

Timothy L. WOOD. *Agents of Wrath, Sowers of Discord: Authority and Dissent in Puritan Massachusetts, 1630–1655*. New York and London: Routledge, 2006. 196 pp. \$70.00.

In his examination of “six particular incidents of conflict and controversy” within the first quarter century of the Massachusetts Bay colony’s existence, Timothy L. Wood set out to explain “the dynamics of the relationship between authority and dissent” among the early New England Puritans (3). By exploring these controversies, Wood contends that he adds four important insights into the understanding of the founders of Massachusetts. First, he demonstrates that the early Puritans did not adhere to a “monolithic code of orthodoxy” (3). Second, he illustrates the overlooked “vertical allegiance that allowed leaders and those under them to find common cause” (4). Third, he reveals “several key dissidents” who have been “omitted from the histories that treat this period,” and thereby fulfills a fourth objective of providing a “complete spectrum of dissent in early New England” (4).

Between 1631 and 1638, three theological controversies confronted John Winthrop and the leaders of New England Puritanism. These conflicts, Wood argues, “helped forge the parameters of a common religious vision” for early Massachusetts (37). In his 1631 struggle with George Philips, a minister in Watertown who suggested that Roman Catholicism was a legitimate form of Christianity, Winthrop objected to the recognition of “Catholics as fellow Christians, thus affirming the centrality of scripture in Puritan religious life” (37). The second theological controversy arose out of the separatist inclination of Roger Williams. Winthrop responded to Williams by banishing him from the colony in 1635 and emphasizing “the importance of keeping faith with other religious communions, such as the Church of England, who still maintained a minimal standard of Biblical truth.” The colony must not be permitted, Winthrop insisted, “to disintegrate into thousands of individual religious seekers” (37). Winthrop’s final theological controversy revolved around the antinomianism of Anne Hutchinson, who defended her views by a claim of divine revelation. As Williams was earlier, so Hutchinson was banished from Massachusetts in 1638. Winthrop responded to Hutchinson’s claim of divine revelation by noting that “authority must be derived from the community as a whole, and not the revelations of one individual” (37).

Wood goes on to explain how the Antinomian controversy and three additional cases of dissent carried political implications for the early New Englanders. Upon their arrival in the New World in 1630, the Puritans were no longer encumbered by “the decadence of old England,” but “possessed the freedom needed to construct an idealized Bible commonwealth.” The early leaders of the colony, however, were soon “shocked to discover how that ‘city on a hill’ ought to look” (63). Along with the political inferences of the Hutchinson case, Wood explores a 1632 controversy in which George Philips reengaged Winthrop about the colonial government’s right to tax surrounding communities. An epistolary debate (1644–1652) between John Cotton and Roger Williams—the banished Puritan who founded Rhode Island—about the relationship of church and state, and a conflict surrounding Harvard president Henry Dunster, who became a Baptist in 1654, round out the disputes. These quarrels, Wood contends, helped define the civil authority of the Massachusetts Bay colony: “The series of controversies that erupted during the first quarter century of settlement in Massachusetts,” Wood concludes, “were pivotal to the formation” of the Puritan identity. In addition to establishing the lines of authority, these early instances of dissent established “common values and attitudes, marked the boundaries of acceptable disagreement, and signaled the point at which dissent should be actively checked by the colony’s leadership” (132).

Wood’s monograph provides a convincing look at the significance of the instances of controversy in early New England, though he is often unexpectedly brief in describing the issues and ultimate outcomes of the cases he examines. Though an interesting and insightful study, the typographical mistakes and the high price for this slim volume make it less than appealing for adoption into classroom usage.

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Ben BREWSTER. *Torn Asunder: The Civil War and the 1906 Division of the Disciples*. Joplin, MO: College Press, 2006. 135 pp. \$9.99.

The year 2006 marked the centennial of the first official separation within the Stone-Campbell Movement, a separation that resulted in two distinct groups: the Disciples of Christ and the Churches of Christ. In recent years there have been various attempts and an increasing desire to move toward restoring some level of unity among those who call themselves: Churches of Christ and Independent Christian Churches/Churches of Christ. The 2006 North American Christian Convention saw preachers and scholars from both of these traditions join together for fellowship.

The study that Ben Brewster offers in his volume serves as a particularly valuable resource in light of these recent reunification efforts. His work examines the deeper issues that stood behind the 1906 division within the Stone-Campbell Movement. While the innovations of missionary societies and the use of musical instruments in worship remain the more visible factors for the 1906 division, Brewster argues that the rise of sectionalism between Northern and Southern states brought on by the issue of slavery was the key factor for the polarization of the Disciples. The primary issue of division “was not church practice or church organization. The primary issue was the Christian’s response to war” (58).

During the Civil War, The American Christian Missionary Society sought to pass “Loyalty Resolutions” to declare allegiance to the Union and declare Confederate soldiers “armed traitors” (79). Brewster argues that “the actions of the American Christian Missionary Society in 1861 and 1863 created a rift that would never be repaired” (74). Brewster calls these resolutions “the greatest Disciples’ tragedy during the Civil War” (58).

Brewster argues that it was the Civil War that ultimately “broke the ranks of the Disciples and cast a shadow over any chances of future unity” (52). Though division was not official, due largely to the lack of a centralized denominational government, it was obvious that the years following the war produced two distinct groups. It was the continual “widening ideological gap between North and South that was seen in a variety of social and sectional issues” that continued to plague the movement (112). In the years that followed the Civil War, “the Disciples continued attempts at regaining the soul they lost in the bloody conflict known as the ‘War Between the States’” but with little success (61).

Brewster devotes special attention to the lives of the southern leadership, most notably, David Lipscomb. Lipscomb served as editor for the *Gospel Advocate*, the voice for southern Disciples. Labeled one of the fathers of the Churches of Christ, Lipscomb made the separation official in the 1906 religion census. Brewster analyzes the reasons behind Lipscomb’s decision. Brewster examines Lipscomb and his contemporaries in light of the southern experience brought on by the War and the Reconstruction efforts following thereafter. According to Brewster, “While deeply committed to Campbell’s efforts at unity, Lipscomb also could not disavow his belief concerning the silence of the Scriptures” (110).

This volume presents a convincing argument for the reasons surrounding the division within the Stone-Campbell Movement. Brewster illustrates the growing animosity that developed between the North and South during this period. This work does not attempt to delve into an in-depth study of the Stone-Campbell Movement; Brewster’s goal is to present a volume that is easily comprehensible to the layman as well as to the scholar. He seeks to explore the reasons behind division within a movement whose primary goal was to restore Christian unity within the Church.

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Warren LEWIS and Hans ROLLMANN, eds. *Restoring the First-century Church in the Twenty-first Century: Essays on the Stone-Campbell Restoration Movement in Honor of Don Haymes*. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2005. 626 pp. \$52.00.

The table of contents of this volume is practically a “Who’s-Who” of Stone-Campbell Restoration Movement scholars, many from Churches of Christ (a cappella). Some of them appreciate Haymes as a librarian, editor, or scholar, and others as a friend or gadfly on the rump of the Stone-Campbell Movement.

Following a brisk biography of Haymes by his wife, Betty, the first major section is “Scripture Studies.” Jack P. Lewis discusses archaeological artifacts relating to the name of Yahweh. Lowell K. Handy provides a rhetorical history of the story of Josiah, showing how it has been used by the church and especially by the Stone-Campbell Movement. The Gospel of Mark is a troubling text to Douglas W. Geyer; he concludes that nothing is certain except that we should follow Jesus. Carisse Mickey Berryhill invites Christians to learn as Paul did to be hospitable. Roy Bowen Ward undermines the traditional view of marriage, arguing that gay marriage should become part of a new tradition. Thomas H. Olbricht argues that “another gospel” was a legalism designed to marginalize Gentile converts; he finds contemporary versions of that legalistic gospel still being preached. The second section, “Historical Studies,” begins with Graydon F. Snyder’s study of early Christian burials, showing that architecture proclaimed a message of resurrection. Keith Huey explains the Irish Presbyterian roots of Thomas Campbell and tells why we can no longer refer to him as an “Old Light Anti-Burgher Seceder Presbyterian.” Claude Cox describes the failure of fellowship between early Baptists and Restorationists in Ontario. C.J. Dull questions Gerald L.K. Smith’s early sympathy with the Ku Klux Klan and shows that it was not conservative Disciples who extended the warmest welcome to the Klan.

Three Disciples have occupied the White House; Ronald B. Flowers argues that Garfield and Johnson were more faithful to traditional Disciples’ teaching on church-state relations than Reagan. “Historical Studies” continue with Terry J. Gardner’s brief, balanced study of Foy E. Wallace, Jr., and his incomparable influence in the Church of Christ. Hans Rollmann examines the major German theological reference works, finding that German Protestants remain largely ignorant of the SCM. Richard C. Goode challenges George Marsden’s idea of Christian scholarship, claiming that a Christian scholar who follows accepted disciplinary norms is selling out to the “Principalities and Powers.”

“Theological Studies” make up the third section. Here, Christopher Bryan meditates on the value of seeing the life of Christ through liturgical glasses. Leroy Garrett compares Campbell and Luther as reformers. He concludes with an imaginary dialogue in Heaven among Campbell, Luther, and Pope Leo X. It ends with a Twilight-Zone-surprise showing Garrett still knows how to rock the boat. John Mark Hicks gives an historical survey of SCM attempts to develop a theodicy. He calls for a new justification of the coexistence of God and evil, one based on biblical narrative and free of metaphysical assumptions, and therefore rooted in SCM principles.

The fourth section contains “Ethical, Cultural, and Sociological Studies.” Richard T. Hughes contributes a short piece based on the words of Campbell, Jesus, and Mark Twain, arguing for Christian pacifists to express nonviolent resistance to war. Michael Casey, aided by the theory of Walter Ong, explains the early Stone-Campbell Movement bias in favor of the written Word as opposed both to the spoken word and the Spirit’s unspoken word. Casey unfolds the consequences of this bias—undecorated auditoria, a love of public debates, and individualized Bible interpretation. John Mark Tucker illuminates past race relations in the Church of Christ by celebrating six black women who shaped his spiritual and intellectual life.

Also in the fourth section, Christopher R. Hutson treats abolition and feminism as historically similar positions. He argues that Alexander Campbell’s “moderate left” position on slavery was as wrong in his day as Evangelicals’ similar position on the role of women is today. Dianne M. Bazell and Laurence H. Kant critique the heirs of the Enlightenment who overemphasize the importance of having evidence to support faith. This encourages movies such as *The Passion of Christ* and artifacts such as the ossuary of James, for they appear to provide missing evidence. Shaun Casey, inspired by Catholic teaching on the ethics of a “just war,” finds the present war in Iraq to be unjust. Finally, William Martin discusses the threats posed by fundamentalist thought, whether Protestant, Islamic, or Jewish. Don L. Meredith leads off the fifth section (“Educational Studies”) with a catalogue of dissertations on theological subjects written since 1904 by Church of Christ members. The most prominent areas of study have been biblical studies, church history, education, and communication.

David Bundy discourses on the unique qualities of California when he discusses the role of Fuller Theological Seminary as it faces the Pacific Rim. Helmut Koester discusses changing theological education at Harvard Divinity School, Haymes's alma mater, as its constituency has become more diverse and the curriculum has followed suit. Finally, the reader encounters the "Confessional Studies." Three papers discuss the "Exodus/Bayshore Movement," the West Islip Church of Christ, and the affiliated "Inner-City Faith Corps," in all of which Haymes played significant roles. Dwain Evans, the founder of the Exodus Movement, presents a brief autobiography. Erma Jean Loveland uses documentary artifacts to write the early history of that Movement from 1961–1964. Freda Elliott Baker presents an intimate oral history of her involvement in the inner-city mission.

Then Robert M. Randolph tells what it was like to be a (Church of Christ) Campbellite from 1940–2004, telling what he knows is a familiar story of gradually awakening to the presence of God beyond the porch at the old home church. Warren Lewis begins his article with a fine genre study of "Why I Left" stories, a number of which were collected in the 1966 volume, *Voice of Concern*. Then, in a less comfortable sequel, he argues that the SCM itself has failed and must fail because it is unbiblical and arrogant to think that humans can restore Christ's church. The volume concludes this section with a dozen writers relating their spiritual journeys to and from the Church of Christ. Nine of these speak with a Canadian voice. Then Joe E. Lewis speaks as a charismatic Christian, Hoy Ledbetter tells why he remained in the Stone-Campbell Movement and how he returned to the Church of Christ; and John D. White ends the volume by explaining why he stays.

Though containing many voices, the volume favors the left profile of the Church of Christ, which is appropriate considering Haymes's own writing and career. Regardless, readers will find here a valuable record of how some prominent Church of Christ leaders are encouraging people to reevaluate their SCM heritage (or to reject it, in some cases). Various writers call for the church to become more pacifist, more hospitable to women, less critical of homosexuals, less rigid on matters of worship, more open to spiritual leading, or more racially diverse. The volume is not designed to be a primary source or textbook for university students, though it surely belongs in the university library. Ministers may find it of little practical use unless they are struggling with the same issues as the authors. Its value is particularly for students of the Stone-Campbell Movement; as such, it should appeal to the same readership as this journal does.

LEE SNYDER

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John Mark HICKS, and Bobby VALENTINE. *Kingdom Come: Embracing the Spiritual Legacy of David Lipscomb and James Harding*. Abilene, TX: Leafwood, 2006. 224 pages. \$14.99.

