

# Book Reviews

**Stephen M. HILDEBRAND.** *Basil of Caesarea. Foundations of Theological Exegesis and Christian Spirituality.* Grand Rapids: Baker, 2014. 204 pp. \$26.99.

Few scholars are as qualified to write an introduction to Basil of Caesarea as Stephen Hildebrand, and Hildebrand's broad knowledge of Basil—as evidenced by his use of both primary and secondary literature—easily guides the reader through the dense theological and exegetical writings of the Cappadocian master. As the title of this series suggests, the focus of this introduction is Basil's exegesis and spirituality, which Hildebrand weaves together well. This focus, though, means that this is not a generic introduction to Basil or his writings. This work is a nuanced overview of the intertwined relationship between Basil's theology, exegesis, and program of Christian asceticism. Readers searching for a simpler path into Basil's writings will likely have to start elsewhere.

The first chapter is devoted to Basil's "awakening"—a much better linguistic description than "conversion," as some have called it—to the ascetic life. Much of this chapter is dedicated to contextualizing Basil's awakening, or as Hildebrand argues, series of awakenings. In so doing, Hildebrand examines the various influences on Basil's moral and theological development, including his siblings, Macrina and Naucratus, and his mentor, Eustathius of Sebaste. With this focus on relationships, Hildebrand introduces the primary context for Basil's thought as "household asceticism." This context is not necessarily unique for a late antique Christian from a well-to-do family, but as Hildebrand argues, it does shape Basil in unique ways. In this chapter, Hildebrand's mastery of literature pertaining to Basil is on full display, though he refrains from overwhelming the reader with wearisome literature review. Though readers who are interested in the pertinent literature may bemoan the use of end-notes rather than footnotes for quick reference.

The next two chapters maintain a thematic link based on the metaphor of reader and text. Chapter 2 is devoted to Basil's theological anthropology. A significant portion of Hildebrand's argument in this chapter compares and contrasts Basil with Origen on this topic, which results in a nuanced interpretation of Basil's use and development of inherited traditions. For Hildebrand, one of the key distinctions between Origen and Basil is that, for the latter, humans (Hildebrand's insistence on using the term "man" in reference to humanity is somewhat odd) are "readers" who approach God through study. And what are the texts that humans study in search of God? That is the subject of Chapter 3: the "two books" of Creation and Scripture.

It is in Chapter 3 that Hildebrand delves more deeply and systematically into Basil's exegesis and view of Scripture. The analysis of Creation as a "book" that humans can read relies heavily—not surprisingly—on Basil's *Hexaemeron*. In the treatment of the book of Scripture, Hildebrand relies more heavily on his homilies. In both cases, there is an impressive array of primary texts to support Hildebrand's reading of Basil. This chapter also includes a treatment of the thorny issue of the Alexandrian/Antiochene, or literalist/allegorist dichotomy in Basil's exegesis. Hildebrand complicates the association of Basil with the Antiochene camp,

and indeed rightly complicates the very root of the Alexandrian-Antiochene divide. Hildebrand shows that a broader view of Basil's approach to Scripture bears out both a preference for a historical/literal approach, along with a suspicion of allegorical interpretation, and yet, Basil, particularly in his writings on the Psalms, does not shy away from spiritual interpretation.

The next two chapters provide a treatment of Basil's trinitarian theology. By splitting this topic into two distinct chapters, Hildebrand addresses a potential problem in the interpretation of the trinity in Basil—the seeming contradiction between a simplified trinitarian theology, particularly in his *On Faith*, and the more complex expressions found in his polemical works. Hildebrand explores this distinction and argues that it is the result of differing audiences rather than an inconsistent theology. Indeed, in Chapter 5 Hildebrand shows how the more complex expression of Basil's view of the trinity, such as that found in *Against Eunomius*, is firmly rooted in the more simple expression he provides for a broader audience in works like *On Faith*.

The final three chapters explore more fully the relationship between Basil's theology, exegesis, and ascetic practice. Chapter 6 is devoted to Basil's view of Christian discipleship. Upon first glance, this ordering of the chapters does not appear to make sense. Namely, the chapters on the trinity interrupt a natural progression from the opening chapter on Basil's awakening to the ascetic life. Why, only after two chapters on the trinity, would Hildebrand return to fleshing out Basil's approach to the ascetic life? The answer, as Hildebrand shows quite well in Chapter 6, is that his understanding of ascetic discipline was forged in the fires of the trinitarian controversies. For example, Hildebrand argues that Basil's dispute with the spirit-fighters provided the context for the full expression of his baptismal theology (120). Beyond just baptism, though, Hildebrand shows the interconnection between Basil's polemical theology and the practices of the Christian life.

Chapter 7 shifts the focus from Christian discipleship more broadly to the specific requirements of the ascetic community. Relying primarily on the *Longer Rules* of Basil's *Asketikon*, though with due reference to the *Shorter Rules*, Hildebrand lays out before the reader the blueprint of Basil's ascetic program. Beyond just a simple overview of Basil's approach to ascetic practice, Hildebrand attempts to show the foundations upon which Basil constructs his community. Then, in the final chapter, Hildebrand demonstrates the full artistry of Basil's ascetic theology as he examines Basil's creative appropriation of tradition. It is in this chapter that we see Basil in the broadest context of his contributions to Christian theology, in conversation with his past and present, and building toward the future.

As mentioned at the beginning of this review, this volume is not an introduction to Basil. This is not a critique; it is simply an observation about the audience for the work. For those already initiated to the Cappadocians, this work will provide a fascinating and important contribution to better understanding Basil and his approach to Scripture. This book will be of particular interest for scholars who work on the Cappadocians, ascetic theology, and comparative late antique exegesis.

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Alistair C. STEWART. *The Original Bishops: Office and Order in the First Christian Communities*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2014. 394 pp. \$50.00.

A major sticking point in ecumenical discussions is the issue of ecclesiastical leadership. Churches in episcopal traditions ascribe authority to the bishop who stands in apostolic succession, while most Protestant churches recognize some form of collective leadership held by a group of elders. Both sides claim that their way represents the most ancient Christian practice. In this volume, Stewart examines this question from a historical perspective, offering a narrative of the rise of the monepiscopacy which ultimately supports neither episcopal nor presbyteral claims to historical precedent. The result is a fascinating, thoroughly researched, and clearly written account of the development of church office in the first three centuries.

Stewart begins by questioning the long-held assumption that the terms *episkopos* and *presbyteros* were synonymous in early Christian usage, a consensus which has lent support to the idea that leadership in the earliest Christian communities was collectively shared among a group of elders, rather than exercised by an individual leader. Stewart challenges this consensus and argues that texts in which the two terms appear together, such as in Acts 20:17-28 and Titus 1:5-8, are better explained by the idea that the term *presbyteroi* refers collectively to the *episkopoi*—sole leaders of Christian assemblies, acting as representatives of those assemblies—who have gathered at a city-wide level. This marks an early stage of federation in which a city's local Christian assemblies began to develop connections with one another. Eventually, around the late second century (not with Ignatius early in the century as commonly supposed), a *monepiskopos*—an overseer of all the local assemblies in a city—emerged from this federation stage in most regions of the Christian world.

Thus, according to Stewart, the earliest pattern was for local Christian assemblies to be led by a single *episkopos* and not by the collective leadership of *presbyteroi*. Local Christian assemblies developed first in households and were led by individual householders, whether or not these were identified by the term *episkopos*. As these assemblies began to expand beyond the household, they looked to the Hellenistic association for their structural model. It was most likely at this point, according to Stewart, that the individual leader of the assembly was identified as the *episkopos*. The *episkopos* was chosen, in large part, for his ability to provide patronage to the Christian assembly, particularly with regard to the common meal, which also served as the church's means of assisting the needy. In this primarily economic role, he was assisted by the *diakonos*, an office that also developed when the Hellenistic association came to be the primary structural model for the church.

Stewart admits, however, that there is evidence for *presbyteroi* at the local, congregational level. But once again this is to be explained with reference to the Hellenistic association (and not the Jewish synagogue), which provides ample evidence for honored members being designated as *presbyteroi*. Stewart insists that these local *presbyteroi* were not office-holders in the churches, but rather honored patrons with an informal advisory role to the *episkopos* and likely the group out of which the *episkopos* was chosen. Over time, the *episkopos* increasingly fulfilled a teaching role in the local Christian assembly, but this function was not original to the office and developed later in response to the need for addressing unorthodox teaching.

In developing his argument, Stewart offers a thorough and comprehensive investigation of early Christian literature, from the NT evidence up to fourth- and fifth-century texts which utilize sources illuminating conditions in the second and third centuries. Stewart also engages

extensively with modern studies, providing readers with an up-to-date survey of historiography on the development of church office. Some may find the author's style of argumentation a bit cumbersome, but frequent summaries help the reader keep the big picture in view. Scholars of early Christian history and graduate students will benefit most from this work, but the author's clear writing style makes this book accessible also to a nonspecialist audience, who will undoubtedly find many illuminating insights into the development of church office and organization in the early Christian centuries. Readers from the Stone-Campbell tradition, which has historically devoted considerable attention to issues raised in this book (ecclesiastical structure and ecumenicity, for example), will find much food for thought.

Ultimately, Stewart must plead ignorance on a number of issues (how local *episkopoi* were chosen by their communities, why *monepiskopoi* eventually replaced the federation model), due to the limitations of the available evidence. But in the end, this work provides a persuasive account of a flexible and evolving ecclesiastical structure based on the office of *episkopos*, which was able to guide the church through its formative years and into its new, established status, beginning in the fourth century.

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**Curtis FREEMAN. *Contesting Catholicity: A Theology for Other Baptists*. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2014. 478 pp. \$49.95.**

Freeman, director of the Baptist House of Studies at Duke Divinity School, has written a theology for “Other Baptists.” These are the Baptists who, when asked to identify their subdenominational branch of Baptistism, must check “Other,” Baptists who don't fit comfortably within conservative or liberal categories. The term also refers to those Baptists who have been willing to engage in conversation with “Others,” such as Catholics, Orthodox, and mainline Protestants. Though the book is specifically aimed at disaffected Baptists, his arguments easily extend to theological outsiders in any Free Church tradition; Freeman's project aligns with similar work done in Stone-Campbell churches by theologians such as Leonard Allen, Paul Blowers, Newell Williams, and more recently Jeff Carey.

The book is divided into two unequal parts. In the Kierkegaardian first section—titled “Sickness unto Death”—Freeman tells the familiar tale of a church which has descended into a binary stasis of calcified conservatism and undisciplined liberalism. Both sides are essentially foundationalists in their philosophy, relying excessively on reason or experience, and both functionally deny the doctrine of the Trinity, either through old-fashioned New England Unitarianism or through the “Unitarianism of the Second Person” characteristic of Southern fundamentalists. Both are Constantinian in the sense that they share “a confidence in the ultimate triumph of Christian culture.” Drawing on four hundred years of Anglo-American Baptist history, Freeman “renarrates the Baptist story as a community of contested convictions within the church catholic,” calling Free Church Christians to a generously orthodox third way which locates itself within the ancient tradition of the Church Catholic while recognizing its distinctive Free Church charisms—thus “contesting catholicity.”

The second part considers a “cure for otherness” which comes through engagement with the catholic Other. His first and fundamental point is that catholicity rests on a robust

Trinitarian theology: “there is nothing more qualitatively or quantitatively catholic than the Trinity.” This claim echoes Leonard Allen’s proposal for Stone-Campbell churches in the last chapter of *Things Unseen*. Such a Trinitarian revival would not only transform theological discussions, he argues, it would reform worship practices such that ministers would invoke the Triune name “when they baptize and lay on hands, offer prayers and pronounce blessings, voice invocations and give benedictions, confess sin and proclaim pardon, and make the sign of the cross and exchange the right hand of fellowship.” Trinitarian theology is also the basis for a more developed theology of the church as a communion of covenanted communities.

Later chapters reimagine specific practices such as biblical interpretation, priestly service, Eucharist and baptism, and the assembly in light of a generous orthodoxy. In each chapter, he provides a theologically constructive narrative based on “a retrieval of sources from the Baptist heritage and in conversation with the wider church.” Thus, he calls for a christocentric interpretation of the Bible, grounded in the consensus of the faithful and open to “new light” from the Spirit. The Eucharist mediates the “real presence” of Christ, and Thomas Cranmer’s *via media* formula “to drink of the cup and eat the bread *in faith* is to feed upon Christ” is adopted. He affirms the normativity of believers’ baptism, while calling for open membership and the recognition of infant baptism. The Church is “a community of *believers* gathered by *baptism* in *covenant* with God and God’s people to walk together under the rule of Christ.” In each chapter he seeks to reconcile Baptist traditions with the ancient practices of the whole church.

In the era of post-Christendom, Free Church ecclesiology has a new relevance and also a new appeal. At least some Catholic theologians have understood this, and scholars such as Gerhard Lohfink in Germany, Jean-Marie-Roger Tillard in France, and William Cavanaugh in this country have attempted to recover a gathered church ecclesiology within their own communion. Freeman does not mention any of them (though he does incorporate the reception of the Vatican II document *Lumen Gentium*); any future work must surely include their contributions. Also, and I take this point from Bruggemann’s review in *Christianity Century*, Freeman says nothing about the poor. Surely one area Baptists and Catholics have in common is that they have been each in their own way religions of the people, more comfortable in the northern factories and southern foothills than among the affluent and elite. Freeman’s retrieval is essential for the long-term vitality of Baptists, baptists, Catholics, and catholics—all of us, basically. Yet, for those of us engaged in this conversation about extended catholicity, I pray that we can proceed in a way which does not alienate, but elevates the least among us.

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**Beth Felker JONES.** *Practicing Christian Doctrine: An Introduction to Thinking and Living Theologically.* Grand Rapids: Baker, 2014. 256 pp. \$22.99.

Jones says the “core premise of the book” is “our beliefs must be put into practice, and faithful practice matters for what we believe” (2). Jones demonstrates the interconnectedness of theology with discipleship, Christian identity, and the love of God. For Jones, to

paraphrase James, “theology without practice is dead.” Jones reiterates that it takes time and practice, as well as a willingness to change, for people to grow in their proficiency of “practicing doctrine.”

Jones, a Methodist theologian, seeks to practice theology with an evangelical perspective, centering upon the call for Christians “to be witnesses to Jesus in the world” (9). She also wants to introduce her readers to “an ecumenical gathering of Christian voices—men and women, North American and European and African and Latin American and Asian, contemporary, medieval, ancient, old, young, black, white, and brown” (8).

Jones argues that theology “begins with God’s revelatory word to us” and “continues as we respond with words” (12). She offers—though not uncritically—the “Wesleyan quadrilateral” of Scripture, tradition, reason, and experience as a model for “thinking about sources and authority for theology” (16). She affirms the Holy Spirit’s role in illuminating inspired Scripture for the individual Christian and the church as well as transforming readers of the biblical text.

Jones not only describes past trinitarian and christological debates, but also connects Christian faith in the Triune God with the worship life of the church and the need for the church to flee from idolatry and heresy. Christians recognize God as the creator, lover, and sustainer of the universe, which leads them to faithful practice and acceptance of their own creaturehood and dependence upon God. Humans should understand themselves principally as created in God’s image, though subject to sin, and thus should look to Jesus in order to know “what it means to be truly human” (98). Therefore, “In practicing Christology, we learn more about Jesus’s identity and more about what it means to live the Christian life, individual and corporate, in relationship with him” (118). The salvation that Christ brings through his incarnation, death, and resurrection leads to transformation and holiness in the lives of believers. The Holy Spirit—the Lord and giver of life—sanctifies, empowers, breaks down barriers, and makes human life “one integrated whole” (178). God sends the church, the body and bride of Christ, into the world to visibly witness to Christ as she hopefully anticipates the eschaton and the final defeat of death. Jones argues that because continuity exists between the current creation and the transformed creation, and between current bodies and resurrection bodies, “then our bodies now matter” (231).

In addition to the main body of the text, Jones includes various boxes within each chapter in which she puts biblical passages, the texts of creeds, introductions to various Christian theologians or theological traditions, poems, hymns, or short pieces on various doctrines and practices. Throughout the work, Jones seeks to correct misperceptions people have about theology, and demonstrates its usefulness to the Christian life. While emphasizing the importance of *practicing* doctrine, as the subtitle implies, Jones also discusses the need for Christians to be “transformed by the renewing of your minds” (Rom 12:2).

Unfortunately, Jones does not give adequate attention to the sacraments. Despite this weakness, Jones’s book can serve as a helpful introduction to Christian theology for undergraduate students or for a Sunday School class.

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Gary BURGE, & David LAUBER, eds. *Theology Questions Everyone Asks: Christian Faith in Plain Language*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2014. 202 pp. \$16.00.

Wheaton College is a well-recognized, conservative, highly academic institution. I was privileged to take one graduate course there to transfer into my doctoral program. Gary Burge and David Lauber have organized faculty from Wheaton to contribute to this book. Each faculty member has a chapter on an area of expertise and interest. The level is appropriate for scholars, but is very accessible to students at the undergraduate level. Difficult concepts are popularly approached with a minimum of technical terminology. The topics are typical overview subjects in need of theological reflection. These topics in part include: Christianity, the Bible, God, Jesus, Holy Spirit, Human Beings, Church, Evil and Suffering, and Eschatology. Each subject is subdivided with specific questions given specific answers from the various authors' points of view. The answers get to the point and do not generally deal with the nuances of the topics in much detail.

Each scholar is just that. They fairly represent different views than their own, but clarify their own conclusion. There is a lean toward inerrancy, but not in a dogmatic way. Interesting questions that students ask are addressed like, "What was God doing before the creation of the world?" Gregory Lee gives his best answer: God transcends time and there is basically no time before the world began. He has a balanced view on evolution. While stating that atheistic evolution is not an acceptable Christian view, he is open to other versions of this theory. He concludes, "We would do well to avoid initiating battles that do not need to be fought" (72).

Jennifer McNutt does a credible job explaining theodicy. She shares a fine quote from the Salvation Army, "We combat natural disasters with the acts of God." Gary Burge balances the tension of the humanity and divinity of Jesus. He asks questions about Jesus' sexual temptation. He concludes, in general, that because Jesus was human he could possibly sin. However, because of Jesus' reliance on the Holy Spirit, he could not sin.

The issue of what it is to be human is tackled by David Lauber. The question whether humans are body or soul is discussed. His answer is that humans are a whole person. This dichotomy/dualism is not an accurate way of viewing human beings. Furthermore, he shares that the worst human failing is distrust or lack of faith not pride.

Finally, Beth Felker Jones addresses eschatology. She questions the question of many doomsday prophets when they ask, "Is \_\_\_\_ a sign of the end times?" That question has been asked a lot in recent months. Her answer is yes and no, or "Better, the answer is first 'no' and only then a careful, possible 'yes'" (189).

All in all this is a good approach to biblical theology. It is conservative in thought and methodology, but fair and open-minded. The book is well organized. The scholars are well qualified. The topics are pertinent to theological dialog. I will use this book for my biblical theology course.

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**Marvin R. WILSON.** *Our Hebraic Heritage: A Christian Theology of Roots and Renewal.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014. 304 pp. \$22.00.

Marvin Wilson, long-time professor of Biblical and Theological studies at Gordon College, has distinguished himself as an evangelical scholar in dialogue with the Jewish community. He has co-edited several volumes of essays reflecting this dialogue. The present volume is a sequel to his earlier work, *Our Father Abraham: Jewish Roots of the Christian Faith* (Eerdmans, 1989) in which he first explored the OT and Jewish background to Christianity. He also served as the primary scholar for the 2000 TV documentary, *Jews and Christians: A Journey of Faith*.

Wilson's stated aim is to explore some of the theological, ethical, and spiritual themes from the Hebrew Bible, which was Jesus' and Paul's Bible, that are compatible with the thought and practice of Christianity and also important to Jewish faith. This must be done in the context of not just Christian commentary on the Bible, but Jewish commentary as well. This has to include Jewish literature of the early period and the rabbinic traditions of interpretation in the Mishnah, Talmud, and other Jewish sources. Wilson is well versed in these sources.

