond their initial reason for consulting the commentary. For a helpful overview of writing issues, see Katie Funk Wiebe's paper, "How to Edit Your Own Writing" (Elkhart Workshop, 1992; available from the Editors).
 - 2.7 Previews are important and challenging to write. Most writers need special help and encouragement to consistently write good hooks. See recently published BCBC volumes for some examples.
 - 2.8 TBC and TLC. These should range in length from approx. 200 words minimum to 650 words maximum. A commentary segment needs to contain at least one of each, marked by a thematic heading, but may contain more. It is good to create a chart of the topics you are addressing in these sections in order to avoid redundancy and to see where you may have gaps in issues you had hoped to address. If a topic warrants more length than 650 words, consider making it an essay, or including a smaller version at TBC or TLC, then referring to the essay that develops the topic further.
 - 2.9 Text in the Life of the Church. The Text in the Life of the Church sections are best if they involve (over the course of the commentary) some 16th century Anabaptist material, as well as some historical material from a variety of Anabaptist or other Christian groups between then and now. Because six denominations support and benefit from this series, a given commentary should not contain examples from only one or two of the groups. Do not think

- that you need to do extensive research into all the other groups. Sometimes it is a matter of simply referring to a perspective by a more inclusive name than calling it “Mennonite,” “Brethren,” etc. Historical reports from any Christian group that reflects Anabaptist values are also welcome. In addition to historical reports, the TLC can also include practical ideas for preachers and educators that do not necessarily have any historical anecdote as part of it, e.g., ideas for sermons. Suggestions for “applying” the text are acceptable in moderation.
- 2.10 Keep in mind that only rarely will a reader start at the beginning of your book and continue through to the end. Nearly all commentary readers will dip in and out according to their concern for a specific text or topic. This makes a certain amount of redundancy welcome as well as liberal cross-references to the essays on themes and critical issues at the back of the volume.
 - 2.11 In all commentary matters, consulting previously published commentaries, especially the more recent ones, can be helpful.
 - 2.12 To acquaint yourself with Anabaptist materials, check the *Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online* (GAMEO); C. J. Dyck, ed., *Introduction to Mennonite History*; Eldon T. Yoder and Monroe D. Hochstetler, *Biblical References in Anabaptist Writings* (Aylmer, Ont., LaGrange, Ind., Pathway Publishers, 1969); Ira D. Landis, *Scriptural Index to the Complete Writings of Menno Simons*, 1981; and Donald F. Durnbaugh, *The Believers’ Church* (1963). See C. J. Dyck’s “Anabaptist 16c Bibliographical Resources” presented at the Elkhart Workshop in 1992 (from Editors). Scripture indexes to sixteenth-century Anabaptist writings are posted on the Herald Press website.
 - 2.13 Remember that your work is a service to God and to the church. Bathe your work in prayer.

3. Style Matters

- 3.1 Writers of the Believers Church Bible Commentary should have the following easily available, in increasing rank of authority (U.S. spelling):
 - 3.1.1 The *Chicago Manual of Style* (University of Chicago Press) or a more popular presentation of it such as Turabian’s *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* (University of Chicago Press).
 - 3.1.2 *The SBL Handbook of Style* (Hendrickson).
 - 3.1.3 The MennoMedia Supplement to the *Chicago Manual of Style*. Spellings are from the author’s primary version: NIV (2011) or NRSV.
 - 3.1.4 This *BCBC Writers Handbook*
Consulting previously published BCBC volumes can be very helpful, but note that in some cases style policies have changed.
- 3.2 Abbreviations for biblical books and Apocrypha (in notes or parentheses) should follow MennoMedia style, which mostly agrees with *SBL*, but use *1 Kings*, *1 Chron*, *Jth*, and *Philem*; also use *Eccl* for Ecclesiastes and *Sir* for Sirach/Ecclesiasticus. Periods do not follow abbreviations (e.g., Eph for Ephesians). When a direct quotation includes a Scripture citation, the style used in the original should be used.
- 3.3 Use abbreviations OT and NT only in parenthetical statements, including the Essays.

