

# Book Reviews

**Robert RICHARDSON.** *Principles of the Reformation.* Introduced and edited by Carson E. Reed. Orange, CA: New Leaf, 2002. 102 pp. \$9.95.

This book is a worthy republication. Richardson articulates those principles of a religious movement which made it distinctive. His accomplishment is admirable. He begins with a prefatory letter to the reader, followed by nine sections, and another note to the reader serving as conclusion and postlude. The nine sections are: (1) Distinction between faith and opinion, (2) The Christian faith, (3) The basis of Christian union, (4) Patriarchal, Jewish, and Christian institutions, (5) Commencement of the Christian Church, (6) The action and design of baptism, (7) The agency of the Holy Spirit in conversion and sanctification, (8) Weekly communion, and (9) Church government.

The first three sections make up about half the book and are “the important distinctions and truths which have been developed” (26). The first section, “Distinction between faith and opinion,” amplifies the corresponding statement in Thomas Campbell’s “Declaration and Address.” Section two: “The Christian Faith” is personal rather than doctrinal. Section three: “The basis of Christian union” is Christ himself, not some doctrinal formulation.

Sections four through nine are “results proceeding from the practical application of these principles” (69). Richardson’s comments on baptism (Section Six) begin with the poignant reminder that “The originators of the present religious movement were, all of them, from Pedobaptist parties” (77) who, on the basis of careful study of the Scriptures, became those who practiced immersion of believers. The subject of Section Seven, the agency of the Holy Spirit in conversion, receives more extensive treatment in Richardson’s *A Scriptural View of the Office of the Holy Spirit*.

Richardson uses exquisite metaphors. He wrote with fervor and skill. Oftentimes the reader wishes for a clearer picture of positions against which Richardson argues, but that is inevitable when one reads from a temporal distance.

This reprint includes several improvements. Richardson’s eighteen-word title has been shortened to four words. A seventeen page introduction precedes the prefatory letter. The page layout is greatly improved by moving notes to the ends of chapters. “Sentences and paragraphs have been shortened; occasionally sentences have been reworked” (21). Spelling has been updated. “For Further Reading” follows the original conclusion, serves as a bibliography, and consists of two parts: “Selected Writings by Robert Richardson” and “Selected Writings about Robert Richardson.” “For Further Reading” should have been listed in the

Table of Contents. Perhaps the reader would have been better served by a chronological rather than an alphabetical arrangement of works by Richardson.

Carson Reed, editor, has provided the perfect introduction by informing the reader that Robert Richardson was uniquely positioned to write *Principles of the Reformation*. He had participated in that reformation for decades, was close to Alexander Campbell, assisted in the writing and editing of the *Millennial Harbinger*, and was chosen by the Campbell family to write *Memoirs of Alexander Campbell* (1856). *Principles of the Reformation* was well received. A more enduring impact was cut short by conflicts that arose in the Restoration Movement just a few years after its publication. The introduction also contains a valuable summary of the principles that Richardson identified.

For historians, this work is essential. Scholars, students, and preachers will find here a precursor to the thoughts of Kershner, Walker, Ketcherside, Garrett, and Fife. This book reminds, informs, and challenges. Reed is correct when he says “Recovering this voice from the past and restoring Richardson’s vision within the context of the developments of the 1850s offers much to present-day conversations” (11).

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**Tim WOODROOF. *A Church That Flies: A New Call to Restoration in the Churches of Christ*. Orange, CA: New Leaf, 2000. 224 pp. \$14.95.**

In a book written by a Church of Christ minister for members of the Churches of Christ (a cappella), Tim Woodroof uses many metaphors to open the eyes of a people who he claims have lost sight of the purpose for which God calls us. Using the example of the airplane, which “didn’t look much like a bird” and “didn’t act much like a bird” and yet, flew anyway, he calls the modern church to divorce itself from an addiction to form and focus on the function of the early church.

As a third generation preacher in the Churches of Christ, he is well acquainted with the problems that have arisen over the past several years concerning the forms that the church should use in service, training, and even hierarchy. In this book, he argues that our focus on these forms is equivalent to trying to imitate the first century church instead of following their example and trying to imitate Christ. In his estimation, we focus on being Ephesians, Romans, or even Corinthians, rather than trying to be Christians.

Woodroof calls us to the core of what it means to be God’s people in any age. He sums up the core of faith in the words: worship, holiness, community, maturation, service, witness, and influence. These he says are the irreducible components of Christianity which, in importance, far outweigh the forms and meth-

ods which we may use to achieve these ends. The means by which we accomplish these essentials are a distant second to doing these core functions. Given the far-reaching consequences of these fundamental operations of the church, his treatment is brief, but cannot fail to evoke an emotional response, especially from those of us within the traditions that he calls into question.

One failing in this book is that Woodroof calls for such a fundamental shift in thinking about church, that in doing so he can upset readers' ideas about their identity as members of the Churches of Christ (a cappella). Some may dismiss him without truly considering what he has to say because he calls for a paradigm shift that is radical and reaches to the core of their understanding of the purpose of the church, indeed that goes against what Churches of Christ have for years taught about what it means to "do church." In much the same way that many people use OT examples to prove that change is against the Will of God, Woodroof cites the many examples of change in the OT to show that God's People are constantly evolving because of the world around them. Doubtless some will brand him a heretic and a traitor to the cause, much as Alexander Campbell's contemporaries did to him.

However, this book is a must for the congregation that is trying to stay alive into the 21st century. For those who are weary from years of debating the use of "modern gimmicks" and "progressive" or even "liberal" approaches to Christian instruction, growth, maturity, evangelism, and even worship, this book will greatly aid in understanding why these arguments over method don't really matter.

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**John G. STACKHOUSE Jr., ed. *No Other Gods before Me? Evangelicals and the Challenge of World Religions*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001. 208 pp. \$19.99.**

The bulk of this collection is a set of six essays by evangelical world religions scholars in response to the question, "What is the one thing you want to say . . . about an evangelical theology of religions?" (12). The result is an assortment of forays into different dimensions of the world religions and their relationship to Christianity. Stackhouse arranges these essays into three parts, labeled: "Programmatic Proposals," "Points of Comparison: Discipleship and Community," and "Critical Concerns." The fourth part consists of three response essays, each offering a general critique of the collection and limited responses to selected essays. Stackhouse then offers an Afterword, subtitled, "An Agenda for an Evangelical Theology of Religions."

The variety of subjects and treatments among these essays is both an asset and a liability. It is the latter because one is often bewildered by the abrupt change of pace and approach, and is frequently left with unaddressed questions.

While this can be the impetus for more research and exploration, it is often a source of frustration and confusion.

But the varying landscape of the book's subject matter is an asset because it provides a glimpse into many critical issues of interfaith inquiry. One that I found particularly fascinating is the question of whether or not converts to Christianity can or should continue the practices and customs of their old lives. This question gets complicated when it is remembered how closely intertwined religious and cultural dimensions often are. To be raised Hindu, for example, is not simply to be indoctrinated with a set of beliefs; it is to be trained and nurtured in an entire lifestyle. We glibly concede that one need not "become American" or abandon her own culture to become a Christian. But what are the ramifications of accepting Christ within a culture that is infused on every level with the *Weltanschauung* of a pagan religion?

One unexpected benefit of this book is two delightfully informative essays on postmodernism and its ramifications for theology of religions. The essay by evangelical postmodern thinker *par excellence*, Stanley Grenz, offers a lucid compendium of the history and credo of postmodernism (very usable general introduction to the subject) as well as a challenging program for promoting the "Jesus-Story" in an atmosphere of "incredulity toward metanarrative." At the other extreme, the essay by Irving Hexham berates what he sees to be an inexcusable rush among evangelicals to embrace postmodernism and adapt the Christian message to it. Hexham challenges the notion that postmodernism has any marked influence beyond academia and Hollywood and argues that, if Christianity abandons the Enlightenment ideals of universal truth, knowledge, and morality, the world will reject it in favor of a message that doesn't. Hexham sees Islam in particular as already making headway with its uncompromisingly absolutist message.

Surprisingly absent from this collection is any significant discussion of the world religions issue most debated in current evangelical circles, that of the possibility of salvation for those who never explicitly embrace Christianity. Though part of the purpose of this anthology is to move evangelicalism beyond this debate, it becomes clear from reading the book that this question infuses all the others. The response essay by Ken R. Gnanakan may be the most insightful in the collection, chiefly because of his insistence on the centrality of this debate. While I do not detect the underlying tone of exclusivism that Gnanakan seems to hear permeating these papers, I agree that, unless and until evangelicalism fashions an inclusivism that is biblically sound and adequately appreciative of the realities of worldwide religious expression, any attempt to develop an adequate theology of religions is mere window dressing.

Nonetheless, I heartily recommend this book for anyone with a heart for missions or interfaith dialogue. The importance of the issues addressed is not to be ignored.

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D.A. CARSON, Peter T. O'BRIEN, and Mark A. SEIFRID, eds.  
*Justification and Variegated Nomism, Vol. I—The Complexities of Second Temple Judaism*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001. 548 pp. \$44.99.

Sixteen authors have gone together to deal with the relationship of Paul's theology, especially that of justification, in relationship to the literature of the Intertestamental or Second Temple Judaism period. Roughly, this includes the literature of 350 BC to AD 200 which primarily came out of Judaism. The issue addressed focuses on a significant paradigm shift brought about by E.P. Sanders in his book, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977). That paradigm shift has influenced Pauline scholars since Sanders's book appeared. The old perspective saw Paul in contradiction with the old "works-righteousness" movement of Judaism out of which he came. Paul's emphasis on being "saved by grace" was considered as unique to Paul and the NT.

Carson's quote of Sanders's own summary of his conclusions (422 in *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*) opens this volume (2):

The "pattern" or "structure" of covenantal nomism is this: (1) God has chosen Israel and (2) given the law. The law implies both (3) God's promise to maintain the election and (4) the requirement to obey. (5) God rewards obedience and punishes transgression. (6) The law provides for means of atonement, and atonement results in (7) maintenance or re-establishment of the covenantal relationship. (8) All those who are maintained in the covenant by obedience, atonement and God's mercy belong to the group which will be saved. An important interpretation of the first and last points is that election and ultimately salvation are considered to be by God's mercy rather than human achievement.

The book then discusses the theological positions of a vast array of literature from the Second Temple Judaism period under the following topics: Prayers and Psalms, Scripture-Based Stories in the Pseudepigrapha, Expansions of Scripture, Didactic Stories, Apocalypses, Testaments, Wisdom Literature, Josephus, Tannaitic Literature, the Targums, Philo of Alexandria, IQS and Salvation at Qumran, Word Studies on Righteousness and Justice, and a Study of the Pharisees.

Carson (543) concludes that, overall, the writers find little connection between Sanders's "Covenantal Nomism" and the results of their own studies. Thus, Sanders is not wrong everywhere, "but he is wrong when he tries to establish that his category is right everywhere."

Covenantal nomism is identified also as a reductionist category. It cannot be made to fit everywhere. It also fails to recognize that the literature is certainly not as uniform in its theology and presentation as Sanders would like to believe. Sanders also assumes a connection between covenant and righteousness, but the study made by Seifrid shows that God's righteousness cannot be identified with God's covenantal faithfulness. As a result, according to Carson (547), "the fundamental assumptions behind covenantal nomism begin to crumble."

