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### Psalm 12: A Prayer of Distress

Calvin Symposium on Worship: Word, Music, Vision, Action

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PSALM 12: A Prayer of Distress

**Refrain**

*Sing slowly, in a minor mode:*

The musical notation consists of two staves of music in a 4/4 time signature, set in a minor mode. The first staff has three measures with lyrics "Kum ba yah, my Lord, kum ba yah. Kum ba yah, my Lord, kum ba" and chords Dm, Gm, Dm above. The second staff has four measures with lyrics "yah. Kum ba yah, my Lord, kum ba yah. Oh Lord, kum ba yah." and chords A, Dm, Gm, Dm, Bb, C, Dm above. The music is written in a simple, melodic style.

*voice 1*

<sup>1</sup>Help, O Lord, for there is no longer anyone who is godly;  
the faithful have disappeared from humankind.

<sup>2</sup>They utter lies to each other;  
with flattering lips and a double heart they speak.

*voice 2*

<sup>5</sup>Because the poor are despoiled, because the needy groan,  
I will now rise up,' says the Lord;  
'I will place them in the safety for which they long.'

*voice 3 (or all)*

<sup>6</sup>The promises of the Lord are promises that are pure,  
silver refined in a furnace on the ground,  
purified seven times.

**Refrain:** *Someone's cryin', Lord, kum ba yah. . . .*

*voice 1*

<sup>3</sup>May the Lord cut off all flattering lips,  
the tongue that makes great boasts,

<sup>4</sup>those who say, 'With our tongues we will prevail;  
our lips are our own—who is our master?'

*voice 2*

<sup>5</sup>'Because the poor are despoiled, because the needy groan,  
I will now rise up,' says the Lord;  
'I will place them in the safety for which they long.'

*voice 3 (or all)*

<sup>6</sup>The promises of the Lord are promises that are pure,  
silver refined in a furnace on the ground,  
purified seven times.

**Refrain:** *Someone's prayin', Lord, kum ba yah. . . .*

*voice 1*

<sup>7</sup>You, O Lord, will protect us;  
you will guard us from this generation forever.

<sup>8</sup>On every side the wicked prowl,  
as vileness is exalted among humankind.

*voice 2*

<sup>5</sup>'Because the poor are despoiled, because the needy groan,  
I will now rise up,' says the Lord;  
'I will place them in the safety for which they long.'

*voice 3 (or all)*

<sup>6</sup>The promises of the Lord are promises that are pure,  
silver refined in a furnace on the ground,  
purified seven times.

**Refrain:** *Come by here, my Lord, kum ba yah, . . . .*

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Refrain words and music: African American spiritual

Additional texts: Someone's singin', Lord, . . . .

Someone needs you, Lord, . . . .

*During the reading of the psalm, the congregation may hum the spiritual "Kum Ba Yah," or the spiritual may be played softly on a keyboard or guitar. The spiritual may also be sung in D major by changing key signature to two sharps and reading all chords as major.*

PSALM 14/53: Call to Confession

Prone to wan - der, Lord, I feel\_ it, prone to leave the God I love.

- <sup>1</sup>Fools say in their hearts, 'There is no God.'  
They are corrupt, they do abominable deeds;  
there is no one who does good.
- <sup>2</sup>The Lord looks down from heaven on humankind  
to see if there are any who are wise,  
who seek after God.
- <sup>3</sup>They have all gone astray, they are all alike perverse;  
there is no one who does good,  
no, not one.

Prone to wan - der, Lord, I feel\_ it, prone to leave the God I love.

- <sup>4</sup>Have they no knowledge, all the evildoers  
who eat up my people as they eat bread,  
and do not call upon the Lord?
- <sup>5</sup>There they shall be in great terror,  
for God is with the company of the righteous.
- <sup>6</sup>You would confound the plans of the poor,  
but the Lord is their refuge.
- <sup>7</sup>O that deliverance for Israel would come from Zion!  
When the Lord restores the fortunes of his people,  
Jacob will rejoice; Israel will be glad.

Prone to wan - der, Lord, I feel\_ it, prone to leave the God I love.

*Prayer of Confession*

Let us pray.