- 3.4 For dates, BCE and CE are used (small caps, without periods) rather than BC and AD (change as of 11/23/13).
- 3.5 In parentheticals, use ch./chs. and v./vv. with number.
- 3.6 It is acceptable to refer to sections of the commentary as EN, TBC, and TLC.
- 3.7 If referenced in running text, capitalize various BCBC sections: Abbreviations, Introduction, Preview, Outline, Explanatory Notes, The Text in Biblical Context, The Text in the Life of the Church, Essays, Bibliography, Selected Bibliography.
- 3.8 Citations should be in-text rather than in footnotes. These should be placed toward the end of a sentence. First names may be used on first mention. Note the following examples:
- 3.8.1 (Swartley 1979: 21). Or if only one entry by Swartley (Swartley: 21). A colon precedes the page number. The author's last name and year of publication are not to be separated by a comma.
- 3.8.2 Use a and b for works of an author in the same year (Swartley 1998a).
- 3.8.3 (ANET 595; MBCF 68-68; HWB 383), items listed by abbreviation.
- 3.8.4 (TDNT 12:22) vol. + page no. The page number is included because entries are not in alphabetical order.
- 3.8.5 (BDAG). No page number because entries are in alphabetical order; no italics because abbreviation represents authors' names (cf. HALOT).
- 3.9 Bibliography is organized by chronology
- Brueggemann, Walter
- 1982 *Living toward a Vision*. Philadelphia: United Church.
- 1998a *Isaiah 1–39*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox.
- 1998b *Isaiah 40–66*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox.
- 3.10 Selected Resources uses date at the end after publisher
- Brueggemann, Walter. *Living toward a Vision*. Philadelphia: United Church, 1982.
- 3.11 Indicating Bible versions
- 3.11.1 Parenthetical Bible translation follows quotation (unless mentioned in running text), e.g., *fear and trembling* (v. 3 NIV); “well-being” (NKJV); *for my deliverance* (NRSV, NIV).
- 3.11.2 Indication of an alternative Bible translation, e.g., *called to be saints* (NIV: *his holy people*); not referring to shame in a psychological sense (NIV: *be ashamed*). Note: Semicolons may be used for clarity, e.g., *With all boldness* (NRSV; TNIV: *sufficient courage*).
- 3.12 Heading levels (A–D) in main text
- A. **EXPLANATORY NOTES** (bold, all caps)
- B. **God's Instruction to Joshua 6:1-5** (bold)
- C. *7:1-4 The Value of Death for Wisdom* (italics, no bold)
- D. *Actual events, strong fate*. All twenty-eight are parts of God's plan . . .
- 3.13 Headings in Essay section
- A. Entry title is flush left, all caps, and bold. First line starts two spaces after the entry title.
- B. B-level subheads are similar, but are set in headline style. Bold, no period, first line starts two spaces after the subhead. (But see c. below.)
- C. If there is a C-level subhead, the B-level head sits on its own line, and the text starts flush left below it (see *Vapor* in the Eccles commentary).
- 3.14 Quotations of any source four lines or more is done in block indention.