I found this book an excellent resource in preparing a course in Second Temple Judaism. I look forward to seeing how volume two resolves the problems raised in this first volume.

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**Millard J. ERICKSON.** *Introducing Christian Doctrine*, 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001. 427 pp. \$29.99.

This current volume is a “reader-friendly” abridgment of Erickson’s earlier *Christian Theology*. The subject matter covers the range of classical systematic theology, from God to the last things. The spirit is irenic, the point of view is classically evangelical, and the style is lucid. Erickson’s treatment of controversial subjects is fair and balanced.

The work is positive in tone. We are left no doubt of Erickson’s stance on each topic but he wastes no ink in attacking alternative viewpoints. A typical example of his approach is found on page 210:

The current form of my understanding is as follows: We all were involved in Adam’s sin, and thus receive both the corrupted nature that was his after the fall, and the guilt and condemnation that attach to his sin. With this matter of guilt, however, just as with the imputation of Christ’s righteousness, there must be some conscience and voluntary decision on our part. Until this is the case, there is only a conditional imputation of guilt. Thus, there is no condemnation until one reaches the age of responsibility. If a child dies before he or she is capable of making genuine moral decisions, there is only innocence, and the child will experience the same type of future existence with the Lord as will those who have reached the age of moral responsibility and had their sins forgiven as a result of accepting the offer of salvation based upon Christ’s atoning death.

Evangelicals will find this book to be highly useful as a text at either undergraduate or graduate levels. Except for the Calvinistic bent in the treatment of the doctrine of salvation, it also is suitable for instruction in Christian doctrine in Stone-Campbell Movement settings.

Regarding baptism, Erickson discusses it in his chapter on the church. His justification for this arrangement is that baptism, along with the Lord’s Supper, is an ordinance of the church. Erickson writes: “The act of baptism was commanded by Christ (Matt 28:19-20). Since it was ordained by him, it is probably understood as an ordinance rather than a sacrament” (360). In the context, it seems that Erickson is trying to escape the taint of “baptismal regeneration” by preferring the term “ordinance.” However, he does not deal with the question of how an ordinance of Jesus can be disassociated from salvation, nor does he touch on the question of how an ordinance which places a believer in the church remains unessential to salvation.

Erickson's discussion of "effectual calling" or "special calling" turns on his belief in total depravity (p. 303). Note:

We are now dealing specifically with spiritual ability or freedom of choice in regard to the critical issue of salvation. And here the chief consideration is depravity. If, as we have argued, humans in the unregenerate state are totally depraved and unable to respond to God's grace, there is no question as to whether they are free to accept the offer of salvation—no one is! Rather, the question to be asked is, Is anyone who is specially called free to reject the offer of grace? The position taken herein is not that those who are called *must* respond, but that God makes his offer so appealing that they *will* respond affirmatively.

This position throws the responsibility for human destiny directly back on God and leads logically to "double predestination" (if some individuals are elected to be saved, it follows that the remainder are elected to be lost). This issue gave rise to the Stone-Campbell Restoration Movement in the early 1800s. The "plan of salvation" offered by Stone, Scott, Campbell, and the host of others offered salvation to all who would elect their election in Christ.

This is an impressive work but teachers in institutions of the Stone-Campbell Movement will need to use it with care.

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**Bruce L. FIELDS.** *Introducing Black Theology: Three Crucial Questions for the Evangelical Church.* Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001. 134 pp. \$13.99.

Having been spiritually nurtured in a white, Christian background, I welcome a book that provides insight into black theology. The Three Crucial Questions series attempts to narrow important issues to a few manageable questions. Fields' chapter titles designate his three main questions: "What Is Black Theology?" "What Can Black Theology Teach the Evangelical Church?" and "What Is the Future of Black Theology?"

In chapter 1, he defines black theology, identifying its main sources as black experience, revelation, Scripture, Jesus Christ, and tradition. Fields concludes by defining the task of the black theologian: "to clearly explain to the people of God how the gospel of Jesus Christ corresponds to the struggle for liberation." In chapter 2, Fields shows that black theology's primary lesson for the evangelical church is a challenge to existing racism, which Fields contends is in effect a form of idolatry. In chapter 3, Fields argues that black theology will only continue to exist if it is faithful to traditional Christian teaching regarding core theological foci, specifically the doctrines of God, atonement, humanity, and salvation.

While at times making unnecessary excursions, Fields's book is a helpful survey that successfully translates black theology into evangelical terms. Although

the relationship between the Stone-Campbell Movement and evangelicalism has not yet been fully settled, *SCJ* readers can readily apply Fields's insights to their own tradition. Some, however, may hesitate to accept some of Fields's more evangelical assumptions, such as his understanding of depravity. Nonetheless, he brings attention to a neglected area of thought for many within the Christian churches and Churches of Christ. Those who are white in our predominately segregated congregations have only just begun to take black experience seriously. Fields rightly challenges churches for not having taken a prophetic role. I was especially challenged to see the systemic nature of racism in society. While Fields opens up new doors of theological insight for our tradition, his main concern is to keep black theology in line with the classical Christian tradition.

While his concern for scriptural and traditional orthodoxy is laudable, I am concerned with some of Fields's conclusions. Fields seems to think that beginning with black experience will necessarily lead to a neglect of Scripture. However, one's experience always comes before and guides the reading of Scripture. Thus, the reading of Scripture must always lead one back, eventually, to an evaluation of experience. The distinctive aspect of black theology is that it arises from black experience. Fields's downplay of black experience is in my opinion a knee-jerk reaction to protect the role of Scripture. Evangelicalism as a whole must learn to take experience as a theological resource seriously or it will become increasingly isolated.

Fields believes that black theology will become obsolete if it does not open itself to outside criticism, especially from the white evangelical church, for after all, white theology is the background for black theology. While dialogue *is* healthy and ideal, black theology is primarily intended for the black community. Its viability certainly depends on dialogue, but in my estimation, the demise of a distinctive black theology will only come to pass when the mainstream church takes its criticisms seriously, not the other way around. Black theology will exist as long as there is oppression.

While I disagree with some of Fields's conclusions, I do believe that his book is a good introduction. While nothing should replace primary sources in seminary study, this book is a good starting point and offers helpful insight for ministers, elders, and theologically-minded church members.

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**John Mark HICKS.** *Come to the Table: Revisioning the Lord's Supper.*  
Orange, CA: New Leaf Books, 2002. 205 pp. \$12.95.

This is not a dull academic tome but a very readable and practical work. While the Lord's supper is the focus of this book, it goes beyond that and will enlarge one's view of the biblical purpose and goal of humanity as well. God's tri-



une nature and the intent of God's creative act are tied into the Lord's supper, shown to be an occasion which foreshadows God's people throughout eternity in communion with him forever.

Written by John Mark Hicks, Professor of Theology at Lipscomb University, this book arises out of years of study, classes, and seminars given on the topic of the Lord's supper. Written from the perspective of one who seeks biblical precedent for present practice, Hicks finds current fashion lacking on many counts. Indeed, in this case, revisioning is restoring.

Hicks examines the Lord's supper and table feasts in context of the whole Bible, not just the immediate setting of the gospels or the NT. As such, communion around the table and the family fellowship that goes with such a table event should be celebratory and not the usual occasion of sacrificial somberness. One of his main points is that today's practice has often changed the table into an altar. This change focuses on the sacrificial and individual aspect of the meal to the neglect of table communion, fellowship, reconciliation, joy, and hope that such an occasion should bring.

The first of the book's four major headings explores communion and feasts in the OT and illustrates that these were important fellowship events between God and the Israelites. Neglect in understanding the OT and biblical sacrificial system has in part led to the current need to "revision." Hicks finds the purposes of OT feasts still alive in the event of the Lord's supper.

The second major heading looks at Luke-Acts and notes the times Jesus was involved in meals. Similarities between these various meals and the Lord's supper include thankfulness and joyous fellowship. In Jesus, God continues his feasting with, and promises to, his people.

The third major heading considers Paul and his writings on the Lord's supper. Again, these events are shown to be joyous occasions bringing the celebrants closer to one another and to God. That difficulties arising from the Lord's supper are not new can be seen from the fact that much of Paul's writing concerned correction of this biblical event soon after the time in which it was instituted.

Lastly, the Lord's supper as often practiced today in Churches of Christ (a cappella) is examined. The historical development of today's practice is briefly revisited. From the early church fathers to the Restoration Movement, a shift from table to altar has taken place. The early Restoration Movement was concerned with restoring the event and meaning of the supper (note Robert Richardson's *Communings in the Sanctuary*). Yet, even this effort has been undermined by a focus on the elements and frequency—the mechanics—of the Lord's supper.

To a degree, current practice of the Lord's supper is a mirror image of the Western obsession with individualism and personal space. This is in contrast to the family and filial concept of earlier ages and many non-Western contemporary cultures. The concept of family is still strong elsewhere, often in proportion to its distance from Western or, at least, present American individualistic culture. Hicks

notes, “Too easily we assume that our experience of the Lord’s supper is equivalent to that of the primitive church,” and as such judge the event (and the Bible) from our immediate (individualistic) experience rather than being shaped by biblical perspectives.

This volume will help the reader regain that biblical foundation necessary for true restoration. This is a book that should be read by all who are interested in restoring the New Testament practice of the Lord’s supper. It is well suited for a study group and has an excellent list of books for further research. With a wide readership, this book will improve the relational nature of church in a society that desperately needs more community, with God as well as with one another.

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**Gregory E. GANSSELE, ed. *God and Time: Four Views*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2001. 247 pp. \$17.99.**

Ganssle, Rivendell Institute for Christian Thought and Learning and part of the Campus Crusade for Christ student ministry at Yale University, edits this volume containing articles from four well-known evangelicals: Paul Helm, Alan Padgett, William Lane Craig, and Nicholas Wolterstorff. Although not formally part of a series, the publisher, InterVarsity, has published other works using the “four view” format, on *Science & Christianity*, *Divine Foreknowledge*, *Psychology & Christianity*, and *The Meaning Of The Millennium*.

In the introduction, Ganssle sets the debate about God and time within a broader context of *faith seeking understanding* and examines five important issues relevant to the subject: (1) the nature of time, (2) God and creation, (3) God’s knowledge of the future, (4) God’s interaction with his people, and (5) the fullness of God’s being. He then briefly summarizes each of the positions of the contributors. Each essay is followed by critiques from the other three contributors and concludes with a response from the essayist answering his critics.

The introduction succinctly states the often difficult-to-determine position of the four contributors. The essays are well-written, the tone of the critiques and the responses cordial and respectful. This is as good a work on the subject from an evangelical perspective as one could imagine.

The major problem with the book is the subject itself. The subject and the methodology of philosophical analysis presented in this work exemplify contemporary Anglo-American philosophy of religion. As one who is more sympathetic to American pragmatism as typified by Richard Rorty as well as Continental philosophy, I struggled to find the relevance of the, often tedious, arguments. Although the contributors spend a large amount of philosophical effort justifying their respective positions, relatively no effort is spent telling the reader why such effort is worthwhile. All of the contributors agree that the primary source for

knowledge of God is the Bible. However, they all equally agree that the Bible is almost completely silent on God's relation to time. Science, and especially Einstein's theory of relativity, has important things to say about time, but none of the contributors specifically relates their positions to scientific theories which might shed light on the subject.