**Holy Wisdom, Almighty God,  
with our lips we acclaim you as Lord,  
yet often in our hearts and lives we deny your reign.  
We confess our foolishness in wandering from your ways,  
in wasting your gifts, in forgetting your love.  
According to your abundant mercy forgive us our sins  
and clothe us in the righteousness of Christ  
so that we may delight in your will  
and walk in your ways,  
to the glory of Jesus Christ, our Savior. Amen**

*Assurance of Pardon*

There is no one righteous, not even one. Romans 3:10/Psalm 14:3  
All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God;  
they are now justified by his grace as a gift,  
through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. Romans 3:23-24  
**Blessed are those who whose iniquities are forgiven,  
and whose sins are covered;  
blessed is the one against whom the Lord  
will not reckon sin.** Romans 4:7-8/Psalm 32:1-2

*\*Response (all sing):*

*O to grace how great a debtor  
daily I'm constrained to be!  
Let that grace, now, like a fetter,  
bind my wandering heart to Thee:  
Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it,  
prone to leave the God I love:  
Here's my heart, O take and seal it,  
seal it for Thy courts above.*

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*\*The response may be sung to the tune BEACH SPRING or NETTLETON.  
Alternately, the entire hymn ("Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing") may  
be sung as a response to the Assurance of Pardon.*

## PSALM 22: From Lament to Praise

*Voice One*

- <sup>1</sup>My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?  
Why are you so far from helping me, from the words of my groaning?  
<sup>2</sup>O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer;  
and by night, but find no rest.

*Refrain 1*    **What wondrous love is this, o my soul, o my soul?  
What wondrous love is this, o my soul?**

*Voice Two*

- <sup>3</sup>Yet you are holy,  
enthroned on the praises of Israel.  
<sup>4</sup>In you our ancestors trusted;  
they trusted, and you delivered them.  
<sup>5</sup>To you they cried, and were saved;  
in you they trusted, and were not put to shame.

*Voice One*

- <sup>6</sup>But I am a worm, and not human;  
scorned by others, and despised by the people.  
<sup>7</sup>All who see me mock at me;  
they make mouths at me, they shake their heads;  
<sup>8</sup>Commit your cause to the Lord; let him deliver—  
let him rescue the one in whom he delights!

*Refrain 2*    **When I was sinking down, sinking down, sinking down,  
When I was sinking down, sinking down . . .**

*Voice Two*

- <sup>9</sup>Yet it was you who took me from the womb;  
you kept me safe on my mother's breast.  
<sup>10</sup>On you I was cast from my birth,  
and since my mother bore me you have been my God.  
<sup>11</sup>Do not be far from me,  
for trouble is near  
and there is no one to help.

*Refrain 3*    **To God and to the Lamb, I will sing, I will sing.  
To God and to the Lamb, I will sing.**

*Voice One*

- <sup>22</sup>I will tell of your name to my brothers and sisters;  
in the midst of the congregation I will praise you:  
<sup>23</sup>**You who fear the Lord, praise him!  
All you offspring of Jacob, glorify him;  
stand in awe of him, all you offspring of Israel!**

*Voice Two*

- <sup>24</sup>For he did not despise or abhor  
the affliction of the afflicted;  
he did not hide his face from me,  
but heard when I cried to him.

- <sup>25</sup>**From you comes my praise in the great congregation;  
my vows I will pay before those who fear him.**  
<sup>26</sup>**The poor shall eat and be satisfied;  
those who seek him shall praise the Lord.  
May your hearts live for ever!**

*Voice One*

- <sup>27</sup>All the ends of the earth shall remember  
and turn to the Lord;  
and all the families of the nations  
shall worship before him.  
<sup>28</sup>**For dominion belongs to the Lord,  
and he rules over the nations.**  
<sup>29</sup>To him, indeed, shall all who sleep in the earth bow down;  
before him shall bow all who go down to the dust,  
and I shall live for him.