- 3.15 Quotations of poetry (biblical or otherwise) that exceed one line should be block indented as reflective of their original source (i.e., retain original indentations).
- 3.16 Quotation from the biblical text should be *italicized*. This is true for all translations of the biblical book to which the commentary is devoted, whether the author's translation (AT), the primary English versions (NRSV, NIV), a "literal" translation (lit. *vapor*), or another version (e.g., NASB).
- 3.17 Quotations from portions of the Bible other than the biblical book of focus should be placed in quotation marks.
- 3.18 Hypothetical translations or explanatory paraphrases, even in the book of focus: use quotation marks, e.g., Could be translated "I place you under oath."
- 3.19 Quotations of three lines or less may be block indented for special treatment, e.g., three similar quotes follow in succession.
- 3.20 The primary translation used in the commentary (either NRSV or NIV 2011) should be identified in the introduction so that it need not be flagged throughout the commentary.
- 3.21 When other Bible translations are referenced, their appropriate abbreviation is given in parentheses. Examples: "Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse" (Rom 12:14 NASB); In Romans 12:14, Paul says, "Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse" (NASB).
- 3.22 References to essays are normally indicated in square brackets, with the brackets and the references italicized, e.g., [*Authorship*, p. 123]. In combination, either of the following is okay:
 - 3.12.1 (see discussion of the book's theme below) [*Vapor*, p. 000; *Metaphor*, *Simile*, and *Symbol*, p. 000].
 - 3.12.2 (see Introduction, "The Theme, Rhetoric, and Message of Ecclesiastes," and the essay *Death*, p. 000).
- 3.23 Avoid bold and underlining in the body of the text. If underlining is necessary for emphasis, use only when a text is already italicized—that is, when text is italicized to indicate that it is a quotation from the commentary text. If emphasis is added, it requires a parenthetical note, e.g., (emphasis added).
- 3.24 Hymns/song titles: capitalize headline style; enclose in quote marks. e.g., "How Firm a Foundation."
- 3.25 Counting occurrences, e.g., five times, thirty-one times, should be spelled out except when used in a chart.
- 3.26 Dash and hyphen. Use an en dash whenever called for by CMS (as a symbol for *through*) *except* with Bible and song verses, where a hyphen is used. In other words, use en dashes for page numbers and all other ranges, including chapter ranges. Same-chapter Scripture verses are the only departure. Examples: Job 3:1-5; Matt 5-6; chapters 3-4; Mark 1:1-3; 4:1-5:3; (Scripture) verses 2-3; (song) verses 1-3; Fox 2008: 8-12.
- 3.27 The name for God should be God or Lord, only seldom Yahweh. Some use of YHWH, if sparingly employed, is acceptable. LORD (SMALL CAPS) should not be used except in a biblical quotation or in contrast to *Lord*.
- 3.28 Conventional (masculine) pronouns for God are acceptable if used sparingly.
- 3.29 Human language should be gender inclusive.
- 3.30 Words in Hebrew and Greek (transliteration) should be used sparingly and primarily if a lay reader could appreciate the reason for noting the term.

- 3.31 Foreign words should follow their English translation and should be italicized. They are often placed in parentheses.
- 3.32 When Hebrew or Greek versification differs from that of English versions, the Writer may choose whether or not to indicate the difference. An explanatory note is placed in the commentary Introduction indicating whether or not Hebrew/Greek versification will be identified, or perhaps sometimes but not normally, etc. If noted, the indications are added within parentheses, or square-bracketed if the reference is already within parentheses: e.g., Leviticus 6:1-7 (5:20-26); (6:8-30 [6:1-23]).
- 3.33 Language translation (parenthetical): use abbreviated form, no comma between lang. and word; e.g., resurrection from death (Gk. *thanatos*); *glory* (Gk. *doxa*; Lat. *gloria*).
- 3.34 Meanings of original language terms are put in quotation marks, e.g., “vapor,” unless in parentheses (vapor). Example: The word *hebel* means “vapor.” Also: The word *laleō* means “to speak.”
- 3.35 Placing an English word in quotation marks also has a different function. To avoid the use of transliteration while still being specific about a given Hebrew/Greek word, a common English translation of the word may be put in quotation marks, e.g., the word “peace” in Hebrew (i.e., a way of referring to *šalom*). Another example: The word “vapor” is used thirty-seven times in the book of Ecclesiastes..
- 3.36 References to translation choices should be put in italics, e.g., The word *vapor* is rarely used in translations of Ecclesiastes.
- 3.37 For Hebrew and Aramaic, the “academic style” of transliteration is to be used for consonants and the “general purpose style” for vowels. For Greek, the “general purpose style” should be used (*SBL Handbook*², pp. 56-60). For ease of use, the transliteration equivalents are reproduced below.

Greek

α	=	a	ο	=	o
β	=	b	π	=	p
γ	=	g	ρ	=	r
γ	=	n (before γ, κ, ξ, χ)	ρ̣	=	rh
δ	=	d	σ, ς	=	s
ε	=	e	τ	=	t
ζ	=	z	υ	=	y (not in diphthong)
η	=	ē	υ	=	u (in diphthongs: au, eu, ēu, ou, ui)
θ	=	th	φ	=	ph
ι	=	i	χ	=	ch
κ	=	k	ψ	=	ps
λ	=	l	ω	=	ō
μ	=	m	ˊ	=	h (with vowel or diphthong)
ν	=	n			
ξ	=	x			

Hebrew

Consonants

א	ʾālep	כּ		מ, ם	mēm	m
ב	bêt	כ	b	נ, ן	nûn	n
ג	gîmel	ג	g	ס	sāmek	s
ד	dālet	ד	d	ע	ʿayin	ʿ
ה	hê	ה	h	פ, ף	pê	p
ו	wāw	ו	w	צ, ץ	ṣādê	ṣ
ז	zayin	ז	z	ק	qôp	q
ח	ḥêt	ח	ḥ	ר	rêš	r
ט	ṭêt	ט	ṭ	שׁ	śîn	ś
י	yôd	י	y	שׂ	šîn	š
כּ, ך	kāp	כ	k	ת	tāw	t
ל	lāmed	ל	l			