If there is no concrete biblical data and no scientific data that can be used to test any of the theories propounded by the contributors, then it seems to me that we have a debate full of sound and fury, signifying nothing, uncomfortably comparable to the "angels on the head of a pin" type of argumentation from "first principles" popular in the middle ages. What criteria, then, should a nonspecialist reader use to judge the validity of each of the theories presented? The contributors themselves seem to use two. The first one is coherence and internal consistency. If a theory is more internally consistent and coherent than its rivals, then it is to be preferred. The second relates to God's majesty. Any theory that presents a more "elevated" view of God than its rivals is to be preferred. The problem is that a more coherent theory that presents God as "more" omnipotent or "more" omniscient (whatever "more" would mean in this context), is not necessarily true. The arguments, then, are ultimately untestable and unpersuasive.

Noam Chomsky once said that our ignorance can be divided into two categories: problems and mysteries. Problems we know how to tackle and would recognize an answer if it were presented. Mysteries, on the other hand, are hard to even formulate in language let alone amenable to coherent theories. In the end, this work may, paradoxically, be seen as an apologetic for the *via negativa* which questions all positive statements about the ultimate mystery, God, tangible support for the restoration principle of "silence where the Bible is silent."

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**Kevin GILES.** *The Trinity and Subordinationism: The Doctrine of God and the Contemporary Gender Debate.* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2002. 282 pp. \$18.00.

Fr. Giles's book is among the most focused and forceful texts I have read on the Trinity, the role of women in the home, church and society, and slavery. Relating these three topics through the themes of culture and biblical interpretation significantly strengthens his argument, which is this: the traditional theology of the Trinity and our changing cultural settings demand a reinterpretation of both biblical texts and historical Christian teaching on women and slaves that leads to full emancipation of all persons.

The strengths of this book are straightforward: strong, orthodox Trinitarianism, a robust theology of providence that sees God at work among the seismic cultural shifts of the last century and a half, a culturally and theologically nuanced

handling of the relevant biblical texts and historical documents, an avowal of the norming influences of Scripture and tradition, and the willingness to forcefully yet respectfully state his convictions about the truths of these issues.

The book is divided into three parts. The first part comprises half the book and has two thrusts: to show that an orthodox Trinitarianism must exclude any notions of the eternal subordination of the Son and to document that evangelical proponents of the fixed subordination of women to men link that subordination to the eternal subordination of the Son to the Father. By establishing the heretical nature of Trinitarian subordinationism, Giles removes one of the foundational planks for those who espouse the fixed subordination of women to men on the basis of the eternal subordination of the Son to the Father.

The second and third parts of Giles's book deal specifically with the issues of women's subordination and of slavery respectively. In each of these sections his argument is parallel: to show that the traditional interpretations of Scripture on these issues reflect the sociocultural settings of the interpreters more than they do an authentic and Christocentric reading of Scripture, that recent evangelical interpretations of these matters actually break from or significantly modify these traditional interpretations, and that God's providential actions in history, in the abolitionist and women's liberationist movements, have brought the modern church to a more authentic, Christocentric and emancipatory reading of the biblical texts relating to women and to slaves.

Unfortunately, in these very strengths lie the weaknesses of the book.

The limitations of this review preclude a detailed analysis, but at the risk of oversimplifying, I will highlight one aspect of his argument: that of the relations of the Persons in the Godhead. By stressing the unity of the Godhead, as Giles does, he rightly stresses their essential oneness in being, will, and action. Giles also rightly espouses the appropriate differentiation among the Persons of the Godhead. However, because he wants to stress the unity of the Godhead, so as to solidify his argument of the essential equality of men and women, and of slaves and masters, the diversity of the Persons of the Trinity is at times dangerously minimized. Regrettably, Giles depends overmuch on the Athanasian Creed and the *filioque* clause of the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed, both Western developments with which the universal Church did not, and does not, fully agree. Due to the weaknesses in the Athanasian Creed and the *filioque* clause—among which is the potentiality for heretical modalism—Giles's argument founders.

Nonetheless, Giles's book will deeply resonate in our late modern/post-modern society in its explicit avowal of the good ends in scriptural interpretation to which cultural locatedness can be oriented. Also, his return to tradition—despite his tendency toward ecclesial Western-ness—will likewise be felt positively by those critical of inconsistencies in the modern worldview. However, due to its somewhat technical discussion of the Trinity, this book is not for the average church member. Well-read church members, pastors, or seminarians will find the book challenging but immensely helpful, even when they disagree with the

author's efforts to push them to clarify their own thoughts. This is an important book with a powerful argument that needs to be heard.

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**Michael WELKER.** *What Happens in Holy Communion?* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000. 183 pp. \$18.00.

The resurrected Christ is actively present in the church's celebration of communion. This central claim in Welker's book expands the traditional Reformed affirmation of Christ's presence in communion through a new focus on the motif of resurrection. Welker writes, "Holy communion focuses us on the reality of the resurrected Jesus Christ and helps us perceive this reality" (10). Welker suggests that the reality of Christ's resurrection provides a theological key for unlocking the mystery of the blessed sacrament. Drawing on his comprehensive knowledge of the history of sacramental theology and the contemporary ecumenical discussion, Welker clarifies the meaning and nature of communion. Communion, Welker argues, is a symbolic community meal of worship that proclaims the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. While traditional sacramental theology has emphasized Christ's death in "sacrificial" terms, Welker encourages us to also consider Christ's resurrection in "eschatological" terms when developing a theology of Holy Communion.

Emphasizing trinitarian and eschatological motifs, Welker uses a biblical theological method to develop his theology of the Lord's Supper. While God's revelation in Jesus Christ is grounded in the "once and for all" work of atonement on the cross, Welker argues that the church is continually filled with Christ's resurrection power through the Holy Spirit in its celebration of the Lord's Supper, while eagerly awaiting the return of our coming King. Welker's eschatological and pneumatological perspective on communion express his indebtedness to Jürgen Moltmann's *The Church and the Power of the Spirit* (London: SCM, 1977).

The book is divided into twelve chapters with helpful summaries at the end of each. While this text would be ideal for seminary students, it can also be used in the parish because of its accessible writing style and lack of extraneous, technical theological discussion. Many a communion meditation could be developed in conversation with Welker's book. An Appendix, "Documents of the 'Growth in Agreement' of Churches on the Global Level in Questions of Holy Communion, in Chronological Order, 1931–1990," provides a helpful orientation for the broader ecumenical conversation.

In addition to Welker's distinct perspective as a German Reformed theo-

gian, he also demonstrates his appropriation of the key insights of the ecumenical discussion, particularly the role of the Holy Spirit in a trinitarian conception of communion. Building on his seminal *God the Spirit* (Fortress, 1994), Welker provides a persuasive polemic for pneumatology being fundamental to understanding communion. Welker argues that all Christian traditions should build on the three elements that ecumenical discussions have found to be essential to the character of communion: “thanksgiving to the Creator (Eucharist), remembrance of Christ (memorial, anamnesis), and invocation of the Holy Spirit (epiclesis)” (176).

Incorporating insights from Orthodox theologian Alexander Schmemmann, Welker argues that the western church should actively recover the epiclesis, the invocation of the Holy Spirit in the Eucharistic liturgy. Focusing on the invocation of the Holy Spirit assures that communion is understood as a triune act of worship, rather than a magical act of consecration by the priesthood (30-36). As Calvin writes, “The sacraments profit not a whit without the power of the Holy Spirit” (*Institutes*, 4.14.9). For those in the Stone-Campbell tradition, Welker’s conception of the Lord’s Supper as a symbolic communal meal will be familiar. He writes, “holy communion is a symbolic communal meal of a meal community” (41). Yet, his emphasis on the reality of the resurrected Christ in the sacrament will push us further in our theological reflection on the mysterious presence of the risen Christ in our celebration of this Holy Feast. Welker laments that during the third and fourth centuries “the Christian church surrendered the connection between holy communion and a full meal (“agape” meal), and thereby came to celebrate the Supper as a symbolic meal” (41). Stone-Campbell churches would do well to follow Welker’s challenge to celebrate the Lord’s supper on occasion with the eating of an actual agape meal to embody and restore the spirit of the early church.

Through perceptively showing the continuities and discontinuities between the Lord’s Supper and the Jewish Passover, Welker highlights the Jewish backgrounds of this Christian liturgical practice. However, he ends this discussion by stating that the church has the freedom to celebrate the Lord’s Supper anywhere between once a year (the practice of the Jewish Passover feast) and every day (a normal Jewish meal). This latitude provides room for the quarterly and monthly celebration of communion in the Reformed tradition (54). However, Welker’s overemphasis on the proclaimed Word of God, exposes Welker’s misunderstanding of the eucharistic form of Christian worship that is universally accepted by the Roman Catholic, Orthodox, and Anglican communions, as well as churches in the Stone-Campbell tradition. The beauty of Christian worship is how the Holy Spirit is able to unite the liturgies of both Word and Sacrament in the common worship of our Triune God. Communion is more than an occasional symbolic meal, it is the apex of Christian worship.

Deepening our understanding of communion is vital for the renewal of the Christian Church. The Lord’s Supper is the highest expression of the unity of

Christ's church (4). With a fuller recovery of the trinitarian and eschatological nature of this sacred meal, we can expect to see a new rapprochement between Roman Catholic and Protestant theologies of the Lord's Supper. Welker's book will play a strategic role in building this ecumenical consensus.

PETER HELTZEL  
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**Ben WITHERINGTON III and Laura M. ICE. *The Shadow of the Almighty: Father, Son, and Spirit in Biblical Perspective*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002. 156 pp. \$14.00.**

This book is about the Trinity, but not in the sense that it explores in detail the relationship between Father, Son, and Spirit. Instead, "This study has the more modest goal of examining some, and only some, of the crucial God language in the NT, in particular the language about God being Father, Son, and Holy Spirit" (ix).

Chapter one examines the Father language used of God in the OT and in the intertestamental literature. Amongst these rare OT occurrences, a distinction must be made between paternal analogies and the naming of God as Father. Witherington and Ice do note, however, that Father language seemed to increase in usage in the late prophetic era as well as the intertestamental period.

Chapter two examines the use of Father language in the NT. The authors are quick to point out that the primary reason for the proliferation of Father language in the early church comes from Jesus' unique relationship with God, as well as from Jesus' own use of Father language. While more common than in the OT, Father language in the gospels is fairly rare and is almost exclusively used by Christ until after Easter/Pentecost. The appropriateness of a human using Father language is discussed in some detail with the conclusion that a person can call God "Abba" based on their relationship with the Son and the receiving of the Holy Spirit.

Chapter three examines the NT Son language, specifically *theos* and *kyrios* used of Jesus, as well as "Son of Man," "Son of God," and others. The authors conclude that Jesus was in fact God, and that his divine identity in no way violates the principles of monotheism. It is suggested that Jesus' use of the title "Son of Man" was not merely because of its obscurity as a Messianic reference, but rather because it implied a Messiah who was human, yet more than human.

Chapter four examines Spirit language in the OT, early Jewish literature, and the NT. The authors suggest that the OT references to the Spirit usually meant "God on the move in our world" (102), while many NT references view the Spirit as not merely a power but a separate person (*persona*) distinguishable from Father and Son yet sharing in the divine identity. In this way, the NT represents a discontinuous view of the Spirit when contrasted with early Jewish and non-



Christian sources on the subject. Though not included in the divine name until after the resurrection, the Holy Spirit also shares the divine identity without violating monotheistic principles.

