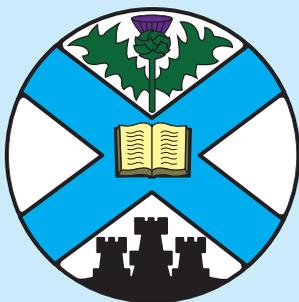


# UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH JOURNAL



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The Association acknowledges permission to use the drawing of the Old College by Lady Lucinda L Mackay

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Timothy G Gombis. *The Drama of Ephesians: Participating in the Triumph of God*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2010. Pp 188. Paperback. ISBN 9780830827206. £14.03.

**I**n his book *Drama of Ephesians*, Timothy Gombis attempts to present the book of Ephesians unconventionally as a drama script. Unlike regular Bible commentaries or sermon series, Gombis considers this genre to best engage his audience with the world of the epistle, both culturally and theologically. As a New Testament scholar who has been engaged with Ephesians both personally and professionally, Gombis wrote this book for contemporary readers to get a better grasp of Paul's worldview expressed in Ephesians.

Gombis' line of argument is that the concept of divine warfare shapes Paul's ideas in Ephesians, announcing God's triumph in Christ over Satan and narrating how the church participates in this triumph. Gombis constructs his argument through setting the scene with supporting sources from Old Testament as well as Jewish and Greco-Roman contexts. He is especially convinced that Ephesians, under the theme of spiritual warfare, is a tight-knitted whole, instead of what some scholars consider as a cut and paste project with raw data being handpicked from other Pauline epistles. A dramatic re-enactment of the book of Ephesians brings a

clearer focus and discerns the theologically powerful argument in such, giving a great introduction and action guidelines for those in pastoral positions as well as individual Christians in general.

The strength of Gombis' argument is that it is good for painting the worldview of Ephesians and Paul's Jewish background, wrapping up the entire epistle in the focus of the spiritual realm, which provides a more congruent understanding than a typical line by line analysis. Gombis' illustration of how our culture and imagination had been held captive by Satan paints an extremely vivid image, giving readers the room to ponder the cultural discernment that he later encourages.

The weakness of Gombis' argument is that he focuses too much on the spiritual realm and misses out on other themes and aspects of the epistle. This book does not make a good line by line expository, since it is written thematically, and the text is not arranged sequentially. Readers cannot rely on this unbalanced exposition alone for an in-depth review of the epistle. Moreover, Gombis mainly attained his supporting sources and examples from early church history and contemporary American culture, which limits his argument: it would be more engaging, especially for non-American readers, if he can involve contemporary socio-economic issues from more than one contemporary culture.

By using the drama performance language, this book encourages the church to be culturally conscious. Viewing Ephesians as a script to be performed is a method that does justice to the epistle the way Paul wrote it, with greater intentionality for readers' character formation within their church communities. By tying the entire epistle under one united theme of divine warfare, Gombis draws his readers into the world of Ephesians and how its teachings can be applied to their daily lives effectively. This book gives those who think they know the Bible back to back the room to ponder on its vibrant and ineffable messages that no one can fully grasp.

Ann Gillian Chu

## Reviewers:

**Ian Campbell** is Professor Emeritus of Scottish and Victorian Literature at the University of Edinburgh and Reviews Editor of the *Journal*.

**Peter B Freshwater** is former Deputy Librarian at the University of Edinburgh and Editor of the *Journal*.

**Ian S Wood** graduated with an MA in History from the University, and has worked as a lecturer for Napier University.

**Ann Gillian Chu** is a Chartered Accountant, and has having worked with KPMG and the Hong Kong Government. She is currently working at Tenth Alliance Church in Canada, and is completing Regent College's Master of Divinity programme.

**Ian Wotherspoon** spent nearly 30 years in Asia and the Pacific before returning to Edinburgh to teach at the Office of Lifelong Learning.

**Stephen G Hillier OBE** is Professor Emeritus of Reproductive Endocrinology and former Vice-Principal International of the University.

## Welcome to the University of Edinburgh Graduates' Association

The University of Edinburgh Graduates' Association was founded in 1924 as The University of Edinburgh Alumnus Association, changing to its present name after a very few years. It is made up of former students (not only graduates) of the University of Edinburgh, members and former members of the University academic and related staff. Relatives of members, and others with an interest in the University of Edinburgh, are also welcome to join.

The Graduates' Association:

- enables its members to maintain contact with each other and with their alma mater.
- organises social events throughout the year.
- publishes the *University of Edinburgh Journal* which is sent to all members as part of their subscription.
- helps promote the welfare of the University and of its students and maintains contact with a number of branches and affiliated clubs.

The Graduates' Association is quite distinct and separate from the General Council of the University, and from Development and Alumni Services. Although not involved in fund-raising activities for the University, it works closely with the other two organisations in providing facilities and social events for its members and their guests. The Executive Committee meets in the Association's rooms at 18 Buccleuch Place, Edinburgh twice a year to manage the Association's affairs, and the office is staffed by the Assistant Secretary and the Assistant Editor of the *Journal*.

If you are already a member of the Graduates' Association:

- Introduce new members and invite them to renew old friendships and acquaintances.
- Search your memory for names of fellow alumni. We can help you discover whether they are members already.
- If you are in a position to do so, advertise your business in the *Journal* and encourage other businesses to do the same.
- Send us news items about yourself and other alumni, especially if you can do so by email.

If you are not a member, and have enjoyed reading this *Journal*, subscribe to it by joining the Association. We can then send you future issues automatically. And you can join us in our regular meetings and social events.

Visit the Association's website at: [www.uega.co.uk](http://www.uega.co.uk)