The book is organized into five major sections comprised of fourteen chapters. Section one explores the theological sources and methods with a focus on uncovering the hallmarks of Hebraic theology. The methods differ from Christian theology and focus on a dynamic revelation and a progressive thought, with dialogue with God an important element. Wilson also includes some observations of the importance of the law for Jews, and the NT view of the law. Section two explores the importance of Abraham for the two faiths and the place Abraham should have for the Christian. Section three focuses on the OT concept of God: his names, his uniqueness in the ancient cultures, and what being in his image entails for humanity. Section four discusses worship and what Christians can learn from Jews about praise, prayer, repentance, and wrestling with God. The final section addresses Christian supersessionism and its historical consequences, and what Christians can learn about the study of Scripture from the Jews.

The first part of the book can be described as a series of laments. Wilson laments the early de-Judaizing of the church, the long history of conflict between Christians and Jews, the loss of Abraham as the common father of Jews and Christians, the loss of a strong biblical foundation for Christian faith (i.e., the OT), the loss of a biblical understanding of God and his work in the world by ignorance of the OT, and the loss of early synagogue influence on Christian worship and lay leadership.

The de-Judaizing of the church meant that the Hebraic way of thinking was lost and Greek categories were introduced. Wilson states several times that the church was for its first twenty years a sect within Judaism, until the council in Jerusalem in Acts 15. From the perspective of Gentile Christians the decision of the council is hard to overestimate. One wonders sometimes if Wilson tends to think it was a mistake. For Wilson the new covenant in the NT is not totally new but a renewed covenant with many continuities with the old. Thus the early church considered itself a continuation of OT Israel. If the church is not deeply rooted in the OT then its roots are likely to be shallow or rotten.

Most readers of this Journal will appreciate Wilson's discussion of water and repentance (207-208). He quotes Rabbi Stephen Wylen who called John the Baptist, "John the mikvah



man.” The mode of Christian baptism is grounded deeply in the OT and first-century Judaism.

A unique characteristic of the book is the list of study questions at the end of each chapter. They sometimes number in the forties. Wilson intends for the reader to linger for some time over each chapter.

Wilson brings years of experience and study to this book, and it is evident in every chapter. The church can learn a great deal from Wilson, and he offers a strong corrective to the church’s historical neglect of Judaism. The horrific history of Christian persecution of the Jews must not repeat itself. Dialogue is crucial and should involve more time than is given to it. As Wilson asserts, the synagogue and church have more in common than they have differences. If this statement seems overstated to us then Wilson is right about the shallowness of the Christian understanding of the Bible and Judaism.

This reviewer always tried to maintain contact with a local synagogue and send students there to observe and learn. After reading this book he wishes he had done much more than he did.

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**Khaled ANATOLIOS, ed. *The Holy Trinity in the Life of the Church*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2014. 272 pp. \$32.00.**

This volume is the third in a line of conference papers to be published for the Holy Cross Studies in Patristic Theology and History at the Pappas Patristic Institute of Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology. The work is arranged in three sections, which Anatolios leaves to the reader to determine whether they constitute a *vestigium trinitatis* (a question the reviewer will attempt to answer at the conclusion of this review). These sections are: the Trinity in Christian Worship; Jesus Christ, the Trinity, and Christian Salvation; and the Trinity and Ecclesial Being (xii). As each of the essays in this collection could be reviewed individually, this reviewer will instead focus on the goals and outcomes of this work with occasional references to the individual essays as necessary.

The first part, The Trinity in Christian Worship, focuses on rather disparate aspects of the Trinity in worship. Lacking cohesion from being placed together based on a broadly similar topic, the essays in this section range from the Trinity presented in the baptismal formula (an essay by Joseph T. Lienhard) to Gregory of Nyssa (an essay by Nonna Verna Harrison). All the essays have a decidedly biblical or patristic approach, which is sensible given the institute that put on the conference which led to these essays. If one were to look for a more unifying thread than simply Christian Worship, it would perhaps be that right worship (of the Trinity), however arrived at, leads to right practice. Lienhard, by way of Gregory of Nyssa, reminds us that, “If you are baptised into the Trinity who is three Persons and three Names, the Three who are equal, then you enter into a life that is unchanging; so, know who your Father is before you are baptised into him” (4). Robert J. Daly notes this also in the prayers that form around the Eucharist by the fourth century that seem to be meant for the refutation of heresy, since Christ’s divinity is a necessary aspect for the effectualness of the Eucharist from a Catholic/Orthodox understanding.

The second part, Jesus Christ, the Trinity, and Christian Salvation, by being both more and less broad than the first (less in that Salvation is, ultimately, a narrower topic than worship, but more broad in the subject surrounding salvation). While McGuckin's essay can, at times, be subject to occasional Eastern Orthodox antipathy towards Western churches (66-67). These essays hold a united focus on the centrality of the doctrine of the Trinity for Christian salvation and deification (interestingly it is essays by Westerners that primarily focus on deification, albeit, in the western figures of Augustine and Luther).

In the final part, The Trinity and Ecclesial Being, the focus is shifted to the nature of the Church and Christians as individuals in their relationship to the Trinity. The most unique, and likely controversial, of these essays is Kathleen McVey's "Syriac Christian Tradition and Gender in Trinitarian Theology." Here McVey looks primarily to Ephrem the Syrian, a fourth-century theologian, poet, and hymnwright, whose native Syriac language as well as various ideas often lead him to contextualize God in general in feminine terms as well as the Spirit since the Syriac word for spirit is feminine in gender (199-216).

While the essays under each section do not always hold together in a unified manner, this reviewer believes that both the sections and the essays do contain a *vestigium trinitatis*. In the first section on worship is the Father primarily on display, for it is to him first, in a functional, though not ontological sense, that our worship is due. The second section with its emphases on Christ and deification makes evident its emphasis on the Son. In the final section, whether it's McVey's treatment of the Spirit (as well as the Trinity) in feminine terms, or John Behr continuing in many ways the work of Metropolitan John (Zizioulas) with his emphasis on the nature of the Church (165-182), this section's emphases on Christian life and the Church make evident its emphasis on the Spirit.

This reviewer would, therefore, without qualification, recommend this book particularly to theologians and pastors. The layperson could certainly glean much, but would need a certain amount of education, particularly in patristics, before this book could be fully opened to them. While it could not serve as a stand-alone textbook in a course on the Trinity, it would be an excellent addition to any such course, provided the majority of the readings were, as the authors of these essays would prefer, from the early and medieval theologians themselves. This book is meant to be a response to the Trinitarian malaise that grips many Christians, despite what their theologians and pastors might teach them. While it alone cannot solve the layperson's problem of misunderstanding, or not desiring to understand, the doctrine of the Trinity, it is nevertheless important for those who do theology and lead congregations to read in order to reinvigorate our congregations with the importance of the doctrine of the Trinity.

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**Amos YONG.** *The Future of Evangelical Theology: Soundings from the Asian-American Diaspora.* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2014. 255 pp. \$25.00, paperback.

Asian-American Evangelicals, formed theologically according to the sensibilities of the dominant evangelical culture in North America, have internalized the white evangelical worldview and in that sense mostly do not see the need to think explicitly from an Asian-

American vantage point. Asian-American evangelical views are therefore, at best, no more than a *minority* theological perspective (114, emphasis mine).

Stone-Campbell adherents know something about being a “minority voice” in the theological academy, at least in its *Evangelical* expressions. Thanks in large part to people like William Baker and the *Stone-Campbell Journal*, the Stone-Campbell viewpoint is no longer seen as suspect in ETS circles, and in fact is increasingly recognized as a distinctive, orthodox Protestant tradition. However, “our” climb to evangelical acceptability is comparatively insignificant to the task faced by those from a non-American (Asian) and Pentecostal orientation since the former is deemed inconsequential and the latter antithetical to serious scholarship. As difficult as this task seems to be, this minority voice will soon be a regular conversation-partner, with contributions like this volume from Fuller Seminary’s Amos Yong.

Amos Yong is a self-identified “1.5 generation Asian-American, pent-evangelical” (36, 118). Such a designation carries a certain “outsider” nuance with it, especially in terms of the North American evangelical academy. We all know how white, male, Calvinistic and non-charismatic our theological circles tend to be, even in our own more inclusive *Stone-Campbell Journal* conferences. Yet what does this ethos say about a Christianity that would champion the Book of Acts as a (*the*) primary narrative of the post-Pentecost People of God? Poignantly, Yong raises the question: “why has Asian American evangelical theology been relatively unenergetic; especially when compared to Asian American theology in mainline Protestant and Catholic circles?”(29). In this volume’s seven hard-hitting chapters, the author attempts to diagnose and offer remedy to this suppressed voice.

Yong begins his book with a fitting prolegomena to the thematic question, calling attention to the new, global context of Christianity, in which the “center of gravity” of the evangelical movement has now shifted from the Euro-American West to the East. Utilizing Bebbington’s well-known definition of *evangelical* (conversionist approach to the Faith with an emphasis on mission and evangelism, activist spirituality, committed Biblicism, and a crucicentric piety that focuses on Christ’s death to procure salvation), Yong makes a case that these general characteristics are increasingly being manifest in an Asian, Pentecostal context, yet the latter is legitimized largely by its conformity to Western Protestantism (37-38). Certainly, there are some positive signs that the evangelical community is awakening to its larger majority world community, but even with its best efforts to broaden the conversation, Asian and Pentecostal theology is offered as merely alternative “perspectives” on topics rather than as conversation partners who can help define them more fully (57-64). While the author is in no way arguing for a liberal-like “plurality of doctrines”—there is clearly an evangelical *core*—he nonetheless, is frustrated that doctrine and context have been so thoroughly disconnected so that the former is viewed as indisputable, universal truths, while the latter are simply missional applications of said affirmations (59-60). In fact, indigenous perspectives (often formed by the pervading non-Christian religions) is largely discounted as having value for Christian belief, since the template for the Faith is found in “transcendent,” North American cultural habits (20-21). Thus, embracing Christ required the setting aside of one’s (Eastern) heritage, as was the case with Yong’s Chinese immigrant parents (18-21). This subtle form of ethnocentricity continues to dominate the theological academy, causing the burgeoning voices of world Christianity to be no more than “contextual illustrations” of biblical truth (provided they conform to our white, Midwestern model). Without a recognition of and a serious modification to this prevailing ideology, evangelicalism’s future will be

stunted by the rationalistic, post-Christian West rather than reinvigorated by the winds of the Spirit that fill the East.

Yong's antidote to this Western hegemony is found in a place quite familiar to both Restorationists and Pentecostals, alike: the Day of Pentecost in the second chapter of Acts. One would expect someone of Yong's tradition to seize upon the phenomena of multiple tongues as a theological fulcrum (in contrast to the Stone-Campbell Movement's fascination with baptism!), but the supernatural empowerment, itself, is not his major concern. Rather, the Pentecost narrative provides a motif for incorporating the needed voices of the "Asian American diaspora" in the evangelical theology of the present and future. Precisely, Yong calls attention to these features of the Lucan story: 1) translatability of the gospel in the world's many languages; and 2) embrace of the world's many cultural histories in the Good News of Jesus, albeit in a critical manner yet one that recognizes the goodness, truth, and beauty of these. He comments:

Hence the outpouring of the Spirit on all flesh preserves, validates and even in this sense redeems the many tongues, languages and cultures of the world, including those of the regions, nations and peoples of Asia. The Pentecost narrative in Acts 2 thus invites Asian Pentecostals in particular, and those across the Asian diaspora in general, to declare and testify in their own tongues and languages about the wondrous works of God. (137)

Of particular relevance, also, to this second-generation Asian-American, is the *migration* theme that takes the early Church from Jerusalem to Rome. Like his own "hybrid" community (Yong's designation), the first-century Christians were largely migrants; "not just local migrants from the surrounding Judean countryside but also Hellenistic Jews and God-fearers from the Jewish diaspora around the Mediterranean world" (199). Thus, the "one" gospel was understood in and expressed from the experiences of these migrant people, notably in contexts of socio-economic practices, raciality, and gender; not normally the topics framing Euro-North American theological discourse, much less traditional Pentecostal (168-177). Observing the ministries of Peter and Paul, Yong observes that "migrancy is not just an accidental feature of the lives of those who crossed humanly construed borders, but rather it characterizes the pluralistic nature of what it means to be the people of God at its core" (175). In short, today's Christian immigrant brings experiences and insights (like their forebears in Acts) that are not merely tangential to Christian theology but rather help texture and "exegete" the richness of it.

In the volume's final chapter and epilogue, Yong offers several proposals that he believes can facilitate a "global evangelical theology" working out of "the Asian-American matrix" (217). This multisteped vision includes pent-evangelical theologians becoming more intentional about developing a serious theology of citizenship based upon the "biblical 'metanarrative' of migration-incarnation-Pentecost-coming reign of God" (222). This will enable the multiple Asian-American communities not only to cross generational differences but contribute to the overall health of evangelical theology. Related to this is the controversial issue concerning the appropriate ministry roles for women, an issue that divides the Asian-American church as much as those of their white neighbors. Drawing upon the *pneumatology* of the Pentecostal tradition, Asian Christians can actively promote women's edification and empowerment in all of life, regardless of their particular stance on ordination (223). Recognizing the Spirit's gifting of all believers, regardless of gender, seems to be a needed

first step to get beyond cultural images, be they Asian or Western. But this “in-house” theological maturation is only the first step in contributing to a truly global evangelicalism. Out of their migrant experience, Asian American pent-evangelicals need to challenge and amend existing (and narrow) evangelical understandings of culture, public discourse, and economic theory (224–228). As readers of this journal certainly know, these categories have largely been engaged within a Western prism that tends to see things as in very crisp, distinct, and formulaic terms (think of Niebuhr’s classic *Christ and Culture*). On the other hand, those related to the Asian diaspora can see these realities (especially the increasingly global market) as much more complex and multilayered than their North American counterparts. Finally, Asian American evangelicals can bring their ethnic resources into constructive projects involving interreligious dialogue (recognizing “truth” in Confucian, Buddhist, and Taoist traditions, albeit it partial and incomplete apart from Christ), apologetics and in theological formulation, itself (229–234).

It should be obvious that this volume is not a typical jeremiad against the evangelical church that is characteristic of many Euro-American critics: its capitulation to the Western gods of individualism, consumerism, and pluralism. These are important issues to be sure, but Amos Yong has put his finger on an even more critical item that threatens evangelical survival: the marginalization of Christianity’s “minority voices,” especially ones that originate from theological contexts that are non-Anglo, non-Reformed, noncessationist (I use this term very generally) and “nonhomegrown.”

This volume is a significant contribution to the discussion of what future evangelicalism needs to look like if it is to survive and, moreover, transcend its current provincialism. Yong’s call for an Asian-American pen-evangelical presence at the table is undoubtedly correct even if one is not convinced by his somewhat-forced version of the book of Acts (“migratory” narrative) or discomforted by his analogy of hybridity with the two natures of Christ (238; he is very Chalcedonian, however). In this more inclusive endeavor, Yong should enjoy wide support from those from the Stone-Campbell Movement who all too well know the frustration of being kept on the theological margins. While still a “minority voice” in the estimation of many evangelicals, we are now considered a legitimate and important participant in theological discussion (see the 2007 Zondervan *Four Views on Baptism* book). Good, but in all fairness, we still bring a largely modern, Euro-American Protestant perspective—even to our reading of Acts. If we (Stone-Campbell adherents) are genuinely committed to “restoration” (for reformation and renewal see 57–64), it is our duty to engage (and incorporate when possible) the somewhat unfamiliar but pneumatologically sensitive minority voice from the majority world. Thanks to Asian American pent-evangelicals like Amos Yong, “strange tongues” can become quite intelligible.

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**Stanley HAUERWAS.** *The Work of Theology*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015. 305 pp. \$28.00.

In recent centuries, philosophical giants Søren Kierkegaard and Gilles Deleuze both held that repetition is never identical: in every attempted repetition, a new reality is produced.

Stanley Hauerwas's most recent book certainly confirms such a claim. This volume is a grand rethinking of what Hauerwas has previously thought that shifts that thought in new directions. The book is "unapologetically self-referential" (2) and "retrospective" (viii); therefore, it is most likely to appeal to readers already familiar with Hauerwas. The pleasure of this text is afforded by watching an active mind grapple with its own thought as it has been expressed over decades of unremitting labor; long-time readers of Hauerwas will simply find this fun to watch.

The chapters unfold as a series of 'how to' manuals ("How to Tell Time Theologically," "How to Be Theologically Ironic"). This is perhaps not the best label to attach to the essays, as it lends them more finality than Hauerwas intends (264). They are, rather, performative developments of theological themes already established as touchpoints in the canon of his work, showing us how one might—for example—relate theology and the ministry, a topic already broached in his 2001 book *Christian Existence Today*, but here thought through in a more explicit and rigorous manner. Sometimes these repetitions simply bring a new clarity; at other times, surprising new directions are explored, such as the qualified defense of appeals to human rights in "How to Think Theologically about Rights."

One of the most exciting new directions this volume takes helps answer what I hold to be Nicholas Healy's most incisive criticism in his controversial 2014 broadside, *Hauerwas: A (Very) Critical Introduction*: namely, the accusation that Hauerwas's ecclesiology is overdetermined by Alasdair MacIntyre's account of community, an account which is purely philosophical and thus inadequate to account fully for what makes the church the church. If the church can be sufficiently described as a particular community constituted by a certain narrative and attendant practices determined by that narrative, the only difference between the church and other communities is the strictly immanent one of telling a different story. Granted, that story may make reference to God and God's revelation, but it is still simply a story told by humans to other humans. In this scheme, the church can continue to exist without God intervening to sustain it because it can simply keep on telling its story. What is needed is a first-order claim that without God's direct and constant intervention, the church would cease to exist. I take it to be the virtue of Healy's book to point out Hauerwas's neglect of such a claim, but in this volume such a neglect comes to an end.

Ironically, Hauerwas does not take this turn toward a more transcendent ecclesiology in direct response to Healy; such an irony confirms the general principle that a writer's best response to criticism is seldom the response that is designed to be a response. Thus, the direct response that comes in the form of a postscript exclusively dedicated to addressing Healy's criticisms is not nearly as convincing as an earlier essay titled "How the Holy Spirit Works." This essay is guided by the christological claim that "Just as Christ in his person is one, so the church is one in being both a social form of humanity and the creation of the Spirit" (48). Hauerwas has usually focused on the 'social form' side of this particular hypostatic union, delineating the role virtues, practices, and language play in making the church the church, but here he gives attention to the other side of the equation: the Holy Spirit. After stating that "[t]he name of the agency the Holy Spirit enables is 'church,'" he offers this remarkable reworking of one of his most well-known aphorisms:

[T]he first task of the church is not to make the world more just but to make the world the world. A strong claim to be sure, but one I hope to show is justified once the rela-

tion between the work of the Spirit and the existence of the church are understood to be inseparable (47).

The church is not just an “alternative linguistic community” (29) that tells a certain story and enacts certain practices. It is that, surely, but it is also the continuous creation of the Spirit. Hauerwas’s ecclesiology is descriptively assisted by MacIntyre’s account of community, but it is not subservient to it; for Hauerwas’s ecclesia is ultimately wholly dependent on the Spirit calling it into existence, and in fact the ‘how’ of its existence is entirely dependent upon direction by the Spirit (even if this works itself out in the very human reality of story-determined practices).

This is where this volume is at its most thrilling: we see Hauerwas taking up an earlier position and extending it, in a manner rather like a good novel, in which an event happens that is completely unexpected, but—in retrospect—wholly fitting and even necessary. Furthermore, Hauerwas ends this gem of an essay by risking the claim that the Holy Spirit is pointing us in a specific direction: toward a ‘slow’ church that does not make its first task social welfare or providing comfort to the lonely, but instead sees its most basic work to be the pointing of the world to Jesus Christ (50-51). It is just this kind of risky claim—an assertion which resists popular understandings of the supposedly appropriate difference between mission and evangelism, and makes bold to claim divine warrant in doing so—that demonstrates Hauerwas’s willingness to step outside the Schleiermachiian methodology of the modern university (with its commitments to objectivity and immanence), and it also shows the difference this new extension makes for how he does theology and what he is able to say. One can only hope that his forthcoming work *The Holy Spirit*, co-authored with William H. Willimon, will continue in this vein.