Overall, the book's strength lies in its biblical approach (it is comprehensive but not exhaustive), its defense of the doctrine of the Trinity, its awareness of extrabiblical literature, its ample documentation, and its useful study questions at the end of each chapter. While I was able to grasp the main points, I found myself unconvinced or even confused by a few of the arguments presented. I was also disappointed with the lack of sources used in chapter four.

This volume is useful for anyone with more than a passing interest in the doctrine of the Trinity. While too academic for use on the popular level, the book is also too narrow in its scope to be used by a college or seminary professor in a systematic theology class. The book's primary academic use would be for supplementary reading or research on this specific topic (the book does include a scripture index). The book may also be useful for anyone who interacts with Muslims as it explains the Trinity in monotheistic terms.

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**Bruce David FORBES and Jeffrey H. MAHAN. *Religion and Popular Culture in America*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000. 324 pp. \$48.00.**

This volume is worthwhile for any preacher or scholar interested in gaining insight into American pop culture and its influence on the church in today's society. As stated in the introduction by Bruce Forbes, the main objective of this book is to open a dialogue and widen the discussion between religion and culture. The whole book attempts to define (or redefine) the essence of religion in today's consumeristic world.

The book is divided into four main parts with essays by various scholars addressing major issues in each section. The first part offers an analysis of religion in popular culture. These essays discuss the appearance of religious themes, language, and imagery expressed through various media in America today. Essays are included by Jane Iwamura, Robert Thompson, Terry Muck, and Mark Hulsether, covering the subjects of the oriental monk, Christmas television specials, the writings of Louis L'Amour and Cormac McCarthy, and analyzing Madonna videos for religious themes. The most helpful essay in this section is on the modern versus postmodern writing of L'Amour (*Shane* series) and McCarthy (*All The Pretty Horses*). Even if you have never read one of their books or like Westerns, Muck uses both authors to describe and contrast this ongoing debate in a way that could be of great help for sermon or teaching illustrations.



The second part looks at popular culture in religion and includes essays by William Romanowski, Gregor Goethals, and Stewart Hoover. This section examines the influences of popular culture in contemporary Christian music, the use of icons and rituals in religious services, and the presence (or lack there of) of the cross at Willow Creek Community Church. From the standpoint of a church leader, this was the most fascinating section of the book. Goethals and Hoover challenge all churches to give serious thought to their use of icons and rituals in the worship service. They seek to help church leaders critically analyze the methods we use to spread the gospel in our modern society.

The third section studies how popular culture has become religion. Michael Jindra, Michelle Lelwica, Joseph Price, and David Chidester write essays investigating the phenomena of *Star Trek*, dieting for women, sports, and the “fetish of *Coca-Cola*.” All four essays show how cultural “products” have become religious symbols offering participation and salvation for the individual.

The final section demonstrates how religion and popular culture are in dialogue with each other. Robert Jewett, Anthony Pinn, and Meredith Underwood call for social reform by examining social vengeance in *Pale Rider*, the plight of African-Americans in the blues and rap music, and the role of women, especially on the Internet.

The book also offers two helpful resources in the back. One is a selected bibliography for persons interested in further study in this important field. The other is an extensive index to easily refer back to topics or specific people. For the average reader, one weakness of the book is that, since it covers such a wide variety of topics, a reader might get bored reading through the various essays. Also, as a warning, in two of the essays on popular music, strong language does occur.

This a great book for all preachers and scholars, including those in the Stone-Campbell Restoration Movement, who are interested in how religion influences culture and how our culture has affected our religious rituals. Whether or not you hail Willow Creek as a church model or condemn them for being too secular, this book will give you valuable insight into how to better reach our culture for Christ.

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**Brian D. MCLAREN.** *A New Kind of Christian*. Edison, NJ: Jossey-Bass, 2001. 170 pp. \$21.95.

Christianity has always had an uneasy alliance with culture. How to be culturally engaging or relevant while also maintaining fidelity and faithfulness to the gospel of Jesus Christ has been one of the most difficult tasks of the church

throughout history. Every time the culture changes, some Christians want to change major features or emphases of the gospel story while other Christians decry any change or deviation from the previous forms and functions of the gospel. While there has been a growing debate between Christians on how the Christian faith impacts, relates to, or is distinct from our postmodern culture, McLaren goes a step further by presenting a fictional conversation between two friends during which the modern Christian preacher Dan converts to the postmodern thinking and way of doing Christianity of his ex-preacher, now science teacher, friend Neo. In this way, McLaren describes what a postmodern Christian might look like, act like, and how he might do theology within a Christian context. Some people may be put off by McLaren's oversimplified version of a postmodern Christian faith, but many will relate to both the inner tensions and the paradoxical nature that people of faith are experiencing today (whether they are approaching issues from Dan's perspective or Neo's perspective).

One of the strengths (and possibly weaknesses) of his portrayal of Dan and Neo is that McLaren is so general and nonspecific that a diverse group of Christian believers can identify with his vision. Both Bishop Spong followers as well as middle of the road evangelicals can relate to both Dan and Neo while coming down on the side of Neo (as Dan finally does also in his own conversion in the process of becoming a postmodern Christian). McLaren throughout his book brilliantly gives a very good road map of the distinctive features and markings of both modern and postmodern culture. What one might have hoped for is to have seen more of Neo's character, especially Neo's doubts, questions, and uncertainties (since the story focuses more on Dan's crisis of faith). One can still wonder what crisis of faith postmodern Christians experience as they try to be culturally relevant and postmodern friendly. I suspect there are many traps, dangerous places, and internal struggles postmodern Christians face, and knowing more of those danger zones or warning signs would have been helpful in this postmodern journey of faith that McLaren takes the reader through.

The earliest Christian responses to postmodernity were overly negative and critical. Then came Richard Middleton and Brian Walsh's *Truth Is Stranger Than It Used to Be* that challenged evangelicals to reconsider and construct more positive portrayals of the Christian faith that were proactive and not just reactive to postmodernity. What McLaren has done is not only give a very positive portrayal of a postmodern Christian but also tries to take people through some of the ups and downs of the journey itself in a fictional narrative form. He rightly makes helpful distinctions between Christianity and Christ (although it would have been very helpful to know specifically how Christianity and culture are to connect and disconnect) and promotes a new vision of how to be a Christian (rather than doing Christianity as we have always done it or abandoning it altogether). Certainly this kind of reinventing the Christian faith that realistically and practically engages our culture is a necessary component to both a viable Christian witness and lifestyle today. But some of us who have already started down this new

pathway are still finding it difficult to navigate the Christian faith in such turbulent waters as postmodernity. Some Christians have hitched their proverbial wagons too closely to the modern culture that is now often being discarded, and postmodern Christians, if they are not careful, may find themselves one day in the same predicament.

Overall, McLaren is well versed in the ins and outs of not only postmodern culture but even many of its philosophers. He rightly points out that there is no monolithic postmodern culture but many postmodern philosophies allowing for many diverse and polyphonic ways of doing postmodern theologies. McLaren also knows the dangers of wedding the gospel too closely to culture (where the one who marries the spirit of the age is sure to become a widow in the next), but he takes the risk and leads out into new and, for many Christians, often unexplored territories. Some of these new avenues he explores include: relating faith to science and nature, new relational models of understanding God, rethinking biblical authority from a postmodern perspective, the controversial issue of how Christianity relates to other world religions, and even how Christian education has to change. In this last area mentioned he advocates moving from a very rational-oriented teacher-student lecture format towards a missional collaborative team format which promotes both mentoring and life experiences outside of the traditional classroom setting.

McLaren perceptively and very insightfully points out in his book how being a new kind of Christian does not mean that one is better or superior to traditional Christians but simply different. He proposes that our either-or way of thinking needs to be turned into a both/and kind of thinking and that even thinking itself needs to move from a Cartesian rationalism to a more experience-intuitive approach based on the movements of God's Spirit. In other words, McLaren throughout his book tries to avoid warfare metaphors and a take-no-prisoners approach for an irenic approach that does not look at issues through "us against them" glasses. Rather, he very powerfully and persuasively argues (he really is not against reason nor logic) that Christians should practice the art and skills in speaking and living the faith that are more in touch with the Spirit of God's transforming love and with the grace of Jesus rather than the more polemical models we have learned from both the institutional church and the academy. He says several times in different ways, through his fictional character Neo: "Jesus is the Savior, not Christianity."

McLaren has a real gift of getting to the heart of numerous issues that cause great dissonance in many a Christian's faith. He says we need to get beyond dichotomous thinking like modernity's subject/object split, belief and behavior split, kingdom and church split, and so forth. But how these tensions correlate and differentiate still needs more work. He raises the right issues but leaves many of them dangling for the reader to figure out on his or her own. Again, this may be a characteristic of postmodern ad hoc apologetics but giving more specific answers is needed by many searching souls.

One of the postmodern catch words is *gift*. God gives us gifts and that is also an image of grace. McLaren's book is itself a gift for many struggling Christians trying to make sense of their faith in a postmodern world. For those who do not struggle, or think that the gospel is simply the "old time religion" that has been handed down to them, McLaren's proposals will surely be seen as not only dangerous but, what is worse, heretical. But if Christians have learned anything from postmodernity, it's to listen to all voices in the conversation (even those who are viewed as marginalized). However one views McLaren's "new kind of Christian," to ignore him or not to listen will be to silence a needed voice in the growing conversation of the gospel and culture and how today's church deals with the complex issue of our postmodern culture.

Brian McLaren has given us some modest proposals to consider. To take this challenge seriously, we cannot just reject this proposal without proposing some alternative vision and proposals. Until others do similar hard work that McLaren has done, his proposals are fresh, bold, innovative, and challenging. His vision of "a new kind of Christian" does not mark an ending of a conversation but just the starting of an important and necessary new one.

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**William ROMANOWSKI.** *Eyes Wide Open: Looking for God in Popular Culture.* Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2001. 176 pp. \$12.99.

In a very readable and engaging discourse, Romanowski undertakes a mammoth task. His book engages current attitudes and misconceptions among Christian audiences toward popular arts and culture and attempts to challenge that audience to evaluate and participate at a critical level. Unwittingly, the reader gets a thorough dose of cultural, literary, communication, and narrative theory, not to mention theology, as Romanowski levels the ground on which he will build. He methodically structures his material, while clearly disclosing the central question of the book to the reader, "What is the place of the popular arts, and how do Christians faithfully participate in them?" (54)

The book breaks down into three major sections: chapters 1–3 are a crash course on Christian understanding of faith, worldview, and culture; chapters 4–7 sketch a Christian cultural landscape and focus on how Christian art ought to function; chapters 8–9 define the classic Hollywood film and Melodrama and critique the prevailing "Christian" method of pop-culture criticism (toting up the number of curse words, violent scenes, and exposed bodies). Romanowski suggests that the "good column/bad column" method of evaluation falls sadly short of helpful analysis, and he offers instead a model (in the appendix) of how a Christian might analyze a film text through a Christian lens.