John Mark Hicks, a veteran scholar of Stone-Campbell history, has teamed up with Bobby Valentine, a devoted young scholar, to provide a feast on Lipscomb and Harding. The occasion for the publication of their work is the centennial of the 1906 U.S. Census which took note of the division that had taken place within the Stone-Campbell Movement. Hicks and Valentine suggest that the “kingdom theology and spirituality” of Lipscomb and Harding “provides the contemporary church with a way forward.” They argue that if Christians today “would reappropriate their kingdom themes and practices, we believe the church would more fully participate in the emerging kingdom of God which will one day fill the earth with divine righteousness” (10). In other words, the work of Hicks and Valentine is both a study of Stone-Campbell history and also an effort at church renewal.

Addressing themselves primarily to Churches of Christ (a cappella), the authors want to avoid two common approaches: (1) those who have little respect for their spiritual heritage in the Stone-Campbell Movement, and (2) those who are blind to the impact of their spiritual heritage in the Stone-Campbell Movement. Hicks and Valentine believe we “have a vibrant and relevant spiritual heritage” that provides a “third way” for “navigating the chaotic seas of postmodernity, the Emergent church movement, and our own seeming spiritual inertia” (15-16).

The two authors’ focus is on what they call the Nashville Bible School Tradition, which was most influential east of the Mississippi and south of the Ohio, even though it had a national presence beyond those boundaries. Their focus is on the positive dimensions of the NBST, not the failings of which they are well aware (23). Other well-known efforts by other scholars have drawn inspiration from Campbell or Stone in their calls for church renewal (17). Being from the deep South and a lifelong member of Churches of Christ, and also having strong connections to both universities named after Lipscomb and Harding, Hicks and Valentine are writing about a heritage that is very close to home for me, a heritage that is lost to too many of this generation.

Part I discusses “Kingdom Dynamics: Divine Action” where the volume points out Lipscomb’s resident-alien approach toward the governments of this world, Lipscomb’s and Harding’s strong beliefs in God’s providential actions in the world, and Harding’s belief in the indwelling Spirit. Part II, “Kingdom Spirituality: Four Means of Grace,” treats the reader to studies of reading scripture, social justice, the Lord’s Supper, and prayer.

Part III, “Kingdom Life: Free to Serve,” begins with a chapter on peacemaking, a spirit alien to too many in Churches of Christ today. The next chapter, “No Creed but Christ: Freedom to Think and Speak,” is equally relevant. The final chapters are on millennialism and a brief conclusion.

Kingdom Come is based on careful, exhaustive research. The usefulness of this volume is enhanced by excellent documentation in the endnotes and an attractive layout. It would serve well as a supplemental textbook in a Restoration history university course on the upper level undergraduate or even at the graduate level. Each chapter concludes with a scriptural/theological study, discussion questions, challenges, a prayer, and bibliographical resources, which would make the work useful as a study guide for mature, adult Bible classes. The authors are to be commended for providing us with such a useful resource.

JOEL STEPHEN WILLIAMS
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Hans Conrad Fischer. *Johann Sebastian Bach: His Life in Pictures and Documents*, with CD. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005. 191 pp. \$25.00.

This volume is a wonderfully illustrated biography written by a German biographer and filmmaker. Oversized at 8½ x 11 inches, with over 200 pictures and illustrations, the volume is more suitable to a coffee table than to a serious Bach scholar, especially since it does not provide very much new information.

On the other hand, all of the facsimiles and quotes from primary sources make this volume a tremendous single-source resource for anyone who wants to know more than an introductory music history text will provide on the life of the famous composer. Interplay between text and illustrations compel the readers to draw their own conclusions about the great composer's life and work.

The volume is focused on the life of a man devoted to music; therefore, it uses musicological terms to which the general public will not relate. But Bach's life was also deeply devoted to Christ, and people of faith would most appreciate the drive and purpose of Bach's life. Fisher unapologetically focuses equally on Bach's background and life, his music and style, his theology and spirituality. This volume will serve as a wonderful resource for any church musician.

In addition, a recorded CD of seventeen of Bach's compositions is included, all authentically performed according to at least some of the latest stylistic schools of interpretation. They are drawn from the 172 CDs of EDITION BACHAKADEMIE, which is the first and, so far, only complete recording of his music. It is a bit disappointing that some of his best-known works are not included, since this is an introductory volume. Since Bach has over 100 times the amount of music provided on the CDs, any editor would have to neglect many of Bach's truly well-known works. Fischer's choices are drawn from the stages of his biography, not from his most popular pieces. The CD does include many of Bach's famous works, such as "Tocatta and Fugue in D Minor," a *Brandenburg Concerto*, two Preludes from *The Well-Tempered Clavier*, an excerpt each from the *St. John Passion*, *St. Matthew Passion* and *Mass in B Minor*, canons from *Musical Offering* and an example from *The Art of Fugue* are all included.

Fischer also emphasizes the role faith played in Bach's compositions. The final chapter of the biography is "SDG: *Soli Deo Gloria*." This is how Bach signed many of his partitas; and many begin with "JJ" (*Jesu juva*: Jesus help).

In his lifetime, Bach saw only two of his works published. While he was respected, he was mostly overlooked, and in his later years he was viewed as "old school." At least two of his sons very much overshadowed him, even before the time of his death. So popularity eluded him; rather, he never pursued it.

Johann Sebastian Bach has been my musical hero for many years, and this volume by Fischer demonstrates why. In his day he may have been somewhat odd and old, but today he is far better known than Telemann, Vivaldi, and even Handel, and, ironically, is now better known than his more trendy sons Johann Christian Bach or Carl Phillip Emmanuel Bach. He wrote with excellence for an audience of One, and that is what drove him to write as sublimely as he did.

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Douglas A. SWEENEY. *The American Evangelical Story: A History of the Movement*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005. 208 pp. \$17.99.

Evangelical scholar Douglas Sweeney summarizes the history of the evangelical movement in America from the 18th century to the present in this very compact volume. In doing so he introduces fellow evangelicals to many of their heroic religious forebears and points to the movement's success, all the while insisting that bragging rights belong only to God. Sweeney argues that evangelicals constitute a movement created in the 18th century and have been at the forefront of the church's renewal.

Because the evangelical story cannot be told without defining evangelicals, Sweeney addresses this problem in his first chapter. He admits that definitions applied to evangelicals are often problematic, but insists that evangelicals constitute a definable movement. According to his definition, they are heirs of the Great Awakening, an interdenominational and international movement calling for personal conversion and action. Sweeney describes the Great Awakening in America, its European antecedents, and the Protestant realignment it caused among its supporters and opponents in his second chapter.

In the following two chapters Sweeney describes the rapid success of evangelicals who institutionalized revivals, reshaped American society through reform efforts, and established an unprecedented network for foreign missions to evangelize the world in the 19th century. Sweeney then interrupts this largely celebratory narrative with a summary of race relations among evangelicals. Here he notes the irony that after the Great Awakening, white evangelicals preached among blacks even while many held persistently racist views that continue to tragically divide black and white churches. Finally, Sweeney sweeps through the 20th century in his last two chapters covering first the Holiness, Pentecostal, and Charismatic movements and then the Fundamentalist and Neo-evangelical movements. In all but the late Fundamentalist movement he sees examples of continued renewal as evangelicals continued to spread the gospel, convert people to Christ, and reshape wider culture. Sweeney concludes with some commentary on the future of evangelicalism, urging evangelicals of various denominations to cooperate in spreading the gospel.

This volume contains much to commend. It is simple yet sophisticated, brief yet thorough, readable yet academic. Its versatility makes it ideal for the casual evangelical readers interested in their religious roots and useful in academic settings. With considerable overlap between this volume and most major American religious history texts, instructors would do well not to pair this volume with another that contains the evangelical story. It is probably most suited for seminary classrooms where some historical background but not the whole of American religious history is needed. Fellow evangelicals may be inspired by the faith and devotion of those Sweeney describes, but they will also find that Sweeney, while proud of the evangelical heritage, is evenhanded in admonishing evangelicals past and present for racism, divisiveness, and other ways they have fallen short. For this, too, Sweeney is commended.

Sweeney offers readers from the Stone-Campbell tradition plenty to contemplate. His description of evangelicalism as a movement sounds parallel to restorationists. He notes that throughout the evangelical story, new groups emerged that called others back to doctrinal and personal purity once institutionalization and laxity have taken hold. Yet Sweeney ignores the warning from Finke and Stark, whom he references, that ecumenical efforts have historically failed to attract people or to avoid becoming stale. Sweeney does not make it clear how evangelicals can continue to be a movement while being scattered among various denominations, each of which eventually loses its momentum and inspires a new restoration movement. However, readers will certainly gain from thinking about the merits of ecumenical efforts, how to perpetuate the Christian movement, and whether or not they are evangelicals.

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John WITTE, Jr. *God's Joust, God's Justice: Law and Religion in the Western Tradition*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006. 498 pp. \$30.00.

Witte, professor of law and ethics and Director of the Center for the Study of Law and Religion at Emory University, describes himself as a legal historian and only an “amateur theologian,” and indeed most of his work, including this volume, reflects that emphasis on history. His many published works (at least 17 books and over 100 articles at last count) tend to emphasize the historical influence of Christianity on Western law and the law’s need of such influence in the new millennium. This volume is a recent addition to the Emory University Studies in Law and Religion series for which Witte serves as General Editor, and it functions as a nice survey of his recent scholarship.

Surprisingly, in light of the subtitle, this is not really a survey of the interaction between law and religion throughout the history of the “Western tradition,” but rather a sort of “John Witte reader,” giving one a taste of his work in the fields (particularly family law, constitutional law and the American founding, and human rights law) that have engaged his most recent and sustained interest. Each chapter is, at least partially, an excerpt or adaptation from one or more of his other works or lectures, either previously published or scheduled to be published elsewhere. While this gives the volume something of a disjointed feel, the introduction and conclusion help to pull the chapters together and suggest a common theme of the working of God in legal history.

The volume is divided into three parts. The first part examines the contributions of various Christian traditions toward the modern understanding of human rights. The second attempts to show the influence of (mostly Protestant) Christian traditions on the founding of the United States and, in particular, on the development of American criminal law. The third section focuses on the influence of religion, especially Christianity, on particular areas of Western family law, familial relationships, and sexuality. This rather *ad hoc* section includes a lengthy multichapter discussion of marriage as a social, legal, and religious institution (including a defense of “covenant marriage” legislation recently enacted in a few states in the U.S.), as well as shorter single-chapter discussions of illegitimacy laws, clerical celibacy, and even Witte’s recent research canvassing the contents of various Christian behavioral manuals for families and children, published between 1390 and 1900.

Witte’s own perspective is broadly ecumenical, and part of his project is to show how certain useful understandings of law, rights, and duties are shared not only across divisions of Christendom but by other faith traditions as well, notably Jewish and Islamic traditions. A few of these understandings regarding government, however, have in times past been explicitly renounced by many within the Stone-Campbell Movement, which may make some readers feel like outsiders as Witte describes a longstanding common Christian understanding of particular purposes of law and the Christian’s relationship to government. Among the more contested understandings are background assumptions that God wants Christians to shape government and laws in ways that impose the minimal rules of “natural law” and tutor the citizenry in morals and virtue. Witte finds numerous examples of those teachings woven throughout the history of Christendom (despite, as he notes, notorious counterexamples like the teachings of Anabaptist communities), but for the most part his historical analysis of legal theology begins no earlier than the fourth century, the age of Constantine and Theodosius I, Lactantius and Augustine. Those Christians who have prioritized a return to the teachings and practices of the first-century church may understandably tend to discount these later doctrines about the state as misunderstandings of biblical texts written perhaps two centuries or more earlier.

Still, this volume contains much important information and is well worth reading. Witte displays his usual careful scholarship throughout the text, citing a wealth of historical sources from many differing religious traditions. His analysis of Russian Orthodox perspectives toward Western evangelism in Russia, for example, provokes deep thought and serves as a good case study in both the prospects for, and impediments to, a universal Christian legal theology. In analyzing particular American laws, he seems to be on especially firm ground in arguing from a Christian perspective for a continued weakening of illegitimacy laws, even as he documents the origins of such laws in sundry Christian theological arguments of the past. And the short discussion of Roman Catholic and Lutheran perspectives on clerical celibacy is evenhanded and direct, pointing out both the dangers of mandatory clerical celibacy and the dangers of a too-strong Protestant reaction that celebrates marriage as the highest calling of the Christian life and risks turning single Christians into second-class citizens in the kingdom of God.

At nearly 500 pages, this volume is not a quick read, but most readers will no doubt learn a great deal about both the theological and legal history of the West. The earlier chapters on human rights provide a useful comparative perspective that crosses national and religious borders, and those with an interest in the particular areas of law examined in later chapters will find a thorough and well-referenced discussion of the theology that has contributed to the formation and evolution of those areas. The volume could easily serve as recommended reading for courses in Christian legal or political theology, or in courses examining the influence of more universal religious beliefs and traditions on the law. Above all, this volume is a useful introduction to the recent scholarship of a leading figure in the field of law and religion.

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James F. SENNETT and Douglas GROOTHUIS, eds. *In Defense of Natural Theology: A Post-Humean Assessment*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2005. 336 pp. \$26.00.

The last four decades or so have seen a veritable renaissance in philosophy of religion, as Christian philosophers have increasingly brought all of the tools of analytic philosophy to bear in articulating and defending a theistic worldview. Employing the fruitful results of recent work in such fields as philosophy of language, modal logic, and metaethics, and appealing to recent discoveries in the empirical sciences, such philosophers have refurbished and refitted the arguments of natural theology and advanced versions of the ontological, cosmological, teleological and moral arguments, not to mention others. The result of such work is a rather formidable case for theism.