A final word on how this book is to be enjoyed: Hauerwas’s style, always suggestively spare, is in rare form throughout these essays—which is only appropriate given that one of the chapters is titled “How to Write a Theological Sentence.” At times we see a language more playful and allusive than Hauerwas usually offers: after listing his grievances against the overuse of human rights appeals, he concludes, “Such is my bill of particulars against the language of rights” (198). A sentence like that is as delectable as it is because of the omitting of everything needless that surrounds it. Through style, Hauerwas is allowing us to savor these thoughts of his, and encouraging us by way of delight to continue to explore the implications of what he has said and continues to say. All the more reason to spend some time revisiting and rethinking the thought of Stanley Hauerwas.

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**Daniel I. BLOCK.** *For the Glory of God: Recovering a Biblical Theology of Worship.* Grand Rapids: Baker, 2014. 432 pp. \$34.99.

In this comprehensive treatment of biblical worship, Block has added a significant voice to the conversation that ought to surround the work of the church today.

In the first chapter, Block succinctly describes the dimensions of worship that he sees as most important from the biblical narrative. He uses these conclusions to frame his own definition of

worship, which becomes the basis for the remainder of the book: “True worship involves reverential human acts of submission and homage before the divine Sovereign in response to his gracious revelation of himself and in accord with his will” (23). He then sets out to dissect this definition piece by piece, resulting in a series of chapters based upon thematic subjects.

This technique is effective, as each idea works its way through the OT, the NT and a practical application for today. In this theological discussion, Block successfully balances both corporate worship and the worship of everyday life.

The topics addressed include: the object of worship, including a discussion of idolatry and false worship, the subject of worship, a treatment of acceptable worship, daily life as worship, concerning holiness and abiding in God’s Word, family life and work, the ordinances, particularly baptism and the Lord’s Supper, hearing and proclaiming the Scriptures, prayer; music, sacrifice and offerings; the drama of worship, specifically OT festivals, sacred space, and leaders of worship.

Block demonstrates that he is an OT scholar since the bulk of the material discussed is found there. He notes that this is, in part, a corrective for churches that have tended to ignore worship practices that existed prior to the NT. His attention to OT texts and their interpretations is well-researched and thorough. While the NT is by no means ignored, its texts are predominantly tied to their OT roots.

For the most part, the book is readable and engaging. At times the material becomes overly detailed and loses its connection to worship. In the chapter on family life, for example, the accurate observation that the value of the family at worship is missing today becomes obscured by the amount of background information that is presented.

Block readily admits that his particular denominational background is evident, especially in his contemporary application. There are some excellent insights about the state of worship in the churches of the United States today, mostly ascertained from Block’s own experiences. His suggestions are valuable and worth considering. At times though, it is a stretch to say that the application is based upon the biblical interpretation presented.

While Block hopefully suggests this work could be used by lay people, such as in an adult Bible study, it is likely that the sheer volume of material and intricate detail would be off-putting for that purpose. For any minister, however, who desires to lead a congregation in biblically faithful, holistic worship, the book is accessible and helpful.

As a textbook for seminarians, it is extensive in the area of the OT but will need to be paired with a solid NT work. It is certainly valuable for the professor of worship, with many important insights that will be helpful in expanding classroom material. The illustrations, tables, and appendices are interesting and useful. The wise professor will give students the opportunity to reach their own conclusions about practical application based upon their own context.

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**Daniel I. BLOCK**, *For the Glory of God: Recovering a Biblical Theology of Worship*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2014. 432 pp. \$34.99.

Block is the Gunther H. Knoedler Professor of Old Testament at Wheaton College, since 2005. The desire to write this book has been building over two decades, during which



Block has become increasingly frustrated with the shallowness of pragmatic worship designed to fill church buildings rather than to glorify God. Also over the last several years he has routinely presented much of the book's content in weekend seminars on "Recovering a Biblical Theology of Worship" attempting to proactively counter his frustrations. His intent is clear in his lectures on *true* biblical worship and in this book: to recover for the church a *biblical* theology of worship by bringing the *whole* Bible into the conversation.

Although Block begins his preface referencing contemporary wrangling over worship music preferences and styles, he quickly moves on to address what he considers more substantive topics. Those he identifies come primarily from Pittsburgh Theological Seminary NT professor Edith M. Humphrey: (1) trivialized, mood-centered, how-does-it-make-me-feel worship; (2) misdirected, human-centered worship; (3) loss-of-the-Word-of-God worship; (4) self-indulgent, replacement-of-*true*-liturgy worship; and (5) exploited, market-driven worship. "After observing trends in worship for a half century, I agree with Humphrey completely" (xii). In essence, Block brings his OT expertise and encyclopedic knowledge of the biblical world to enlighten the reader's understanding of worship.

Growing out of his worship experiences (not to mention his lengthy professorial career in OT, world travels, and conservative church affiliation), Block asks a series of critical questions that shape his approach and methodology. "What kinds of worship are appropriate? More specifically, what kinds of worship represent true worship of the one true and living God? And how do we determine this? What are credible and authentic worship practices today?" (xiii). Thus, Block organized the book topically seeking to answer three more fundamental questions: "What do the Scriptures have in mind when they speak of worship (chapter 1)? Who is the object of true worship (chapter 2)? Whose worship is acceptable to God (chapter 3)? The rest of the book explores personal and corporate worship, particularly the elements of worship, the design and theology of sacred space, and the role of leaders in worship. Block's emphasis throughout is the "exploration of specific biblical texts to establish patterns of worship and the underlying theological convictions that are rooted in Scripture" (xiv). The end of each chapter, however, is devoted to practical implications and applications for contemporary worship.

Two words frequently used by Block are "principle" and "ordinance," though neither is clearly defined. Scriptural principles for him are "biblically rooted" and "theologically formed" truths that regulate (govern) and describe (normative expression that moves beyond what is expressly stated) worship. One is rightfully aware, however, that significant presuppositions determine the selection of these eternal truths. Block's repeated broad use of *principle* to signify permanently established theological truths (especially from the OT) guiding contemporary worship reflects many of his personal preferences. Block intentionally avoids the word sacrament, replacing it with ordinance, while never discussing meanings or reasons for doing so (Those affiliated with the Stone-Campbell Movement should feel right at home). Simply stated, this emphasis on ordinances, and their role in regulating worship and separating them from salvation, results in a flat excessively legalistic, stringent, rational practice almost devoid of emotion.

Block's book is ambitious and impressive in its intentions, scope, and amount of information. Stylistic tendencies abound, however, and become tiresome: numbered lists, dense footnotes, and frequent re-use of previously published material without sufficient editing to tailor the piece to better fit the book. Aside from these issues this volume is an exceptional-

ly rich resource for thinking afresh about biblical worship for contemporary churches. The book's thirteen chapters were framed to fit either an academic semester or a Sunday school quarter; though in either context an informed and skilled teacher is necessary.

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**J. Ellsworth KALAS.** *Preaching in an Age of Distraction.* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2014. 165 pp. \$16.00.

I remember my first real introduction to the different worlds of evangelical and mainline preaching. As our doctor of ministry cohort ate dinner one night, the conversation drifted around to the thinkers and the textbooks that have had the greatest impact on our preaching. Since we were studying at Asbury Seminary, several of my friends mentioned Kalas as their favorite author. When it became my turn, I mentioned that my favorite homileticians were Haddon Robinson and Donald Sunukjian. I'll never forget my cohort's response: "Who?"

I hasten to add that Asbury Seminary is a conservative Methodist school and that most of *SCJ's* readers would feel very comfortable reading Kalas's books. In fact, I have met Dr. Kalas and I have a great deal of respect for him. I share this story not only to encourage readers to try an author with whom they might be unfamiliar, but also as a way of introducing Kalas and his writing style. While some writers aim primarily for a preacher's head with insights into homiletics and other writers aim primarily for a preacher's "hands" with how-to tips on application, Kalas often aims for the preacher's heart. This volume is no exception.

Kalas's thesis is that preaching is harder than ever these days, largely because we live in what he deems the "Age of Distraction" (9). Both pastors and church members constantly struggle with distractions that range from the Internet to work to families. While the preacher's weekly sermon preparation helps anchor him to God, his listeners do not have that blessing. In fact, they often carry their distractions to church with them. Preachers also deal with their own distractions. Since they bear responsibility for the spiritual lives of their listeners, preachers must guard against becoming distracted.

Yet Kalas does not see distraction as all bad. In fact, he sees it as "absolutely necessary" to helping preachers and church members alike avoid boredom (68). Kalas is not "appealing for a painfully pious life," but reminds us that Jesus was often invited to parties because people enjoyed being with him (77). However, preachers must learn to be selective, not only to avoid being lured away from their spiritual center but also to avoid becoming overwhelmed with mediocrity (77).

Like an inductive sermon, this volume builds momentum as it draws nearer to the end. While the first half of the book focuses on the challenges and benefits of preaching amidst so many distractions, the second half provides excellent insights into how and why preachers can and should remain faithful to their tasks. For example, Kalas reminds us that while "packaging" in the form of worship and style is important, so is biblical preaching. While it may seem counter-intuitive, Kalas observes that in a spiritually illiterate age such as ours, many people are hungrier than ever to understand God's Word. He writes, "If our populace is becoming scripturally illiterate, we should by no means acquiesce by using the Scriptures

less. . . . Scripture will assert itself by virtue of its inherent authority only if we give it a reasonable chance to be heard” (89). Kalas adds that while sermons must be relevant, we as preachers should play to our strength in that we have a message from God. After asking why people come to church, he responds by quoting Jesus’ summary of John the Baptist’s ministry: “What did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet” (Luke 7:26). We preachers cannot become so distracted by the latest fad that we minimize our message (118).

While anyone can enjoy and appreciate this book, preaching professors and potential readers should consider their own preferences before making a decision. Readers who are looking for resources aimed at their heart will likely enjoy this book. Readers who are looking for books aimed at their head or their hands may find the first few chapters of this book a bit of a distraction.

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**Michael BROTHERS.** *Distance in Preaching: Room to Speak, Space to Listen.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014. 184 pp. \$20.00.

Princeton Theological Seminary’s Michael Brothers’ latest volume presents what may be the first homiletics book that focuses primarily on the concept of distance. Though it has been discussed in other places both in and out of this field, this work opens the windows much wider. The book follows through five distinct parts; in chapter one, Brothers gives us a basic introduction to the concept of distance especially as he sees it applied to preaching. Chapter two centers on the place of distance in aesthetics and performance distance as a backdrop to preaching. Chapter three focuses on the use of distance in Fred Craddock’s work on preaching. Chapter four centers on others’ views on distance, namely Mark Ellingsen and Charles Campbell. Chapter five offers a brief review of more recent theories of distance. He finishes with two sermons, models of what he has done when focusing on distance.

The most helpful section of the book comes in the chapter focusing on the work of Craddock (whose passing occurred as I was working on this review). As one of the foremost preachers and writers about preaching, Craddock has influenced homiletics immensely in the last 30 years. As Brothers revisits Craddock he reminds the reader of his significant modifications to the preparation and delivery of sermons. It’s interesting that Brothers’ current experience of teaching young ministers led him to conclude that the way these young men and women listen to one another in class has changed; these shifts suggest how sermons will be heard differently in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This makes the concept of “distance” much more important. He notes a couple of significant shifts Craddock made in his preparation. Whereas many still follow the ancient “*logos, ethos, pathos*” of the preaching event with *logos*/text as the primary need, Craddock focused on the *pathos*/audience as the new key. The emphasis on audience looks two directions; first, the preacher should focus on the first-century audience as a key for understanding the *logos*. What did the people who heard Jesus’ parables hear? What did Timothy and Titus bring with them as they opened and read Paul’s instructions about their roles as church planters and leaders? Second, who are the people to whom we are preaching? What do they know? What brings them into the building today? What do

they anticipate when the sermon is preached? Why should they listen to this person when they've heard this text explained and applied so often already? He doesn't minimize the concepts of *logos* and *ethos* but suggests a different order of focus and importance.

Brothers does an excellent job of using both the theories and sermons of Craddock to demonstrate the way "distance" can be created. Craddock's term—"overhearing"—moves one from the traditional direct confrontation with text to a more indirect means with such techniques as current colloquialisms, anachronisms, metaphors, and storytelling to allow the hearer to make up their own minds about the text. Craddock leaves the hearer "free to think, to feel, to resolve." The audience members must take responsibility for their own application. They are allowed to draw their own conclusions and more importantly, to allow them to say "no." Brothers states, "In Craddock's proposal, the counterpart of distance is also its goal: 'free participation' on the part of the hearer. Craddock's proposal ends where it began, a concern for the hearer" (Location 178 of 4130). Perhaps arising from his great love of literature, Craddock propels philosophy and literature as well as the performing arts into the field of homiletics.

As one who teaches basic homiletics courses to undergraduates, the question would be, "Can I use this book in those courses?" The answer is probably "no." Basically, the need for the beginner centers on rhetorical needs like thesis statements, flows and outlines, introductions and conclusions. One might choose to move beyond a speech textbook approach and consider some alternate styles like Thomas Long's *The Witness of Preaching* or Eugene Lowry's *The Homiletical Plot*. Brothers would prove more helpful for advanced students or preachers looking to grow and improve. What I enjoyed most about this volume centered on its reinforcement of Craddock's work and his revitalizing approach to the preparation and delivery of sermons. I recommend Brothers' book to anyone seeking refreshment from what probably feels like a loaf of old bread reheated and reheated and set on the table to the groans of one's family hoping for something fresh from the oven and scenting the whole house.

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**Gordon T. SMITH.** *Called to Be Saints: An Invitation to Christian Maturity.*  
Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2014. 256 pp. \$20.80.

This volume tackles the theology and theory of spiritual maturity in six chapters plus two appendices. The first two chapters introduce the need for a theology of holiness and provide an overview of the Christian life. Chapters three through six lay out the premise of the book: "four distinct but deeply interrelated dimensions of Christian maturity. These are essentially four invitations.

A holy person is a wise person.

A holy person does good work.

A holy person loves others in a manner consistent with how God has loved us.

A holy person is a happy person. (35-36).

This volume fills a vital need for the church today. Too often the church as a whole has neglected the pursuit of spiritual maturity and settled for easy-to-see substitutes like church

involvement. A holistic theology of the biblical expectations of a lifelong path of discipleship is of supreme importance.

Two primary strengths of this work come to mind quickly. First, Smith emphasizes the importance of relational transformation in spiritual maturity. As a discipleship pastor, this has been a cornerstone of my ministry in the church. We often interpret Gal 5:22-23 in terms of individual character development. However, the fruit of the Spirit is relational, and Smith rightly applies this idea in Chapter Five: Learning to Love.

A second strength of this book is the inclusion of two extremely helpful appendices. Appendix A deals with Congregations and Transformation while Appendix B addresses Christian Higher Education. Both are very helpful and full of insight. As a pastor, I always seek to put theology and theory into the context of the local church. I greatly appreciated that Smith added thoughts on how the concepts in the book can be applied to the church.

Two small weaknesses should also be noted. First, while the book is not especially long at just over 250 pages, at times it seemed to wander slightly off course. It felt as if the author wanted to include every shred of research material and ideas, which made some sections somewhat unfocused. Second, I would not have included the idea of vocational holiness (Chapter Four) as a major tenet of spiritual maturity. While it certainly is important, it may have been better served as an appendix. Admittedly, these weaknesses are slight and in no way take away from the usefulness of the book.

I see three primary uses for this book. First, I would recommend it as a textbook in a college class on spiritual development. Second, the book would greatly inform pastors called to lead people to spiritual maturity. Last, I can envision teams of church leaders (pastors, staff, elders, and key volunteers) reading through the book together and discussing the principles.

In the end, I enthusiastically endorse this volume to anyone who wants to take the call to discipleship seriously. In an age of quick-fix ministry programs and instant behavior modification theologies, Smith has provided a valuable theology of Christian maturity that church leaders and college personnel would do well to engage.

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**Paul HEINTZMAN.** *Leisure and Spirituality: Biblical, Historical, and Contemporary Perspectives.* Grand Rapids: Baker, 2015. 352 pp. \$24.99.

If there has been something of a resurgence in serious theological reflection on the subject of work, the same cannot be said for the subject of leisure. This dearth of reflection is all the more worrisome given how contemporary cultures increasingly encourage us to equate the pursuit of happiness with the pursuit of satisfying leisure. This alone makes the latest volume in Baker's *Engaging Culture* series a most welcome addition.

Author Paul Heintzman, a professor of leisure studies at the University of Ottawa, offers an informative overview of the concept and practice of leisure as it developed in Western cultures, all with an eye toward discerning how Christians ought to engage in leisure holistically. He begins by helpfully delineating and discussing seven different ways in which leisure has been and continues to be conceptualized, including the two ways he grants the greatest

weight to throughout the rest of the book. The first of these, which he terms the “classical” or “the state of being” view of leisure, was developed by Greek culture and appropriated by much of medieval monasticism. In this view, leisure is an attitude or state of being that is receptive to a life of reflection and contemplation and engaged in for its own sake. The second important view, which Heintzman calls the “leisure as activity” model, equates leisure with the activities people engage in during their nonwork time, though not for their own sake but for some other specifiable benefit (health, pleasure, and self-expression).

After sorting through the conceptual issues, Heintzman reviews the state of leisure in Western societies, using the seven different concepts of leisure as a frame for naming and briefly examining a particular issue for each, such as the difficulty in cultivating a deeper spiritual life through the exercise of leisure given the pace of contemporary life and the leisure choices made by most North Americans. He then offers a brief historical overview of the two concepts of leisure most pertinent to his study, rooting the “classical” view in the work of Aristotle and the “leisure as activity” model in the thought of the Renaissance and Reformation, especially John Calvin. Heintzman then turns to an overview of biblical perspectives on leisure, focusing primarily on the notions of Sabbath and rest. Aware as he is that our views of leisure are always bound up with our understandings and practices of work, Heintzman next sketches the history of the concept of work in the West, as well as the biblical view of work. Many readers will find this biblical section surprising, not least because Heintzman argues that the best scriptural support for living a well-balanced life of work and leisure is found in the book of Ecclesiastes.

Having dissected leisure’s cultural, historical, and biblical groundings, Heintzman takes these pieces and attempts to synthesize them into a more comprehensive and holistic view of leisure that has both qualitative and quantitative dimensions. This holistic view brings together the (largely) Roman Catholic “classical” or “state of being” view of leisure that is grounded in “being” and contemplation with the (largely) Protestant notion of leisure as an activity of “doing” that participates in a certain rhythm of life. Heintzman then offers some brief ethical guidelines for leisure in contemporary life by reflecting on leisure in light of the Golden Rule. The closing two chapters use some of Heintzman’s own social-scientific research to demonstrate connections between leisure and spiritual well-being.

The most obvious strengths of Heintzman’s book is the commendable effort he has made both in mapping the current state of the discussion of leisure in contemporary Western societies and in identifying many of the key questions that Christians must address if they are to live faithfully within them. Because most of the work is a revision of the author’s master’s thesis, at times the work feels a little overly dependent on secondary sources for typologies and other framing structures. Likewise, many readers will find the last two chapters in the book the least satisfying, reflecting as they do Heintzman’s turn to a more social-scientific approach to the study of leisure and spirituality that he took up subsequent to his doctoral work; these two chapters do not feel fully integrated into the rest of the work. Despite these minor shortcomings, any thoughtful Christian interested in wrestling with the largely unexamined topic of leisure in our day would do well to start with Heintzman’s informative work.

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Walter KASPER. *Pope Francis' Revolution of Tenderness and Love*. New York: Paulist, 2015. 117 pp. \$16.95.