While primarily aimed at formulating in his readers a Christian paradigm through which analysis takes place, Romanowski's text also finds room to critique popular Christian culture. He suggests that Christian culture in the United States is at times more American than Christian. In chapter seven, Romanowski reveals the tendency of Christian art to oversimplify life in order to arrive at the requisite happy ending—which is more sentimental than Christian. He states “Christian popular artworks should grapple with the complexities of life that result from economic recessions, factory closings, natural disasters, disease, accidents, and so forth” (99). As representation of life, “Christian popular art should not be simpler than the reality it attempts to represent” (101).

Throughout the text, Romanowski continually reiterates the necessity of a solid community of reference for interpretation—not only for popular arts, but Christian art as well. He helpfully illustrates the inherent fallacy behind the idea of a person interpreting a cultural text “individually.” Even if considering a text on one's own, one must acknowledge the shared meanings and experiences that provide the basis for one's conclusions and the very foundation for the text itself.

Considering the text as a whole, the book is aimed more toward a popular audience than an academic audience. A reader from any of several academic fields will, as mentioned earlier, recognize theory and philosophy, but to encourage the lay reader on through the text, the names and faces have been changed, as it were, to protect the innocent. The lack of annotations facilitates flow and ease of reading, but for an academic audience the missing information means more work in chasing down references. This reviewer's text is from the third printing, suggesting that his book is well received. There is a web site dedicated to the text as well, but if one has read Romanowski closely, one notes that to describe this web site is to review another text.

*Eyes Wide Open* will be helpful in several different scenarios. If a church class is *seriously* dedicated to exploring an alternative paradigm for the evaluation of popular art, then this text will be of use. This text will also be helpful in a survey course, at an introductory level, to help students get an idea of the cultural landscape and what a “Biblical map of reality” might look like. For the interested and curious, this text will challenge the prevailing passive model and teach how to *[Look] for God in Popular Culture*.

JENNIFER HAMILTON

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**William D. TAYLOR, ed. *Global Missiology for the 21st Century*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001. 550 pp. \$24.99.**

In 1999 one hundred and sixty evangelical church and mission leaders met in Iguassu, Brazil, for a week of reflection and discussion on the issues facing mis-

sion theology and practice in the 21st century. Some were well-known international mission thinkers, others had worked quietly in their fields of service, with voices unheard by the larger church. This book is a compilation of papers prepared and read before and after the conference for discussion among the participants. As such it provides a multifaceted and multicultural examination of the complex issues facing the Church in this generation.

With forty-one chapters by as many writers and weighing in at over 500 pages, this book is not intended as a quick read. When first preparing this review, I tried to skim the material, but I was repeatedly drawn into more careful reading and reflection by the insightful thought and writing of many of the authors. This book need not be read cover to cover. It is really a treasure chest of missiological thought with new challenges to our thought and practice in many of the chapters.

Part One introduces the reader to the Iguassu Consultation, its purpose, participants, and results. Part Two examines some of the major factors that complicate and challenge the mission task in the 21st century. Part Three presents Ajith Fernando's daily messages to the gathering on "Biblical Trinitarianism and Mission." In Parts Four and Five seventeen representatives from different geographical regions and cultures discuss their perspectives on the mission theology and challenges the Church faces in specific parts of the world. The writers in Part Six explore six different religious communities and their approaches to spirituality and mission. The last part provides commentary on the consultation and its results.

An important feature of the compilation for *SCJ* readers is its repeated call to ensure that the church's missiology is truly grounded in God's word. It repeatedly challenges the reader to interact with what the Bible says about missions. Even more beneficial, though, the nonwestern writers help the western reader reflect upon ways in which general theology and missiology have at times been conditioned more by culture than by what the Bible actually says. This resource conveniently gathers their perspectives and insights together to allow the reader an overview of their concerns and challenges to the church universal.

Anyone who seeks to reflect deeply on the vast array of issues facing the contemporary Christian mission will find much in this volume to stimulate their thought and action. This text will be useful in a higher-level class on mission theology and practice in which students need to develop their own thinking on the perspectives presented in the text. All missionaries who seek to better understand the world and culture in which they serve will find this thought-provoking volume well worth reading.

PAUL PENNINGTON

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**Graham JOHNSTON.** *Preaching to a Postmodern World: A Guide to Reaching Twenty-First Century Listeners.* Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001. 189 pp. \$13.99.

Johnston sets the stage for his contribution to contemporary homiletic thought when he writes, "The church can choose to bury its head in the sand or, equally disastrous, attempt to turn back the clock to the good old days. . . . The way forward for the Christian faith will be for evangelical Christians to stop shrugging or twitching at the mention of postmodernism, and get on with engaging the culture with God's timeless message in a critical and thoughtful manner" (14).

The chapter titles provide a helpful overview of what the reader can expect to find in this helpful text. Chapter One, "Toto, We're Not in Kansas Anymore," lays the foundation for understanding our current situation. The closing line summarizes Johnston's overall premise: "The challenge for the biblical communicator moving into the postmodern era, then, is to present the message of Christ with freshness, relevance, and meaning to a generation of listeners who don't know what they're missing" (21).

Chapter two, "Postmodernity: Animal, Vegetable, or Mineral?" surveys the postmodern landscape. In 36 pages the reader receives a helpful overview of current thought processes. To the uninitiated there is enough information to become reasonably informed. To the well-read, the information is fresh enough to keep the reader's interest. Chapter Three, "Rules for Engagement," and Chapter Four, "Challenging Listeners," encourage the twenty-first century preacher to remain faithful in listening to and proclaiming Scripture. Johnston also mandates that preachers become better listeners to their audience. Without such active engagement with postmodern thinkers, the preacher will never connect effectively.

Such connection won't come easily. Chapter Five, "Obstacles," presents the difficulties that will arise. The fundamental hurdle being rejection of Scripture; postmodern thinkers tend to reject all outside authority. The reader is strongly warned against communicating any sense of dogmatism, yet encouraged to rely upon and advocate the importance of the Scriptures (a position readers of *SCJ* can appreciate).

Chapters Six and Seven, "Inroads" and "Practices for Engagement," lay out practical approaches for engaging a new culture. In Chapter Six, Johnston identifies a variety of touch points shared with postmodern thinkers. This chapter alone is worth the price of the book. In Chapter Seven, he provides a number of helpful suggestions, primarily advocating the use of narrative and inductive elements. He suggests storytelling, humor, drama and media. There are helpful, though brief, instructions for making the inductive elements effective.

Unfortunately, while not overtly rejecting deductive preaching, Johnston (like so many modern homileticians) does little to encourage an age-proven

approach which has the power to address the biblical issues postmodern thinkers face. A simple recommendation to include inductive/narrative elements in all our sermons would have avoided such an omission. One of the strengths of this work is the frequent use of postmodern elements. Johnston is well versed in film, music, TV; areas of interest and influence to postmodern thinkers. It is apparent Johnston has done his research well.

This volume is worthy of any preacher's attention. Johnston's suggestions will help make the preacher more effective. Attention to listening, noting the obstacles, including inductive elements in one's sermons, all will make preaching more enjoyable for any generation of listeners. In the end, this work is well worth the preacher's time.

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Lincoln Christian Seminary

**Steven D. MATHEWSON.** *The Art of Preaching Old Testament Narrative.* Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002. 288 pp. \$16.99.

Evangelical preaching is typically crafted on the deductive, three-point sermon format, a format better fitted to the didactic NT letters than to any other Scripture genre. It's the method taught almost exclusively in evangelical seminaries and Bible colleges. After all, we are the NT church. But we're also people of the Book—the whole Book—and 30% or more of the OT is narrative material, in which the “big idea” is not stated directly, but instead surfaces indirectly. Since biblical stories do not lend themselves readily to the deductive method, how do we effectively and honestly preach them if we lack the appropriate inductive skills set?

Mathewson's answer to that question is this book, wherein he challenges preachers to exposit biblical stories in a fashion that fits the genre while offering a methodology for the task. Building on the work of Haddon Robinson, under whom he did doctoral work in preaching, Mathewson walks readers through a text-sensitive process for exegeting and preaching OT narratives. If “much of homiletics is more caught than taught” [Haddon Robinson. *Biblical Sermons* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1989), 9], then Mathewson has not only caught the homiletical pass from Dr. Robinson, but has also run for a touchdown.

The book is divided into three parts. In Part 1—From Text to Concept, through extensive discussion of standard literary analysis techniques (plot analysis, character study, archetypes, plot motifs, setting and pace) blended with useful theological principles from various traditions, Mathewson shows the reader how to inductively identify sound exegetical and theological ideas embedded in narrative texts.

In Part 2—From Concept to Sermon, Mathewson supplies a fresh perspec-



tive on the familiar steps that lead from the exegetical and theological ideas through packaging and then delivering the preaching idea. In the chapter “Mastering the Storyteller’s Craft” he explores literary techniques (including historical-cultural research and character studies, image building, and attendance to accepted elements of style) as means of bringing vividness to narrative-based sermons.

Part 3—Sermon Manuscripts, offers five sermons as learning devices, each presented between a foreword and an afterword and complemented by an interview with the preacher (Mathewson, Donald Sunukjian, Paul Borden, Haddon Robinson, and Alice Mathews).

Mathewson has a full grasp of his subject and shares it with solid pedagogical style. Numerous figures and tables highlight essential points throughout his sensibly organized text, and his annotated footnotes inform the reader while enhancing manuscript flow. Scripture and subject indices are included as well as two appendices. Appendix A—Advanced Plot Analysis, will take the basic Hebrew reader to a new level of language skill as it utilizes text linguistics to teach plot analysis via noting Hebrew literary and grammatical devices. Sample forms analysis charts and text layouts are provided for study.

The book’s readability and flow are excellent, but on rare occasions are impeded by placement in the main text of lengthy, less readable quotes. Occasionally, Mathewson brings such diverse knowledge and experience to bear on the discussion as to make assimilation difficult. These few instances required multiple passes over the material. Time-challenged bivocational pastors may struggle to employ Mathewson’s detailed method, but use of even some of it will enhance a preacher’s effectiveness in the pulpit.

In the depth and breadth of this volume there is something for any biblical scholar whatever the level of expertise. The book belongs equally on seminary reading lists as well as on seasoned preachers’ bookshelves.

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**Bonnie Bowman THURSTON.** *Preaching Mark.* Minneapolis: Fortress, 2002. 218 pp. \$18.00.

The relationship between the academic study of the Bible in the university setting and the application and use of the Bible in theological or ministerial venues is often awkward and precarious. On one hand, there are those who see no distinction between the two; the academic and religious approaches to the Bible fit together perfectly. On the other hand are those who see an insurmountable distance between the two worlds. Personally, I find my affinities vacillating between the two positions resulting in a tense ambivalence. This volume

represents a conscious effort on the part of the author to bridge this gap. Thurston makes it exceedingly clear from the outset and throughout the book that her purpose is to aid preachers and teachers in the church and that her concerns are primarily homiletical. The author is responding to what she perceives as a need for a resource on the Gospel of Mark specifically designed with preachers and teachers in mind to assist them with interpretation and proclamation.