This volume is a collection of 13 original essays by leading philosophers of religion and Hume scholars that take a fresh look at Hume's famous criticisms of natural theology. The four essays of part one discuss general features of Hume's critique and his overall philosophy. Terence Penelhum offers an overview of Hume's arguments in the *Dialogues* and *Enquiry*. Todd Furman develops and defends the arguments, identifying three "sins" of the "eager believer"—the theist who is perhaps a bit too willing to be persuaded even by unsound arguments.

Keith Yandell analyzes and assesses Hume's empiricist commitments—*concept empiricism* and *verification empiricism*—that drive much of his critique of theism. Given these views, any talk of God is meaningless. But Yandell shows that the views *themselves* are meaningless given the constraints that they impose. He also examines the specific Humean commitments that drive his critique of the theistic arguments. Yandell argues that those commitments are clearly false, and thus concludes, "The idea that Hume dealt a deathblow to natural theology is sheer fiction." Whether any theistic argument succeeds is a simple matter of its soundness and persuasiveness. Sennett (formerly of Lincoln Christian College) assesses Hume's influential argument to the effect that even a sound argument of natural theology will always fall short of a proof of God's existence, since there are many actual and possible rival hypotheses that also would fit the bill. He calls this argument "Hume's Stopper," and argues that the "Stopper" appeals to a principle—the "Ignorance Assumption"—that is unduly restrictive in a quest for truth (See a similar article published by Sennett in *SCJ* 5.2 (2002) 207-216).

The essays of part two develop and defend specific arguments of natural theology with the Humean critique in mind. Groothuis suggests that cosmological arguers are often far too modest regarding the relative richness of the theistic conclusions that may be derived from a standard cosmological argument. He argues that the cosmological argument, if successful, calls for more than an anonymous transcendent First Cause, but calls for a number of the divine attributes as well. Gareth DeWeese and Joshua Rasmussen defend two philosophical versions of the *Kalam* cosmological argument, and settle into a defense of a version of the Principle of Sufficient Reason—crucial to the argument and challenged by Hume. They also defend the "Principle of Determination," which, they suggest, points to a free agent as the cause of the world, and urge this as part of a potential reply to Hume's Stopper.

Robin Collins restates his basic fine-tuning argument for the probability of theism over the "atheistic single-universe hypothesis." He offers several levels of reply to the common objection, "If the complexity of the world requires a designer, then who designed the even *more* complex designer?" Paul Copan offers a sketch of Hume's skeptical views on morality and shows how they follow from an incoherent empiricist epistemology. He argues that a theistic grounding for objective morality is more plausible than a naturalistic one, and invokes Thomas Reid's moral epistemology along the way. Both Hume and Reid thought that our moral beliefs are functions of our "wiring." As a nontheist, Hume had no reason to suppose that what our psychology compels us to believe is warranted or corresponds to reality in any way. He thus drew the appropriate skeptical conclusions. With his theistic backdrop, Reid maintained that those beliefs that arise because of our "constitution" are warranted, as our faculties have been designed to discover truth.

In his second contribution to the volume, Yandell examines Hume's general account of the nature of experience. Among other things, he notes that if Hume thinks that having an apparent *God-experience* cannot, in principle, count as evidence for the actual existence of God, it is because his view commits him to denying that an apparent *cat-experience* cannot, in principle, count as evidence for the actual existence of cats. Hume's view entails that we lack warrant for our beliefs in both cats and God, but, whereas the former belief is benign and forgivable, the latter is not. Yandell observes that anything Hume has to say about the "destructiveness" of theistic belief to human nature applies with equal force to Humean philosophy.

Victor Reppert presents a version of his “Argument from Rational Inference,” which, taking its cue from C.S. Lewis and others, purports to show that a closed, naturalistic universe would preclude the possibility of reasoning from ground to consequent, as the would-be ground-consequent relation would give way to a wholly nonepistemic cause-effect relation. J.P. Moreland argues, similarly, that a naturalistic worldview cannot provide adequate resources for explaining the existence of consciousness itself. Finally, Douglas R. Geivett develops a cumulative case argument, pulling together several strands of evidence from cosmology, design, consciousness, moral experience and attested miracles. The evidences here are independent, but they converge not only to make a compelling case for theism, but to flesh out a rather robust version of that worldview.

This is a fine volume that should be read by anyone interested in philosophy of religion, theology, and apologetics. The essays range widely in their degree of difficulty, and some, frankly, may confound the newcomer to these disciplines. It will serve as a good supplementary text for advanced college or seminary courses in apologetics and philosophy of religion. Its appearance is timely, as natural theology is a burgeoning field now that the prohibitive Positivism of the previous century is little more than a museum piece. Given its publication in *InterVarsity*, the direct influence of this volume is likely to be within the community of Christian philosophers. One hopes that the volume will stimulate thought and discussion that will, in turn, yield further publications that will cull the attention of the wider philosophical community.

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C. Stephen EVANS. *Kierkegaard on Faith and the Self: Collected Essays*. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2006. 352 pp. \$49.95.

C. Stephen Evans, Professor of Philosophy and the Humanities, Baylor University, is one of the world's preeminent Kierkegaard scholars. In addition to writing many books on Kierkegaard, Evans at one time was the curator of the Hong Kierkegaard Library in Northfield, Minnesota—the key center for research on Kierkegaard outside of Denmark.

The present volume is a collection of 19 essays (largely reprinted from journal articles and book chapters) spanning over 25 years of Evans' career. It includes essays spanning such topics as the fundamentally Christian nature of Kierkegaard's thought, his understanding of metaphysics, his understanding of irony and humor, his understanding of the relation between faith and history, between faith and reason, how his thought can be understood relative to the work of contemporary Reformed philosopher Alvin Plantinga, his view of the nature of religious authority as such and in relation to morality, his view of the nature of the self and the unconscious, and his view of the relationship between belief and the will. Though there are some broad groupings (three essays under "Kierkegaard on Ethics and Authority"), these essays can be read fruitfully separately (as they were written) as one's particular interests dictate.

This should prove useful to those more familiar with Kierkegaard but perhaps even more so for those who are minimally acquainted with his thought. It interacts with many of the big questions that anyone (particularly the evangelical Christian) who is mildly aware of and interested in Kierkegaard is likely to ask—particularly those concerning Kierkegaard as a Christian thinker and his view of the nature of truth, faith, reason, the self, and the relation between religion and ethics. The volume explains Kierkegaard—who is often (and often intentionally) less than clear—*clearly* and with a lightness of touch that bespeaks a wealth of both scholarly engagement with the texts and experience communicating in print and in the classroom.

Broadly speaking, this volume attends to several scholarly tasks. Throughout, Evans applies himself ably to the (regrettably necessary) task of clearing up common misunderstandings of Kierkegaard as anti-rational (though he critiques particular understandings of "reason"), as fideistic (though he sees faith as having an irreducible role in life), as a skeptic (though he argues for a certain epistemic modesty), as purveyor of subjectivism and individualism (though he sees the existing individual/subject as a necessary and central part of a right understanding of reality and the Christian faith). Interestingly enough, in showing Kierkegaard to be exempt of these common and often just labels for "postmodern" thought in general, Evans can be seen to make a roundabout case for a more chastened and faithful "postmodern" thinking with Kierkegaard as exemplar, though Evans does not argue this explicitly. Beyond merely correcting wrong views of Kierkegaard and explaining his position more clearly, Evans makes strong arguments for an often surprising portrait of Kierkegaard as epistemologist (contra-anti-rationalism), as apologist (contra-fideism), as humorist (contra the "melancholy Dane") and as sociologist (contra-individualism). Beyond mere exposition, Evans takes Kierkegaard into new and sometimes unexpected arenas such as the realism-antirealism debate, the nature of humor, Reformed epistemology, and psychoanalysis.

This volume is a treasure trove of well-written and insightful essays by one of the best Kierkegaard scholars in the world. It would be supremely helpful for beginners with Kierkegaard, be they students, pastors, or simply those thinking seriously about their faith. It is also a necessary addition to the shelf of anyone with any kind of scholarly interest in Kierkegaard.

CHRISTOPHER BEN SIMPSON

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James K. BEILBY, ed. *For Faith and Clarity: Philosophical Contributions to Christian Theology*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006. 264 pp. \$22.99.

Beilby has assembled a pantheon of academics to join him as he plumbs the depths of how Christian philosophy serves theology. Readers should be forewarned that this volume is not for the faint-of-heart or for those without a background in related disciplines. However, those who are up to the challenge will find much to stimulate their thinking.

Content diverges into four large sections: methodology, revelation and Scripture, the doctrine of God, and creation. Each large section incorporates two or three essays from various authors on the topics at hand.

The opening section on methodology includes essays from Beilby, Padgett, Moreland, and Moser and deals with the ongoing tension between foundational issues in philosophy and theology. Beilby sets the stage by giving strong arguments for the notion of “Christian philosophy” aiding the endeavors of theology. The problem in Beilby’s assumption is that not all philosophers share a theistic worldview. Though both Beilby and the other contributors deal brilliantly with the topics at hand, they do so through a thoroughly theistic lens, which stalls the dialogue.

Padgett’s essay on worldview attempts to overcome the weakness of Beilby’s purely “Christian” philosophy by suggesting how philosophy brings important questions to the table. Padgett cites five historical models, (Anselm, Aquinas, Luther, Orr, and Bowne) in a sort of “Niebuhresque” profile of how theology and philosophy interact (cf. Niebuhr’s *Christ and Culture*, Torchbooks, 1956). Padgett concludes by stating, “Theology and philosophy can cooperate and be partners only when each maintains its own proper autonomy as a distinct tradition of inquiry” (33).

Moreland’s chapter on ontology is a welcome addition to this section but contributes nothing new. He summarizes issues relating to existence and identity, and then argues with Kant’s notions of predication and existence. Though helpful, it is primarily a regurgitation of thinking found elsewhere. The most useful tool is the closing section on why anyone should care about ontology at all. In these paragraphs, Moreland responds to why metaphysics are important for worldview studies in a very readable dialogue between a believer and an unbeliever.

Moser argues for a filial epistemology over against a propositional epistemology. It is irenic and helpful but too brief in scope. His move towards a filial epistemology is an attempt to overcome modernist foundations, without giving way to deconstructionism, but he fails to bridge the gap between these views.

The section on revelation and Scripture questions two fundamental doctrines of evangelical orthodoxy: divine revelation and inerrancy. Both views go beyond fundamentalist doctrine to seek new avenues of understanding. Critical to this discussion is Clark’s postfoundational chapter on inerrancy. Clark calls for a “speech act” understanding (ala Searle, Vanhoozer, and Swinburne) of language to clarify terms and delineate what may be meant by the term “inerrancy.” This paradigmatic shift in hermeneutics and interpretation will “miss the mark” for most conservatives, but it clearly challenges basic assumptions and pushes toward a deeper and more holistic understanding of Scripture.

The section on the doctrine of God is helpful but far too historic to contribute much to the overall work. Craig, Richards, and Wolterstorff do admirable jobs of challenging traditional understandings of brilliant thinkers. Craig deals almost exclusively with Pannenberg and his Hegelian assumptions while Richards expounds Aquinas’s notion of “divine simplicity.” Wolterstorff contributes on the topic “the justice of God.” While he too approaches the topic from a historical point of view, dealing with Nygren and Niebuhr, his conclusions are better suited for the work and seek to help theologians deal with this oft-neglected aspect of God’s nature.

The essays on creation are worth the cost of the volume alone. Plantinga, Yandell, and Hasker wrestle with difficult philosophical problems that have plagued theology for years. Plantinga’s work on creation and design forms a strong foundation for what Yandell says about evil and suffering and what Hasker concludes about anthropology.

The strengths of this volume are many. All of the topics are philosophically relevant, well researched, and written by top thinkers in the field. It contributes to the ongoing dialogue between theology and philosophy, and prepares the way for future dialogue that will enable these two disciplines to both peacefully coexist and serve one another. Those in the Stone-Campbell Restoration Movement will not find issues that are unique to our historical perspective, but we can draw upon the strengths of this volume to enhance the ongoing discussion

about our movement and evangelicalism at large and to buttress our worldview as we continue to struggle with age-old questions.

The weaknesses are few but noticeable. All of the contributors share the theistic perspective. While there is “strength in numbers,” it diminishes the overall usefulness of the volume from a philosophical perspective. It strongly contributes to the area known as the “philosophy of religion” but fails to address some important philosophical categories. It is unclear whether the editor purposefully attempted to push towards a postfoundational, and therefore, postmodern bent or if the contributors simply took the material in that direction on their own. However, this is the direction they are going. The other notable weakness is the academic nature of the volume. This volume, though aimed at academics, would be of little value to one who did not have a background in academia—thereby limiting the pool of potential readers and people who could benefit from the research done for this work.

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Ben WITHERINGTON, III. *The Problem with Evangelical Theology: Testing the Exegetical Foundations of Calvinism, Dispensationalism and Wesleyanism*. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2005. 294 pp. \$29.95.

As heirs of the Protestant Reformation, contemporary Evangelicalism (including the Stone-Campbell Movement) has long cherished one of the battle cries of the Reformers: “*Sola scriptura*.” On the other hand, a second defining Reformation slogan has often been curiously neglected: specifically, the call to be continually involved in the reforming *process*—*semper reformanda*. This failure has often precluded Reformation and Restoration descendants from advancing beyond the initial biblical insights of their respective founders and caused theological and denominational failure and allegiances to calcify and become resistant to healthy correction.