Are there useful insights for those of the Stone-Campbell Movement that can be gained by reviewing a book with a Catholic orientation? The plea for unity should have no boundaries, yet our brotherhood seems to shy away from our Catholic brothers. After all, they do provide a direct, historical link to the NT period and have been faithful in keeping that record. This does not mean that their consideration of tradition as revelation is valid. What it does mean is that in their tradition we can see the impact of scripture and the consistent use of it throughout their history. Even if we disagree with their hermeneutics, we can learn from both their use and misuse. For this reason (among many others), a watchful eye on contemporary Catholic thought may help the Stone-Campbell Movement avoid some of the errors and inconsistencies of that church's tradition, while gaining great insight into the apostolic foundation of that tradition. This can only strengthen our quest for such a foundation built on the Apostles and Prophets (Eph 2:20).

Admittedly though, there are difficulties in reading a book like this, especially one written by a Cardinal. Walter Kasper, who demonstrates a keen and supportive relationship with Pope Francis, "is working to ensure Francis' legacy endures."<sup>1</sup> Thus, the perspective is definitively Catholic, and references to primary and secondary documents from the Vatican are given the primary place of authority. For this reason, there is a noticeable absence of Scripture, which our readers would find unacceptable or at best, a shortcoming. Additionally, one not familiar with these documents stands at a disadvantage, not experiencing the full impact of Cardinal Kasper's perspectives. For this reason, the reader who is not familiar with these documents comes away lacking the fuller understanding. Thus, my suggestion is that one needs to read with the book in one hand and the documents in the other.

Kasper's approach is to offer a general view of the Bishop of Rome (Francis's preferred title rather than Pope) and then move to the vital issues that are at the heart of Francis's papal ministry. He intuitively approaches the issue of the relationship between Francis and his predecessors. Holding true to his Jesuit roots, Francis relates the theological truth of the Catholic tradition to which he and his predecessors passionately cling, to his kerygmatic style. The motivation behind this is his passion for reform (*EG* 26<sup>2</sup>). Obvious to this is Francis's spiritual kinship to Paul VI in advancing the spirit of Vatican II, offering a "new and fresh" approach (19).

From this foundation, Kasper moves quickly into the vital issues of Francis's papal focus. These are the Gospel, Mercy, the church, Renewal, and Ecumenism. For this reviewer, these seem to be in an ascending order of relationship built on the value of the previous. In this, Kasper portrays the gospel as the root (*radix*), but this gospel is realized in the Jesuit tradi-

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<sup>1</sup> David Gibson, "Walter Kasper, 'pope's theologian,' reveals the brains behind Francis' heart," n.p. [cited 21 May 2015], Online: <http://ncronline.org/news/vatican/cardinal-walter-kasper-popes-theologian-reveals-brains-behind-francis-heart>.

<sup>2</sup> *Evangelii nuntiandi*. (Joy of the Gospel) Apostolic Exhortation of Pope Francis on the Proclamation of the Gospel in Today's World. 24 November 2013. The Apostolic Exhortation, like an Apostolic Letter, is of lesser authority than an encyclical and may be written on a doctrinal matter, announce a papal act, or declare a church a Basilica. For additional information on Papal documents see <https://www.ewtn.com/holysee/pontiff/categories.asp>. The numbers following the title represent paragraphs, which are numbered for ease of reference. All Vatican documents follow this format.

tion of a spiritual reading and reflection as recommended by *Dei Verbum* 21-26.<sup>3</sup> Nonetheless, Kasper depicts Francis maintaining the tradition of the church regarding the gospel but also understanding the place of the gospel in the contemporary setting. Kasper points out that Catholic observers are witnessing a trend toward the evangelical alternative to the traditional gospel of the church (27). Nonetheless, this does not deter Francis's appeal to the traditional gospel and its good but challenging message.

The gospel exemplifies the next theme Kasper describes—mercy. His bishopric coat of arms announced his motto of *Miserando et eligendo* (by gazing upon me with the eyes of his mercy, he has chosen me). This understanding is realized in the dual understanding of Francis that mercy as a central biblical theme is a primary characteristic of God, as well as the medicine used by the church in place of weapons of severity (33). This discussion on mercy as the characteristic of the church takes Kasper to the theme of the church as the “messianic people of God (*LG* 9-12).<sup>4</sup> Thematic to this issue is Francis's stand that it is the ordained who are at the service of the people who make up the majority of the church. To digress as a personal note, this is a valuable lesson that the leaders of the RM churches must learn from Francis. It is the responsibility of the church leader to equip not direct (Eph 4:11-13). For Francis, this is realized in a magisterium that listens. His approach to this is somber in *EG* (69-70, 90, 122-126). However, this internal diagnosis is not to be considered narcissistic. Consider Kasper's take on this, “Francis wants out of the stale air of a church that is self-involved—suffering from its own condition, bemoaning or celebrating itself” (44). This is good advice as I fear the same has happened to many RM churches whose inwardness borders on or becomes very narcissistic. The remedy for this for Francis (and for the RM churches) is renewal. This is found in a conversion of the papacy, from which Francis does not shy away, as well as the continuation of the Vatican II plea for seeing the church as *communio*. This is understood for Francis in the one church present in each local church, assuming a *concrete form* and a *concrete face* (emphasis mine) in the locality of each, individual church. This appeal is certainly in line with the Apostolic view held as an essential quality of the church and proclaimed as a restoration tenet. Kasper notes that for Francis this means “decentralization of the church and strengthening [of] episcopal conferences” (*EG* 16, 32). This keeps the Bishops in close touch with the local parishes as we in the RM see as the function of the Elder (Bishop) locally.

From these four major foci of Francis, Kasper draws out the implications of these on ecumenism, interreligious dialog, and perspectives on poverty. Regarding ecumenism, he picks up the mantra of Vatican II in *EG* 244-246, dispelling any doubt of his support of the intentions of Vatican II and the desire for unity. One evidence of this unity is realized in the “‘ecumenism’ of the blood of martyrs, who come from all churches” (69). This same passion is obvious in his interest in interreligious dialog as promulgated by the Second Vatican Council (*GS* 3, *AG*, 11, *NA* 1-2).<sup>5</sup> Finally, Francis expresses a vision of a poor church for the poor (*EG* 53-60, 197-291), grounded christologically in the life of Jesus, realized in the explanation of Paul who states that Jesus became a slave for humanity (Phil 2:6-7).

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<sup>3</sup> *Dei Verbum*, Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation. Promulgated by the Second Vatican Council 18 November 1965.

<sup>4</sup> *Lumen Gentium*. Dogmatic Constitution of the Church. Promulgated by the Second Vatican Council 21 November 1964.

<sup>5</sup> *Gaudium et spes*, 7 December 1965; *Ad Gentes* (To the Gentiles) on the missionary activity of the church; *Nostra Aetate*, 28 October 1965.



Kasper draws these views of Pope Francis's revolution of tenderness and love together by stating that the position that Francis has taken on these vital issues may not and probably does not sit well with either the conservatives or the more progressive. The reason for this in Kasper's mind is that, like the gospel, there is never completeness. The Joy of the Gospel is still withheld from some people as the church has not completed its task. Thus, the revolution of Francis is a contemporary appeal to the joy and power of the gospel proclaimed within the revolution of mercy. This task taken on by the Catholic Church under this Pope should also inspire those of the Restoration Movement to lead a revolution of mercy that proclaims the full joy of the gospel.

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**Craig HARLINE.** *Way below the Angels: The Pretty Clearly Troubled but Not Even Close to Tragical Confessions of a Real Live Mormon Missionary.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014. 267 pp. \$22.00.

For some inexplicable reason it is in the last three pages, entitled "Thanksgiving," beyond the last chapter and Epilogue, that the author gives the three reasons why he wrote such an open and blatantly honest account of what it meant to him to be a Mormon missionary. It would have been better to have stated this earlier so that the reader could see how each unfolded throughout the whole experience. First, it was due in no small part to a recurrent nightmare—being assigned again to a two-year stint as ambassador for the Mormon Church. Why would something that was supposed to be so important to the Church and so wonderful for personal faith appear repeatedly as a nightmare? The author's response became an "armchair" psychological analysis of why this was happening. His "Freudian" conclusion: Wonderful? Yes and no. Eight plus hours a day "tracting" (door knocking) in a foreign land (Belgium, 1970s) with a barely recognizable memorized spiel on a subject uncomfortable but for the smallest minority of Belgians created a 99.9% failure rate—even if "success" could be a brief, friendly conversation at the door. Baptisms there were but so few that the entire mission for Belgium was thoroughly restructured shortly thereafter. From many such experiences the author leaves the impression that there was something lacking in the training that did not adequately prepare the missionaries for such negative realities. Perhaps the church authorities felt that emphasizing the positives while ignoring the negatives best prepared young minds. Yet unintentionally they intensified the negatives by implying that even having any negative thoughts or feelings was caused by lack of faith. Thus the missionaries were in many ways set up for psychological failure. Such struggles of courage and guilt filled many pages of the author's journal. One is impressed with the minute detail of all aspects of a young missionary's life, from the incessant recording of activities to the deeper internal feelings of momentary euphoria and occasional episodes of near clinical depression.

Secondly, what was for him such a surprise was that he found among numerous "Still-Believing Former Mormon Missionaries" a large number who were experiencing the same type of "nightmares" and like himself were very reluctant to talk about it lest a person be seen as weak in faith or that in some way by expressing something negative about missions, they might discourage some young person from taking on the "glory of being a Mormon." On the

other hand, he began to notice that other “Still-Believing Former Mormon Missionaries” had begun writing “true confessions” about their missions that were neither the overly optimistic “hero chronicles” nor the “exposés” of the disgruntled and discouraged. The author felt that he too had something meaningful to add to this new missionary genre.

The third reason was to recognize that sincere religious people of all faiths share more in common than they differ, or as the author put it, we were all “tooting a lot of the same spiritual horns.” This was a conclusion that he drew from his experiences rather than what he drew from his training—a conclusion that he came to by himself and in later reflection but that he felt should have been given him in the training. On the other hand, the training and church attitude almost unconsciously instilled a very strong sense of “us vs. them” mentality designed to steel the young men and women against the often severely negative response that would be so much a part of the daily life of the next two years. Find solace in knowing that the greater the world hates you the greater is your faith. Thus any sense of doubt, hesitation, or even psychological discomfort can only mean lack of faith. Trying to talk one’s self out of these attitudes became very much a part of daily routine.

Overall, Harline has presented a thoroughly engaging and for the Mormon Church as well a challenging perspective of Mormon missionary life. It should be noted that despite all difficulties he encountered as a missionary, the book is dedicated to all three of his children who all served themselves as Mormon missionaries—no doubt better prepared by their father’s experiences.

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**Fouad MASRI.** *Connecting with Muslims: A Guide to Communicating Effectively.* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2014. 176 pp. \$15.00.

This is the second book by Masri dealing with interactions between Christians and Muslims. A native of the troubled land of Lebanon, he was caught between the hate-filled conflict of Muslim, Israeli, and Christian communities of the Middle East, himself being from a Christian home. Hate and disgust was a part of his life until the death of a friend through collateral action caused him to realize that hate was not the answer—only Christ could bring healing and peace to war-torn hearts. From that experience he has been dedicated to helping his fellow Christians to understand the world of Islam and through better understanding to reach them for Christ. He has also founded the Crescent Project which is a Christian organization dedicated to the conversion of Muslims throughout the world and training fellow Christians for the same.

Perhaps the best advice Masri has for the Christian who wants to interact with Muslims is to read the Qur’an. In almost all cases the Muslim will be quite impressed with anyone who has taken the time to read their Holy Book. It will open many doors to further discussions about both the different and similar perspectives with Christianity.

The book is divided into two parts. The first handles basic NT texts dealing with evangelism with a special emphasis on developing an awareness of Muslims in your vicinity. Rather than being influenced negatively through often biased contemporary media, Masri challenges you to engage Muslims with the love of Christ as you interact with them in your

everyday life. He notes that the Christian need not be hesitant to engage the Muslim due to ignorance of Islam, if the follower of Jesus will prepare at least a “working understanding” of Islam—which he provides. After all, it is not the understanding of Islam that will convert the Muslim but the power of the Holy Spirit through a meaningful presentation of the gospel, which of course is not dependent on the rhetorical skill of the Christian. However one must also learn the Word well enough to “give a reason for the hope that is within you.”

Part 2 deals more practically from the perspective of the Muslim, that is, how the common Muslim views Christians and what are their basic objections to Christianity. Masri categorizes these objections under seven questions: What do you think of Muhammad? Hasn't the Injeel [NT] been corrupted? Who is Jesus, the Son of Mary? Who actually died on the cross? Don't Christians worship three Gods? and Why did Jesus have to be sacrificed? He encourages fellow Christians to prepare simple but meaningful responses to these questions because they will inevitably become the primary areas of discussion as a dialog between Christians and Muslims proceeds. For each question the author provides a brief background and explanation of why it figures prominently in the mind of the Muslim. He then outlines practical responses to each that draw in part from the Qur'an and then effectively relates them to the Injeel (Arab word for NT), explaining how and why the Muslims typically answer the questions the way they do, what legitimacy their understanding may have in regard to Christian teaching, and then shows how the NT answers the questions and where Islamic theology is inadequate and/or inaccurate.

To give a brief example of Masri's suggested response to a question, in this case “Who Jesus Is,” he notes that the Qur'an states that Jesus was virgin born, performed miracles and was most likely resurrected from the dead, none of which was attributed to Muhammad. Jesus is mentioned some 90 times in the Qur'an—much more often than Muhammad. In a sense, Jesus was the greatest of the Prophets because of these things, but he was not the last Prophet, which implies that his message was corrupted by his followers and thus it was necessary for a later, and last Prophet to be sent. However, according to the Qur'an, despite being the greatest Prophet, he was not the Son of God nor was he divine. Often the initial response from a Muslim on hearing/reading that Jesus was God's Son implies sexual relations between God and Mary. Thus the Christian must clarify that even though Jesus was Mary's son and fully human, it was through the power of God (Holy Spirit) that this unique combination of the human and divine form came into being, not through human sexual relations. Jesus was fully God and fully man by the power of God. Inviting them to read Phil 2:5-11 or John 1:1-18 would be good to do at this point. The author offers of course much more than this on this question, but this gives you a picture of how he proceeds.

For many Christians who want to reach out to their Muslim neighbors, much of the material for the Islamic perspective will be quite unfamiliar. Masri's book would be an excellent source for helpful information about Islam as well as a practical guide in how to use that material effectively in conversations with Muslims. Since there will only be an increased interaction between Christians and Muslims in our world, it would be good for all Christians to prepare themselves for opportunities to engage their Muslim neighbors in meaningful dialog about our faith. Masri's book would be the place to start.

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**Kenneth E. BAILEY.** *The Good Shepherd: A Thousand-Year Journey from Psalm 23 to the New Testament.* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2014. 288 pp. \$24.00.

In the subgenre of “shepherd exegesis” (the reviewer’s term, not the author’s), this volume stands out in two ways. To begin with, Bailey bases his knowledge of middle-eastern sheep-herding practices on thirty years of acquaintance with actual middle-eastern shepherds. During his long career of teaching Bible and theology in Egypt, Lebanon, Palestine, and Cyprus, some of his students have come from shepherding families and have experience herding sheep themselves. In addition, the author reads Arabic fluently; here as in his other works he introduces the reader to both ancient and modern middle-eastern Bible commentators.

The book traces the use of Psalm 23 by later biblical authors, including the major prophets (Jeremiah 23, Ezekiel 34, Zechariah 10), all four Gospel writers (Matthew 18, Mark 6, Luke 15, John 10), and Peter (1 Peter 5). The writer finds ten commonalities among the passages: the identity of the Good Shepherd, the focus on the individual lost sheep or on the whole flock; the flock’s opponents, sometimes thieves and sometimes predators; a “Good Host(ess?)” (94—more on this in a moment); the Incarnation implied or realized; the “price paid” for the return of the lost sheep; repentance/return; bad sheep; celebration; and the location where the story ends. On each passage the book offers rhetorical analysis, commentary, and a theological summary.

The book demonstrates strong echoes of the Shepherd Psalm through the rest of the canon. Of the ten commonalities among the passages, all but two appear strong and defensible. In establishing the “Good Host(ess?)” theme, the writer acknowledges that the relevant verb in Psalm 23 appears in masculine form, but he uses middle-eastern dining customs as an opportunity to discuss male and female aspects of God’s provision for his people (53–57). This approach seems to stretch the text to make an otherwise valid point.

Another of the commonalities that appear weaker than the rest: the “price paid” for returning the lost sheep to safety. This theme clearly belongs in the discussion, for Jesus says, “I lay down my life for the sheep” (John 10:15 ESV). But the author reads the theme back into the OT passages with indifferent results; there the “price paid” becomes no more than the work of looking for a sheep in the wilderness, an aspect usually not mentioned in the actual accounts.

The chapter on Mark 6 creates a plausible but (to the reviewer’s mind) doubtful connection to the Shepherd Psalm and to the political situation at the time of the feeding of the 5,000. Space forbids further discussion, but fortunately the whole work does not depend on this chapter; the book would make its contribution even if it did not cover the feeding passage at all.

These few negatives do not outweigh the positive contributions of the book, both overall and in detail. The writer establishes his thesis, that later biblical writers made extensive and creative use of Psalm 23. He also provides helpful background material that can inform exegesis of the later passages. For example, his discussion of how village shepherds managed their flocks, even into the twentieth century, illuminates John 10 (213–224).

This book will work for a variety of audiences, from undergraduate students to professional scholars. Its clear organization and lucid prose make it readable all through, and its repetition (in the good sense) also make it usable as a reference book.

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**Craig BLOMBERG.** *Can We Still Believe the Bible?* Grand Rapids: Baker, 2014. 274 pp. \$16.98.

The obvious answer to Blomberg's question is, "Yes!" What else would we expect? Blomberg, however, does not just give a simple answer. As a credible, conservative scholar he is willing and able to ask tough questions of this question and of the text. He appreciably does not set up easy issues just to dismantle them. He gives nuanced answers. Some of his answers may not be accepted as conservative enough for some church members. I, for one, appreciate Blomberg's willingness to leave some issues a little open-ended.

Blomberg focuses on six questions. Are the copies of the Bible corrupt? Was the canon just a political selection? Can translations be trusted? Is inerrancy ruled out by these issues? Aren't several biblical genres unhistorical? Doesn't miracle make the Bible mythical? Chapter by chapter he works his way through these questions. Then in his conclusion he pulls them all together.

Much of the information given is well known to the scholar. There is not much new material. What is beneficial is his open approach and willingness not to be dogmatic, even though he has a definite opinion. For the undergraduate student or church member this book is an invaluable resource for understanding textual criticism and views of inspiration. Blomberg introduces people like Bart Ehrman and the arguments of skeptics and agnostics. A very surprising chapter is on miracles. Church members would be attuned to his examples that come from his family and personal experiences, as well as some other people. Scholars, however, may balk at this approach in a scholarly work. Again, I for one, appreciate Blomberg's combining serious scholarship with personal experience. These two should be in tension and tandem for those of the Christian faith.

The Conclusion of the book is worth the read. Blomberg succinctly answers the six questions above. If one cannot read the whole book, the conclusion has some nuggets. Blomberg's openness is seen through such statements as, "The great news, however, is that none of these six restrictions that some would place on faith is even remotely necessary" (215). He makes a distinction between what is essential and what is important. One's opinion on the six questions is important but not essential for one to be a Christian. There is room for difference. Acceptance of one another should be the result even if there is not agreement.

Another surprising quote is, "Millions of evangelicals worldwide and throughout history have not accepted the belief that every last word of Scripture is without error, yet they are living (or have lived) faith-filled, Christ-directed, God-honoring lives" (221). Some on the far right would question that someone who is not an inerrancy believer is really a Christian. Blomberg, although holding to inerrancy is open to those of different persuasion. He states that almost nothing is at stake if Job never existed, but everything is at stake if Jesus never lived (223).