Given these emphases, she outlines five methodological moves that frame the book's content: the treatment of canonical Mark in English; a focus on units of material rather than individual verses; the avoidance of scholarly apparatuses, such as technical language and excessive citation; a prevailing and intentional move toward application; and the goal of providing information for use in congregational settings. Thurston identifies herself as a Nicean Christian who approaches Mark with "a hermeneutic of belief." She provides a brief but useful introduction, which addresses the basic issues of authorship, historical context, sources, and the like. The remainder of the book treats the entire Gospel of Mark divided into eight sections in which the author deals with the major issues of each unit. The book includes two appendices, the first listing the Roman Catholic, Episcopal, and Common Lectionary cycles for Year B (which focuses on the Gospel of Mark), and the second recommending additional helps for preaching Mark, categorized under general reference works, commentaries, and book-length studies. Although she has avoided any scholarly apparatus within the body of the text, endnotes and an index are available in the back of the book.

Thurston does an exceptional job of consistently wrapping up each section with short summaries oriented toward homiletical application. These summaries, along with the resources for additional reading scattered throughout each chapter, provide the reader with an excellent basis for making the transition to proclamation and practice within a community of faith. Moreover, they encourage the reader toward further reflection and study. Taken together, the combined aspects of every chapter are centered directly on answering two questions: "Why did Mark preserve this story? Why was it important for his community?"

Arguably, the strong point of the book is also its weakness. Thurston clearly wants to provide a rich and useful resource for religious professionals, and admits to having little interest in speaking to fellow academics. Indeed, she successfully furnishes a helpful assortment of materials on the Gospel of Mark for pastors and teachers. But the problem with this is that the book nevertheless is presented as a scholarly piece, notwithstanding the intentional avoidance of jargon and trappings associated with academic discourse.

Thurston often too quickly glosses over difficult issues with which scholars are constantly wrestling, which implies that they are unimportant or irrelevant. Yet, she is apparently capable of determining what is relevant quite effortlessly by positing that she is supporting the fulfillment of a homiletical task not unlike that of the author of the Gospel himself. As a result, the theological concerns of Mark become transparent and obvious to her. In no way do I mean to suggest that a

text written for use by religious professionals within a church environment is incapable of being intellectually sound. But I would contend that oversimplifying the most difficult issues ultimately works against the author's objective. Thurston's goal of producing a resource for preachers and teachers in the church is an admirable one, but there are a number of commentaries and guides that already do the very same thing. This leaves me wondering what else she might have had in mind to do.

My criticism certainly sounds more severe than I mean for it to come across. In truth, I admire Thurston's effort, and I enjoyed reading the book. I would recommend it to seminary students, pastors, and lay leaders who care deeply about not only their congregations, but also about engaging the biblical text itself in a critical fashion. *Preaching Mark* may prove to be for them a catalyst for stimulating deeper intellectual curiosity and inquiry.

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Drew University

**Randy FRAZEE.** *The Connecting Church.* Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001. 256 pp. \$16.99.

Frazee, Senior Pastor of the Patego Bible Church, Dallas/Ft. Worth, wants you to slow down and connect with others in real community. He doesn't accept that the popular buzzword *small group* and *real community* are synonymous. And he's willing to move to a new neighborhood, get a job closer to home, and go to bed earlier if that is what it takes to experience the latter. For the last five years or so he's been leading his church toward real community. He's convinced that's the greatest need the church has. This is the rare book that is popular enough for the average church member with enough scholarly background to satisfy the stuffiest seminarian. His outline is one that will preach: first century Christians achieved community through a common purpose, a common place, and sharing common possessions.

Quoting John L. Locke (no, not *that* John Locke), a professor of communication at the University of Sheffield in England, Frazee traces the origin of our isolation to the growth of individualism after World War II. He is convinced that we've "brought our individualism into our small groups and therefore made them dysfunctional as effective places of true community" (47). Characteristics of real community are rather hurriedly summarized as authority, a common creed, traditions, standards and a common mission. Not much new there. Still, the point is made: individualism breaks down community, a common purpose centered in Christ builds it. He then moves on to give us a short course in theology, explaining the concepts of sanctification, ecclesiology, anthropology, and more. Professional theologians will want to skip over this section, while others may benefit from the review.

The acrostic for a biblical community is catchy. SERVICE: Spiritual Formation, Evangelism, Reproduction, Volunteerism, International Missions, Care, Extending Compassion. Bob Buford reminds us that whatever we measure is really our mission. What is it that most churches measure? Frazee suggests the SERVICE acrostic as a useful tool in measuring real community, not merely the numbers of people in a small group.

The real value of the book is in the section entitled “Connecting to a Common Place.” Frazee does an effective job of tracing the dysfunction of modern-day suburbia. He hearkens back to the pre-war days when shopkeepers lived above their businesses and could walk to other residences and businesses. They had a sense of community. James Howard Kunstler is quoted as saying that the suburban way of life is “socially devastating and spiritually degrading.” I’ve never read *that* quote in a Christian book before. This section is Frazee’s greatest contribution to the discussion of real community. He takes the gloves off when he critiques the lifestyles of the average, evangelical suburbanite. He is practical and serious when he suggests that *where* we live has as much to do with achieving real community as *how* we live.

The characteristics of a real neighborhood community are these: Spontaneity, Availability, Frequency, Common Meals, and Geography (living close to those with whom you share community). Many of us who have moved around this country’s major urban areas can identify with the David Wells quote: “While earlier generations of Americans were permanent residents attached to a place, we are nomads, perpetual immigrants condemned to move from place to place in our own country.”

Frazee is bold enough to call for a fundamental reorientation of the way we live and where we live as a necessary prerequisite for real community. This book is a fresh and honest primer to the subject of real community in suburban America. It’s easy to “add on” a small group to an already busy life. It’s much more difficult to alter a lifestyle that suburban America has told us is its dream. Christians committed to biblical community will understand it’s worth the stretch. All the lonely people depend upon it.

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**Michael W. FOSS.** *A Servant’s Christian Leadership Manual for Tomorrow.* Minneapolis: Fortress, 2002. 144 pp. \$15.00.

Michael Foss and Prince of Peace church are not a traditional Lutheran pastor or church. Prince of Peace is known for its innovation and focus on life-changing discipleship. Foss is also not your traditional megachurch founder. His arrival at Prince of Peace occurred as a huge, traditional Lutheran church had lost

its founding pastor and was facing decline. Under his leadership, Prince of Peace has reinvented itself and is thriving once again, in entirely new ways.

Foss seeks to offer encouragement to church leaders who may see little reason for hope. Foss identifies seven areas where the church must change its thinking. While explaining these new ways of thinking, Foss includes a wealth of insights at a more practical level.

Foss addresses the discouragement of church leaders and raises a hopeful message, based on moving away from linear thinking (either/or) towards new “looping” ways of thinking. (creative, synthesizing, outside of the box) He applies this new way of thinking to seven areas:

1. Concern for doctrine and tradition must move toward concern for what the church attender experiences. Yet, Foss carefully adds the qualifier that authentic Christian experience will inevitably draw one into knowledge of God.

2. People attending churches no longer want to be observers. They want to be given opportunities to participate. This participation needs to be so deep it is an immersion experience.

3. Churches must help people develop the relationships they hunger for. It is only in community that people will find wholeness. The highest level of this type of community is when people are taught the power of servanthood, especially outside of the church’s walls.

4. The church must shift its focus from credentials (power in the hands of a few) to gifts (ministry by all Christians). This must include accountability for being effective. Are people actually becoming passionate Christ followers?

5. Rigidity has for too long controlled the organization of the church. Churches must become organisms which free up people and the Spirit for new ways of ministering.

6. Thinking and rigid structures must be replaced by the ability to more quickly perceive needs, opportunities, and the Spirit’s leading.

7. Answers have always been the “currency” of the church. even if people are not asking the question. The church must become more focused on beginning with the questions actually being asked.

Foss’s book has several strengths. He is accurate in his understanding of the issues facing the church. He interjects real-life stories at good points to enliven the chapters. He has a good balance of quotations from relevant authorities to give credibility. His wealth of practical wisdom from the trenches is another strength.

Two criticisms should be voiced. First, the title of the book is at odds with the actual content. A “manual” is usually focused on the *what* one is to do. In actuality this book is much more about the *why*. Second, two confusing plots intertwine throughout the book. Seven paradigms need to be changed, plus there are seven chapters based more on practical insights.

Overall, though, this is a good introduction to the cultural issues facing the American church today.

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**Robert BENNE.** *Quality with Soul: How Six Premier Colleges and Universities Keep Faith with Their Religious Traditions.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001. 217 pp. \$19.00.

Robert Benne, the Jordan-Trexler Professor of Religion, at Roanoke College, Salem, Virginia, has attempted to discover the “things that have to be done for things to go right, for colleges and universities of the church to take seriously their Christian heritage, both intellectual and practical, in all aspects of their common life” (ix). This volume is the result of that research. It is set against a number of analyses of what went wrong in institutions that were begun as faith-based enterprises only to become thoroughly secularized in later generations (James T. Burtchaell, *The Dying of the Light: The Disengagement of Colleges and Universities from Their Christian Churches.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998, is one of the most recent). The work is divided into three parts.

In Part One, Benne summarizes, “The Current Situation,” identifying the loss of original vision, ethos, and number of persons within the various structures of the institution committed to that vision and ethos. He postulates that the loss of persons committed to the vision and ethos of the founders of the institution as a primary factor in the abandonment of the institutional founding purpose. This lack of committed persons is seen in governing boards, administrative leaders, and faculty. Rather, the administrative leaders and faculty responded to market demands for higher education and to the “Enlightenment paradigm,” which diminished or eliminated any confidence in revelatory truth and focused mainly on an epistemology of reason and science. In addition to such external factors affecting institutional drift, Benne also identifies internal factors. One of these, pietism, especially hastened this drift by separating the life of the mind from that of the spirit.

Benne identifies four types of church-related institutions: the orthodox, the critical-mass, the intentionally pluralistic, and the accidentally pluralistic. These categories represent those institutions with the strongest (orthodox) to the weakest (accidentally pluralistic) connection to their religious heritage. He then describes such features as governance, church support, ethos, chapel, and required religion courses.

In Part Two, Benne identifies the six institutions that are the focus of his research: Calvin College (Christian Reformed), Wheaton College (evangelical), Baylor University (Southern Baptist), University of Notre Dame (Roman

Catholic), St. Olaf College (Evangelical Lutheran Church of America), and Valparaiso University (Missouri Synod Lutheran). In the latter two chapters of this section, Benne expands on how the vision and then the ethos of each institution are formed by their religious connection. He describes the particular characteristics of the vision and the ethos of each institution, affected by the religious heritage.

In Part Three, Benne presents strategies for institutions to maintain or to recover their connectedness to their religious heritage. First, Benne maintains that the sponsoring religious tradition must produce enough persons who are committed to the religious vision of the educational institutions of that tradition. Without supporting data, Benne asserts that the evangelical and Roman Catholic traditions produce sufficient numbers and mainline Protestant groups do not. Furthermore, Benne argues that institutions should maintain a core critical mass of the various constituencies of the school—a percentage of c. 33%—which is unalterably committed to the religious tradition and the original vision of the institution. Then, there needs to be another 33% of the constituency who “warmly” support the religious tradition and original vision, followed by a third group, which is open to the mission of the institution. Finally, Benne asserts that institutions must give attention to the selection of trustees, administrators, faculty, and students who support the vision and ethos of the school.

The book is an interesting attempt to try to identify “what went right” in contrast to other analyses of “what went wrong” with Christian institutions. His categorization of the four types of religious institutions is particularly interesting. His approach to the six schools that “did it right,” is primarily anecdotal, helpful in its description of the ethos and vision of the schools. It would have been helpful to have more objective statistical data of the salient characteristics comparing and contrasting these schools with those who lost their original mission.