*Refrain 4*    **And when from death I'm free, I'll sing on, I'll sing on!  
And when from death I'm free, I'll sing on!**

*Psalm may continue with the singing of "The Ends of All the Earth" (Psalter Hymnal #542)  
or another song of praise.*

PSALM 22/23: From Lament to Hope to Comfort

Fm C

1. Lord, why have you for - sak - en me,  
 2. Yet you are holy, and the songs  
 3. But I am mocked and put to scorn,  
 4. Yet you, O Lord have been my God

Fmin

and why are you so far a - way  
 of praise of Israel are your throne;  
 all those who see me laugh and say,  
 and only hope since I was born;

Bbm

from my complaint and my dis - tress  
 When our ancestors called on you,  
 "You trust in God, so let us see  
 Trouble is near me, none can help;

Eb Fm Csus<sup>4</sup> 3 Fm

poured out be - fore you night and day?  
 you saved them, re - scued all your own.  
 the help of him to whom you pray."  
 My Savior, leave me not for - lorn.

*There should be some time for reflection between stanzas 4 and 5. Instruments may improvise an interlude to establish new key.*

Versification by Christopher Webber, ©1986  
 Chant tone based on hymn tune HARVEY'S CHANT (William Bradbury, 1853), arr. M. Tel

F C

5. O praise the Lord you that fear him,  
 6. The Lord does not de - spise the poor,  
 7. The poor shall eat and have their fill;  
 8. Kingship belongs to God the Lord;  
 9. My soul shall live for him,

C F

O Israel's offspring, stand in awe  
 but when they cry, he hears their plea;  
 Those who seek God shall give him praise;  
 He rules the nations from his throne;  
 my heirs shall serve the Lord at his com - mand,

F Bb

All you who are of Ja - cob's line  
 I will praise God and make my vows,  
 All nations shall turn to the Lord  
 All those who sleep with - in the earth  
 to people yet un - born make known

C F Gm C<sup>4</sup>sus 3 F

Give glory al - ways to the Lord.  
 I will per - form them pub - lic - ly.  
 and bow be - fore His throne al - ways.  
 bow down to wor - ship him a - lone.  
 the saving deeds of his right hand.

*As an interlude leading to Psalm 23, instruments may play the second half of CRIMMOND (Psalter Hymnal #23)*

PSALM 38: A Psalm for Passion Sunday or Good Friday



1. Re - buke me\_\_ not in an - ger Lord;\_\_\_ your ar - rows  
2. You know my\_\_ sighs and weak - ness, Lord,\_\_\_ my blind - ed  
3. My mouth is\_\_ mute, I can - not speak;\_\_\_ my ear is  
4. Do not for - sake me, O my Lord;\_\_\_ do not go



cause me an - guished grief. I have no strength, for  
eyes and throb - bing heart. Friends and com - pan - ions  
deaf, I can - not hear. I wait for you to  
far from me, my God. Come quick - ly, help me



I am crushed\_\_\_ and spend my days\_ with no\_\_ re - lief.  
stand far off\_\_\_ while oth - ers plot\_ to seek\_ my hurt.  
an - swer, Lord,\_\_\_ to si - lence those who boast and jeer.  
now, I pray,\_\_\_ O Lord, my Sa - vior and\_ my God.

*To sing the entire Psalm, insert the following text*

*before stanza 2:*

My sinful folly brought me low.  
bowed down, I groan in deep despair.  
My guilt is like a heavy load  
that is too much for me to bear.

*before stanza 4:*

My pain is ever with me, Lord,  
for I have sinned against your laws.  
My foes are mighty - those who hate  
and slander me without a cause.

Text paraphrase by Helen Otte, 1985, ©1987 CRC Publications, alt.

Tune: CHICKAHOMINY by Henry B. Hays, 1981 ©Order of St. Benedict, Inc.

*This is a partner psalm for "Ride On, Ride On in Majesty" (Psalter Hymnal #382)*

PSALM 41: A Lament for When Both Friend and Foe Are the Problem

G Am/G G Em G C G



What a priv - i - lege to car - ry ev - ery - thing to God in prayer!