Blomberg closes his book answering its title: "We should still believe the Bible and act accordingly, by following Jesus in his discipleship" (225). Amen.

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**Michael Joseph BROWN.** *What They Don't Tell You: A Survivor's Guide to Biblical Studies.* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2015. 125 pp. \$12.93.

Brown's survival guide offers a condensed representation of biblical studies with "Rules of Thumb" that are organized thematically to remove the many stumbling blocks that newer students, particularly Christians, meet in getting involved with the field. The book begins by setting forth its intentions and its focus on the historical-critical method. The first chapter explains how scholarship differs from an average Bible study by discussing its development and goals. He then lists and describes the methods and the history of the English Bible. In the second chapter Brown begins organizing content with "Rules of Thumb." This chapter stresses basic and advanced points involved in interpreting biblical texts, including the reader and the text's relationship. The third chapter has information about scholars and their association with the content of the field and their ways of communicating. The fourth chapter's focus is on the role of tradition, unexamined faith, and other challenges that faith has when engaging scholarship. The rest of the book consists of Brown's exhortation about the joys found in embracing biblical studies.

This book's inherent strength is that despite the large amount of information communicated, it remains short in length and pithy. Brown offers "Rules of Thumb" that are proverblike in what they contribute for guidance on essential concepts that appear to be small. For example, Brown presents an overview of how to construct arguments. When readers encounter information like this it discourages misunderstandings and encourages maturity. The additions in the second edition contribute to the book's overall strength as well. Brown updated the book by refining his explanation of postmodern biblical criticism and added a new section on contextualized forms of biblical interpretation. The main additions include a "Rule of Thumb" that encourages readers to define technical terms and an appendix that offers resources for further study. These additions make the book point beyond itself, which helps Brown's advice endure as readers continue in their studies. The advice is made to last.

The weaknesses of this book involve missed opportunities. If Brown's principles concerning the religious reader's initial reaction to scholarship, particularly those of chapter 4, were moved to the beginning of the book, it would guard against unnecessary pitfalls. Christians with an unexamined faith need to have these issues discussed early so they have the tools to adapt. Another weakness is the lack of clarity concerning scholarship's output that is exacerbated by discussing the value of education as making someone good or bad instead of informed or ignorant. This has the consequence of blurring Brown's connection with his understanding of biblical interpretation as trying to understand and explain what the Bible means. Brown seems to feel disdain about the way Bible study is often done, but he still says that there is nothing wrong with maintaining its problems. He says that scholarship can change lives, but Brown should explain if scholarship has been effective at disseminating what it has gleaned.

Overall, Brown's survival guide belongs in the hands of new college or seminary students. A minister or scholar will not get a lot of use from this book simply because its information will already be second nature. However, its usefulness is based on this because things that are essential for newcomers are second nature to trained people, and trained people are not always able to articulate that information for their students. This is what makes it a com-

panion for other resources in an introductory course on biblical studies. Students that use this book are directed to keep improving and its principles will stick with them.

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**Andrew E. ARTERBURY, W. H. BELLINGER, Jr., and Derek S. DODSON.**  
*Engaging the Christian Scriptures: An Introduction to the Bible.* Grand Rapids: Baker, 2014. 288 pp. \$26.99, paperback.

An excellent introductory textbook for university students, this book would work equally well to lay readers who want a good, basic, nontechnical introduction to the world of academic study of the Bible. A 7×9 page size with wide margins makes note-taking easy. Numerous charts, maps, and pictures (all in black and white, but easy to read) illustrate descriptions on the pages. The preface is short, showing their interest: “a contextual approach to the Christian scriptures, giving attention to historical, literary, and theological contexts” (xi), to which they remain faithful throughout.

Eight chapters span the entire Bible: Places to Begin—canon, translation, and interpretation (21 pages); Pentateuch (42 pages); Former and Latter Prophets (41 pages); Writings (24 pages); Between the Testaments (14 pages); Gospels/Acts (51 pages); Paul (44 pages); General Letters and Revelation (23 pages). Highly select bibliographies follow each chapter; those of the NT are nearly twice as long as for the OT. Scripture and subject indexes end the book. There are no footnotes. Textboxes (with gray shading) throughout highlight important concepts, such as Creation and the Ancient Near East, The Literary Structure of Genesis 1, The Divine Name, The Immanuel Prophecy, a timeline of the Prophets, The Historical Jesus, important dates for Paul, and Household Codes, among numerous others.

As the subtitle claims, this is an *introduction*, not a *survey*. Certainly, it could be used in such a class to enhance the kind of interaction that beginning students (or all Bible readers, really) need to have when approaching the Bible. The authors present a walk-through of the Bible while reflecting on biblical scholarship, although never quoting or documenting their sources. As an entry-level introduction, this not only avoids bogging early students down in such detail, it stays focused on the point at hand: getting students familiar with the language and issues relevant for actually reading biblical texts, while preparing them to go deeper at some later time. The writing style throughout is easy, but not breezy; it does not waste time but is clear, on point, insightful, and engaging.

Consequently, in areas where the authors deem it to be important for approaching biblical texts, especially areas that have been particularly saturated with debates (like the documentary hypothesis of the Pentateuch, or the authorship of Isaiah, or the dating of the book of Daniel, or the origins of the Gospels, or debates around the relation of Luke-Acts), they offer a highly readable fly-over of relevant debates, including a variety of alternatives. But since they are not interested in reviewing debates for the sake of debates, they do not have a standard “Review of the Scholars” section anywhere in the book. Instead, they will simply cover such when deemed relevant, and even then they do not always list alternative points of view. Among countless examples found throughout the book: the statement “canon lists most likely emerged in the third century” (7) is as close as they come to admitting to a huge debate; the view of the “majority text” is never even mentioned (despite a healthy section

on NT textual criticism, 13); Genesis 1 is presented from one literary point of view using a gray textbox chart to illustrate the explanation, followed by: “Most interpreters would agree that Gen 1 and 2 provide two creation accounts” (31), with no other indication of debates around this; and the dating of the Gospels is listed as “probably” followed by standard dating for each (but with no alternatives listed). For the book of Revelation, the authors more directly confront the readers themselves, naming a “very popular interpretation” that regards the book as “forecasting the future”—a view, surely, that students are more likely to have heard in popular forums. Half a page is spent debunking the approach, including the blunt statement: “the predictive approach has always been wrong” (253).

Lest I am misunderstood as criticizing the book for the things just listed, I am rather praising it. This book is overviewing such a vast amount of literature—biblical texts and scholarly debates alike—that it must have been exasperating at times to know what to include and what to leave out. A book like this could easily be nipped apart: I might want Luke-Acts treated together, instead of separated by John; or feel that Hebrews gets short-changed, with no more attention than James; or want a more definite inclination on the date and authorship of 2 Thessalonians; or insist that more attention be given to the early interpretation of texts by OT, apocryphal, and NT writers; or suggest that in light of the entry-level audience, a healthy glossary is needed. Others will disagree with and want other things.

But I would rather commend the book—every chapter and as a whole—and then note two chapters in particular: the two shortest, the first (Beginnings) and fifth (Intertestamental). For in these chapters, the authors do not merely recite historical tidbits or dry facts (as is often the case in other resources), they interact with the topics in meaningful ways demonstrating their significance, highlighting (as only one example) the importance of the Greek Septuagint for early Christians and the importance this has for both interpretational and canonical concerns, both then *as well as* now. At least these and other questions are getting brought up early in a student’s formal training for reading the Bible. The authors and publisher are to be congratulated on a sound resource that is aptly titled, and that will be usable beyond a simple read.

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**R. W. L. MOBERLY.** *Old Testament Theology: Reading the Hebrew Bible as Christian Scripture.* Grand Rapids: Baker, 2013. 352 pp. \$34.99.

Walter Moberly’s new book is a collection of essays on aspects of OT thought, most of them connecting rather immediately to aspects of theology that are still of interest for the church today. Moberly appears to have selected these essays with a view to exploring how one might read the OT theologically, in conversation with the contemporary church. The book makes for very enjoyable reading. While the choice of title is somewhat odd (see below), the studies that make up the book are written in an engaging style, building on and correcting past scholarship, but never allowing the main lines of the argument to be buried under scholarly minutiae. (Many of us prefer books that make continuous reference to earlier scholarship, but that doesn’t make for the type of reading that everyone enjoys.) Moberly also demonstrates an ability to see things in new ways.



It must be said that the title of the book seems ill-chosen, in that there has been a time-honored practice of using the title “Old Testament Theology” to indicate that a book *is* an OT theology, rather than that it deals (however obliquely) with select aspects of OT theology. Moberly’s book is nothing like an OT theology, although it would appeal to (and benefit) anyone who likes to read OT theologies.

Moberly opens with an in-depth discussion of the *shema*—an unexpected and (perhaps) clever way to begin a book dealing with a distinctively Christian approach to the OT. From there the chapters jump around to a fascinating assortment of topics, several of them of clear importance for Christian theology, including (no less) the questions of election (chapter 2) and of whether God changes (chapter 4). Other chapters deal with the theological center point within the tale of Jonah (chapter 6), God’s provision through manna (chapter 3), reading Isaiah in the light of the Gospels (chapter 5), and the biblical concepts of faith and wisdom (chapters 7–8). The chapter on reading Isaiah, of course, is a bit different from the others, in that it involves a degree of reading from the Gospels back *into* Isaiah—an approach that not everyone will find acceptable.

All in all, this is a fine work from Moberly. His conceptual frame is always current, but the discussion never sounds trendy. Moberly speaks regularly of finding meaning either “behind” or “in” the text, while dealing also with what is “in front of” the text (the reader’s context). When he uses the term “Old Testament” (as in the book’s title), he uses it *over against* “Hebrew Bible,” so that the term itself implies (for him) a Christian readership of the OT scriptures—seeking meanings in line with NT readings of the OT. (Thus the book’s subtitle.) This is all well and good, but it unfortunately leads to the one really worrisome aspect of Moberly’s project, which lies in his understanding of *meaning* as something like a shifting potential (*a la* Brevard Childs’s way of thinking). Moberly’s reasons for viewing meaning as a canonical commodity remain as sparsely argued as they were in Childs’s work. Happily, Moberly’s explicit references to those ideas are mostly confined to a single section of a single chapter, and the exegesis he models in the rest of the book is not affected by this way of thinking.

This book would not work well as the central text for an OT theology course, but it is the perfect choice for a supplementary text. Anyone with an interest in the OT will want to consider this book.

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**Tremper LONGMAN III.** *Old Testament Essentials: Creation, Conquest, and Return.* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2014. 215 pp. \$18.00.

This volume is an introductory-level survey of the OT story. Longman says the purpose of the book is “to help you grasp the message of the OT as it narrates God’s work from the time of creation up to Israel’s return from Babylonian exile,” along with an examination of the law, psalms, wisdom literature, and prophets (12). The book has a workbook format and, after the preface and introduction, is divided into 17 chapters, each intended for a one-week study. The chapters are (1) Creation, (2) Fall, (3) Abraham, (4) Isaac and Jacob, (5) Joseph, (6) Exodus, (7) Wilderness Wandering, (8) Law, (9) Priests, Holy Place, and Sacrifices,

(10) Conquest, (11) Judges, (12) Saul, David, and Solomon, (13) Psalms, (14) Wisdom, (15) Divided Monarchy, (16) Prophecy, (17) Exile and Return.

Each chapter has the following format. First, there is a suggested memory verse related to the theme of the chapter and an assigned reading from the relevant OT text(s). Second, a “Bible Study Guide” lists several content and reflection questions on the Bible reading. Third, there is a “Reading” section with an essay of 4 to 8 double-columned pages. This section overviews the content of the biblical text, highlights key characters, events, theological emphases, and relevant historical background. Fourth, a “Reading Study Guide” follows with several content and reflection questions on the “Reading.” Fifth, an “Anticipating the New Testament” section makes connections between to OT text under consideration and the NT, and this section includes a few questions on the connections. Sixth, “The Ancient Story and Our Story” connects the biblical text and its themes to the believer’s life. Seventh, a “Going Deeper” bibliography offers a couple of additional resources (often commentaries).

The book has numerous strengths. It is well written and easily accessible for the beginning student of the OT. The selection of texts and themes will certainly leave the reader with a good sense of the overall OT story, its major themes, and why it matters for the Christian reader. The questions throughout each chapter help the reader think about what they are reading and reinforce the significant information. Longman does a good job of bringing in relevant historical and cultural information to inform one’s reading of the biblical text. He also does well in admitting difficulties for which there are no clear answers. Longman also helpfully guides the reader to see the OT as an integral part of the Christian’s story and its relevance for Christian life.

I note a few problems with the book as well. First, granting that discernment of “essentials” requires judgment calls, the selection of material covered seems somewhat unbalanced. Over half the chapters are rooted in the Pentateuch, but there is only a single chapter on the literary prophets. Within that chapter, Longman focuses largely on only two prophets, Jeremiah and Daniel. For all its significance in the NT, Isaiah receives almost no consideration. Second, at times Longman leaves the impression that there is only one answer for what are complex interpretive issues, such as the meaning of “good and evil” with respect to the forbidden tree in Genesis 3, the meaning of “I Am” in Exodus 3, the purpose of the ban, and the repeated line in Judges that “there was no king in Israel.” These issues, however, are minor compared to the overall value of the book for introducing Christians to the message of the OT.

The book is intended for small group study, but it would function well as a text for a college-level OT introduction course or as a Sunday school workbook for adult classes.

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**Joel B. GREEN and Jacqueline E. LAPSLEY, eds.** *The Old Testament and Ethics: A Book-by-Book Survey*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2013. 216 pp. \$22.00.

This volume, a collection of sixty-one essays written by thirty-three authors, is a subset of articles chosen from among the over five hundred articles originally appearing in the *Dictionary of Scripture and Ethics* (Baker Academic, 2011). These articles appear in seven

major sections. The first section, "Overview," is a set of three overview essays that set forth the theological and methodological framework for the remaining articles. Sections 2 through 6 (Pentateuch; Historical Books; Wisdom and Psalms; Prophets; Deuterocanonical/Apocryphal Books) next comprise essays devoted to each book in the Protestant and Catholic OT canons. The final section, "Special Topics in Old Testament Ethics," contains seven essays on special topics such as "Dead Sea Scrolls" (Amy C. Merrill Willis), "Ten Commandments" (Jacqueline E. Lapsley), and "Ethics of Exile" (Daniel Smith-Christopher). Essays in the first section average fourteen pages' length, whereas those devoted to biblical books average two pages. All but three articles conclude with a short bibliography for further study.

As an abridgment from the larger *DSE*, the book inherits many of *DSE*'s weaknesses and strengths. Evangelical and conservative readers may find problematic the prevailing stance toward biblical authority in the articles articulated at the outset in Bruce C. Birch's essay, "Scripture in Ethics: Methodological Issues." While Birch rightly rejects the simplistic notion that all well-intending readers of Scripture will uniformly and easily distill Scripture's relevance for contemporary ethical formulation, he downplays too much the central authority of Scripture for that task, choosing instead to center ethical formulation in the less well-defined "experience of the biblical communities with the character and activity of God" (31).

A second major weakness is the relative paucity of contributors from theologically conservative camps. Not only is M. Daniel Carroll R. one of the few evangelical contributors, his excellent article, "Old Testament Ethics," is one of the few to acknowledge the fine contributions made by right-of-center voices such as Walter Kaiser and Christopher J. H. Wright to the discussion of the interplay of Scripture and ethics.

A third weakness is an uneven depth of coverage in the articles. Whereas some articles (L. Daniel Hawk on Joshua and Bruce C. Birch on 1-2 Samuel) engage in some detail the specific ethical issues raised by a given biblical book, others only identify the ethical issues raised within the book and offer no comment (e.g., Dennis Olson on Genesis).

The aforementioned weaknesses notwithstanding, there is much to commend this work to the preacher, student/researcher, and lecturer as a starting point for study of an OT or Apocryphal book. It provides economical access to a significant set of *DSE* articles. These articles, in turn, call the reader's attention to ethical questions and contributions to ethical formulation raised by the particular biblical books. There are gems among the articles such as Stephen B. Chapman's "Ethics of Deuteronomistic History," the article on Joshua by L. Daniel Hawk, and Jacqueline Lapsley's insightful treatment of Ruth.

Several writers provide not only excellent coverage of a book's ethical content, but also serendipitous introductions to the books as a whole. Few short introductions can rival the first three paragraphs of Else Holt's article on Jeremiah. Those needing a brief introduction to the deuterocanonical/apocryphal books or to the Dead Sea Scrolls will do little better than David de Silva's essay on the Apocrypha and Amy C. Merrill Willis's brief discussion of the Scrolls. Finally, contributors of articles dealing with predominantly narrative books deftly assist readers to see the ethical emphases presented indirectly through a book's plot and characterization.

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Bill T. ARNOLD and Richard S. HESS, eds. *Ancient Israel's History: An Introduction to Issues and Sources*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2014. 560 pp. \$44.99.

The Bible's historical credibility has long been in the crosshairs of academic studies. Responses to those attacks have often been simplistic and naïve. Arnold and Hess have produced a volume of sophisticated essays that provides up-to-date and responsible analyses of the historiographic issues surrounding ancient Israel's history.

For the believer, the value of such an enterprise is a given; students in our increasingly nonfaith-based world, however, may question the value of such a study. The editors provide two major answers: "The ancient world is at once similar and different. Its history enables us to identify the enduring values, both virtues and vices that remain common to all humanity. It also gives us a place to stand that is truly outside our own present age and the means to view this age from a profoundly different perspective" (3). They also emphasize that the Hebrew Bible has profoundly impacted Western history, art, law, and ideology. In addition, the Hebrew story provides perspectives on Christianity and Judaism (and I would add Islam) and the larger impact all these have had, and continue to have, on world history (3-4). The barrage of assaults on the historical credibility of the text, however, often leaves the uninitiated believer adrift as to how to navigate the arguments.

The volume is arranged chronologically and one may access the specific sections of Scripture with relative ease. Each chapter surveys the basic storyline of the section and proceeds to provide background information. A sizeable portion of each chapter addresses the respective academic issues and arguments and demonstrates the viability of the Bible's basic storyline.

Rather than respond to the array of issues themselves, the editors enlisted fifteen seasoned scholars of faith, who are well acquainted with the academic issues. Characteristic of the approach is Hoffmeier's chapter (46-90) dealing with the Exodus and Sinai wanderings. The skeptics' caricature is that there is no evidence of Israel's presence in Egypt, no ancient extrabiblical sources to record the events, and attempts to trace the route of the exodus have proved futile. Hoffmeier responds to each charge and marshals, at minimum, circumstantial evidence to demonstrate the viability of the historicity of the events. Sadly, such responses as his have failed generally to impact the juggernaut of cynicism and believers have often been left in the lurch of how to respond. This volume provides data to help equip the serious student with information to weigh the options.

Ortiz (227-261) similarly addresses the historicity of David's and Solomon's united monarchy. Many scholars have noted that no contemporary extrabiblical sources mention either individual and have thus inferred from additional circumstantial (and sometimes distorted) evidence that neither king ever existed or alternatively did not rule over kingdoms of any significance. Out of the archaeological data and inferences derived from extrabiblical, anthropological, and sociological perspectives, Ortiz provides viable explanations that dovetail with the biblical narratives.

In spite of the complexity of the material, the authors have written clearly, navigating the material in such a way that serious students can find the discussions readable and informative. Occasional side-notes help summarize specifics that contribute to the biblical storyline: Ancient Alalakh (27), Mari (40), Edom (242), Rise of Apocalyptic Literature (441).

A number of maps and photographs accompany the chapters, however, the photographs generally are poorly reproduced. The Kindle edition (\$29.99) *might* render the photographs better.

The editors state that they designed the volume for advanced undergraduate and graduate students; they have hit their target fairly well. For those uninitiated with the issues, the volume will be more of a challenge, but it is not beyond the scope of their comprehension.

