

# Dr. Meredith G. Kline



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I am often asked, “Who do you think has had the greatest influence in your ministry?” My response is always something along the lines of: “In terms of how I read the Bible and the way this impacts my teaching, and especially preaching, each and every week? Without a doubt, it would have to be the influence of Dr. Meredith G. Kline!”

It was my great privilege to sit under Dr. Kline’s teaching, *and praying*, while a student at Gordon Conwell. (Anyone who has sat in one of Dr. Kline’s classes will understand perfectly why I include “*and praying*.” Never has anyone led me into the throne-room of God through prayer like Dr. Kline through his carefully thought-out, theologically rich and deeply personal prayers that preceded each and every one of his classes.) And so while many gather around the world this week to celebrate and memorialize this giant of the faith and Biblical scholar, I fondly remember his prayers, his complex diagrams of redemptive history on the old blackboard, the conversations he endured after class with a skeptical student on his way to becoming a “Reformed” and Presbyterian minister, rooted not merely in tradition or history but in Biblical study under the mentoring assistance of so humble a giant in Biblical scholarship!

How great was his impact on me, and subsequently our church? Let me illustrate it this way, if perhaps you would stop to whisper your thanks to God for the ministry of Meredith Kline: For if there has been anything in the preaching and teaching ministry of this church that is “Christ centered” (which I pray to God there is!), then I can honestly say that the hermeneutic method and framework that gave me the intellectual and theological justification for reading the Old and New Testament scriptures in this way was handed down to me by Dr. Meredith Kline. That is to say, if there has been anything in my ministry with you over these past 15 years that has instilled a love and confidence in God’s written word so as to bring us to a greater confidence and love for God’s living Word, if anything in my ministry that has enabled you to see the continuity between the Testaments and God’s careful orchestrations of history that vindicates the experience of the two travelers on the Emmaus Road with Christ, then you have reason to whisper a prayer of thanks to God for Dr. Meredith Kline! Indeed, it was Dr. Kline’s careful explanations and applications of a covenantal hermeneutic that finally enabled me to read the Bible as a unified, if not multi-layered, revelation of God acting through redemptive history as finally and climactically revealed in Christ. For this alone, we can all be thankful. But there is more.

If you have come to believe in a God centered way of salvation as signified and executed through the judgment waters of Christian baptism through the ministry here at CPC, it was Meredith Kline's *By Oath Consigned* that finally converted your pastor, once a staunch Baptist himself, into the Reformed and Presbyterian way of thinking about salvation itself as then relived through Christian Baptism! And if you have come to see Genesis not as a topic of controversy mainly, but as a "Kingdom Prologue" in relation to God's self-revelation as the great King of Kings in both the first and many subsequent "new creations" of redemptive history that again climax in the New Creation of Christ acting through the Holy Spirit, then again you may want to offer a prayer of thanksgiving for Dr. Meredith Kline. And if you have heard something of the distinction between God's "common and special grace" here at CPC—even as to enable you to see God at work outside of redemption—with huge implications in how we relate to the world as Christians with grace and even respect rather than with hostility, then again, thank God for Meredith Kline.

On and on I could go, paradigm shift after paradigm shift—shifts in my anthropology as related to the priestly "Images of the Spirit," shifts in my understanding of Scripture as related to a covenantal "Structure of Biblical Authority," shifts in my understanding of history itself as culminating in "God, Heaven and Har-Magedon"—it was a huge couple of years for me under the incredible teachings and ministry of Dr. Meredith Kline! Many of the commentaries I have used over the years are also written by those indebted to Meredith Kline. And so while you may never have met him, you have certainly been impacted by him, even as you can join with me in delighting that Meredith Kline is now finally experiencing that which figured so prominently in his studies and teaching, even all things "heaven" in the presence of Christ.

In memory of Dr. Kline, I have asked Rebekah to include some of his writings in our book store. Have a look, if per chance you would want to attempt the, sometimes arduous, task of transcribing some of Dr. Kline's made up hyphenated words. To be sure, he is not an easy read, but he is certainly a profound read in a league of his own vis-à-vis mining the riches of covenant history in scripture! Enjoy!