Stone-Campbell scholars have long faulted their fellow Protestants for ignoring the prominence that the NT gives to the “sacraments”—baptism and the Lord’s Supper—preferring to relegate these to a Zwinglian-like symbolism that all but separates their practice from “faith.” However, to the movement’s credit, the Campbells and Barton Stone were not content with simply accepting the prevailing Protestant understandings of these important NT rites. It might be argued that the Stone-Campbell Movement was a long-awaited renewal of the spirit of *semper reformanda*. Recently, however, Reformed theologians such as Kevin Vanhoozer have been challenging their peers to allow biblical and canonical theology to set their theological paradigms, and the next decade should see the appearance of several significant works on theology that make the biblical narrative the mediator of theological conclusions rather than the predetermined teachings of systematic theology. In other words, Calvin’s venerable *Institutes* could actually be read in terms of “theological pilgrimage” instead of as the “final word.” Rather than pursuing their respective crafts in isolation, OT and NT scholars and their counterparts in systematics are now joining forces in a long overdue interdisciplinary manner.

Some scholars are already on the cutting edge of bringing systematics under the governing authority of Scripture, notable among them Ben Witherington, III, from Asbury Seminary. In an earlier volume on christology, *The Many Faces of Christ* (Crossroad/Herder, 1998), Witherington proposed that a chronological examination of the NT documents yielded a portrait of Jesus that not only was the foundation for the historic creedal formulations but actually surpassed these confessions due to a stunning variety of christological images. What emerges from the study of the text is not an easily stated, “monochromatic” picture of Jesus (3). Instead, one encounters the God-Man in “many faces;” unified, but in a less-than-systematic way. Witherington reminds us that liberal theology does not have a lock on theological reductionism.

In his most recent effort, Witherington advances his critique of Evangelical “Bible-binding” by taking Calvinism, Dispensationalism, and his own Wesleyan tradition to exegetical task. In essence, each one of these prominent definitions of Evangelical theology errs most in the key doctrinal commitments that distinguishes it from its other family members. Regarding Calvinism, Witherington notes: “Reformed exegetes have a hard time coming to grips with the paradox of a God who is both sovereign and free. . . . They have a hard time understanding that holy love does not involve determinism, however subtle. . . . They have a hard time dealing with the idea that God programmed into the system a certain amount of indeterminacy, risk, and freedom. And maybe . . . the good old Evangelical lust for certainty leads us all to too quickly fill in gaps and silences of Scripture, driving us to bad exegesis” (5). From this provocative statement, the author begins his “assault” upon the biblical fidelity of Calvinistic interpretations of total depravity, “bondage of the will” (as explained by both Augustine and Luther, especially from Romans 7), and election, playfully heading these chapters with titles like “O Adam, Where Art Thou?” and “Awaiting the Election Results.” His analysis of Romans 7 and the definition of “election” that emerges from a biblical theology are particularly insightful.

However, Calvinism receives relatively light chastisement in comparison to Dispensationalism. Sparked by the generally uncritical reception of the LaHaye–Jenkins’ *Left Behind* series, Witherington launches into a full-scale critique of this popular approach to Scripture by taking on its most hallowed shibboleths: the nature of biblical prophecy, the rapture, and LaHaye’s interpretation of the relationship that exists between Israel and the church. He comments: “Of the three theological systems we are examining in this volume, Dispensationalism is in fact the new kid on the block, and it is clearly the most exegetically problematic as well” (93). To contemporary evangelicals supporting Israeli aggression by appealing to an alleged fulfillment of biblical prophecy, Witherington offers this admonition: “According to the book of Revelation only God is the proper executor of justice and final judgment on the world, not human beings. Revelation is about the most

antimilitaristic book in the Bible as it never once encourages any human, never mind Christians, to take up arms. Rather it encourages them to pray and be spiritually prepared to suffer for their faith. . . . The author (John) would find shameful; the way this book has been used in the *Left Behind* series and by many of the televangelists” (166). In sharp contrast to Dispensationalism’s preoccupation with Israel (and the USA) and a twenty-first-century unfolding of world events, the author reminds his readers that “from a Christian point of view, all OT promises and prophecies are to be fulfilled in or by Christ, not apart from Christ and/or the church” (109).

Yet Witherington’s own Wesleyan tradition is not without its exegetical faults. While the author is undoubtedly more charitable to John Wesley than to Augustine, Luther, or Darby, he nonetheless criticizes Methodism’s founder at the points most associated with Wesleyan theology, notably entire sanctification and prevenient grace. Of the former, he notes: “The problem with Wesley’s analysis is that sometimes he defined sin too narrowly, as simply the willful violation of a known law, and thus saw perfection as the avoidance of that coupled with the experience and expression of holy love. But this definition of perfection does not include being conformed to Christ in his sufferings and death, much less being made like Christ in his resurrection. But that is what Paul says real perfection—full perfection—amounts to” (215). And concerning the latter, Witherington admits that “Wesley’s theology of prevenient grace is frankly weakly grounded if we are talking about proof texts from the Bible. . . . I would prefer to say (from scripture) that sinners are enabled by grace, in the moment of crisis and crying out, to respond to the gospel” (209). In addition to these critiques of John Wesley, Witherington offers a word of caution about the dangers of “experiential exegesis” that is now best seen in today’s major Wesleyan–Arminian offshoot, namely the Pentecostal Holiness or Charismatic movement. While he commends this fast-growing evangelical wing for its important recovery of pneumatology, he also challenges the biblical and theological legitimacy of its interpretation of and emphasis upon tongues and the “baptism of the Holy Spirit” (218-222).

Given the scope and breadth of Witherington’s indictments, adherents to the Stone-Campbell Movement might well feel a bit left out, since many in scholarly circles have come to the conclusion that we have contributed our own, distinctive problems to evangelical theology, such as failing to articulate a coherent theology. On the other hand, we could take a certain amount of pleasure in the fact that such a preeminent scholar is calling for theological construction in a manner reminiscent of the Stone-Campbell Movement. Maybe the Restoration has a hermeneutic that can correct the problem Witherington observes.

Witherington concludes by calling attention to how theology was done in the first-century world, namely by Jesus and Paul. Those familiar with Witherington’s writing will not be surprised to see attention given to “Jesus the Sage and the Storyteller,” or to “Paul the Rhetorician” (231-235). In a manner that should well resonate with postmodern affections for narrative, readers are reminded that Jesus, Paul, John, and the rest all did their theology in a “storied universe” (230). Thus, along with its firm scriptural foundations, biblical theology makes sense for evangelistic reasons. On top of that, it holds the promise of transcending denominational and party lines, bringing together the church universal. Restoration founders had a vision like that.

This volume has become a favorite of mine. I have recommended it to many of my colleagues, and I heretofore unabashedly recommend it to *SCJ* readers. This volume has given me a renewed appreciation for our Restoration Plea and its great hermeneutical and ecclesiastical potential. And it has chastened me to not only champion the authority of Scripture alone but to continually allow that holy book to reform my theology.

Semper reformanda!

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Dale BROWN. *The Book of Buechner: A Journey through His Writings*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox. 394 pp. \$24.95.

Dale Brown, professor of English at Calvin College, directs the Calvin College Festival of Faith and Writing. Frederick Buechner (pronounced Beekner) was the first writer invited to be interviewed at the Festival, and he returned for a second time some years later. The Festival was not the first time that Brown and Buechner had met, though it helped cement a literary friendship that continues today. Many of Buechner's books appear in Brown's literary courses, and he has written many articles and reviews of Buechner's works and published interviews. For these reasons, Brown offers a unique perspective in this comprehensive and insightful volume.

Taking an interesting approach, rather than tracing the life of Buechner, this volume follows his literary production, allowing readers to get to know Buechner through his writings. Ten of Buechner's books were selected for study in this fine effort.

Three elements stand out in Buechner's writings; his father's suicide, his Christian belief, and his maternal grandmother, Naya. The progression of his faith appears in his works. In his first work, the Christian theme is in the background. However, between his first work and his second he hears George Buttrick speak in a Presbyterian church in New York City. Something clicked within him, and he became more interested in his latent Christianity. The Christian influence grows from that point, informing major themes in his writings, but he is never publicly a Christian writer. Brown does an excellent job of making this clear.

Brown also does an exceptional job of bringing out the influences of Buechner's family. His father's suicide when he was a child, emphasized in Brown's third chapter, continues to haunt him. The main character in Buechner's third novel, Rudy Tripp deals with an inner vacancy left by his father's death. His maternal grandmother, Naya, whose life had a strong influence on him, appears in characters throughout the novels.

The strongest element in Brown's writing is his ability to give Buechner's characters more life than they have in his stories, showing they are based on real people. The book is difficult to put down. The biggest drawback is Brown's use of namedropping. At the beginning of each chapter people who influenced Buechner's writing of that novel appear along with names of critics and their remarks. Instead of just using a few of the important ones, Brown provides near-exhaustive lists. In the forward, Brown lists 11 authors who have participated in the Festival of Faith and Writing, immediately followed by another list of 17 more writers involved. This trend continues throughout the volume. In addition, Brown compares one of Buechner's novels to the writings of six known authors, including a constant comparison to C.S. Lewis. The feeling is that perhaps Buechner cannot stand alone and needs these others in order to give credence to his writings.

Over all, though, this volume would make an excellent volume for a literature course.

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Joel B. GREEN and Stuart L. PALMER. *In Search of the Soul: Four Views of the Mind-Body Problem*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2005. 223 pp. \$20.00.

Many in our society and culture accept the results of scientific research with unquestioning loyalty. Richard Dawkins's *The God Delusion* (Houghton Mifflin, 2006) is but one example of the scientific community becoming more vocal about matters of faith. Far from being an issue of the past, the debate between God and science is increasingly pertinent. This volume not only enters the debate but does so with power, clarity, and the firm conviction of faith.

Green and Palmer, both of Asbury Theological Seminary, have gathered four respected philosophers to address the existence of the soul from four different positions. Neuroscience, for instance calls into question any nonphysiological explanation of what it means to be human. To speak of a soul that distinguishes humans from the animal world, continues to exist beyond the death of the body, or provides a context for moral decisions is increasingly challenged by science. The contributors place the discussion within the traditions of Christian theology and biblical studies but with different approaches to the problem.

The four views presented run along a continuum ranging from Goetz's substance dualism to Corcoran's construction view of persons. Goetz and Hasker may be identified as dualists while Murphy and Corcoran are identified more with materialists. Each of the four contributors present a view that strives to hold to a distinctively Christian view of the person. For Goetz, the soul is a substance, not in a material sense, but in the sense that it displays qualities and characteristics unique to it. Hasker suggests that the soul emerges from within the processes of biological evolution. Murphy works to hold on to materialism and make room for modern science yet rejects the reductionism of science. Corcoran argues against dualism, but for a Christian view of the person that grounds one's identity within the physical body.

The goals of the text include introducing the range of options with regard to what it means to be human, providing compass points as Christians consider these options, and helping the reader note the reasons why discussions of the body and soul the mind and the brain are so crucial. How well do the contributors accomplish these tasks? While this volume has not brought incredible clarity to the issue, it does invite readers into current discussion regarding the mind/soul debate, helping one become more aware of the options for Christians who wish to enter the debate. Readers will also be reminded of the importance of thinking through these issues in light of modern science. So, Green and Palmer accomplished their stated goals. The text does lean heavily toward the theological and philosophical and is less practical than it might have been. The essays provide a wonderful picture into the debate of the mind/soul but much of the application to practical ministry is left to the reader to fill in. Having said that, as I read more about this issue I have little doubt that I will return to this book to utilize the compass points provided.

Not for the faint of heart, the philosophical arguments are at times difficult to follow and Palmer himself remarks that students often ask about the relevance of this discussion. However, I would recommend this text to graduate school professors as a review of current approaches to the body/soul debate and for relevant graduate courses.

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Donald K. MCKIM, ed. *Calvin and the Bible*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006. 296 pp. \$75.00.

With this volume, Cambridge has produced a comprehensive study on Calvin's interpretation of Scripture. For too long people have understood Calvin from his systematic writings like the *Institutes* while ignoring how Calvin actually interpreted Scripture in his commentaries. In this volume, eleven Calvin scholars examine the hermeneutics and social location evident in his commentaries, which reveal his life's work of studying Scripture.

Randall Zachman looks at Calvin as a commentator on Genesis. When Calvin wrote this commentary, he was involved in controversies over the Lord's Supper, the providence of God and election, the doctrine of the Trinity, and even the heretical writings and turmoil with Servetus in Geneva. Zachman shows how Calvin followed the "plain-sense" of Scripture while also seeing the "double-sense" of Israelite promises often fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Calvin also was concerned with scientific accuracy, the literary genre and types of literature, and followed Augustine in that the goal of all biblical interpretation is the edification of the church.

Raymond Blacketer examines the Mosaic harmony and Joshua. This was one of Calvin's later commentaries. Calvin was immersed in both Hebrew and Greek while examining the writings of the Patristic fathers and has a somewhat love-hate relationship with rabbinic literature. One of Calvin's goals in his revision and changes within these historical documents was to provide what he saw as a simpler format and order for pastors and teachers to engage the biblical material. One sees in Calvin's exegetical method the classic threefold division of the law (commandments, ceremonial, and moral) as well how he dealt with moral problems within these texts.

Susan Schreiner studies Calvin's interpretations of Job, which originated in his sermons. Calvin used an expository approach to Scripture, applying his view of accommodation to God's relationship to humanity but also to preachers' relationship to their congregations. Calvin deals with such difficult issues as suffering, theodicy, and providence, showing how God and Scripture bring both revelation and hiddenness.

Wulfert de Greef examines Calvin's commentary on the Psalms. Calvin sometimes followed the Vulgate but more often the Septuagint. Calvin was not only a masterful interpreter but a very capable textual critic. He was well read in the early church fathers and made independent judgments in agreeing or disagreeing with them. Calvin's hermeneutics are both literal and historical, though he would employ allegory at times (a practice for which he criticized the medieval church). Calvin held Israel and the church in dynamic tension together as God's people. He was christological in his exegesis, but did not read Christ into the OT unless the NT alluded to it. Calvin emphasized both the unity of the Jewish-Christian covenant and the unity of the church.

