

FROM THE PASTOR'S PEN



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Pay Attention to N.T. Wright

Pastor Troy

I've grown quite fond of the Bishop N. T. Wright. N. T. Wright has become a world-renowned scholar of New Testament with quite a number of books in the field of the NT as well as biblical theology. Wright is also a bishop in the Anglican Church, most recently as Bishop of Durham in England. Wright has just recently accepted a post as Research Professor of New Testament and Early Christianity at the University of St Andrews in Scotland.

One of the first reasons I enjoy Wright is that his scholarly work is impeccable. He has embarked on what will be a six-volume series called "Christian Origins and the Question of God." His deep historical work and his attention to the biblical texts forces scholars around the world to familiarize themselves with and address the conclusions of his work. He has a massive tome on the life and death of Jesus that demolishes the popularized myths about Jesus that are often featured in American newsweeklies and television news magazines. His most recent, 800-page volume on the historical and theological truth of Jesus' resurrection alone has sent shock waves through the academy. I really enjoy reading Wright – a good writer who is both bold and self-deprecating.

Secondly, though, Wright is a bold preacher and wonderfully pastoral. That is to say, Wright doesn't merely write works for the sake of ivory tower discussion. Whenever Wright publishes a scholarly work, he releases a few more readable books on the same topic for discussion in the church. He deeply cares about the church and the character of Christian Faith in the public square – hence his recent work as a bishop and, accordingly, a member of the House of Lords. He has released a number of commentaries on various books of the New Testament with titles like "Matthew For Everyone" or "Romans for Everyone." Quite a number of pastors I talk with enjoy these books immensely and recommend them to their churches. We've shown a few videos of

Wright here at the church over the years as well.

Lastly, I appreciate Wright for taking upon himself a mantle that I've always associated with C. S. Lewis - namely, a humble yet straightforward apologist for the Christian Faith in a world of skeptics. He just released a third book in a recent series attempting to explain and clarify the Christian Faith. The first book, entitled "Simply Christian" is much like Lewis' "Mere Christianity." The difference, here though, is that Wright is a New Testament scholar and offers quite a bit more NT reflection and Jewish background to Lewis' philosophical deductions. The second book, entitled "Surprised by Hope" (again playing off of Lewis' title "Surprised by Joy") is a wonderful discussion of the resurrection of Jesus Christ (again, a popular book derived from the larger scholarly volume), the end of the world and the life everlasting. The most recent book, "After You Believe" is a discussion of Christian ethics (hence the sub-title "Why Christian Character Matters"). The beauty of this third volume is its emphasis on Christian living, when often most scholars, or teachers for that matter, stop at simply what you know or believe. Wright is intent on describing a Christian "life" that corresponds to a Christian "faith."

I do not agree with every point Wright makes, though, in his shadow, I am far from confident in my counter-arguments. Yet, if you happen to see Dr. Wright on television, responding to a question of Christian Origins or the New Testament, know that he is a stalwart defender of the Christian Faith and a humble and gracious apologist. I also couldn't recommend more highly these three most recent works for your shelves. The Giddens' found Wright's

"Surprised By Hope" to be immensely helpful for them in Zimbabwe. I share their sentiment and pray for the work and ministry of N. T. Wright.