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**Daniel E. FLEMING.** *The Legacy of Israel in Judah's Bible: History, Politics, and the Reinscribing of Tradition.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012. 408 pp. \$34.99.

Fleming's book highlights the methodological struggles in the use of OT content for a historical reconstruction of ancient Israel. Fleming argues that the relationship between the Bible and history has typically been framed as degrees of "historicity," often beginning by debating the nature of the biblical tradition and only then looking at archeological evidences to "prove/disprove" the tradition. Fleming avers an inverse approach writing: "Instead of beginning with the question of whether a given narrative or picture is accurate and therefore useful for history, we can follow the archeologists and let the historical questions come first." (31) Fleming finds the archeological record of early Iron Age Palestine too vague to bear the weight of traditional (biblical) reconstructions of "Israelite" emergence. Nevertheless, he is adamant that the earliest traditions in the OT/HB represent historically attested models of collaborative socio-political organization parallel to examples gleaned from Bronze Age cuneiform texts.

The book's thesis represents an emerging trend to isolate so-called Northern Israel's identity and historical processes from the picture of a "United Monarchy" centered in Jerusalem. Fleming suggests relinquishing traditional geographic identifiers of Northern/Southern kingdoms for reconstructions of ancient Israel as this approach "assumes a homogeneity of social and political culture that must be challenged." In his words, "The names Israel and Judah do not offer a universal key to fixed identities through time, and they belong to a complex geography of shifting identities," (17). Fleming reconstructs two distinct "Israels," historically identifiable through a "profound contrast" at the "macro level of social organization, the large scale of political decision making." The polity he labels *Israel* represents a decentralized collaborative society that preceded monarchy and is essentially an alternative approach to governance. *Judah*, on the other hand, represents a distinct polity bearing no historic concept of collaborative politics. From emergence, Judah emphasized the centralized role of Jerusalem as both political and sacred space. This "two-state" paradigm is Fleming's canon for distinguishing authentic *Israelite* traditions from *Judahite* ideology.

The book is organized in four major movements. Part One presents the basic argument for a bifurcated approach to "Israelite" history and tradition. Fleming delimits insightful distinctions between *Israel* and *Judah* polity. In addition to a unique deference toward centralized space (Jerusalem), *Judah* bears an unflagging fidelity to Davidic succession, suggesting a lack of autonomous regional (tribal) social/political associations. Conversely, *Israel* assumes no historical emphasis on either centralized governance or cult. Individual rulers were deposed without regard to the ruling house, testifying to the shared right of rule by

multiple constituents. Fleming proposes two major hypotheses: 1) Only in *Israel* was there a perceived need for a group etiology apart from monarchy. 2) All primary phases of biblical history/tradition prior to Davidic rule, originate in *Israelite* circles of influence (shared Jacob kinship, the Exodus and Mosaic leadership, pre-monarchic decentralized political conditions) (29).

Part Two gleans from biblical texts the evidence for the “two-state” paradigm, paying special attention to the absence and/or latter addition of Judah to earlier tribal lists. Fleming argues how *Israel’s* “collaborative politics” engenders a collection of disparate traditions prompting him to find multiple “voices” within the authentic tradition, each representative of distinct entity. For example, he isolates both eastern and western conquest tradition, each with a different vision of Mosaic leadership, as well as a particular Benjaminite tradition, notably evident within the Saul narratives.

Part Three defines the concept of “collaborative politics” providing extrabiblical examples. Fleming highlights two sets of distinct approaches to group governance. First, he defines *heterarchy* versus *hierarchy*, as power transmitted in parallel units rather than top down (188). He further notes the difference between *corporate* and *network* strategies suggesting that collaborative politics are *corporate*, nonexclusionary, sharing power across different sectors of society, whereas centralized governance reflects inherently exclusionary *network* strategies. A foremost expert in Bronze Age cuneiform texts, Fleming places particular emphasis on a reconstruction of Amorites and Aramean group politics. Fleming suggests that we understand both groups, not as outside invaders, but as historic indigenous peoples inhabiting both established village life and long-range pastoralist communities.

In the final section, Fleming addresses overarching methodological questions, adamantly questioning the efficacy of recent emphasis on studying “Israelite” ethnicity. He finds this approach as a futile attempt to connect material culture of the early Iron Age Palestine with the name Israel in the so-called Merneptah Stela, an entity who for Fleming is far too nebulous to ground any historical reconstruction. The final chapter discusses how to distinguish “genuine” from “invented” tradition by asking questions of continuity and change. Communal habit and memory are rooted in continuity. Appealing again to his reconstruction of Bronze Age collaborative politics, Fleming argues that traditions reflecting *Israel’s* inclination toward collaborative politics are more “genuine” and therefore useful for historical reconstruction.

I agree with the overarching thesis that scholars/readers must come to terms with the historical reality that the OT is essentially Judah’s book. However, Fleming’s miasmatic treatment of *Judahite* history/tradition is too dismissive, suggesting that *Judah* should not be understood as “Israel,” because of a presumed inability to comprehend collaborative politics. Furthermore, does *Israel’s* ability to relocate its capitol imply a rejection of centralization, or does it simply demonstrate that the center could be moved? His logic appears flawed as it is evident that both entities accepted monarchy, albeit in disparate degrees, by the eighth century; Fleming’s *terminus a quo* for *Judahite* history.

There is a potential theological/missiological pay-off in Fleming’s emphasis upon Israelite polity over ethnicity. Polity discussions allow for a more porous “big tent” Israel; however, a priori rejection of ethnicity scholarship is unfounded and reactionary. We may never reconstruct Merneptah’s Israel, but there are clear distinctions within settlement patterns in Late Bronze/Iron I Palestine. It appears that Fleming is open to discussing a theo-

retical “Group A” and “Group B”); however, he rejects use of Egyptian designations from the period (which is all we have) as too vague. His position both reflects a dismissal of ethnic markers and is essentially framed as an anti-argument grounded in silence.

Fleming offers the reader an important discussion of methodology, insightful historical reconstructions, and arguments for the “genuineness” of early biblical traditions. His approach ultimately represents what Richard Hess calls “Critical Orthodoxy” in that both the biblical account and critical methodology are given equal footing. Fleming’s mediation of differing interests in reconstructing an ancient Israel will likely spur on countless debates and ultimately satisfy neither maximalist nor minimalist.

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**Patricia DUTCHER-WALLS.** *Reading the Historical Books: A Student’s Guide to Engaging the Biblical Text.* Grand Rapids: Baker, 2014. 208 pp. \$22.00.

As its title makes clear, Dutcher-Walls’ book is intended for students from beginning to end. Its prose is clear, its organization lucid, and it has a judicious sprinkling of charts, maps, and discussion questions. The rhetoric is that of a friendly teacher, frequently using second-person address, and making light references to familiar examples in technology and popular media. Dutcher-Walls chooses a helpful governing image for reading the historical books of the OT: finding a family history in one’s attic, and learning to read that family history by exploring contextual, literary, and historiographic issues.

This guidebook introduces the beginner to the basic issues of reading the historical books—Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings, Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah. One chapter lays out the “context” of these books, a basic outline of the geography, history, and culture. The second chapter is a primer on literary methods for reading these narratives, from plot to character to point of view. The third chapter switches to rhetorical criticism, giving just a taste of the way the historical biblical books present their “interests” and try to persuade their readers. The final two chapters go deeper, using a well-chosen sampling of comparative ancient Near Eastern materials in order to discuss how the OT handles history-writing and history-shaping.

Throughout, Dutcher-Walls presents unobjectionable background information as a springboard for further study; she is particularly deft at avoiding the controversies that beset Bible teachers. She promises to “take the text of Scripture seriously” (xvi-xvii) while completely bypassing any questions of faith, inspiration, or revelation. Although she uses the terms “Old Testament” and “Scripture,” in general she simply calls these books “ancient documents,” never mentioning the NT or any interpretations within the Jewish or Christian tradition. She can matter-of-factly state that these books, like other ancient writings, present “the course of human life and events” in conversation with “God’s intentions,” without ever raising troubling questions—such as “God’s intentions” for the slaughter of Israel’s enemies.

Similarly, Dutcher-Walls explicitly bypasses the question of whether “the events recorded in the biblical books happened the way they are described” (xvii). Her chapter on “the context of the text” stipulates that she is only describing the social world “as it is conveyed

in the historical writings” (27). Thus she ducks the question of how the actual setting(s) of writing, preexilic or exilic or postexilic, may have influenced the views of holiness, proper worship, and Israelite identity presented in the OT historical books (22-27). Only at the end of the book does she delicately raise questions of “a diverse view” in the way ancient historians adapt their sources (150-155).

Again and again, I found myself admiring Dutcher-Walls’ ability to say true (and important) things without getting into those controversies and reconstructions that bedevil the biblical scholar, and confuse the beginning student. It may be that for many students, this invaluable guide to basic contextual and literary questions, this straightforward presentation of ancient historiography, is a necessary precursor to deeper questions of sources and theology. For such students, it makes sense to begin with what we *do* know—and with methods of study that can guide exploration—rather than present the confusing issues that these texts raise, questions of historical accuracy and theological adequacy.

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**Bruce K. WALTKE, James M. HOUSTON, and Erika MOORE.** *The Psalms as Christian Lament: A Historical Commentary*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014. 312 pp. \$28.00.

This volume is a second volume or continuation of *The Psalms as Christian Worship: A Historical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010; hence *PCW*) by the same authors. A third volume is planned, but still in its early stages. The second volume follows the pattern set by the first. After an introduction (chapter 1), the authors select one psalm for each of the next ten chapters and provide: I. The Voice of the Church, II. The Voice of the Psalmist: Translation, III. Commentary, divided into two parts, Part 1: Introduction (with typical subheadings such as Literary Context, Form Criticism, and Rhetorical Criticism), and Part 2: Exegesis (with subheadings appropriate to each psalm), and IV. Conclusion (with emphasis on interpretation through a christological lens).

The authors select the seven traditional Penitential Psalms (except for Psalm 51, included in the first volume) with Psalms 5–7 and 44 as the basis of their study. They defend their selection as a move to avoid debate and the charge that “other psalms could have been chosen as more representative of the genre” (xi). Their selection, however, only makes this charge more appropriate. Any theology of lament depends on the psalms used as case studies. So while only eleven of sixty laments in the Psalms include sin as a primary or secondary cause for lament, seven of the ten text-based chapters in this volume bring sin or guilt into the discussion (from the psalm or from the Voice of the Church). Consequently, though they do not deny other causes, the authors inordinately stress Christian lament for sin. Two concerns fuel the authors’ emphasis: 1) the desire to recover theological “sin” from the human sciences, and 2) concern that “the interpretation of lament is too subversive to leave to liberal theologians,” especially Walter Brueggemann and his followers (3-4).

In “The Voice of the Church” the authors select one or more writers from the Church Fathers to the Reformers: Origen, Ambrose, Jerome, Augustine, John Chrysostom, Cassiodorus, Thomas Aquinas, Erasmus, Martin Luther, John Calvin, and many others. This sec-



tion is the highlight of each chapter to one with little familiarity of the history of interpretation. It becomes obvious that for centuries the church has interpreted the Psalms as the voice of David, as corporate Israel now become the church, and as the voice of Christ.

“The Voice of the Psalmist” provides a fresh translation of each psalm with extensive grammatical and textual notes, helpful to anyone working with these psalms. The only oddity is the consistent use of “I AM” for the Tetragrammaton, both in the translation and throughout the book. It may be true that the name of God (YHWH) carries some meaning related to “being” such as “I AM.” Common custom, however, is to transliterate Hebrew names, e.g., Adam, Jacob, not translate and call them “Land Man” and “Grabber.” Consistency would demand the same for God, thus, YHWH or Yahweh; or to follow the longstanding church custom and use “LORD.” It is odd that the authors argue for listening to and following the voice of the Church, but disregard their own advice with how they handle the name of God.

In “Part III: Commentary,” Waltke employs what he calls “Accredited Exegesis.” He explains and defends this method with unusual and unfortunate ferocity in the first volume (*PCW*, 1-112). Here he spares no words for his disdain of other methods, especially post-modern approaches: “postmoderns bastardize the Christian commentator’s allegory method . . . postmoderns are, for the most part, apostate, anthropocentric, and self-serving, and so deconstruct the author’s intention to foist their own political and/or social agenda on Scripture to validate their elitism . . .” (*PCW*, 7). “Accredited Exegesis,” however, reads the text for its plain sense and for its reference to Christ. To best understand the exegesis in this volume I recommended the reader to read pages 1-112 of *The Psalms as Christian Worship*. Unfortunately, Waltke’s lack of patience for other methods continues in this volume. He would find a broader audience if he followed what his colleagues write about Erasmus, who recognized that “all human authors have their blind spots so that we read them with scholarly discrimination and judgment, and yet also with indulgence” (153), and regarding those with whom Erasmus disagreed, “we do not judge them all as ‘heretics’” (153).

The commentary portion includes an unusually high sensitivity for chiasmic or concentric patterns and appeals to root words and etymology to establish meaning. In Psalm 5 (ch. 2), Waltke finds eight chiasmic structures and appeals to the meaning of eight root words. These emphases are present, but decline in following chapters. Concentric or chiasmic patterns may be a special feature of some psalms, including Psalm 5. The appeal to etymology, however, continues a practice dismissed by modern linguistics. I refer the reader to a short essay by Douglass Moo, “We Still Don’t Get It: Evangelicals and Bible Translation Fifty Years after James Barr” (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014: 9-14). Moo provides an excellent discussion of the “root fallacy” and why interpreters continue to be drawn into such explanations of words.

A final warning must be raised regarding the authors’ regard for depression. In an early reference to Evagrius’s guide for the daily life of monks, our authors write, “Gluttony, lust, and avarice are bodily temptations while sadness stands alone as a frustration of desire, what we might call depression” (16). Much later they refer to the “global pandemic” of depression, “viewed by the medical profession as clinically as serious as cancer and heart attacks. Yet to assume that guilt vanishes with medication and to dismiss religion is rather like treating a migraine by cutting off one’s head” (239). The authors do not recognize depression as a serious physiological disease. Cancer and heart attacks are the two leading causes of death in

America. However, the tenth leading cause of death is suicide (the second leading cause of death in those between the ages of 15 and 34); mental illness, including depression, is a serious medical issue. It is true that some depression is due to sin, but to make such sweeping claims with such graphic terms is irresponsible. The last thing a person suffering from a bipolar disorder or serious clinical depression needs to hear is that their condition is not serious and the problem is due to their own sin.

This second volume offers beneficial information on the ten selected psalms, especially the look back to the “Voice of the Church.” The translations with extensive notes in “The Voice of the Psalmist” are helpful, even if a bit quirky. And the “Commentary” offers a strong historical-critical exegesis with the addition of typology. I only hope the third volume will discontinue the broadsides against other interpreters and express greater sensitivity to human struggles with problems other than sin. Both of these attitudes are an unfortunate drawback to an otherwise excellent resource for graduate students and pastors.

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**Bernd JANOWSKI.** *Arguing with God: A Theological Anthropology of the Psalms.*

Translated by Armin Siedlecki. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2013. 430 pp. \$70.00.

What is a human being according to the Psalms? This volume is an intensive and comprehensive response to the question. The book begins with two chapters that introduce the topic or question of the book and establish Janowski’s method. Each of these chapters, and every subsequent chapter, includes a brief excursus relevant to the topic (with a supporting bibliography). Thus, we find in chapter 1 (“Fundamental Questions of Old Testament Anthropology”) the excursus: “The Biblical Worldview,” and in chapter 2 (“The Psalms as Fundamental Anthropological Texts”) the excursus: “The Whole Human Being.” Janowski then divides his book into two major divisions of four chapters each: Part 1 explores “From Life to Death” in the Psalms (chapters 3–6). Each chapter in this and the second division includes the exegesis of a psalm as a case study, investigation of a keyword(s) related to the psalm and chapter topic, and an excursus (as above): chapter 3, “How Long Will You Hide Your Face? The Complaining Human Being” (case study: Psalm 13, keywords: “Seeing and Hearing,” excursus: “Light and Darkness”), chapter 4, “Swords Are on Their Lips: The Hostile Human Being” (case study: Psalm 59, keyword: “Revenge,” excursus, “The Enigma of Evil”), chapter 5, “Establish Justice for Me according to My Righteousness, YHWH! The Persecuted Human Being” (case study: Psalm 7, keywords: “Heart and Kidneys,” excursus: “Connective Justice”), and chapter 6, “When Will He Die and His Name Perish? The Human Being in Sickness” (case study: Psalm 41, keyword: “Vitality,” excursus: “The World of the Sick”).

Between the major divisions of the book is a short interlude entitled, “The Gate to the Abyss.” Here, Janowski pauses for “excursive reflections” on two drawings by Paul Klee (“Outbreak of Fear,” and “The Gate to the Abyss”), a poem by Paul Celan (“Psalm”), and music from Franz Schubert (“With My Hot Tears”). These artistic expressions interpret the

low point of human existence (now reached in the book), and while the artists did not have the Psalms in mind, their works thematically connect to the nadir of human life.

In the second half of the book, "From Death to Life," Janowski maintains his earlier pattern: chapter 7, "My Life Has Touched the Underworld: The Transitory Human Being" (case study: Psalm 88, keywords: "This Life and Afterlife," excursus: "Life and Death"), chapter 8, "You Have Girded Me with Gladness: The Praising Human Being" (case study: Psalm 30, keyword: "Gratitude," excursus: "The Beautiful Day"), chapter 9, "You Show Me the Path of Life: The Gifted Human Being" (case study: Psalm 16 [with Psalm 23], keyword: "Immortality," excursus: "Closeness to God"), and chapter 10, "My God, My God, Why Have You Forsaken Me? God's Human Being" (case study: Psalm 22, keywords: "Psalm-Prayer," excursus: "*Ecce homo*" ["the human being?"]).

The book concludes with a brief postscript, "The Way toward Life," that encourages the reader "the Psalms are a book for living" not just reading (348). The Psalms show the way to closeness with God, divine presence in the present time. The journey with the Psalms, from lament to praise, may be arduous, but the one who lives with the Psalms on the voyage will discover nothing less than life itself.

As this abbreviated synopsis of this volume suggests, the text is dense and comprehensive, the outcome of a lifetime devoted to the study of the Psalter. To take one further example, Janowski begins the second half of the book ("From Death to Life"), by introducing the understanding of death in Iron-Age Israel and Judah. He explains, "It took a relatively long time for ancient Israel to begin to understand death and dying as an encounter with their God YHWH and as the beginning of a more intensive form of communion with God" (212). One reason for this delay was their belief that YHWH was a God of the living, not the dead. Thus, the power of death and YHWH were mutually exclusive. The expansion of divine responsibility into the realm of the dead did not take place until the end of the eighth century to the beginning of the sixth century BCE, as attested by two extrabiblical documents (a funerary inscription, and two silver amulets) suggestive of the presence of YHWH's authority in the underworld. In the process of explaining these claims, Janowski lists Israelite mourning rituals (with supporting texts), offers an Egyptian drawing that illustrates burial rituals, charts the development of Israel's understanding of God and death from the eighth to second century BCE, provides a bibliography of resources, along with thirty footnotes—all within the first eight pages of chapter seven. The remaining three hundred pages are no less dense, but just as tightly packed with theses and evidence. Few monographs can claim such expansive knowledge brought together into one volume. Reader beware: this volume is no fast read.

Janowski also introduces the English reader to Continental scholarship on the Psalms, especially German studies that have "undergone remarkable resurgence . . . in the past twenty-five years" (xiii). On the one hand, Janowski's sixty-five page bibliography contains over fifteen hundred entries, only ten percent in English (copiously deployed in footnotes throughout the book). On the other, the author's extensive command of secondary literature does not mean he merely summarizes the conclusions of other scholars. To be certain, the most important work in *Arguing with God* is Janowski's—his own precise claims, set alongside detailed, comprehensive, and persuasive arguments.