Peter Wilcox tackles Calvin on the Prophets covering such books as Isaiah, Hosea, Daniel, Jeremiah, the 12 minor prophets, Ezekiel, Malachi, and Lamentations. These commentaries came from Calvin's students who took notes on his lectures and filled in the blanks. Calvin's commentaries were first published in Latin and then in French for the evangelization of France. Calvin emphasized the theological continuity between the OT and NT and distinguished between the end of exile for Israel and the kingdom of Christ. Calvin was a restorationist in the sense he wanted to see the church be reformed and return to its original integrity. Calvin's theology was also eschatological as he looked forward to the renovation of the whole world.

Calvin as a commentator on the Synoptic Gospels is examined by Darlene Flaming. The Gospel of John serves as the hermeneutical key in understanding all the Gospels just like the book of Romans functioned for Calvin as the key to all of Scripture. Calvin combined textual studies in the original languages, literary criticism, as well as intermixing history and story, miracles of Jesus with the spiritual lessons they teach. Calvin insisted that Jesus really grew in wisdom and understanding just as his own orthodox christology of Jesus as fully man and fully God informed his interpretation of Scripture. Calvin dealt with the Synoptics more like one general biography of Jesus rather than focusing on the peculiar emphasis in each individual Gospel.

Calvin as a commentator on the Acts of the Apostles is analyzed by Wilhelmus Moehn. Calvin was very interested in Palestinian history and Luke's account of church history. Calvin dealt with several historical problems in relation to the timelines found in Acts and in Josephus. Calvin was more inclined to side with Josephus and leave some questions unanswered.

Calvin as a commentator on the Pauline epistles is dealt with by R. Ward Holder. Calvin spent over ten years writing his Romans commentary and this became his lens for interpreting all the rest of Scripture. Calvin wrote commentaries also on Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians, which he grouped together. He also

studied Hebrews, Titus, Philemon, and Thessalonians.

Gary Neal Hansen's article covers Calvin's commentaries on the Catholic epistles and the book of Hebrews. Calvin would write commentaries on First John, Second Peter, James, and Jude but felt no need to write on every epistle since, for Calvin, some were simply superfluous and overlapping in content. Calvin interpreted Scripture with Scripture and saw his own situation and polemics in places like Second Peter regarding Rome's view of the primacy of the Petrine office.

Lastly, David Steinmetz summarizes Calvin as an interpreter of Scripture. He shows the difference between Calvin's exegesis and medieval exegesis. Calvin was a humanist, using rhetorical skills and the historical criticism of his day, as well as a reformer. Calvin's commentaries constantly show Calvin's concerns for the welfare of the church and its confrontation with error and true doctrine.

This compendium of articles and different authors are uneven and at times overlapping, but they brilliantly reveal many of the historical circumstances and how one's social location influences biblical interpretation. Most of these articles do a good job of showing Calvin's strengths and weaknesses in the hermeneutical process while viewing Calvin within his own historical context.

I highly recommend this work for pastors and teachers for further investigation into this important area of biblical studies and how Scripture speaks to people today pastorally for their edification and spiritual growth.

CHRIS CRIMINGER

Vallonia Christian Church

Vallonia, IN

M. James SAWYER. *The Survivor's Guide to Theology*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006. 640 pp. \$34.99.

The field of systematic theology will never be lacking in introductory volumes. Such works of theology often attempt to provide readers a foundation for understanding the discipline of systematic theology, yet fail to include discussions on some of the most significant preliminary issues. Sawyer articulates this problem: “Strangely, in biblical and theological studies, one must have a grasp of the discipline to understand the introductory issues!” (10) Sawyer provides his own solution: a text that does not provide a traditional systematic theology but rather delineates presuppositions, background issues, and methodological concerns vital to the academic study of systematic theology.

Sawyer’s work is divided into three major sections. The first focuses on the main introductory issues in theology: the theologian’s task, epistemology and truth, sources and authority, doctrinal taxonomy, the interaction between theology and other disciplines, such as science, and divisions of theological study. Flowing from his presupposition that “theology involves far more than doctrine or a straightforward summary of biblical teaching” (11), Sawyer delivers a well-balanced, thorough approach to these issues by exploring them philosophically, historically, and biblically. He commands substantial knowledge over each of these fields and is able to thread them seamlessly into an understandable framework for the student of theology to employ in further study.

The second section is devoted to the survey of major theological traditions. Along with providing brief historical orientation regarding each tradition, Sawyer articulates key theological issues that both link and separate the traditions, including major doctrines, hermeneutics and sources of authority. He brings prominent theologians to the surface and describes their particular contributions to the movement. He also identifies philosophical and historical influences that fostered the development of each tradition, thus presenting a rather complete picture. Finally, Sawyer critiques core presuppositions and doctrines expressed in each tradition, ably uncovering important issues for the student of theology to explore further.

The third section is an alphabetical collection of biographical sketches encompassing major theologians and philosophers throughout church history. This alone would serve as a uniquely helpful research tool, but Sawyer also includes a short dictionary of theological and philosophical terms. Appendices are also provided, which give brief, yet thorough, instructions in doing basic theological research.

Weaknesses are not easily identified in this work. Sawyer sets out to provide an accessible work focused on introductory issues alone, and accomplishes this task in stellar fashion. The work’s weakness is in the limited audience it may reach. It is too complex for the average undergraduate. Therefore, the best usage would likely be in an advanced undergraduate theology seminar or introductory graduate course in systematic theology where the focus is on theological background issues and methodology. Overall, Sawyer is to be commended for writing a thoroughly researched text that will serve as a valuable tool for the theologian or student of theology, both as a detailed guide to introductory issues and as a reference concerning theologians and theological traditions.

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N.T. WRIGHT. *Evil and the Justice of God*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2006. 176 pp. \$18.00.

We expect a volume bearing this title to be a philosophical defense of the justice of God in the face of evil. But this is decidedly *not* what Wright writes about in these brief, five chapters. Wright is concerned that philosophical approaches to the “problem of evil,” in contrast to the Bible itself, often fail to confront the more important issue of what is to be done about it. Solving the problem of evil is not a matter of trying to figure out where it came from in the first place, but seeking ways to bring the healing justice of God’s kingdom even into our present evil world.

The volume's first chapter addresses what Wright calls the “new problem of evil.” He notes that evil—in light of events such as September 11 and Hurricane Katrina—has become a hot topic in today’s society, but points to how many people, such as politicians and media pundits, seem surprised by it and don’t have a clue what to do about it. The immature responses of our culture to evil are seen in the extreme tendencies either to blame everyone else or to blame oneself for everything. Wright indicts both modernism and postmodernism for their inadequate responses to evil. Modernism has failed to take evil seriously enough, often ignoring it and preferring instead to believe in a doctrine of “progress” which still inclines people to believe that humankind is basically “all right.”

Postmodernism, while rightly recognizing the flawed condition of humanity, fails to provide any solutions and actually robs people of moral dignity because, within the flux of postmodernism, there is nobody to take responsibility for evil. Wright argues that what is needed, and what neither modernism nor postmodernism can provide, is a more mature worldview which includes a serious recognition that evil is real, that it is deep, and that the line between good and evil runs through us all.

The heart of Wright’s text is his overview of the biblical material. He surveys the OT in chapter two, calling attention to the events of Genesis 1–11, events which provide the narrative framework for the long story of how God sets about to redeem his creation. He focuses on the role of Israel, a people chosen to be the vehicle of blessing who are nevertheless flawed themselves and thus also part of the “problem,” and ends the chapter with specific comments on Isaiah 40–55 (especially the servant of Yahweh), Daniel, and Job. The emphasis throughout is that the OT is less interested in answering the question of what God has to *say* about evil than in telling what the God of justice and faithfulness “has done, is doing and will do about evil” (45).

Chapter three deals with the NT, especially the Gospels and the cross and resurrection. Wright says “atonement theology” needs to be linked to the larger problem of evil. He sees the motif of God’s victory over evil as the most satisfactory way of understanding the atonement, while not denying other perspectives. The Gospel writers tell their story so as to portray how all the forces of evil come together to do their worst, and how God defeats them through Jesus’ death and resurrection. In this way evil is taken seriously, and at the same time God’s long-term plan reaches its decisive climax. Calvary is an *event* where we see what God *does* to deal with evil.

The last two chapters flesh out some of the implications of this victory. Recognizing that we live between the accomplishment of the cross and the future new world, Wright challenges Christians to bring the future into the present (working backwards from the scriptural vision of where Christians are headed) by living out our deliverance from evil. Beyond personal concerns such as prayer and holiness, he points to the implications of the cross for large-scale issues such as politics and empire, penal codes, and international disputes. In a pastoral-type way, he discusses the power of forgiveness to release people from the grip of evil, including the importance of people forgiving themselves. Forgiveness is often misunderstood, but it is not the same thing as tolerance (pretending that evil doesn’t exist or that it’s really okay). Christians must put this vital element of the Gospel into practice, not only on a personal and church level, but also on a national and global level.

Wright takes a complex subject and in his usual delightful way provides a readable, stimulating, and profound account. His double emphasis on “implementing the achievement of the cross and anticipating God’s promised future world” (102-103) is on target. It locates the ultimate answer in God’s new creation (future and cosmic), while avoiding an “other-worldly” emphasis that robs people of motivation to do anything about evil in the present. Wright’s concern that people must not fail to take account of the practical ways evil affects them (personally, corporately, politically, internationally) is welcomed.

A few items may raise some eyebrows. Wright rules out “any immediate prospect of finding an answer to the question of where evil came from in the first place and what it’s doing in God’s good creation” (136). While limiting discussion about the origin of evil is understandable, perhaps something could be said, especially in

terms of human culpability, which Wright clearly affirms. Wright both affirms that death is an intruder, “the final satanic weapon” (116) that corrupts creation, and paints death “as a natural and harmless feature of the original landscape” (52). He seems to say that death assumed another role after humankind sinned.

This volume would be a helpful supplemental text for courses that deal with the problem of evil, not least because it is a healthy reminder not to forget the Bible in this discussion! But for that very reason, its greatest use may be in the local church. It will give preachers and Bible teachers a needed perspective from which to tackle this subject, and in an age of widespread biblical illiteracy, it will help equip believers with a biblical worldview on a matter which directly concerns us all.

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Ida GLASER. *The Bible and Other Faiths*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2005. 255 pp. \$18.00.

This volume is the fourth in the *Christian Doctrine in Global Perspective* series published in partnership with John Stott's Langham Partnership International. The series seeks to engage key tenets of Christian belief within the global context, and this volume by Ida Glaser accomplishes this purpose. Glaser, who is affiliated with the Edinburgh Centre for Muslim-Christian Studies, explores the roles of noncovenant religions in the Bible and their significance for current relationships with non-Christian faiths. This volume, then, is an introduction to the broader religious background of the OT and NT as well as a biblical guide for Christians to engage other faiths.

The author develops her argument that the Bible contains rich resources for Christian responsibility in a world of religious diversity through three parts. The first part offers an introduction in which a rationale for the subject and an explanation of the author's basic method of biblical interpretation are presented. Most notable in this section is the author's use of a "canonical approach" to biblical interpretation that seeks to identify relevant themes woven throughout Scripture. This hermeneutic is akin to that of biblical theology, and Glaser argues that this method honors the integrity and contexts of solitary biblical passages. Within this paradigm Glaser argues that in order to appreciate more fully the roles the religions play in the Bible, one must move beyond the traditional exclusivist, inclusivist, and pluralist understandings of Christianity and other faiths. This point is well taken, but Glaser never clearly articulates an alternative biblical paradigm.

More helpful are the following two parts, in which the religions of the wider worlds of the OT and NT are explored. In part two, five chapters are devoted to the rich religious context of ancient Hebrew faith, and here Glaser explores the interrelationships between the covenant people, their neighbors and the land that is shared and religiously appropriated. Within this religiously diverse crucible of temptations to idolatry and unhealthy syncretism, the identity of the covenant people is forged. A highlight of this second section is the chapter devoted to an understanding and appreciation of the book of Genesis against its broader ancient near eastern religious background. After reading this section it becomes clear that the OT has much to say about interreligious issues.

The religious background to the NT is the focus of the next five chapters in part three. Glaser devotes these chapters to describing the nature and impact of Samaritan and Greco-Roman religions on early Christianity. This section highlights how Christianity builds upon religious elements that were contemporary with the early Church, yet emphasizes the discontinuity between the faith of the first Christians and pre-Christian religions. The final chapter in part three presents several tantalizing questions that emerge from early Christianity's interaction with other faiths as recorded in the Bible. This list includes no surprises, as the expected questions such as "Is Jesus the only way to salvation?" and "Can people of other faiths go to heaven?" are raised. The reader is disappointed here, not only by the posing of standard, stale questions, but even more so by the absence of clarity in the author's responses to her own well-worn questions. Indeed, this ambiguity is the greatest shortcoming of this volume. Rather than a mere review of standard content related to the interaction of Christianity and other faiths in the worlds of the Bible, one would have hoped for a fresh supplemental discussion. For example, rather than focusing on the dissimilarities between covenant and noncovenant faiths, it would have been more helpful to focus on the similarities. Instead of asking ultimately the unanswerable (as even the author herself concedes) question, "Who will go to heaven?" it would have been constructive to ask, "What might other faiths know of God?" and discuss the implications of the pervasive theme of general revelation in the Bible.