- <sup>1</sup>Happy are those who consider the poor;  
the Lord delivers them in the day of trouble.
- <sup>2</sup>**The Lord protects them and keeps them alive;  
they are called happy in the land.**  
You do not give them up to the will of their enemies.
- <sup>3</sup>**The Lord sustains them on their sickbed;  
in their illness you heal all their infirmities.**



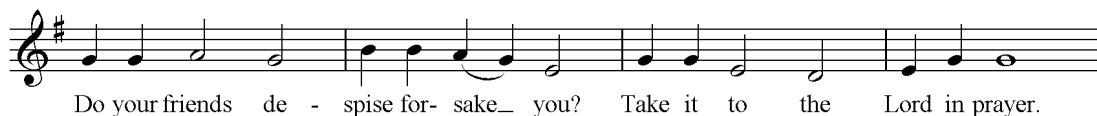
Are we weak and heav - y lad - en? Take it to the Lord in prayer.

- <sup>4</sup>As for me, I said, 'O Lord, be gracious to me;  
heal me, for I have sinned against you.'
- <sup>5</sup>**My enemies wonder in malice  
when I will die, and my name perish.**
- <sup>6</sup>And when they come to see me, they utter empty words,  
while their hearts gather mischief;  
when they go out, they tell it abroad.
- <sup>7</sup>**All who hate me whisper together about me;  
they imagine the worst for me.**



Have we tri - als and temp - ta - tions? Take it to the Lord in prayer.

- <sup>8</sup>They think that a deadly thing has fastened on me,  
that I will not rise again from where I lie.
- <sup>9</sup>**Even my bosom friend in whom I trusted,  
who ate of my bread, has lifted the heel against me.**
- <sup>10</sup>But you, O Lord, be gracious to me,  
and raise me up, that I may repay them.



Do your friends de - spise for - sake\_ you? Take it to the Lord in prayer.


- <sup>11</sup>By this I know that you are pleased with me;  
because my enemy has not triumphed over me.
- <sup>12</sup>**But you have upheld me because of my integrity,  
and set me in your presence for ever.**




Pre - cious Sa - vior, still our re - fuge! Take it to the Lord in prayer.

- <sup>13</sup>Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel,  
from everlasting to everlasting.  
**Amen and Amen.**


PSALMS 58-62: Canonical Move from Anguished Lament to Humble Trust




Psalm 58 1. O\_\_\_ when will we see jus - tice done? When\_ will the right - eous  
 Psalm 59 2. De - li - ver me, O God, my strength from\_ those who lie\_\_\_ in  
 Psalm 60 3. O\_\_\_ God, have you re - jec - ted us, or\_\_\_ do you on - ly




win? O\_\_\_ speed the day when we can say, "God\_ judg - es hu - man  
 wait, from\_ en - e - mies who prowl and plot, whose on - ly law\_ is  
 sleep? Give\_ vic - tory with your might - y hand, your\_ prom - i - ses\_ to



sin!" The\_ ve - nom of\_\_\_ the wick - ed's lies de - stroy all\_\_\_ in their  
 hate. But\_ you, O Lord, could come and save, con - found - ing\_\_\_ their false  
 keep. For\_ you have caused our land to quake; no\_\_\_ step now seems se -



path. Their\_ fangs are bared; no\_ one is spared, and\_ to our cries\_ they're  
 pride, and\_ show the earth your right - eous worth as\_\_\_ in your love\_ we  
 cure. We\_ stag - ger in\_\_\_ our\_ suf - fer - ing, our\_ faith seems less\_ than



Refrain (Psalm 61)  
 deaf. God, hear my cry!\_ To you I call, e'en\_ when my\_ heart is  
 hide. sure.



faint. To\_ your strong tower lead\_ me in power, and\_ keep me ev - er safe.

from Psalm 61

- <sup>1</sup>Hear my cry, O God;  
listen to my prayer.
- <sup>2</sup>From the end of the earth I call to you,  
when my heart is faint.

**Lead me to the rock  
that is higher than I;  
<sup>3</sup>for you are my refuge,  
a strong tower against the enemy.**

- <sup>4</sup>Let me abide in your tent for ever,  
find refuge under the shelter of your wings.
- <sup>5</sup>For you, O God, have heard my vows;  
you have given me the heritage of those  
who fear your name.

**<sup>8</sup>So I will always sing praises to your name,  
as I pay my vows day after day.**

*The responsive reading of the psalm may be framed by the singing of the refrain "God, hear my cry!" Or, the psalm may conclude with the singing of "My Soul Finds Rest in God Alone" (Psalter Hymnal #62).*

Psalm may conclude with responsive reading on the right.