So what is a human being in the Psalms? Summation of a simple answer from Janowski is hardly possible. Methodologically, Janowski asserts that OT anthropology requires an inte-

grative approach that defines and relates three elements: concrete circumstances, literary contexts, and anthropological constants. This approach retains the multidimensionality of the OT view of the human, leaving room for particularities (with concrete circumstances and literary contexts) as well as maintaining universal characteristics (with anthropological constants). If the Psalms are the mirror of the soul (Calvin), the essence of humanity, then it is only through God and in relationship to God that humans take their rightful position in the world. The questions posed to God in lament present humans as afflicted and complaining, not about the trivial, but about God leaving them to face a world full of injustice. Despite these questions, the Psalms know of the path to life, a path overcoming the crisis of trust (not a resolution of the particular crisis) and leading to renewed trust in God. As a result the Psalms guide a person to peaceful, confident waiting—grounded in relationship to God. This is one important reason for reclaiming the laments in Christian prayer. A second, perhaps even greater reason comes after Janowski’s careful work with Psalm 22 and the Markan Passion (chapter 10). Janowski concludes that NT Christology is Psalms-Christology (with Zenger, 338). It is because of the lament-spirituality of the Psalms that we are able to understand Jesus’ death and resurrection. For this reason it is even more important that the Psalms of Lament are included “as an integral component of Christian prayer” (338-339).

Few books merit translation from German to English (or vice versa); Westminster John Knox Press is to be applauded for recognizing the exceptional contributions and enduring value of Bernd Janowski’s *Konfliktgespräche mit Gott: Eine Anthropologie der Psalmen* (Neukirchener, 2003/2009) and bringing this text to a wider English-reading audience. If you have not already read the original German edition and you are serious about your scholarship in the Psalms (or biblical anthropology), immediately put the English translation on your reading list and make room for *Arguing with God* on your bookshelf among other German monographs of equal weight (Gunkel, Westermann, and Mowinckel). I think it unlikely that pastors or graduate students (unless in a course on Psalms) are likely to find Janowski’s immense work and dense prose to be especially rewarding, and I cannot imagine undergraduates reading more than a few pages before giving up. Such is the fate and honor of a specialized study, translated or not. Like other important works, Janowski’s ideas will require mediation into more popular formats and readable prose; another task worthy of pursuit.

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**Gary V. SMITH.** *Interpreting the Prophetic Books: An Exegetical Handbook.* Handbooks for Old Testament Exegesis. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2014. 224 pp. \$22.99.

The prophetic books of the OT/Hebrew Bible are often ignored in the pulpit due to their context-specific language, forms of speech, as well as the challenge of discerning appropriate contemporary relevance. In this book, Gary V. Smith serves as a guide for seminary students and pastors who desire to take up this challenge. Smith writes from an evangelical perspective, thus this handbook covers the prophets as they appear in the protestant canon, including Lamentations and Daniel. Additionally, he assumes the face value dates for their historical setting (6<sup>th</sup>-century Jonah). Like all volumes in this series, this book is structured in six chapters addressing genre, major themes, preparation for interpretation, interpretation,

proclamation, and a final chapter illustrating the process with two specific texts from the prophets.

Genre is a notoriously complex issue in the prophets. Smith handles it in three parts. First, he articulates three temporal categories of prophecy: present, near-future, and eschatological future. These temporal categories are not directly tied to genre, but must be discerned by the thematic content and literary context. Second, Smith outlines eleven different genres or forms of prophetic speech helpfully illustrating each form with specific texts. Third, Smith discusses issues related to Hebrew poetry: parallelism and figurative language. Throughout this chapter, Smith carefully focuses on, not just the form of the text, but on what the author was doing with the text. That is, on the pragmatics of the text. He is sensitive to prophets using traditional forms of speech in ironic or creative ways.

In the second chapter, Smith walks through each prophet discussing its major themes and overall purpose. Given the space limitations of the series and the size of this corpus, only the most cursory overview is possible, yet it serves to give the reader a general impression of what each book is about. In the “preparing for interpretation” chapter, Smith highlights the importance of knowing the historical, socio-economic, and religious setting of each prophet (86). He gives a one-paragraph description of the historical setting for each prophet, describes features of ANE prophecy generally, illustrates textual criticism extensively, and points readers to four-five recommended commentaries for each book as well as some of the main electronic resources.

Future-oriented prophetic texts present several significant interpretive challenges and questions. Smith addresses six of them head-on: how can you tell if a prophecy is metaphorical or literal? Should a future fulfillment be limited by the prophet’s contextual setting in history? Are prophecies conditional or unconditional? How does a Christian come to terms with the differences between some OT prophecies and their alleged NT fulfillment? How can one determine if a prophecy is about the near-future or eschatological future? How to deal with seemingly unfulfilled prophecies?

In the final two chapters, Smith outlines a process for and illustrates how to move from the prophetic text to a sermon. His process can be outlined in four main steps:

Getting Oriented: This involves close reading of the text in its literary context, understanding and defining the historical and cultural setting, writing a detailed descriptive outline.

Shaping the Presentation: This involves defining the audience you are addressing, developing a thematic outline, discerning a main idea, and reflecting on potential applications.

Determining the Principle: this is the noncontext-specific principle “applicable to all eras of history” (159).

Reflecting on Application: Smith avers that the goal of preaching is not simply to impart information, but “to help people grow more Christ-like in the practical ways they relate to others” (161).

This work is remarkable for the amount of information packed into a slender volume (192 pages of text). Throughout this work, Smith is focused on the sermon as the goal of interpretation. Thus, his emphasis on the pragmatics of the text is especially appropriate. The final two chapters outlining a process for sermon preparation with examples certainly sets this

book apart from many other introductions to the prophets. Nevertheless, there are a few areas in which this book could be strengthened. Since socio-economic and cultural background is so vital to interpreting the prophets, a separate bibliography in this area would have been helpful. Additionally, a bit more interaction with the history of scholarship related to the prophets would help the preacher understand some of the alternative perspectives they are likely to encounter in the commentaries. Finally, two areas deserve further discussion in an introductory volume of this kind: intertextuality and the impact of canonical approaches. Despite these caveats, this book is a helpful introduction. Its size allows it to serve as a useful supplementary textbook for a preaching from the OT class or an exegesis course. Gary V. Smith proves a wise and reliable guide through the thorny labyrinth of interpretive issues in the prophets.

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**John GOLDINGAY.** *The Theology of the Book of Isaiah*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2014. 158 pp. \$18.00.

The singular in the title of this book may be somewhat misleading. What Goldingay is *really* dealing with is signaled by his two major sections: “The THEOLOGIES in ISAIAH” (17-87), and “The THEOLOGY That EMERGES from ISAIAH” (89-149). This way of framing the book of Isaiah acknowledges two very important issues: that the book of Isaiah seems to contain at least three related but differing theologies—and that there is a distinction between the theologies which are explicit *within* the book of Isaiah—and the theology which may *emerge from the book as a whole*.

In his introduction, Goldingay addresses the problems with certain common assumptions which many readers make concerning Isaiah and also presents his own way of approaching the theology of the book of Isaiah (11). Goldingay suggests helpful ways of organizing the often disparate material in Isaiah (12-16).

The two assumptions which Goldingay questions are that the book of Isaiah proceeds “in a clearly logical and coherent way,” and that “the entire book was written by Isaiah ben Amoz.” (11). Instead, according to Goldingay, the book resembles a collage (12-14). Nevertheless, the collage does have themes which serve to unite the various individual components of the book of Isaiah (12). “There will then be something to learn from its individual elements and also something to learn from the total arrangement” (12). For example, Goldingay proposes ways in which the subsections of Isaiah 1–40 relate to one another, to this section of the book of Isaiah, and to the book as a whole (12-13). Whether or not a reader of Goldingay’s book agrees with his analysis of the unity (or the lack thereof) in authorship of the book of Isaiah, a reader should find helpful Goldingay’s comments concerning the contexts within which the various prophecies should be understood.

There is something for people across the theological spectrum to hate (or, at least, to take issue with)—and love—in this book. For example, Goldingay writes (72), “Isaiah 53 is not a prophecy of the Messiah but a portrait of how Yahweh’s servant-prophet becomes the means of Israel’s being put right with God, of Israel’s personal renewal, and of the nations’ coming to acknowledge Yahweh.” However, in the next sentence, Goldingay seems to throw

a bone (with some meat on it) to conservatives. “But one can see how the chapter came to help people understand Jesus’ significance.” Goldingay’s attempts to take Isaiah in a manner that treats the original context and meaning in a serious manner, while at the same time allowing for a legitimate NT significance for the prophecy, will undoubtedly draw fire from both directions. This probably indicates a balanced presentation. Goldingay’s discussion of the difference between the “meaning” and the “significance” of Isaiah’s prophecies—particularly those which the NT writers interpreted as referring to Christ—is very helpful (35). While other scholars have made similar distinctions, Goldingay has handled this issue in a brief and clear manner.

Goldingay’s style is generally clear and free of obscure scholarly terminology. Although scholarship certainly informs Goldingay’s presentation, he does not appear to feel the need to inform the reader of his scholarship. Indeed, his style often borders on the colloquial—or at least, the homey. For example, Goldingay comments on the tendency of Judah’s leaders to seek Yahweh at the surface level, while, at the same time “they formulate their policies on the basis of their own so-called insight (Isa 29:13-14) in the way that Christian meetings usually work” (55).

Goldingay has written a very readable and provocative book, which could be enjoyed by and beneficial to both undergraduates and graduate students. Furthermore, thoughtful laypeople, who are willing to be challenged and stretched, would find it a helpful resource for better understanding what the book of Isaiah is driving at. Goldingay refuses to confuse obscurity with profundity.

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**Carol A. NEWSOM with Brendon W. BREED.** *Daniel: A Commentary.* The Old Testament Library. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2014. 472 pp. \$50.00.

Newsom, Professor of Old Testament at the Candler School of Theology has produced a volume in the Old Testament Library series that in effect replaces the earlier commentary on Daniel in that series published in 1965 by Norman W. Porteous. One area where Newsome advances the discussion past Porteous is that she is able to make profuse use of the Dead Sea Scrolls, both its Daniel manuscripts for text-critical discussions and texts like the War Scroll that appears to have been influenced by the book of Daniel. She is also able to dialogue with scholarly commentaries and articles published since the time of Porteous’s work. Though this is a scholarly commentary, and Newsom engages deeply in tradition-critical questions, the commentary is clearly written so that a reader does not get bogged down in footnotes or excessively technical discussions.

As would be expected from a commentary on Daniel in this series, Newsom takes the typical critical view of the book of Daniel: that although Dan 1:1-2 appears to reflect the genre of historiography, both the court narratives (Daniel 1–6) and the rest of the book written in first person autobiographical style (Daniel 7–12) are works of fiction not history, that Daniel’s four kingdoms (Daniel 2 and 7) are Babylon, Media, Persia, and Greece not the traditional Christian view that they are Babylon, Medo-Persian, Greece, and Rome, that the crisis caused by Antiochus IV (167–164 BCE) forms the main backdrop of at least Daniel 7–12

(though not the court narratives) reflecting the real milieu in which the book was completed, that the “Messiah” is nowhere found in the book, and that Daniel’s prophecies are mostly written after the fact, and when they are not, the prophecies fail. To Newsom’s mind, these critical issues were settled in the nineteenth century with conservative scholar Pusey being the last serious scholar to defend the historicity and genuinely predictive nature of the book. Since she regards these issues as settled, she does not interact with conservative scholars (G. Archer, J. Baldwin, K. A. Kitchen, Alan Millard, E. J. Young, B. Waltke, and D. J. Wiseman) subsequent to Pusey who continue to argue for the traditional view of the book. Instead she simply assumes the common critical view and comments on the book from that perspective.

Newsom is particularly adept at narrative analysis, using techniques that have been refined in biblical studies circles since the time of Porteous. She sees the key theological theme in Daniel 1–6 as the need for Gentile human kings to recognize that God controls human history and that kings need to see their earthly, finite kingships as delegated to them by the eternally sovereign God of the Jews. In sections that deal with intertestamental history (Daniel 7, 8 and 11) Newsom gives careful, concise summaries of relevant events.

A distinctive and fascinating feature of this commentary is a treatment written by Brennan Breed following Newsom’s commentary on each unit that gives the reception history, that is, a brief history of interpretation, for that unit. These surveys discuss references to or interpretations of Daniel found, for example, in early apocalyptic writings (1 Enoch), in the Qumran writings, in the NT, in rabbinic writings (the Talmud), among church fathers (Jerome, Augustine, Hippolytus), in medieval Jewish commentators (Rashi, Ibn Ezra), by popes (Gregory) and reformers (Calvin, Luther), and by speculative dispensationalist writers (William Miller, Clarence Larkin [complete with his prophecy charts]). It even makes reference to the interpretations of Daniel in Islam and by historical figures like Gandhi.

In sum, Newsom’s commentary on Daniel with Breed’s reception histories constitutes a competent, up-to-date, well-written, informative treatment of the book from the critical perspective. As such it should find a place in every academic, theological library and will prove a valuable reference work for pastors and teachers.

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**Kevin YOUNGBLOOD.** *Jonah: God’s Scandalous Mercy. Hearing the Message of Scripture Commentary: 28.* Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014. 192 pp. \$29.99.

The focus of the *Hearing the Message of Scripture* commentary series is on interpreting the rhetoric of the biblical texts to understand the theological message the texts convey. In the structure of the commentary, each chapter of the biblical book is treated in six sections, containing discussions of the main idea of the passage, its literary context, a translation and exegetical outline of the chapter, an analysis of the structure and literary form of the chapter, an explanation of the grammatical details and historical context of the text, and an exploration of the canonical and practical significance of the text.

Youngblood’s contribution to the series investigates thoroughly the canonical, historical, and literary contexts of the book of Jonah, showing the importance of reading Jonah as



part of the canon of Scripture as a commentary on prophetic tradition and theology, as well as in its historical context as Israel's theological response to Assyrian hegemony. Though the book of Jonah is often treated as a beginning text in learning to read Hebrew narrative due to its simplicity of style and grammar, the perceptive analysis of the details of the text provided in this commentary shows that Jonah is a complex literary work of art. Virtually every word of the book of Jonah is carefully chosen to craft the rhetorical message of the story of the prophet, and these details are brought out in Youngblood's thoughtful literary analysis. The commentary pays close attention to the genre and structure of the book and its literary techniques that communicate the message of the book through rhetorical strategies such as parallelism, alternating scenes, repetitions, use of symbolism, intertextuality, gaps in the narrative, discourse markers, and intricacies of the Hebrew language, in order to flesh out the message of Jonah. The attention to the nuances of Hebrew grammar make the commentary useful as a resource for technical questions, as evinced by the frequent citations of reference grammars in the footnotes, but it also remains accessible for readers not familiar with the Hebrew language. Each chapter concludes with a discussion of the message of Jonah within the canon of scripture, and also of the theology of the book and how it relates to the theological developments of the NT, as well as practical Christian living.

This commentary offers a challenging analysis of the theological message of Jonah in a format that has much to offer for scholars, students, and pastors who are looking for materials to use in teaching and preaching and answers to grammatical questions, as well as for laypeople interested in deepening their understanding of Scripture. The methodological procedure which structures the interpretation of each chapter of Jonah into stages not only presents an interpretation of the book of Jonah, but also provides the reader with a model approach to read other Hebrew narratives by applying rhetorical and literary analysis in following the same procedure. In this regard the book is more than a commentary on Jonah, as for many readers it will also be an introduction to appreciating the literary artistry and rhetorical techniques of Hebrew narrative and the importance of the nuances of Hebrew grammar in biblical interpretation.

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**Craig A EVANS.** *From Jesus to the Church: The First Christian Generation.* Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2014. 203 pp. \$30.00.

This volume is short and accessible yet original and well-documented. Developed from the 2010 Deichmann Lectures that Evans presented at the Ben-Gurion University of the Negev in Beersheba, Israel, this book examines a specific element of the Jewish matrix from which the Christian church was formed. While the book's title suggests a broad history of the early church, it rather focuses on "the clash between the family of high priest Annas and the family of Jesus of Nazareth" (2). Evans wants to alert scholars of a fascinating connection of the family of Annas with the beginning (Jesus of Nazareth) and end (Jesus ben Ananias) of the first Christian generation. The book's introduction summarizes Second Temple messianic expectations and Jewish prophecies against the temple, briefly arguing

that Jesus' prophecies of the Jerusalem temple's destruction were not post-Easter creations by the church.

Chapter 1 asks "Did Jesus Intend to Found a Church?" His answer is "No." Jesus did not seek to build a church *over against Israel* but in hopes of bringing the fulfillment of Israel's hopes. Evans seems to be addressing those who believe Paul founded Christianity or simply those unaware of the Jewish background to the church. This chapter, however, situates the early church firmly into Second Temple Judaism and not within Greco-Roman conventions.

Chapter 2, "From Kingdom of God to Church of Christ," presents Jesus as the "kingdom proclaimer" in the tradition of Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel and argues that the proclamation of the kingdom provided the foundation on which the new Christian community would be built. Chapter 3, "James as Leader of the Jesus Community," presents James as an often-overlooked yet significant figure for the Jesus Community in Jerusalem and asks how and why James came to be so prominent. This chapter also begins to explore the difference between James and Paul on the role of works of the law in the life of the believer. Chapter 4 examines works of the law further by looking at Jewish tradition of Phinehas, the zealous priest. Evans argues that understanding works of law "must take into account the way Phinehas the zealous priest was appreciated among Jews and Christians in late antiquity" (78).

Chapter 5 traces the history of conflict between the priestly family of Annas and Jesus of Nazareth, the twelve apostles, Stephen, James the son of Zebedee, Paul, Peter, James the brother of Jesus, and Jesus ben Ananias. This is the most intriguing and original chapter in the book. He argues that Jesus ben Ananias was a member of the Jesus movement and, like Jesus of Nazareth, he also spoke oracles of judgment against the temple that were inspired by Jeremiah 7.

The final chapter examines the continued conflict between Jews and Christians in the Gospel of Matthew, the Gospel of John, the letters of Revelation and of Ignatius, and in the time of Simon ben Kosiba. This is the weakest chapter in the book because it does not fit naturally into his thesis, but the information is helpful nonetheless. A seven-page appendix, however, presents a summary of the root causes in the Jewish-Christian rift and is a valuable perspective in light of his specific thesis.

I highly recommend this volume to all readers interested in the Jewish background to the early church. Craig Evans is one of the rare scholars who has both a masterful command of the primary sources and an accessible writing style. Evans' well-documented, original thesis, along with his accessible writing style and the book's aesthetics, make this book a must-read for students, professors, and all interested readers.

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**Sandra BINGHAM.** *The Praetorian Guard: A History of Rome's Elite Special Forces.* Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2013. 268 pp. \$29.95.

Through meticulous research and innovative interpretations, Sandra Bingham masterfully navigates the Praetorian Guard's meager data bringing this clandestine group to the his-

torical light. Bingham demonstrates the Praetorian Guard is far from monolithic in its historical development (chapter 2), strategic organization (chapter 3), or multitudinous duties (chapter 4); various emperors in various situations appropriated these elite soldiers for strategic political purposes. Although essentially responsible for the security of the imperial family (1), the conventional portrayal of the praetorian guard as “simply the *bodyguard* of the emperor” (115) is rendered defenseless by Bingham’s examination (6, 8, 115).

Established by Augustus in *ca.* 27 BC (66, 116), the praetorian guard’s permanent presence in the city of Rome, a military proximity condemned under the republic, signaled the ascension of the principate (or the “monarchy” as in Dio 53.11.5, 66, 126 n. 4; see also 1, 17, 124), for now thousands of soldiers loyal to the emperor alone were residing in the imperial capital (17, 70-71, 116-117). As Bingham avers, “The imperial praetorian guard, then, was part of the very fabric of the city of Rome from early on in its history . . . as a constant reminder of the power inherent in the principate” (79), an ever-present influence until their dissolution by Septimus Severus in AD 193 (3, 43-46, 118).