Even so, this is a valuable volume. The chapters on Genesis and Gentile religions are themselves worth the price of the volume. The discussion of the ways the covenant faiths built upon local, preexisting understandings of God are also very timely. As Christians in the current climate wrestle with whether Allah is God or not, it is helpful to be reminded that both in the OT (*El*) and the NT (*Logos*), the covenant people borrowed local terms for God and infused them with new meaning. This volume, therefore, would be useful for undergraduate courses in biblical backgrounds and world religions. Used along with broader introductory texts, Glaser's volume will provide necessary insights into the role of the religions in the formation of the covenant faiths as recorded in the Bible.

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Rowland FORMAN, Jeff JONES, and Bruce MILLER. *The Leadership Baton: An Intentional Strategy for Developing Leaders in Your Church*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004. 221 pp. \$22.99.

As a former track athlete, I have witnessed many baton exchanges. With reaching hands and crying commands, placing the baton safely and securely into a teammates hands often determines the outcome of the race. According to Forman, Jones, and Miller, the most important steps taken by the church are the ones that intentionally prepare and nurture leadership in the church (22-24). They believe the church's future depends on training new generations of lay and professionally schooled leaders.

Forman, Jones, and Miller are associated with the Center for Church Based Training (CCBT) in Dallas. Forman is the director for curriculum development. Jones is the senior pastor for Fellowship Bible Church as well as executive director for CCBT. Miller is senior pastor of McKinney Fellowship Bible Church as well as chairman of the board of directors for CCBT. All three men are committed to church-life and developing leadership within the context of the local congregation.

The authors have divided this volume into three parts: Vision, Process, and Implementation. The volume concludes with two appendices, while each chapter includes discussion questions.

Part One (chapters 1 and 2) casts their vision for developing leaders. With principles drawn from the small group movement, discipleship movement, seminar movement, etc., they create a system for developing a person's character, which roots itself in a vital community, and motivates itself by Christ's mission (49). In order to accomplish its goals, Church Base Training places the person in the local church context for his/her training.

Part Two (chapters 3-6) outlines a strategy for leadership development, focusing on exercising biblical wisdom (72-73). They recognize the importance of godly wisdom, godly character, and servant leadership as qualities that exemplify leaders (63-64). In order to reach stated leadership development goals, training is comprised of courses, community, and mentoring.

Courses supply a system that will train leaders to "think well about the multifaceted issues that confront us" (74). By following a six-step process, all of which is immersed in prayer, they provide a framework for making wise decisions about concerns and conflict within the church. Their steps include grasping the issue, studying the Scriptures, consulting available resources, forming a response, testing the response through dialogue with others, then taking the steps to obey (76-82).

Part Three (chapters 7-11) brings the discussion to the practical aspect by implementing what has been revealed through the first six chapters. They offer advice in how to equip a governing board, emerging leaders, ministry staff, and interns.

The volume ends with two appendices. The first fleshes out a rationale for the six-step decision-making process from chapter 4. The second offers sample questionnaires and surveys for distribution to potential leaders as an inventory to identify one's understanding of God.

The authors are passionate about their message, and Parts One and Two of the volume are innovative and refreshing. They offer practical ideas about implementing a mentoring relationship in order to secure church leadership for future generations (22).

Forman, Jones, and Miller are offering a paradigm shift for training church leaders. They succinctly trace history's move away from Jesus' mentoring the disciples to seminaries offering degrees for professional ministry. They call for the church to step in and offer training beyond (or in lieu of) the seminary degree. In essence, they are calling for churches to provide training that will "carry far greater weight than a degree from a Bible college or seminary" (189). So a student who graduates from college or seminary should spend time in a church setting being mentored by an experienced minister and ministry, before leading his or her own church ministry.

The authors call for a balance between the theological training of seminary with the practical, hands-on experience offered by an internship in the local church. Theological training finds its life in the application of the local church. These authors offer a means for which the local church can begin taking responsibility for training leaders.

In addition, realizing that graduate/seminary training is not a practical outlet for every leader (cost and accessibility), Forman, Jones, and Miller offer a viable option. Training leaders to think theologically is important to them; teaching leaders in the church to think theologically is certainly an appealing thought, and should be applauded by both seminaries and churches.

This book is an excellent—but far from perfect—volume for any church beginning to rethink its role in training leaders. The graduate/seminary experience has its place, but the church should not abdicate its responsibility to the schools (48). This is a good source to provide the basics for beginning such training.

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Lisa Wilson DAVISON. *Preaching the Women of the Bible*. St. Louis: Chalice, 2006. 138 pp. \$13.59.

This volume's introduction, notes section, and bibliography supplement its 13 main chapters. In the introduction and first two chapters, Davison shares her reason for writing, her theological journey, and the methodology for chapters 3–12. In doing so, she is transparent regarding her feminist-modernist theological position, a clue to which can be found in the volume's title.

Chapters 3–12 are sample sermons and include 1) the biblical text, 2) introductory notes, 3) historical/cultural context notes, 4) textual context notes, 5) insights for the sermon, and 6) the sermon itself. Some of the women considered include Jochebed and Pharaoh's daughter, the daughters of Zelophehad, Jephthah's daughter, the mother of Immanuel, Huldah, the "queen of heaven," Jesus' mother Mary, Jesus' female disciples, Mary Magdalene, and churchwomen of Corinth. In Chapter 13 Davison shares her vision for preaching in the future, suggests more texts, and commits to continue the quest to "harvest their stories" (i.e., the stories of women in the Bible).

The separate endnotes require a placeholder for reference, and a 41-source bibliography of feminist or woman-oriented works completes this work.

What some would identify as strengths others will surely see as weaknesses. Davison's modernist/feminist approach to the Bible reflects how she was "taught to take the bible seriously but not literally, and to use my intellect in matters of faith" (2). She consistently works using that lens, so Davison's approach will thrill some readers and upset others, depending on theological perspective.

Davison correctly states there is no substitute for good exegetical research. She also comments that where biblical women are concerned there is often a dearth of information to exegete. This is a genuine hermeneutical concern. In response, Davison has developed a homiletical method that primarily combines the feminist hermeneutic of suspicion regarding the biblical text with a midrashic approach.

Questioning the text through such a bias (suspicion) risks reading predetermined answers into the text—a caution for Davison's overall method. In sharing her sermon notes, Davison positively illustrates how midrash can be a helpful tool. However, the degree to which Davison sometimes extrapolates via midrash can be problematic; occasionally she fills in the gaps with too much fiction.

Davison addresses what she understands to be the historical, male sexist control of Scripture, the cause of women's invisibility in the biblical narratives, and the subordination of women among God's people throughout history. To that end, she focuses the sermons on the biblical women themselves in her effort to recover what's been lost. The resulting text teaches much about women but very little about God and the dynamics of God-human relationships; something to be expected given the volume's title.

If Davison hopes to reach more conservative readers, the exclusive use of feminine pronouns for God—something Davison does in the final sentences of almost every sermon—will inhibit that. Better to simply refer to God as God, however awkward it might be for her.

Whether seen as a "how-to" or a "how-not-to" book, Davison has provided food for thought on just how one authentically handles cultural context when presenting the word of God to the church. Understanding differing interpretational methods used in teaching and preaching has merit, whether one employs them or not. While this volume would not be a primary resource for many, it can complement any preacher's bookshelf, and would be useful in the classroom study of hermeneutics and homiletical methods.

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Michael A. HARBIN. *The Promise and the Blessing: A Historical Survey of the Old and New Testaments.* Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005. 681 pp. \$49.99.

Harbin specializes in OT at Taylor University (Upland, IN). His volume identifies the Abrahamic covenant as a central theme that unifies the Christian canon: the blessings God promised to Abraham are being fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

This is a polished publication. Its writing style is clear and engaging. The text flows from beginning to end in a way not typical of a volume this size—a result of being authored rather than edited. A map, chart, photograph, or text box occurs on nearly every page, yet these do not intrude on the centrality of the author’s text. Publishing features—such as binding, color, layout, and paucity of typographical errors—are high quality.

Harbin has designed the volume for college courses surveying the Old or New Testaments. Among other factors, professors who select such texts want to know how the author approaches controversial issues and deals with opposing viewpoints. Below are summaries of a few such issues.

Unity and diversity of Scripture: Harbin emphasizes the Bible’s “striking unity” in the first paragraph of the preface (23), on the first page of the NT section (347), and in the text’s final paragraph (592). Diversity within the canon is suppressed. For example, the creation accounts in Genesis 1 and 2 demonstrate unity, not diversity (64-65). Samuel/Kings is treated alongside Chronicles with no focus on differences. Similarly, the gospel story is told without reference to the goals or plots of each evangelist.

Authorship: According to Harbin, Moses wrote Genesis, Exodus, and Leviticus on Mt. Sinai (45), and these three documents, perhaps together with Job, can fairly be called the first “canon” (46). Moses wrote Numbers and the bulk of Deuteronomy later (49). Joshua wrote Deuteronomy 34 and the book of Joshua (49, 174). Samuel probably wrote Judges and Ruth and much of the book bearing his name; Nathan probably concluded the latter, beginning with Samuel’s death in 1 Samuel 25 (211, 215). The superscriptions in Psalms and similar statements in Proverbs contain accurate authorship information (234-235, 247-248). There is “no real reason” to reject Solomon as author of Ecclesiastes and Song of Songs (249-250). The prophets wrote the books bearing their names (268, etc.). The Gospels are named for their authors. Matthew wrote first, the Synoptics were completed by the mid-60s, and John was written around 90 (381-382). Paul wrote all the letters bearing his name and probably Hebrews as well (565). Harbin considers James the first NT letter (454) and accepts traditional authorship of all general epistles and Revelation.

Prophecy: Harbin describes the prophets as speaking both to present and future situations. Moreover, he gives helps for communicating this difficult concept (268, 273). A distressing weakness of his treatment of the prophets, however, is the near-absence of their focus on social injustice. According to Harbin, the reason prophecy increased in Israel and in the canon was to focus the nation on the future (268). His introduction to prophecy makes no mention of social injustice (267-270). Treatments of Amos and Micah each include one generic comment about social injustice (278, 301).

Women: Harbin moves toward a moderate view concerning biblical teaching about women and their roles in the church. “Paul clearly did not visualize women having no role in worship” (502). “These qualifications [in 1 Corinthians] are a reminder that a man should not be arrogant and that equality in Christ exceeds what is often given culturally” (561). Phoebe “occupied the position of a deacon within that church” (512).

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William D. MOUNCE, ed. *Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006. 1136 pp. \$29.99.*

In this volume, Mounce (*Basics of Biblical Greek*, Zondervan, 1993) works with Miles Van Pelt (*Basics of Biblical Hebrew*, Zondervan, 2001) to update the classic *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of the Old and New Testament* (Nelson, 1968). It begins with two short sections guiding English-only readers and those with only a little Greek and Hebrew to make use of the volume. The value is that word studies for preaching and teaching need to be based on the wording of original languages in order to be accurate. It then explains how to proceed through a word study.

The heart of the volume is the English to Hebrew/Greek lexicon with short entries for each word. These entries start with the OT or NT usage of the word, then supplies what part of speech it is and spells out the word in Hebrew or Greek, followed by a transliteration, "GK" number (which relates to the end of the volume's Hebrew/Greek to English lexicon), Strong's number, and the number of times the word appears. After this, each submission has definitions, and expositions relating to the Hebrew or Greek are listed along with the biblical references of where the word appears in the Bible. The volume finally includes a Scripture index and a Hebrew and Greek to English lexicon.

A strength of this volume is the ability to take an English word and find it quickly in Hebrew or Greek. In addition, the section describing how to do a word study is very informative for those who have little to no experience in the original languages. In this section, the most important part concerns "common mistakes" (xxi), where it looks at the problems of anachronism and etymological fallacies that can creep easily into a word study.

One of the critiques is the incompleteness around some entries. In the entry for "Satan," for instance, only the Greek word, *Satanas* is listed (612). Only the definition from the 2nd temple period is given in the first paragraph. The second paragraph leads into a discussion of "Satan" in the OT. The Hebrew usage of "Satan" is introduced within the Greek part of the passage. This is counter to the purpose of the overall work, which is trying to show both the Hebrew and the Greek words used behind the English text. There should have been an entry concerning the Hebrew word, *Hasatan* within this work. This is especially the case since the OT's uses of Satan bring up the question of the definite article prefaced to the word Satan, and have caused some scholars to think of Satan as a title in the court of God.

The positives usage of this volume is the ability to look at an English word and be able to go back to the Hebrew or Greek word behind it. This volume may be a tool for the student or preacher who wants to go from the English back to the original language. Looking through this volume, the saying, "he knows enough Greek and Hebrew to be dangerous" comes to mind. As any dictionary, this work should only be the beginning of research into a word of a text and needs to be tempered with other resources that work with the text.

MATTHEW SHEPHERD

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Michael D. COOGAN. *The Old Testament: A Historical and Literary Introduction to the Hebrew Scriptures*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006. 572 pp. \$53.00.

This is a great contribution to the field for its conciseness and clarity for introductory-level students and for its insight and breadth for advanced students. Coogan employs a helpful style with a modicum of technical vocabulary. While best suited for seminary students, advanced courses in OT at the undergraduate level could also utilize this text. Inset boxes are used throughout for helpful excursions that will prove interesting to most students.

Each chapter concludes with a listing of important terms, discussion questions, and a helpful bibliography for further reading. Within these bibliographies Coogan recommends commentaries for biblical texts as well as seminal articles or essays on important topics addressed in the chapter. Detailed allusions to the *nephilim* of scholarship are eschewed so that students are not overwhelmed by names and theories. Such editorial decisions will be appreciated by most students. Coogan has intentionally kept the discussion of biblical texts relatively proportional to the biblical texts themselves so as not to privilege any one text over others. While this foundational choice is understandable, its net outcome leaves students with more details than is warranted in some areas and less in others where such may be desired by some.