Since I work in an institution that is not associated directly with one religious tradition but which takes its Christian mission most seriously, I was interested in his opinion whether such an institution can succeed. After discussing arguments for and against this question, he concludes, “it seems very likely that one can only be a Christian school in that broad sense if one is anchored in a specific tradition. There are two reasons for this observation. First, we always come to Christianity through a particular tradition and we continue in the faith as practitioners of a particular tradition even though we may be capaciously ecumenical in our attitudes” (184). The second reason he gives is that institutions need to be accountable to a specific group bound by common values.

We hope to prove him wrong at our institution, believing that we have kept our Christian mission without a strong tie to one particular religious tradition.

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L. Gregory JONES and Stephanie PAULSELL, eds. *The Scope of Our Art: The Vocation of the Theological Teacher*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001. 263 pp. \$20.00.

This collection of fourteen essays, written by professors from a variety of colleges and seminaries, represents an attempt to open a dialogue among teachers and scholars about the vocation of the theological teacher. They deal with a variety of subjects, grouped loosely into three categories.

The first five essays deal with the formation of the theological teacher. Topics range from doctoral education to reading and writing as spiritual disciplines. Paulsell's discussion of writing as a spiritual practice is particularly thought-provoking, helping me to think of the academic work of teachers and scholars in a different way than I had previously.

The next four essays focus on the practicalities of theological education in the classroom. Susan M. Simonaitis writes of teaching as a conversation. She asserts that "conversation as a paradigm of teaching must foster attention to possibilities, particularly those that are unexpected" (104), and cautions teachers against a view of education as indoctrination of students with their own views. Michael Battle encourages teachers to view teaching and learning as apophatic, or ceaseless, prayer. He cautions against an all too common dichotomy between prayer and intellectual learning, seeing both as essential simultaneous actors in the work of the theological educator.

The last five essays discuss the relationship between theological teachers and the schools in which they teach. Claire Mathews McGinnis encourages educators to apply *The Rule of St. Benedict* to the relationships between their vocation and their institution. She sees Benedict's emphasis on stability as being especially applicable, allowing teachers to view tasks that would seem to be completely separate with a coherency that would not be otherwise possible.

The principal weakness of the book lies in its scope. The essays are each well-written discussions of their individual topics, but the book as a whole is lacking in-depth discussion of its topic, the vocation of the theological teacher. It serves as an introduction of many issues, but fails to be definitive on any of them. However, this may also be one of its main strengths. The aim of the authors is not to provide answers but to raise important questions about theological education. They provide an excellent starting point from which to explore many of the issues confronting theological teachers at a deeper level.

As a graduate student with a desire to teach at the college level, I benefited greatly from reading this book. It would be helpful for any theological teacher and scholar who desires to think more deeply about their role as educators, as well as those students who aspire to be teachers.

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**Kenneth L. CUKROWSKI, Mark W. HAMILTON, and James W. THOMPSON.** *God's Holy Fire: The Nature and Function of Scripture.* Abilene, TX: ACU Press, 2002. 303 pp. \$14.95.

This is a timely book. It joins a large list of recent monographs and articles concerned with the problems of biblical illiteracy, on the one hand, and naïve biblicism, on the other. The authors tackle both problems and, along the way, manage to show that careful, technical study of Scripture in a demanding university setting should not be feared, but welcomed, by those who love and serve the God of the Bible.

Thompson and Cukrowski teach NT and Hamilton OT in the College of Biblical Studies at Abilene Christian University. This book is volume two in the Heart of the Restoration Series, designed to address issues of central importance to people in the Churches of Christ (a cappella).

Each author is largely responsible for the writing of three chapters of roughly twenty to thirty pages each, with Hamilton contributing a brief conclusion. Three short appendices give advice on building a basic Bible study library and preparing to lead a discussion about a passage of Scripture. Finally, Jeanene Reese and Tim Sensing provide discussion questions for each chapter, as well as some case studies on how to work with the Bible in dealing with congregational issues.

The book does five things: (1) It makes a case for the importance of the OT as a vital and valid part of the Christian canon of Scripture. In so doing, it counters the deeply-rooted tendency in churches of the Stone-Campbell tradition to marginalize, if not depreciate, the OT as “law.” (2) It offers a narrative summary of the literature of Scripture, with reflections on the existential and theological importance of “story” and “stories” in human life. (3) It introduces the various literary genres represented in the Bible, showing how misguided and unhelpful it is to try to reduce this variety to propositional forms. (4) It gives a “soft” introduction to critical biblical study by outlining the kinds of questions scholars have to ask in order to understand ancient materials in their historical contexts. In the process, it briefly touches on the necessity of textual criticism, social-historical analysis, the process of canon-formation, and hermeneutical method. (5) It invites the reader to reflect on how Scripture has functioned and ought to function in informing the worship, ethics, and spiritual direction of the church.

The authors seldom lose touch with their intended audience. They interweave vignettes from their personal lives, including memories of home, travel, and scholarly study. Sidebars offer up definitions of technical terms, discussion summaries, “memory verses,” and bibliographic references. The result is a book that would lend itself well to a quarter-long adult (or maybe even older teen) study in a church education program.

I found little to fault in this volume. I think it would be helpful to nuance a bit more carefully the whole notion of the Bible as “the Word of God.” This is

really a very complex theological concept and does not lend itself easily to the tendency, widespread among evangelicals, simply to substitute “Word of God” for “Scripture” or “Bible.” I also think the concept and process of canon formation should have gotten more attention. The only typo that caught my eye is in note 2 for chapter 6, where the word “opinions” in Murphy-O’Connor’s book should be “options.” But these are flyspecks. In all, the authors have rendered a valuable service in setting their considerable scholarship to the service of the church. May their tribe increase.

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**Gregory GLAZOV.** *The Bridling of the Tongue.* JSOTSS, no. 311.  
Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001. 449 pp. \$90.

This volume is an edited version of Glazov’s DPhil thesis for the Jewish Studies Faculty of the Orientale Institute, Oxford University. As such, this is not a popular exposition of Scripture discussing the personal and moral issues involved in controlling speech. Far from it, this is a tightly-focused, academic examination of the repeated phenomenon in the biblical record of God’s messengers going speechless on the occasion of God confronting them with their prophetic vocation. The subjects of inquiry, then, are Moses, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and also the Suffering Servant (Ps 51, 81, 32, 39, 131).

Glazov observes a number of important questions to be answered: What is the nature of the prophet’s reluctance to speak? What are the principles by which this reluctance is resolved? What are the principles that allow a prophet to remain quiet in the midst of anguish? How do the patterns uncovered compare with intrabiblical and versional traditions of interpretation?

After surveying the work of those who have examined these prophetic bridling passages from a form-critical perspective, Glazov lays out his own analysis, which he considers an adaptation of Habel: confrontation, first human response (awe resulting in silence), introductory reassurance, first human objection (confession of guilt and request for a sign of empowerment), installation through reassurance and sign (verbal and hand to mouth gesture), specification of the prophet’s role, second objection (from a sense of identification and solidarity with the people), further reassurance and sign (promise of divine presence for the remnant that survives the woe or the prophet silenced if he resists his duty), the nature of the principle by which the prophet’s reluctance to be a messenger of doom is still to be identified.

Critical to Glazov’s observations are the prophets’ two objections to their required task and their silence before God. The pattern is established by Moses and follows with the others. The first objection or resistance to God’s call cen-

ters on the prophet himself and his own sense of personal inadequacy, guilt, and fear in the presence of God's awesomeness. The second objection, the issue upon which Glazov focuses his attention, varies in its nature and on whether or how it emerges in the narrative.

For Moses, the issue is whether or not the objection in Exod 5:22 is part of his call or not. For Isaiah, his second objection, playing the role of a stupefying spirit is how he shows his solidarity with the people as well as his objection to delivering the message of doom God has conferred upon him. For Jeremiah, no second objection is recorded in his call narrative, just the one objection proclaiming his immaturity. However, the oracles of Jeremiah 1–24, which constitute Jeremiah's warning and interceding for his people, suggest that they derive from Jeremiah's objection to his task of issuing judgment on them. His doubts about his mission, his accusations of God, must be understood, then, as his acute awareness of a divine suppression of his intercessory vocation. Ezekiel voices no open objection at all, either of his inadequacy or of his resistance to the task. He simply falls before the divine presence. He does not ask for the reception of the word (Jer 1), purification of his lips (Isa 6), or a lightening of his tongue (Exod 4, 6). He is told simply to open his mouth "wide." Was he resistant or accepting?

Probably the most controversial aspect of Glasov's study is his conclusion, over against his own initial resistance, that ancient Near-Eastern mouth-opening and purification rites at least have an indirect influence on all the prophetic bridling biblical narratives. The key factors in Egyptian rites include the shepherd's staff or rod which functions as a symbol of sovereign rule and the repository of royal force, the eye of which encompasses the power for resurrection of royalty. An opening of the mouth ceremony on royal mummies and statues using the "finger of god" tool in association with the Eye (of the royal staff) was believed to resurrect the monarch and confer royal authority to the heir. Thus, the "finger of God" phrase in Exod 8:19, Moses's and Aaron's serpent-rods, and Moses' mouth opening, are seen by Glazov to function as a not-so-subtle polemic against Egyptian gods and the Pharaoh.

This volume is well-researched and presents its evidence carefully. The subject involves extremely technical discussion and, thus, it is not for the academically faint of heart. It certainly earns its place on the shelf of graduate school libraries.

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**Allen P. ROSS.** *Holiness to the Lord: A Guide to the Exposition of the Book of Leviticus.* Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002. 496 pp. \$29.99.

Ralph Waldo Emerson once wrote, “the man who can make hard things easy is the educator.” In that sense, Ross has proven to be an educator to teachers and preachers who have been perplexed by the book of Leviticus and have been puzzled in regard to how to communicate its significance for the Christian. While the volume does not necessarily make interpretation of Leviticus easy, it does provide a framework from which the book can be expounded in the church setting.

Ross is Professor of Old Testament at Beeson Divinity School. However, this *Guide to the Exposition of the Book of Leviticus* is not designed primarily for the seminary classroom, nor is it intended to be a comprehensive commentary on Leviticus. Rather, it is designed to present “an approach to the text that will work consistently in every chapter, whether it contains moral law or laws of sacrifices or civil laws about property and debts” (9). This is a companion volume to *Creation and Blessing: A Guide to the Study and Exposition of Genesis* (Baker, 1997), which provides a thorough discussion of the author’s expository approach and should be consulted by those who desire a detailed treatment of his hermeneutic.

The introductory section of the current volume orients the reader to basic issues in the study of Leviticus. As Ross places the book in its historical and cultural setting, he acquaints the reader with the larger world of critical scholarship and the discussions which have arisen in the study of this portion of the Torah. He does not attempt to be overly technical. Rather, he works to provide his evangelical audience with a perspective on some of the discussions in this work and an orientation to the commentaries recommended for further study. A major emphasis is that Leviticus is very much part of its social and cultural environment, with the overt monotheism of Leviticus setting it apart from similar works in the ancient Near East. The chief theological movements in the book, the nature of the holiness of God, the standing of Israel as the people of God, and the purpose of the ritual in the covenant of God, are summarized to prepare the reader for the commentary.