The praetorian guard’s intimate connection with the emperor (15-16) produced not only the highest rate of pay in the Roman army (1, 67; for Domitian’s pay raise, see 37-38, 68) but also unique military and administrative tasks (1-2) integral to Rome’s security in times of war and peace (87)—from the suppression of rebellions (87) to policing festivals (100-105) to fighting fires (106-113) to securing the emperor’s “watchword” (61, 84) to espionage (91) to the maleficent removal of “those deemed a threat to the principate” (21). Such intimacy with the emperor, essential for the success of highly sensitive tasks, also proffered unprecedented access for seditious ends, as in the assassination of Caligula in AD 41 (21-22) and the demise of Nero in AD 68 (32-33), both in which the praetorian guard played a crucial role. Thus, it is inaccurate to relegate this “personal army of the emperor” (115) to merely a military entourage responsible solely for the imperial family’s safety, however high the reward or sophisticated the portrayal may be; instead, this elite group of soldiers “was responsible also for specialized military tasks and for various administrative duties” (115) from espionage to capital punishment exclusively demarcating the praetorian guard “as part of the overall organization of civic administration” (2) from Augustus to Severus.

Bingham’s succinct style and voluminous footnotes (125-211) are commendable, and yet, some observations are left underdeveloped. For example, in describing some of the banal tasks afforded the praetorian guard by various emperors, Bingham asserts, “Throughout their history, the soldiers proved to be pragmatic concerning this relationship, carrying out whatever demands were made of them and showing themselves unwilling to put their privileged position at risk” (3). While self-preservation may be an essential motivator, such insipid demands for such an elite group, like cartography or “engineering works” (2), may reveal more about the political strategy of the emperor than abuse of the Praetorian Guard. So the vapid chore of guarding Caligula’s statues in AD 40 may constitute a key example contributing to the diffuse “discontent” and “displeasure” now extending to even “members of the guard” (3), but even still, this demand—conjoined with Caligula’s remarkable affinity to imperial cult statuary accentuated by his obsession with his own apotheosis—may say more about the emperor’s political strategy and nuance than the function (or exploitation?) of the praetorian guard. An understandable retort may be that this investigation extends beyond the current project’s scope, which justifiably may be so. Nevertheless, it is pertinent to entertain the possibility that the various duties ascribed to the highly valued Praetorian Guard may

say less about the flexibility of the guard and more about the peculiar emphases of the particular emperor for his broader socio-political program.

Unquestionably outside of Bingham's project, and yet of central importance to my particular field of scholarship (NT Studies), is the impact of this erudite analysis on passages like Phil 1:13, in which Paul reports not only chains of imprisonment but also close proximity to the Praetorian Guard. Notably, Bingham argues, "Perhaps the most sinister of the duties assigned to the guard was the confinement, and often the execution, of those whom the emperor considered a risk" (119); elsewhere she reiterates, "the praetorians were involved in the confinement and execution of those deemed to be a threat to the state" (2, see also 21, 93-94). Paul's proximity to the Praetorian Guard, then, may elucidate not just his condition of imprisonment but potentially the imperial perspective of Paul's gospel message as, in some manner, politically subversive. Bingham, therefore, unwittingly wades into the foray of empire studies in NT scholarship demonstrating academic advancement in fields beyond her purview—an occurrence, I am confident, that will prove common in other disciplines interacting with this heuristic work.

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**Paul A. RAINBOW.** *Johannine Theology: The Gospel, the Epistles and the Apocalypse.* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2014. 496 pp. \$40.00.

With this volume, Rainbow provides his own contribution to the recent surge in published theologies on the writings attributed to John. Rainbow's edition represents a unique approach that adds to the diversity of voices on this topic.

As the title indicates, Rainbow employs all the writings attributed to John in the formulation of his theology, including the Apocalypse. He affirms the traditional view of authorship by the apostle John, son of Zebedee for the entire corpus. This then provides the foundation by which he may use material from the full corpus for his work. His argument for authorship adds nothing substantively new to the debate, but rather is a summary of arguments in favor of the traditional view. The presentation regarding authorship and other background matters, such as audience and community theories, is understandably brief as its function is to simply provide justification for his methodology.

With regard to the organization of his presentation, Rainbow's book would benefit from a statement of how he came to adopt the structure and categories employed. It appears that he chose to focus on categories defined by persons and relationships. Of course, this is an inference based on chapter headings, which focus on God the Father, the Son, the Paraclete, Believers, and the Community. While there is no fault in adopting such categories, some explanation seems warranted in a work of scholarship. One may speculate that such categories are the product of, and perhaps even an appeal to, the broader emphasis on relational faith in popular Christianity in America.

Recurring Johannine themes that typically are addressed as discrete objects of consideration in their own right, such as signs, witness, dualism, *et al.* are examined as they contribute to the reader's understanding of the persons and relationships that make up the primary categories. As such, those accustomed to prominent emphasis given to these themes in

other books may find them underrepresented. Here again, the reader would benefit from some explanation as to Rainbow's categorization. Does he believe that persons and relationships are of primary concern to John, and thus his categories rise organically from the text? Do other recurring themes or elements then function as supporting material for these priorities? Or is the emphasis on persons and relationships a matter of Rainbow's contrivance, into which the data culled from the text is organized?

As with any publication, the utility of this volume will vary based on the goals of the reader. For those who seek answers to questions such as, "What does John say about the Father," or "How does John contribute to our understanding of the person and work of Jesus," this volume will prove quite useful. Rainbow has gathered all the relevant material from the Johannine corpus that speaks to these questions and has placed the material in a well-organized and easy-to-access format. For such questions and conversations, his book is an excellent resource.

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**John T. CARROLL.** *Luke: A Commentary.* New Testament Library. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2012. 600 pp. \$60.00.

Carroll, Harriet Robertson Fitts Memorial Professor of New Testament at Union Presbyterian Seminary, has contributed a solid volume on Luke to the New Testament Library series. In a world with no shortage of top-rate multivolume commentaries on the Third Gospel, this less-than-500-page (excluding indices) one-volume work is welcomed with open arms. Despite its relative brevity, the work lacks neither depth nor insight. Following NTL's format, Carroll addresses pertinent introductory issues (sixteen pages on author, audience, genre, purpose, approach to reading Luke's Gospel, central theological and ethical concerns and commitments, and the design of the narrative), then provides a translation of each pericope with brief grammatical and text-critical notes, followed by more extensive commentary on a few verses at a time. Scattered throughout are four excursions on the parallel birth announcements, women in Luke's narrative, poverty and wealth in Luke's Gospel, and the reign of God and the Roman Empire in Luke's Gospel. These brief excursions leave the reader wanting more, but accomplish their goal of alerting the reader to both the presence and complexity of these issues.

Carroll describes the commentary as "a synchronic narrative analysis that attends closely to the literary shaping of the canonical form of the Gospel of Luke" (9), and this description is apt. He articulates his source theory in the introduction (two-document hypothesis), but comparison with these sources is selective and often relegated to the footnotes, enabling the reader to focus on Luke's own theological and rhetorical concerns. Carroll's extensive engagement with Luke's use of the Septuagint and with the Third Gospel's relation to Acts also enables the reader to appreciate Luke's theological and rhetorical artistry.

Since a survey of the entire commentary is impossible in such a short review, I will highlight Carroll's treatment of Luke 2:1-7 as an example of his fine engagement with historical, literary, and theological issues. Here, as elsewhere, he addresses historical issues where needed, albeit briefly. For example, on the difficulties with Luke's census in 2:1-2, Carroll inti-

mates four historical problems but concludes, “It is impossible to salvage historical accuracy for Luke’s report” and directs readers to other treatments of the issue (65). Some readers may hope for more guidance on historical issues, but Carroll makes up for it in his treatment of literary issues, his primary focus. On the literary level of this text, Carroll discusses how the census forwards the narrative’s plot and points out the irony of Caesar’s “call[ing] the shots,” while the audience knows God is the one actually directing the action (cf. other helpful illuminations of irony in 4:31-37; 6:17-19; 22:63-65; 23:1-25 et al.). Further, he points out how Luke foreshadows the conflict between God’s reign and Caesar’s reign (what is the relation of the Messiah’s eternal rule to Caesar’s power?). This is a theological theme Carroll explores throughout the commentary—in the introduction, in several texts, and in an excursus.

Carroll’s commentary proved helpful to me for both research and teaching, though more so the latter because of its relative brevity compared to many other critical commentaries. Its size is an asset for the classroom and pastors, however, as it is more manageable than the illustrious volumes by Bovon, Fitzmyer, Nolland, or Marshall. Carroll avoids overly technical jargon, transliterates Greek and Hebrew, and includes indices of scripture, other ancient sources, subjects, and authors.

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**Charles L. QUARLES.** *Illustrated Life of Paul.* Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2014. 300 pp. \$29.99.

Quarles’s book seems to bridge his academic and pastoral interests. The book, based on scholarly research, aims to present Paul’s life and letters in such a way that readers might be inspired to carry out their ministry and vocation with the same commitment, fervor, and sacrifice as found in Paul (ix). Over the course of nine uneven chapters, Quarles walks readers through the whole of Paul’s life and ministry. To be sure, the specifics concerning Paul’s birth and final days are ultimately shrouded in mystery and conjecture, but Quarles is cognizant of this fact and, in the main, proceeds accordingly. Thus, he examines the various traditions associated with those parts of Paul’s life and weighs their viability. The chapters in between these mysterious bookends are arranged chronologically, using the narrative of Acts, specifically the three so-called missionary journeys, as the source and guide for the arrangement. This accounts for the unevenness of the chapters, for when the narrative in Acts is lengthy Quarles’s discussion responds in kind. Along the way, Quarles pauses to consider and explain key historical, sociological, and theological matters, especially as they relate to Paul’s thought and ministry strategy. Many of these pauses are refreshing.

In terms of strengths, the book has a range. First, the style of presentation is generally engaging, almost playful, and this enables readers to travel through the narrative at a quick pace while at the same time appreciating its key features. Second, the illustrations and maps throughout assist readers in conceptualizing the nature and sometimes grandeur of the places Paul traveled and proclaimed the gospel. Third, Quarles’s decision to situate the narrative within the framework of Acts is useful for those seeking to contextualize the occasions and historical circumstances from which Paul’s letters arose. While not all NT scholars will accept this approach (using Acts as a source for Paul’s life and ministry) or agree with some

of the conclusions Quarles makes about certain letters (provenance of the Prison Letters), the arguments here are worth patient consideration. Finally, while not all will accept his decisions on this matter, let alone the proposed timing and provenance for certain letters (Prison Letters, Pastoral Letters), it was a relief (though not a surprise) to see Pauline authorship attributed to all thirteen letters. Quarles provides a reasonable—albeit brief—summary for how to make such a case using the known historical details in Acts.

However, the book is not without weakness, and these too have a range. First, there are occasional and unnecessary repetitions of information, found not only in the body of the text (4/6, 22, 69/72, 88/90, 95/99, 110/115, 148/151, 152/153, 160-161/175-176, 162/164, 195/196, 196/200) but also the image captions—i.e., some of the descriptions mirror information already noted in the text (45, 46, 186, 228, 229, 252, 266). Second, the use “Christian” and “Christianity” throughout, while potentially useful for and familiar to nonspecialist readers, are not only anachronistic but also unhelpful. This is especially the case when Quarles uses the term “Christianity” as though it were a recognized religion, distinct from Judaism, within the context of Paul’s life and ministry—or even that Paul himself became a Christian (see 1, 29, 60, 74, 168). Moreover, Quarles occasionally says things that make it appear as though Judaism and Christianity coexisted and/or were at odds with each other (e.g. 1-2, 16, 19, 30-32, 71, 76, 78, 137, 168, 216, 246-247; cf. 56, 224). NT scholars have demonstrated that such was not the case and would not be until more than a century later (see Dunn [1992, 2006]).

Third, the book contains a handful of unnecessary tangential discussions, which are not only quite lengthy (152-156, 158-159) but also distracting to the flow of the argument. Fourth, Quarles’s frequent appeals to rabbinic traditions or regulations in order to substantiate a claim regarding Paul’s teachings or practices are ultimately anachronistic. Fifth, the book is riddled with overstatement and dramatic claims, presumably offered for effect (e.g. 4, 8, 37, 74, 77, 93-95, 129, 132, 136-137, 141, 154, 163, 168, 201, 211, 222, 226, 232, 235). Related to this problem is the fact that Quarles’s penchant for the dramatic often comes at the expense of textual or historical accuracy. I cannot recall how many times I found myself saying, “But the text does not say that” or “You’re asserting claims that are not in line with the text.” In fact, there are occasions when the biblical account says the opposite of what Quarles asserts (43, 48, 52, 71, 88, 101, 145). Finally, and this is the most glaring (and ironic) weakness, the amount of speculation that pervades the book is astounding, not to mention disheartening. I say “ironic” because in two places (172, 256) Quarles criticizes the claims of other scholars as being too uncertain or speculative. This final problem applies not only to details that simply cannot be known (6, 22, 25, 82, 88, 100, 208, 216, 222, 260, 263) and the vast number of perhaps-, may- (or may have-), possibly-, most likely-type statements found throughout the book, but also Quarles’s tendency to make a speculative claim and then proceed with the argument as though the claim were in fact valid and true.

Thus, in terms of recommendation, I find myself in a threefold quandary. First, this book is written for beginning college students and interested church members, and, in the main, I think it would be a usable resource for such an audience. However, and especially for those wanting to do more in Pauline studies, it would be imperative for this book to be read alongside and even supplemented by other scholarly texts on Paul. The introductions by Capes-Reeves-Richards (2007), Bird (2009), and even Thiselton (2009) come to mind. This sup-

plementation would be necessary to balance and even undo the rather fanciful and speculative descriptions that Quarles occasionally offers.

Second, and following from the first, I could recommend this book only after issuing a necessary disclaimer—one that warns readers about the weaknesses noted above. Such weaknesses not only are inappropriate for a scholarly text but also cripple Quarles's aim "to follow solid evidence in reconstructing Paul's life" (ix). Thus, I would be prone to recommend any number of other life-of-Paul type books that avoid these tendencies and meet the aim more effectively. The recent treatment by Still and Longenecker (2014) is one example.

That brings me to the third part of the quandary: Quarles's book, while certainly attempting to keep Pauline scholarship accessible and current, ultimately adds very little that is new to the discussion. In many ways, his treatment—not only in terms of format and style but also general content—reads like a condensed, blended, and slightly updated version of the more detailed studies by Bruce (1977) and McRay (2007), with a smattering of Knox (1987) and O'Conner (1996; 2005). The updates typically come in the form of occasional and sometimes random details about specific locations, customs, and practices. Two other noticeable differences would be Quarles's use of color illustrations—instead of the usual black-and-white—and his slimming down or removal of technical issues so as not to overburden the nonspecialist reader. But then again, there are other books that do that, too.

So, would I recommend this book? Yes, but with the disclaimer noted above. Would I "highly" or even "enthusiastically" recommend the book? No.

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**Bruce W. LONGENECKER and Todd D. STILL.** *Thinking through Paul: A Survey of His Life, Letters, and Theology.* Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014. 408 pp. \$44.99.

Here is a beautiful showpiece of a textbook, well-written, and excellent for introducing Pauline studies to students, pastors, and lay readers who are ready to get challenged. The 7×9 page size allows for lots to be put on each page, and the glossy finish not only brings class but makes the copious color pictures, maps, artwork, and charts jump off the page (although, I did not much like the page glare when reading, and my handwritten notes kept smearing on the page). The quality binding allows the book to lay open and flat from page one. Numerous student and instructor resources for this text are online.

The layout is consistent, intuitive, and helpful in three parts: I: Life (about 20 pages); II: Letters (nine chapters cover all thirteen Pauline letters); and III: Theology (three chapters on apocalyptic and other narrative issues). Chapters begin with a succinctly stated chapter goal and overview, and most list key verses; and they end with two or three pages of key terms, questions, and bibliography. After a short conclusion, there is a useful nine page glossary, followed by indexes for scriptures, subjects, and authors. Clearly conversant with scholars, care is taken not to bog down in footnotes.

Part II orders the letters more or less chronologically, starting with the *Earliest* (1 and 2 Thessalonians—obviously, some will disagree with this), and then proceeding to *Chief* (Galatians, 1-2 Corinthians, Romans); *Prison* (Philippians, Philemon, Colossians, and Ephesians); and *Pastorals* (Titus and 1-2 Timothy). The letters 1-2 Thessalonians are combined



in a single chapter, as are Philemon and Colossians, and finally the Pastorals. All others each have a separate chapter.

The authors address the question of pseudonymity head on, starting with 2 Thessalonians (80-81). After offering a balanced approach for and against (sans footnotes), they voice a sensitivity for their readers: “We recognize and appreciate the fact that not a few readers of this text (along with their teachers and ministers) may be inclined to view pseudonymity as wholly incompatible with canonicity.” They suggest that “allonymity” (“another name”) may soften the concern (yet, it is omitted from the glossary). “Our aim in this textbook is to help you think through Paul . . . not . . . tell you what you ought to think about Paul and Pauline studies at every twist and turn.” Some will see this as dodging the issue, but it is better seen as an attempt to not stick one’s head in the sand about legitimate questions and to deal “straight up” with all readers. So, for example, they consider 1-2 Thessalonians, Philippians, and Philemon as Paul’s; Colossians and 2 Timothy as probable; Ephesians as unknowable; and Titus and 1 Timothy as unlikely by Paul. Each time, they address the issues directly and even-handedly.

Part III, Theology (less than a hundred incisive pages), reflects on important discussions in current Pauline scholarship. Rejecting that Paul writes systematic theology, and hailing J. C. Beker, chapter 11 focuses on “the apocalyptic narrative” which underlies all of Paul’s writings, namely that God’s good creation is under attack by cosmic forces, and that believers participate in divine triumph through Christ (302-304), referring especially to several Galatians texts, Eph 6:12, and 1 Cor 15:24 with the description, “these passages encapsulate the main foci of Paul’s apocalyptic perspective.”

Interestingly, “apocalyptic” is defined somewhat vaguely, and the return of Jesus is left outside of Paul’s underlying apocalyptic narrative. If the authors went out of their way to address pseudonymity, they appear to do the same for distancing (or excluding) the concept of *parousia* from “the ultimate narrative” (133, 304). Although *parousia* receives several paragraphs in the discussion of 1-2 Thessalonians (71-72) and is described as “the subject of a significant swath of the letter” (64), the concept is given no hint of treatment as a part of Paul’s apocalyptic narrative. When it is discussed on 71-72, the discussion wanders off onto the word “rapture,” which pops up twice out of nowhere (like a scribal emendation) with a weak footnote on etymology (nor is “rapture” listed in the index or glossary—it would have been better omitted altogether). And although 1 Cor 15:23 sets up v. 24 by naming *parousia* as integral to Paul’s “apocalyptic narrative,” the authors always exclude it (132, 133, 304, 338).

This uneasiness with the concept gets stated outright two chapters later, since Paul’s texts are not always “easily and readily applicable to life two millennia removed from their original situation. What does one do with the fact, for instance, that Paul expected that Jesus would be returning in the near future?” (351) So, they conduct an intriguing, and quite useful, series of five case studies that, among other things, are “untouched by eschatological imminence,” looking for “stable” Pauline concepts not associated with such an apparently problematic expectation but that transcended such a concern, and yet are still rooted in the apocalyptic narrative—and that Paul clearly taught should be part of “Jesus groups.” Hence: freedom/responsibility, Scripture interpretation, ethics, the poor, and violence are treated separately as related to Paul’s apocalyptic narrative, yet aside from imminence—all valuable. Unfortunately, they do not address why distancing *parousia* from the central narrative

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(something that may not be textually defensible), is a better option than removing imminence from *parousia*.

There is much more. Chapter 12 deftly addresses covenant/law in Paul, as well as Roman imperialism, both extremely significant. The diverse selection of beautiful artwork for inclusion could occupy one for some time. Despite any concerns expressed here, this book, with its online resources, is a credit to the authors and publisher, a great introduction, and will stimulate needed conversation on Paul and Pauline studies.

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