

RESPONSE TO DR. MARJORIE COOPER'S CRITIQUE OF "AUGUSTINE AND AQUINAS"

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In her response, Dr. Cooper 1) argues against the idea of presenting the categories of Augustinian and Neocene-Thomistic theological system as collectively exhaustive; 2) questions the characterization of spiritual gifts with respect to BAM; and 3) comments on issues of hermeneutics, especially as the exegesis of New Testament Greek is treated in AA&BAM. Each of these observations warrants a response.

1) Nowhere is it said in the article that the "Augustine/Thomas" system employed was thought of as "collectively exhaustive." What is *implied* is that the overwhelming majority of denominations do fit under this very broad umbrella even if their publically-comprehended distinctive is not given a category under the "Augustine/Thomas" heading. For example, Dr. Seibert mentioned Menno Simons (Mennonites) in the context of his having perceived my having a "Narrow View of Theology." The Mennonites and other Anabaptists were not singled out, but their theology is within the bounds of the "Augustine/Thomistic" umbrella. Many "fellowships" are known for their more narrow emphasis. The tragedy in the modern church is that most systematic theology is nonexistent in the minds of many in the pews and what little theology they have is the "tried-and-true" hermeneutic of their particular fellowship, which they accepted rather than acquired as good Bereans (Acts 17:11-12).

2) The eight questions which the article concluded with were set forth for the readers to think about the *theology* of "gifts" that are Biblically associated with discipleship (teaching) and evangelism. If BAM is to be thought of as a movement focused on discipleship and evangelism, then the spiritual gifts associated with such

spiritual work should be considered when asking, "Who is qualified to lead her or his entrepreneurial-based business into the field of business competition with 'discipleship' and 'evangelism' at the forefront of their objectives?"

My article was rooted in a very narrow definition of *mission*, as I heard it at the 2010 CBFA Fall Conference. Why? Because I am opposed to BAM, however defined? NO. But because when men and women begin to call for new majors and undergraduate programs based on unclear definitions, I am stimulated to say: "Think, study, and contemplate what is behind the excitement of thinking of business as *business as mission*, especially if its emphasis implies 'discipleship' and 'evangelism.'"

3) Dr. Cooper opens wide the door to the reason I made every effort to avoid the specific *hermeneutics* and *exegesis* issues that are involved in addressing such questions as those posed by my article. The issue raised regarding the order or relationship between the two theological concepts of "regeneration" and "conversion"—which comes first—as posed by verses 12 and 13 in John 1:12-13 was *exegeted* by Dr. Cooper. If you accept her exegesis you will more than likely find yourself aligned with the "Neocene-Thomistic" body of believers. I did no such exegesis anywhere in the article. To have done so would have been tantamount to "taking sides" in the discourse I desire to stimulate.

Good *hermeneutics* demands the "whole message" and "whole purpose" of God's revelation, not *exegesis* alone (Acts 5:20; 20:27). Hermeneutics is composed of many exegeted passages, not just one or two. Exegesis is a "tool;" hermeneutics is a "story."