Coogan's treatment of source-critical analysis in the Pentateuch is helpful. He has condensed what is, at times, a rather esoteric discussion and provided a helpful entry into the dialogue. Coogan presents recent critical data on many of the topics he addresses. This is seen, for example, in the theory of Israelite settlement, where he discusses the lack of archaeological support for the Israelite destruction of Jericho and Ai. Yet there are exceptions within this general tendency to provide up-to-date data. In his discussion on ancient Near Eastern deities (101), Coogan perpetuates the putative battle between old deities and young deities at Ugarit where it has often been assumed that the youthful Baal is supplanting the old god El. These assumptions have come under fire in the last few decades from a number of scholars. In another example (227), Coogan perpetuates the assumption of the tradition of Levirate Marriage at the end of the book of Ruth even though, in my estimation, Jack Sasson (*Ruth*, Sheffield Academic Press, 1989, 121) has cogently argued that this is not the case. Sasson reads the *Kethib* in Ruth 4:5, which attests "I [Boaz] will acquire Ruth" rather than the *Qere* "you [the closer kinsman] will acquire Ruth." Sasson then argues the logic of the setting and concludes that Boaz is forcing the deal through subtle manipulation.

Coogan often achieves a nice balance when scholarship has been divided on a particular issue. This can be seen in his discussion of the end of 2 Kings (365), where there has been debate concerning the Deuteronomistic Historian's viewpoint of Jehoiachin's release. Some have said this indicates the Historian's hopeful outlook while others are less sanguine. Coogan includes discussion of the Apocrypha in this volume and includes helpful chronological charts at the end of the text. Coogan's approach to the Bible is from the perspective of Near Eastern Studies and has intentionally avoided theological discussion of the text. On the one hand, this approach would be helpful for students in an introductory course in many universities, which is clearly its intended audience. Yet for professors who want students to engage these texts theologically as well as historically, Coogan's text must be supplemented with other readings. Even so, this volume will surely be a standard resource in many courses for years to come.

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Rolf RENDTORFF. *The Canonical Hebrew Bible: A Theology of the Old Testament*. Trans. by David E. Orton. Leiden: Deo Publishing, 2005. 813 pp. \$59.95.

The publication of David Orton's translation of Rolf Rendtorff's magnum opus was a significant enough event to result in a public discussion of it at the Society of Biblical Literature meeting. Among German OT scholars, Rendtorff, who views his project as a continuation of that of his even more famous mentor Gerhard von Rad, is a singular German voice advocating a form of canonical criticism in reading the Hebrew Bible. As such he is a promoter of some of the insights of Brevard Childs that have become so influential in the English speaking world. Rendtorff goes beyond Childs, while still being indebted to him, in developing a genuinely thorough OT theology. Rendtorff's sizeable tome shows what a canonical approach that takes the historical-critical consensus of a previous generation a step further might look like. He shares with Childs the unenviable (some would say impossible) task of owning and embracing the historical-critical approach and its supposed consensus without giving a really convincing rationale for why the final redaction should be given theological and interpretive primacy.

Rendtorff also has another item on his agenda lacking in Childs. For Rendtorff, whose later career has been intimately involved in inter-Jewish-Christian dialogue, the Hebrew Bible or OT (notice that the complete title in English includes both phrases!) is quite legitimately continued by both Rabbinic Judaism's Mishnah and by the NT of Christians. As such, Rendtorff lacks Childs' confessional approach while advocating a new basis for a postmodern ecumenism.

The volume is divided into three main sections. Rendtorff reads the Hebrew Bible theologically strictly in the Jewish canonical order. Interestingly here, Rendtorff uses the order which "asserted itself" (5) in Judaism since the invention of printing. In other words, Rendtorff uses a relatively contemporary Jewish order rather than a more flexible order in terms of the Latter Prophets and particularly the Writings that is found in the ancient period before the invention of books, much less printed books. This has little effect on the discussion of the Torah and the Prophets. An acknowledgment and discussion of the theological insight to be mined from other more ancient orders would have improved the volume, however, in the discussion of the Writings.

In the first main section Rendtorff leads the reader through the entire Hebrew Bible in its Jewish order. His massive learning, theological insight and subtle attention to intertextual echoing are particularly noteworthy. Because of Rendtorff's methodology and his theological sensitivity, the reader is guided through the OT in the Hebrew order and gains a sense of its underlying continuity without in any way ignoring the diversity of its various parts. While Rendtorff has not focused on the "canonical seams" as much as Sailhamer, he does a commendable job of making intercanonical connections and this must be seen as one of the most useful parts of his work.

The second major section is arranged thematically and, by Rendtorff's own admission, the categories are drawn from theology and not from the Bible. But to Rendtorff's credit, even here, he takes the canonical arrangement seriously and explains the various insights from different sections of the canon in the TaNaK order. Thus, a narrative quality informs and enriches his analysis of selected themes in the OT. His discussion of covenant and election would be a good example of this (432-446). In this section Rendtorff traces selected themes throughout the OT. He argues for the nonarbitrary nature of his selection of themes as arising from the canonical narrative. He thus begins with creation followed by covenant. The last theme, Israel's future, fits the canonical story. The themes are discussed in canonical order of their first mention. Each theme is then traced throughout the Hebrew canon without attempting a systematic doctrinal synthesis. In this way Rendtorff hopes to avoid imposing a foreign system upon the OT. Of course this is a tricky business and ultimately the selection of themes arises not merely from an inductive study of the Hebrew canon but from Rendtorff's sense of the theologically important. The fact that he at least discusses the chosen themes in the order in which they first arise and includes the rest of the canon's treatment of that theme in canonical order is a helpful clue about Rendtorff's idea of how to construct a genuinely biblical theology without the imposition of foreign theological categories onto the biblical material.

In the (much briefer) third section Rendtorff discusses methodological questions his approach raises. Here one reads his final justification of his approach and its implications for Jewish-Christian interfaith dialogue. Speaking schematically his work belongs in the intermediate stage of the rediscovery of biblical theology. He is still wed in significant ways to the quickly vanishing historical-critical consensus of previous generations. Often he feels obligated to tip his hat to that research while arguing for the need to go beyond it. Given his age,

context, and life experience, this is understandable. The fact that he never quite gets beyond it is at times lamentable, but this does not diminish the theological richness of his work. Along with Brueggemann, Goldingay, Fretheim, and Childs, Rendtorff's volume takes its place as a significant contribution to the consideration of OT theology informed by a heightened importance being given to the canonical form and arrangement of the Hebrew Bible.

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John H. HAYES, ed. *Hebrew Bible: History of Interpretation*. Nashville: Abingdon, 2004. 366 pp. \$40.00.

In this volume, Hayes and his coworkers integrate a history of Jewish and Christian studies of the Hebrew Bible, book-by-book and section-by-section. Some emphases in this volume are: (1) paragraphs in articles showing how later sections of the Hebrew Bible understood earlier sections, (2) Jewish contributors, (3) critical articles on Deuteronomistics, Poetry, Prophecy, Pentateuch, and the Decalogue, and (4) inclusion of Jewish interpretation history. Contributors occasionally refer to Islamic interpretation as well. The bibliographic reach of the abbreviations list embraces more than ninety rabbinical works, more than five hundred reference works, serials, and periodicals, and thousands of books and commentaries.

Perceiving the need Bible students have for economy and usability, along with this volume, Abingdon has also published *Methods of Biblical Interpretation* (2004), and *New Testament: History of Interpretation* (2004) as separate collections of articles from their two-volume *Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation*, also edited by Hayes (1999). Abingdon has provided typographical, grammatical, style, and bibliographic updates and corrections; few minor corrections remain.

Contributors to the 41 articles including some from the Stone-Campbell Movement: W.C. Gwaltney, Jr. (Milligan College), “Lamentations;” R.R. Marrs (Pepperdine University), “Obadiah;” M.E. Shields (Drury College), “Haggai;” and J.T. Willis (Abilene Christian University), “Micah.” All articles focus on issues treated by critical and exegetical scholars among early Christian fathers, medieval exegetes, Reformation interpreters, and modern critics.

This volume, like other recent publications, lacks balance in presenting 19th- and 20th-century commentaries and critical interpretations. More orthodox Christian viewpoints do not appear. For example, although most of the articles cite Wellhausen’s approach, none cites Wiseman’s case for a literary unity of Genesis (*Ancient Records and Structures of Genesis*, Nelson, 1985). While disciples of Wellhausen and Noth discover a complex, confusing, and conflicting deuteronomistic history “very different from that of Noth” and “distinct in its conception” from other disciples of Noth (330)—as another example—more orthodox, less confusing criticism, interpretation, and commentary are deemphasized, marginalized, or omitted from this volume.

This volume does provide a rich supplement for seminary and university classes in Hebrew Bible, courses on biblical interpretation, and student preparation for graduate exams and theses. Students will find the wealth of more orthodox, evangelical Hebrew Bible scholarship elsewhere.

DANIEL J. DONALDSON

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Central Christian College of the Bible

Tremper LONGMAN III. *Proverbs. Baker Commentary on the Old Testament Wisdom and Psalms.* Grand Rapids: Baker Academics, 2006. 608 pp. \$39.99.

Longman, who teaches at Westmont College, has written extensively on OT wisdom including a helpful primer on Proverbs (*How to Read Proverbs*, Intervarsity, 2002). This latest commentary is part of a series on Wisdom Literature and the Psalms that tailors to the distinctive literary and poetic features of this genre. All the contributors to this series share the conviction that Scripture is God's Word: Scripture spoke in the past to God's people and continues to speak today.

The volume is organized around the major textual units in Proverbs. Each unit of material begins with the author's translation of the Hebrew text with technical observations included in footnotes. An interpretive section follows the translation. Finally, each unit in the chapters on Proverbs 1–9 concludes with a section on theological implications. With the sentence literature in chapters 10–29, the theological implications are made on the dominant thematic themes in an appendix.

Longman develops several theological and structural features worthy of mention. For example, Longman believes that Proverbs at least alludes to the possibility of an afterlife (86). As he moves through the commentary, he identifies the proverbs that affirm the likelihood of such a belief (10:2; 11:4; 14:32).

Longman also argues against the current trend to see an intentional organization to the sentence literature. Recent scholarship holds to the belief that there is some semblance of order to the sayings in chapters 10–29 (Brown, Hildebrandt, Van Leeuwen, Waltke). Longman, however, maintains that the sentence literature is more or less random with a few isolated collections here and there. There is, in his opinion, no overarching systematic structure to the volume. He observes, "a systematic collection of proverbs may give the wrong impression . . . that life is systematic and that Proverbs was a 'how-to, fix-it' book" (40). The lack of structure is intentional and "reflects the messiness of life" (40). He believes the trend to see structure and clusters is imposed rather than discovered.

He does concede that on some occasions the proverbs may have intentional connections. Still these connections do not create a context that one would use to interpret the proverbs (255, 306). However, he appears to interpret 14:20 and 21 in light of each other (557). He also seems to interpret 16:4 in light of verse 3 (329).

Because Longman believes the sentence literature is a random collection, he includes a topical appendix of dominant themes at the end of the commentary that reflects on such topics as anger, laziness, guidance, family, friends, wealth and poverty, and speech. Longman observes that he only knows one other scholar who takes a topical approach to Proverbs and that is Derek Kidner (549). However, several others *do* approach Proverbs topically or thematically including Kenneth Aitkin, John Miller, and John Willis.

Longman devotes only 30 pages in the appendix to 28 representative topics of the proverbs. To make these topics an appendix, however, marginalizes them and distracts from their theological value. It would have been better for Longman to make the theological observations on the proverbial topics a more integral part of the commentary.

On several occasions Longman argues that proverbs in the sentence literature are not absolutes but principles that are generally true (231, 240, 277, 320). For example, in the case of 15:22 he says, "the proverb is true 'generally speaking'" (320). This view is problematic. Many proverbs offer contrasting perspectives on life and even appear to "contradict" one another (the classic example is 26:4,5). So how can two contrasting proverbs both be generally true? Rather than describing the sayings as generally true, it is better to understand them as communicating *a* truth for a particular occasion; they are partial generalizations.

Longman offers fresh insight into various theological dimensions of proverbial thought and the sentence literature. He provides a helpful understanding of what the sage means by the term "heart." Unlike many scholars Longman does not limit the meaning of heart to the mind (307). For the sage, heart is one's "core personality" (131, 239). The term aligns closely to the idea of character (481). The commonly used phrase, "needy of heart," refers to a person who lacks character (235).

Another fresh perspective is to identify one of the characteristics of wisdom as a person's ability to learn from his or her own as well as other's mistakes (77-78, 269). One gains wisdom by welcoming correction and discipline from others.

Longman's commentary is provocative and accessible. His wealth of knowledge, years of experience, and fluid writing style make this commentary an engaging read. He offers stimulating insights on individual

proverbs probing the depths of those proverbs that on the surface appear mundane. He leaves no proverb “unturned.” Longman has produced an extremely helpful and readable commentary.

DAVE BLAND

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Johanna W.H. van WIJK-BOS. *Making Wise the Simple: The Torah in Christian Faith and Practice*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005. 329 pp. \$20.00.

Van Wijk-Bos regrets the ignoring of the OT in the Presbyterian church and aims to provide guidelines to help the church appropriate the OT, especially the Torah or Pentateuch.

The author has two interests: feminism and a concern for the Jews. She grew up in Holland and is sensitive to the post-Holocaust situation. These interests lead her to emphasize the marginalized women in the Pentateuch and to concentrate on laws for aliens and strangers.