Text: Carol Bechtel, from Psalms 58-61, ©2009  
 Music: KINGSFOLD

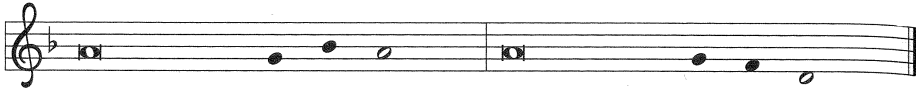


PSALM 74: A Setting for Advent

*Refrain 1*

**O come, O come, Immanuel, and ransom captive Israel  
that mourns in lonely exile here until the Son of God appear.**

*Psalm may be spoken, or chanted by cantor, choir and/or congregation.*



O God, why have you utterly cast us off?  
why is your wrath so hot against the sheep of your pasture?  
**Remember your congregation that you purchased long ago,  
the tribe you redeemed to be your inheritance,  
and Mount Zion where you dwell.**  
Turn your steps toward the endless ruins;  
the enemy has laid waste everything in your sanctuary.  
Your adversaries roared in your holy place;  
they set up their banners as tokens of victory.  
They were like men coming up with axes to a grove of trees;  
they broke down all your carved work with hatchets and hammers.  
They set fire to your holy place;  
they defiled the dwelling-place of your Name  
and razed it to the ground.  
They said to themselves, "Let us destroy them altogether."  
They burned down all the meeting-places of God in the land.  
There are no signs for us to see; there is no prophet left;  
there is not one among us who knows how long.  
**How long, O God, will the adversary scoff?  
will the enemy blaspheme your Name for ever?  
Why do you draw back your hand?  
why is your right hand hidden in your bosom?**

*Refrain 2*

**O come, O Wisdom from on high, who ordered all things mightily;  
to us the path of knowledge show and teach us in its ways to go.**

Yet God is my King from ancient times,  
victorious in the midst of the earth.  
**You divided the sea by your might  
and shattered the heads of the dragons upon the waters;**  
You crushed the heads of Leviathan  
and gave him to the people of the desert for food.  
**You split open spring and torrent;  
you dried up ever-flowing rivers.**  
Yours is the day, yours also the night;  
you established the moon and the sun.  
**You fixed all the boundaries of the earth;  
you made both summer and winter.**

*Refrain 3*

**O come, O Branch of Jesse's stem, unto your own and rescue them!  
From depths of hell your people save, and give them victory o'er the grave.**

Remember, O LORD, how the enemy scoffed,  
how a foolish people despised your Name.  
Do not hand over the life of your dove to wild beasts;  
never forget the lives of your poor.  
**Look upon your covenant;  
the dark places of the earth are haunts of violence.  
Let not the oppressed turn away ashamed;  
let the poor and needy praise your Name.**  
Arise, O God, maintain your cause;  
remember how fools revile you all day long.  
Forget not the clamor of your adversaries,  
the unending tumult of those who rise up against you.

*Refrain 4*

**O come, O Bright and Morning Star, and bring us comfort from afar!  
Dispel the shadows of the night and turn our darkness into light.**

Refrains from "O Come, O Come, Immanuel" - VENI IMMANUEL (Psalter Hymnal #328, stanzas 1, 2, 4 and 6)

## PSALM 102: A Litany for the Sick or Dying

*The Family and Church Community surround the sufferer*

### *Refrain 1*

**O Lord, hear my prayer, O Lord, hear my prayer; when I call answer me.  
O Lord, hear my prayer, O Lord, hear my prayer; when I call answer me.**

### *Voice 1*

Hear my prayer, O LORD;  
let my cry for help come to you.

**Do not hide your face from me  
when I am in distress.  
Turn your ear to me;  
when I call, answer me quickly.**

### *Voice 2*

For my days vanish like smoke,  
my bones burn like glowing embers.  
My heart is blighted and withered like grass;  
I forget to eat my food.

*For those struck down or dying at a younger age*

### *Voice 2*

In the course of my life he broke my strength;  
he cut short my days.  
I said, 'do not take me away, my God in the midst of my days,  
you whose years go on through all generations.'"