Vowels

ֿ	patakh	a	יְ	hireq yod	i
ֿ	furtive patakh	a	ֿ	qamets khatuf	o
ֿ	qamets	a	ֿ	holem	o
ֿֿ	final qamets he	ah	ֿֿ	full holem	o
ֿֿֿ	segol	e	ֿֿֿ	short qibbutz	u
ֿֿֿֿ	tsere	e	ֿֿֿֿ	long qibbutz	u
ֿֿֿֿֿ	tsere yod	e	ֿֿֿֿֿ	shureq	u
ֿֿֿֿֿֿ	short hireq	i	ֿֿֿֿֿֿ	khatef qamets	o
ֿֿֿֿֿֿֿ	long hireq	i	ֿֿֿֿֿֿֿ	khatef patakh	a

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RESPONSE GUIDE FOR READER-CONSULTANTS

BELIEVERS CHURCH BIBLE COMMENTARY

The following questions are designed to help you evaluate the commentary materials on aspects of special interest to both author and editor. Please be frank in your response. Add whatever comments are important to you in further clarifying your evaluation of the script. Thank you for your help.

	No		Yes		Uncertain
A. <u>General Readability</u>					
1. Vocabulary is understandable to persons of early college: Comment:	1	2	3	4	5 U
2. Tone is appropriate and positive: Comment:	1	2	3	4	5 U
3. Sentences are concise and direct: Comment:	1	2	3	4	5 U
4. Paragraphs are the proper length: Comment:	1	2	3	4	5 U
5. Style is fresh and engaging: Comment:	1	2	3	4	5 U
6. Flow of thought is clear: Comment:	1	2	3	4	5 U
B. <u>Specific Segments</u>					
1. Preview					
(a) Stimulates interest in what is to follow ("hook"): Comment:	1	2	3	4	5 U
(b) Provides helpful orientation to the unit: Comment:	1	2	3	4	5 U
2. Explanatory Notes					
(a) Big issues are addressed well: Comment:	1	2	3	4	5 U
(b) Level of technicality is about right: Comment:	1	2	3	4	5 U
(c) Appropriate engagement with scholars and positions: Comment:	1	2	3	4	5 U

	No			Yes		Uncertain
3. Text in Biblical Context						
(a) Engages the wider biblical context well	1	2	3	4	5	U
Comment:						
(b) Enlarges understanding of the passage by showing how it is related to other parts of the Bible:	1	2	3	4	5	U
Comment:						
4. Text in the Life of the Church						
(a) Indicates how the text has or may function in shaping the belief or the conduct of God's people:	1	2	3	4	5	U
Comment:						
(b) Balance between historical and contemporary references is good:	1	2	3	4	5	U
Comment:						
5. Commentary Introduction						
(a) Issues addressed are appropriate and on target:	1	2	3	4	5	U
(b) Length and amount of detail is appropriate:	1	2	3	4	5	U
Comment:						
6. Essay Section						
(a) Essays are appropriate and well written	1	2	3	4	5	U
(b) Essays have the right amount of detail and sophistication	1	2	3	4	5	U
Comment, esp. on essays to add or delete:						

7. Is anything important missing in any of the above sections?

C. Other

1. Interprets in and for the Believers Church tradition	1	2	3	4	5	U
Cites key documents, events, etc., representing this tradition	1	2	3	4	5	U
Engages BC tradition with some breadth, not just one group	1	2	3	4	5	U
2. Demonstrates careful reading and exegesis	1	2	3	4	5	U
Shows awareness of historical context of writing	1	2	3	4	5	U
Bibliography reflects good grasp of the field	1	2	3	4	5	U
Appropriate interaction with other scholars and positions	1	2	3	4	5	U
3. Meets needs of target audience and is thus likely to be well-received by pastors and lay leaders in the church	1	2	3	4	5	U
4. What suggestions for improvement do you have? (please include page numbers)						
5. Would you recommend this commentary to your friends for the study or teaching of this book of the Bible? Why or why not?						