The commentary follows a basic format throughout its treatment of the text: [1] an abstract of the theological ideas developed in the passage; [2] a synthesis of the passage which includes both a brief summary and outline of the text; [3] exposition of the passage; [4] concluding observations which highlight the “clear expository idea” which Ross sees arising from the text; [5] bibliography containing works for study of the text in greater depth.

Because of its stated intent, the greatest strength of this book is found in its broad treatment of the text. Ross provides the reader with an excellent “bird’s eye view” of each major section of the book, placing individual items of the levitical legislation within its larger context of the book, the OT, and the Bible as a whole. Also because of its stated intent, an unavoidable weakness in the commentary is a relative lack of exegetical depth in the treatment of individual pas-

sages. Study of individual texts will leave the reader with unanswered questions. Ross anticipates these questions by providing section bibliographies which provide the reader with resources for further study.

*Holiness to the Lord* does an excellent job of providing the reader with an expository framework by which the current application of Leviticus can be understood. As such, it is an appropriate resource for all students of the OT. It would be a particularly valuable addition to the libraries of churches and Bible colleges and to the collections of preachers who have avoided this Leviticus because they have lacked a workable means of distilling its timeless principles for a contemporary audience.

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**David WENHAM and Steve WALTON.** *Exploring the New Testament, Volume One: A Guide to the Gospels & Acts*; **I. Howard MARSHALL, Stephen TRAVIS, and Ian PAUL.** *Exploring the New Testament, Volume Two: A Guide to the Letters & Revelation.* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2001, 2002. 301 pp. 333 pp. \$25.00 each.

With these two volumes, InterVarsity has filled the crucial need for a NT survey/introduction textbook which can satisfy both undergraduates and novice graduates that is both affordable and an excellent classroom tool. Authored by veteran British evangelical scholars, Marshall (University of Aberdeen), Travis (St. John's College), Wenham (Wycliffe Hall, Oxford), Walton (London Bible College), and newcomer Paul (managing editor, Grove Books), this publication inspires confidence that the knotty issues to be covered are handled with care and understanding. These volumes do not take students over their heads, seeking rather a "simplification of issues," yet students will not feel coddled, as each chapter invites students to explore issues deeper if they wish.

The volumes employ sound educational devices, each chapter consisting of a box which previews the material to be covered, the teaching material sprinkled with data boxes, maps, and charts, plus What do you think? questions (which will take students about 15 minutes to do and can be used for class discussion) and Digging Deeper (directed research topics), and the concluding matter consisting of Essay Topics (both introductory and intermediate) and Further Reading (annotated! and divided between introductory and intermediate resources). Bound sturdily and printed on heavy-weight paper, a teacher and student just couldn't ask for anything more from a textbook.

Volume One, which focuses on the Gospels and Acts, carefully lays the necessary groundwork before investigating the books themselves. Three sections (about 50 pages each) survey the historical context of the Gospels, the settled

results of Gospels study, and what the Gospels teach us about Jesus. The first provides the necessary information about such things as Josephus, the Qumran Community, Antiochus IV, Judas Maccabeus, Herod's Temple, and the Pharisees. The second section explores the similarities of the Gospels with other ancient literature as well as their distinctiveness, why these four Gospels are to be more valued than other ancient Gospels that were written, and results of source, form, and redaction criticism, and how to best make use of the Gospels today. The third section discusses the quest for the historical Jesus, from Schweitzer to the Jesus Seminar, an overview of his life, and discussions of his death, his teaching, and his identification. The chapters on the books (about 25 pages each) are carefully written, highlighting key issues. The chapter on Mark, for instance, as the narrative is explained section by section includes highlight boxes on Mark's Secret, Mark's Sandwiches, Mark's Details, Mark's Irony, and Mark's Ending.

The chapters of Volume Two are laid out in the same manner as Volume One. An introductory, twenty-page chapter exploring the Roman world of the first century including such things as emperors, governance, the Roman army, citizenship, women in society, religions, cults, and philosophies. This is followed by a brief chapter on ancient letter-writing and another on various Pauline issues, like pseudonymity, his conversion, and constructing a chronology of his life. Chapters (ranging from 10-25 pages) on each Pauline book, chapters on Pauline theology and on interpreting Paul follow, before launching into the section on the general epistles, which is aptly labeled "Letters by Other Church Leaders."

Marshall's chapter on Galatians is typical of the others. Since he handles it first of Paul's letters, he candidly explains right up front that he does so because he believes it was Paul's first letter, but he also admits that his position is "a minority opinion on the matter" (47). Yet he encourages the student to consider the majority opinion which places the letter later in Paul's career and will be discussed in more detail later. This calm and balanced treatment of contentious issues occurs over and over in both Exploring volumes and is greatly welcomed.

Paul's motivations and occasion for writing Galatians are addressed, the structure of the letter is provided (two outlines, one rhetorical, another content), followed by the argument of the letter, its effectiveness, to whom it was sent, and the relevance of Galatians for today. Marshall patiently highlights the North and South Galatia theories, explaining the evidence for both and why he favors the South theory. He also lays out carefully the evidence for taking the meeting in Jerusalem narrated in Galatians 2 as the same as in Acts 15 or Acts 11:30 before he explains that he personally "favours" the latter (58). Boxes explain Puzzling Terms (justification, flesh, law and elemental spirits), E.P. Sanders's "New Look on Paul," The Grace of God, Where Was Galatia? and Two Alternate Scenarios on the Galatians 2 visit to Jerusalem.

Anyone concerned about how Marshall handles the authorship of the Pastorals in light of his allonymity of his ICC commentary or about how he deals with women and leadership in 2:11-15 should relax. As is to be expected, he does

present his position as a “middle way” between branding the letters cleverly successful impersonations of Paul or viewing them as dictated by Paul (189). However, he presents sympathetically the other positions and those who hold to them, including the authentic Paul position (noting Earle Ellis). Readers will appreciate that Marshall does not note his position without recognizing that the “faith commitment” of any suggested anonymous author is no trivial matter in the authorship equation and admitting that Marshall admits his own “faith commitment” makes his judgment on the matter “weigh with me” (176).

Likewise, on the matter of women and leadership in 2 Tim 2:15, Marshall treats the topic evenhandedly while also indicating his directions. In a very large box, the key information is carefully laid out, the potential for problems with uneducated women receiving new freedoms in the church that were not reflected in society at large, the rarity of the verb *authentico*, the purpose of the “saved from childbirth” phrase, with Marshall mildly concluding that “we may find” the passage “does not impose the same restraints upon people today” (181). Yet, recommended reading on this issue includes Piper and Grudem, *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood* (Zondervan, 2001) as well as Pierce, Belleville, and Groothuis, *Discovering Biblical Equality* (InterVarsity, 2003).

I highly recommend these volumes as the best college textbooks currently available for beginning NT overview classes. More thorough than Elwell and Yarbrough (*Encountering the New Testament*, Baker, 1998), more up-to-date, balanced, and carefully constructed than Gundry (*A New Testament Survey*, Zondervan, 1994), and more evangelical (conservative) than Achtemeier, Green, and Thompson (*Introducing the New Testament*, Eerdmans, 2001), this is the one to go with.

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Cincinnati Bible Seminary

**Donald HAGNER.** *Encountering the Book of Hebrews.* Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002. 224 pp. \$21.99.

This volume joins *Encountering John* (Andreas Koestenberger) and *Encountering Romans* (Doug Moo) in Baker’s efforts to expand its warmly received *Encountering the New Testament* (Walter Elwell and Robert Yarbrough) undergraduate NT survey. Hagner, George Eldon Ladd Professor of New Testament, Fuller Theological Seminary, is a highly respected scholar who fittingly offers tribute to F.F. Bruce, revered NT Professor at the University of Manchester, for influencing him to prize the teachings of the book of Hebrews. Rightly tagging Hebrews “one of the most difficult books of the New Testament” (20), Hagner deserves commendation for successfully arranging the teaching of Hebrews into the very accessible packaging of the Encountering Biblical Studies model.



Certainly, the most appealing aspect of Hagner’s study of Hebrews from the perspective of adopting it for an undergraduate course on Hebrews is that it does not *look* like a commentary, despite the fact that it really is a very good commentary. It *looks* like an undergraduate textbook: two-column pages, each chapter introduced by an outline, a choice quote from a respected authority on Hebrews, and a photo teaser (not explained until a full photo appears later in the chapter), each chapter filled with enticing sidebar information (nearly 100 total), focused paragraph-by-paragraph analysis, each chapter concluding with study questions on the key content of the chapter, lists of key terms (already boldfaced and defined when they arise in the discussion), and selected bibliography of six to ten items, mostly articles, for further reading. The volume is completed with a thoughtful conclusion which briefly and carefully discusses not only how the unique theology of Hebrews enhances the NT canon but also how it is important for the practical life of the individual Christian and the church. This is followed by an excursus on the canonical history of Hebrews, a select bibliography of commentaries and articles, and a glossary of all the key terms highlighted throughout the volume. Really, the editors have included almost everything a teacher or student could imagine to help college students learn.

Hagner’s primary comments are almost always appropriate, carefully nuanced for initiates to NT studies, not too long or too short either. The best material, though, is in the sidebars, which cover such things as: Midrashic Interpretation in Hebrews, the Importance of Psalm 110 in the Early Church, Jesus as the Pioneer of our Salvation, The Sinlessness of Christ, The View of the Law in Hebrews Compared to Paul’s View, Dualism in Hebrews, Jeremiah 31:31-34 in Hebrews, The Mercy Seat of the Ark of the Covenant as the Place of Atonement, and Realized Eschatology in Hebrews. It is in a sidebar on Heb 6:4-12 that Hagner faces the issue of Apostasy and the Question of the Eternal Security of the Believer (91). Here, he helpfully accentuates the value of both the Calvinist and Arminian positions by suggesting that each is biblical and vital when applied to believers in opposite circumstances, eternal security to someone questioning the assurance of their salvation, eternal condemnation to someone who is considering turning their back on Christianity once and for all. His recommended bibliography on the issue includes excellent representatives of Calvinism (Roger Nicole) and Arminianism (I. Howard Marshall).

There is so little to quibble about in this fine volume. However, a few comments might be helpful to editors as the series expands to the rest of the NT. First, although it was nice to see the study questions (which are coordinated with the stated objectives for each chapter), the questions are not usually stated specifically enough for undergraduates to answer easily. “In what ways does the author of Hebrews indicate the unique status of the Son?” could be more helpfully stated as “In what *seven* ways . . .” Since these are just regurgitation questions anyway, students are not going to want to look all over for the answers and need to know for sure they have completed the answer. Second, adding “For Further



Discussion” type of questions would be helpful to get more intense students thinking about deeper issues in Hebrews and would be more valuable for class discussions than just the content-related study questions. Third, in order to make the reading smooth, chapter and verse references indicators are too often absent from the comments. Since the comments focus on a few specific words and phrases scattered through each Hebrews paragraph, it would be helpful for students to locate them easily in their Bible as they read along.

I would use this volume in a heartbeat for undergraduates, to whom it is geared, but it could also be a great tool for an adult home Bible study, or Sunday Bible class, maybe even for self-study by an eager adult learner. I might want to add a *real* commentary also for a college course, but I have no doubt that the students will wonder why all commentaries aren’t like this one.

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