**In the beginning you laid the foundation of the earth,  
and the heavens are the work of your hands.  
They will perish, but you remain;  
they will all wear out like a garment.  
Like clothing you will change them, and they will be discarded;  
but you remain the same, and your years will never end.**

### *Refrain 1*

**O Lord, hear my prayer, O Lord, hear my prayer; when I call answer me.  
O Lord, hear my prayer, O Lord, hear my prayer; come and listen to me.**

### *Voice 1*

Hear my prayer, O LORD;  
let my cry for help come to you.

**Do not hide your face from me  
when I am in distress.  
Turn your ear to me;  
when I call, answer me quickly.**

*One or more of the following prayers and other appropriate prayers may be used,  
either spoken by all, or by Voice 1.*

Lord Jesus Christ,  
by your patience in suffering you hallowed earthly pain  
and gave us the example of obedience to your Father's will:  
Be near me/him/her in my time of weakness and pain;  
sustain me/him,her by your grace,  
that my/his/her strength and courage may not fail;  
heal me/him/her according to your will;  
and fill me/him/her with the hope of eternal life  
when tears and pain will be no more,  
Amen. (Adapted from the Book of Common Prayer)

Almighty God  
by your power Jesus Christ was raised from death.  
Watch over \_\_\_\_.  
Fill his/her eyes with your vision  
to see, beyond human sight, a home within your love,  
where pain is gone and frail flesh turns to glory  
Banish fear. Brush tears away.  
Let death be gentle as nightfall,  
Promising a day when songs of joy  
Shall make us glad to be together with Jesus Christ  
Who lives in triumph,  
The Lord of life eternal.  
Amen. (Adapted from *The Funeral*)

O Lord, support us all the day,  
until the shadows lengthen, and evening comes,  
and the busy world is hushed and the fever of life is over,  
and our work is done.  
Then, in your mercy  
Grant us a safe lodging, and a holy rest,  
And peace at last.  
Amen.

(Attributed to John Henry Newman)

*After a period of silence:*

*Refrain 1*

**O Lord, hear my prayer, O Lord, hear my prayer; when I call answer me.  
O Lord, hear my prayer, O Lord, hear my prayer; come and listen to me.**

*Voice 2*

Let this be written for a future generation,  
that a people not yet created may praise the LORD:

**“The LORD looked down from his sanctuary on high,  
from heavens he viewed the earth,  
to hear the groans of the prisoners,  
and release those condemned to death.”**

*Refrain 2*

**The Lord is my song, the Lord is my praise. All my hope comes from God.  
The Lord is my song, the Lord is my praise; God, the well-spring of life.**

*This adaptation of Psalm 102 (TNIV) can be used in at least two pastoral settings.*

*The primary setting would be a hospital room, hospice facility, or bedside of a person who is suffering or approaching death. In this case, Voice 1 would be an elder, pastor, or other representative of the church. Voice 2 would be the person who is being prayed for. The time of prayer would also ideally include family members, friends, and other members of the congregation, who would speak as All. If the person being prayed for is unable to participate a person or persons would be designated to speak the words of Voice 2 on his or her behalf, preferably while making some kind of physical contact with the person being prayed for.*

*This Psalm litany could also be used in a congregational setting, whether in a regular worship service or a “healing service.” In this case, the person being prayed*

*for would not likely be in attendance, and persons would be designated to speak Voice 2 on his or her behalf. Subsequently, the pastor and elders could bring the litany to the bedside of the sufferer.*

*The litany contains a portion from the psalm that relates to circumstances of an untimely serious illness. In this case, the indented portion could be included.*

## RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

Froehlich, Karlfried: *Discerning the Voices: Praise and Lament in the Tradition of the Christian Psalter* in Calvin Theological Journal 36 (2001), pp. 75-90.

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Miller, Patrick: *Prayer and Worship* in Calvin Theological Journal 36 (2001), pp. 53-62.

Rienstra, Debra and Ron Rienstra: *Something Blue: The Ministry of Lament* in Worship Words: Discipling Language for Faithful Ministry (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2009), pp. 221-232.

Witvliet, John D. The Biblical Psalms in Christian Worship: A Brief Introduction and Guide to Resources. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans), 2007.