The author begins by defining Torah as instruction and reflecting on the connection between Exod 19:3-6 and 1 Pet 2:9-10 (Part I). Part II explores the cultural background and social setting of ancient Israel. Here the concern is with the place of family and the nature of piety and worship. Van Wijk-Bos defines the genre of the Torah as "Tale." She finds several levels of truth in the tale, but possible interpretations are limited by the historical context, the language, thematic consistency, and our own interests and needs (66-69). The author divides the Torah into two major parts, Gen 1:1 to 11:32 and Gen 12:1 to Deut 34:12 (Parts III and IV). She selects major themes to study from these texts, such as creation, sacrifice, prayer, Sabbath, and family descendents. She also includes in Part III a translation with some comments on Gen 2:4b-3:24. For the rest of the Pentateuch in Part IV she can only pick out a few texts to consider. Here is where she explores the theme of the "others" who become a part of Israel or situations where Israel or her ancestors were the "others." For the author, women are some of these "others."

In the conclusion (Part V) the author reflects on the God of the Torah. She finds in him a God that goes against the grain of Christian understanding. He is a God who regrets, who appears, who accompanies, who is prejudiced (for the poor and for Israel), and who is passionate. Van Wijk-Bos concludes Part V with reflections on Jesus and the Torah, and Paul and the Torah. A test case for Jesus is the parable of the Good Samaritan. If Christians put themselves into the parable perhaps they are the ones who passed by on the other side while the Jews suffered the Holocaust. A test case for Paul is his comments on the law of love and on gender relations.

The Christian appropriation of the Torah is an important, complex, and much debated issue. There are many helpful insights on covenant and Torah in this volume. The Bible's concern for the stranger is often overlooked. Better understanding between Christians and Jews is an admirable goal.

However, van Wijk-Bos does not provide a consistent model for applying the Torah to our Christian context. Her effort is marred by modern critical assumptions toward both the OT and NT. Sometimes the Torah takes precedence over the NT, especially Paul and his views on women. Sometimes modern critical views take precedence or supposed modern moral superiority. Sometimes her concern for the Jews takes precedence. This results in inconsistencies in her application of OT texts. I would also question whether the concern for the stranger can be used as the main grid through which to view the Torah. Her assumptions also lead her to view Jesus and Paul as totally absorbed by their cultural contexts: Jesus never envisioned his followers to be anything other than a group within Judaism, and Paul's moral views are no different than those that predominate Greek culture. This volume must be read critically but it can be read with profit.

GARY HALL

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Lincoln Christian Seminary

Carolyn OSIEK and Margaret Y. MACDONALD with Janet H. TULLOCH. *A Woman's Place: House Churches in Earliest Christianity*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2006. 352 pp. \$20.00.

In this work, Osiek and MacDonald bring together for perhaps the first time two important and popular topics among Christian historians: women's roles in early Christianity and the house church setting. They use their historical imagination to consider the impact that hosting a church in their house would have on women and the impact those women would make on their guests. In the course of this project, they provide a wide-ranging analysis of issues related to the Greco-Roman cultural background of the early Christian era, including slavery, child-rearing, abortion and infanticide, education, marriage, patronage, honor and shame, meals, sexual practices, domestic life, architecture, asceticism, and widowhood. They abundantly utilize research by Roman and Greek historians that may not be familiar to many readers. The work clearly belongs within the genre of social-scientific criticism of the NT and early Christianity.

At the beginning of the volume, they provide a helpful typology of three approaches to the role of women in early Christianity. First, some view early Christianity as accepting and promoting the patriarchalism that characterized the contemporary culture. Second, some argue that Jesus and his followers promoted equality of women in opposition to the cultural customs of the times. Third, others argue that a movement toward greater freedom and equality for women was already permeating the Roman Empire and that Christianity "simply rode the wave of social development and followed these tendencies to a certain extent" (2). The authors support the third view by providing abundant evidence of the substantial and sometimes surprising roles that women played outside the household.

In the introduction, they lay out their operating assumptions and offer a brief overview of how women may have functioned as hosts of house churches. In chapter 2, they discuss the structure of the Roman family and the roles of notable wives such as Prisca and Perpetua. In chapter 3, they delve into customs of labor and delivery, abortion and infanticide, and nursing. Chapter 4 reviews practices of child-rearing, education, and discipline, especially as they relate to girls. Chapter 5 focuses on the experiences of female slaves, especially in connection with sexual abuse by their masters. Ephesians 5 and its teachings about marriage is the focus of chapter 6. In chapter 7, the authors speculate on leadership roles that women may have played in house churches. In chapter 8, Tulloch examines artistic depictions of funerary banquets in order to discern their implications for the role of women. In chapter 9, the main authors consider the implications of women serving as patrons in the early church. In chapter 10, they speculate on the role of Christian women in mission and evangelism. Chapter 11 provides a brief conclusion that summarizes the main points that the authors have drawn from the evidence.

Potential readers should be aware of two characteristics of the volume. First, this text does not provide a substantial amount of NT exegesis. Readers looking for an in-depth analysis of all the relevant passages relating to the role of women may want to look elsewhere. However, the volume provides much analysis of the Christian literature of the second century and beyond. Those who are not so familiar with the development of Christianity after the NT will be enlightened by this material.

Second, the authors often must offer tentative conclusions or simple speculations because of the limited nature of the evidence. Historical reconstruction often requires filling the gaps of the evidence with imaginative and reasonable musings, and this is no less true when one is seeking information on topics that are obliquely addressed by the NT. The authors deserve credit for always noting when they are speculating beyond the certainty of the evidence. In contrast to other works on these topics, their approach is moderate, judicious, and even cautious when necessary.

GREGORY L. LINTON
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Johnson Bible College

Peter RICHARDSON, *Building Jewish in the Roman East*. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2004. 413 pp. \$39.95.

Books, like buildings, are appreciated for both aesthetic and functional elements. Peter Richardson's *Building Jewish in the Roman East* showcases the author's skills but never builds a structure that delineates general Jewish construction techniques or describes distinctive Jewish architectural elements that have been culturally shaped. This work will best appeal to specialists who have an interest in how the first-century social setting shaped Jewish construction and the context in which Christianity emerged.

Excluding the bracketing introduction and conclusion, all other chapters are built of prefabricated materials presented at conferences, or published in other venues. These chapters are roughly organized into sections on town structures, synagogues and the Temple. Within these sections some chapters have little relevance and should have been omitted. Two include: "3-D Visualizations of a First-Century Galilean Town" which describes the development of computer animation to depict Yodefat (Jotapata) where Josephus resisted the Romans and "The James Ossuary's Decoration and Social Setting." in which the author makes some significant assertions based on his close scrutiny of the ossuary. Such chapters, though interesting, detract from the focus of the volume on the mutually informative studies of architecture and religion.

Archaeologists interested in discerning whether the domestic structures they have unearthed were built by Jews will find other sources more useful. The author offers no distinctively Jewish architectural elements other than the presence of *mikvaoth*, of which he never makes a study of dimensions or locations. While ritual purification is recognized as a factor that shaped Jewish domestic architecture, the author makes no attempt to look at the location of latrines, or if there are distinctive food preparation areas. Bible students interested in the eating rooms of common houses and wealthy villas where Jesus was entertained will have to find leads to follow in the footnotes. They can learn something of context from descriptions and pictures of Cana and Yodefat derived from excavations in which the author participated. The first-century buildings of Cana include a 10x15 m public building (possible synagogue) that was sheltered by roof-tiles (66, plate 17). If the tile roof came from the first century and was not a later Byzantine era modification, this would vindicate Luke's description of roof-tile removing friends of a paralytic in Luke 5 from the criticism of those who say that ceramic tiles were not used in first-century Galilee.

The author's argument for a Galilean small town social setting for the origin of Q (90), which he presupposes as a source for Matthew and Luke, based on household descriptions is not surprising. It will provide a foil against which champions advocating the Griesbach or Farrer Hypotheses of the relationship of the Gospels might take up to establish the social setting of texts they hold as having priority.

Scholars nonetheless, will find some excellent topical studies on synagogues, the Temple, and Herodian construction. The author's description of Jewish public buildings/synagogues proliferating in the Roman Empire after the pattern of "associations" and churches following the synagogues is plausible. Richardson's chapters dealing with Herod's piety and innovations in his construction program are challenging. Here he asserts Herod was not as offensive as he is traditionally portrayed. The volume is worth having in research libraries for chapters of selected interest but will rarely be read cover to cover.

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James L. RESSEGUIE. *Narrative Criticism of the New Testament: An Introduction.* Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005. 288 pp. \$22.99.

“Doing close readings” serves as Resseguie’s practical definition of narrative criticism, as well as a synonym for the application of modern literary criticism to ancient biblical narratives (24-25).

Having earned the Ph.D. at Fuller Theological Seminary, Resseguie has taught NT studies at Winebrenner Theological Seminary in Findlay, OH, for three decades. He has authored several major works and numerous articles, mainly related to the exercise of narrative criticism and literary criticism, as well as reader-response criticism of the Gospels and Revelation.

As an introduction in the “how to” of employing modern literary criticism to biblical narrative, Resseguie succeeds. Readers expecting an overview of narrative criticism as it has been traditionally defined in the late 20th century (and as it has impacted biblical interpretation, hermeneutics, and homiletics since the early 1980s) will be disappointed.

The opening chapter of the work guardedly describes the limited positive influence of the New Criticism upon contemporary narrative criticism: namely, that New Critics argue for the text as an organic whole; and, that New Critics pay close attention to the words on the page. Thereupon, Resseguie leads the reader on an exceedingly interesting practical journey for the doing of narrative analysis on both select secular and biblical narratives (and even a few select works of art, including paintings), culminating in his own energetic narrative critical explanation of the Nicodemus story. In the middle chapters, the author explains the vital roles of “defamiliarization” (suspension of previous understanding), rhetoric, setting, character development, point of view, and plot in the doing of narrative analysis. In the concluding chapter, ending in a narrative analysis of the Nicodemus story, Resseguie well models his summary statement: “narrative analysis enlivens the imagination and offers new ways of looking at the familiar” (241).

Resseguie offers no single or simple strategy for the doing of narrative criticism. The doing of narrative criticism, as outlined by Resseguie, is best understood as an eclectic approach, employing simultaneously multiple, yet selective, strategies of the New Criticism: rhetorical, literary, post-structuralist, narratological, socio-rhetorical, deconstructive, psychological, gender, and reader-oriented criticisms, among others. For Resseguie, narrative criticism is “primarily concerned with the literariness of biblical narratives—that is, the qualities that make them literature” (19). Cultural, sociological, and historical critical analyses are considered secondary in his prescription for the doing of narrative criticism. In essence, his recommendations for the doing of narrative criticism comprise an apologetic for the primacy of modern literary criticism in interpreting biblical narratives.

As an introduction to narrative criticism, Resseguie’s readers would be well served with the addition of an opening chapter on the history of narrative criticism as an academic and, in particular, a biblical discipline. As a primer on the definition and practice of early twenty-first-century narrative criticism, the text offers meaningful assistance. The text, suitable for biblical scholars and seminarians interested in narrative analysis as related to the New Criticism, serves those seeking a clearer understanding of contemporary literary criticism as is now oft applied to biblical narrative.

In any case, Resseguie’s work makes for an interesting read.

BILLY STROTHER

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Alan P. STANLEY. *Did Jesus Teach Salvation by Works? The Role of Works in Salvation in the Synoptic Gospels*. Evangelical Theological Society Monograph Series. Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2006. 436 pp. \$42.00.

If the subject of faith and works catches the reader's attention, then this volume by Stanley (Mueller College of Ministries, Queensland, Australia) offers a far-ranging resource for consideration. The fourth volume of the Evangelical Theological Society's monograph series edited by David W. Baker, it is an adaptation of his doctoral dissertation done at Dallas Theological Seminary.

The volume is well-researched, includes numerous tables illustrating the author's various points, and is supported with copious footnotes. It sports a large bibliography with both subject and Scripture appendices. In 12 chapters, Stanley covers "The Role of Works in Salvation in Church History," "The Role of Works in Salvation in Judaism," "Salvation in the New Testament," eternal life, discipleship, endurance, and judgment, all in relationship to salvation. This is not a simple presentation of Jesus' teaching, but one that covers most issues that affect the understanding of "works" in relation to salvation.

The chapter on church history chapter provides readers an overview of the subject, including the recent evangelical debate concerning "salvation-discipleship." When Stanley deals with Judaism, E.P. Sanders' "Covenantal Nomism" is mostly in view, though also included is a brief look at grace and works in Judaism. These two chapters give a broad sweep of issues, and take up a full third of the volume.

The words studies are a strength of this volume. Words for "works" and "salvation" in their various forms and with their various synonyms are thoroughly examined. He also studies these in their various contexts, giving attention to the different NT books. Stanley's conclusion on works is, "Works are assorted activities, good and bad, performed by people that invariably demonstrate before God the nature of their internal condition. It is therefore not the works by themselves that are important but rather the condition of the heart they reflect" (133). With salvation, Stanley makes the point that it should be seen as "pilgrimage" rather than a point in time.

The strengths of this volume are also some of its weaknesses. At times Stanley seems to be throwing too large a net, trying to do too much with too little reflection. The voice of Jesus in the Synoptic Gospels is never heard on its own, but always in relationship to a myriad of other voices. An example of this occurs when Stanley summarizes Gospel material while quoting Phil 2:12 and follows with an excursus on Zane Hodges' view that the rich young ruler missed out on discipleship not eternal life (208). The many helpful footnotes sometimes turn into rabbit trails not germane to the subject at hand. There are exegetical leaps, as when he says, "What then does it mean to be perfect? . . . perfection is a synonym for eternal life and a requirement for entry into the kingdom" (201).

Stanley's handling of Scripture lacks sophistication, with little attention to the critical issues related to the NT documents (particularly the Gospels). This also raises the question of Stanley's audience. Much of the discussion is practical and intramural, speaking to debates between evangelicals, while some of it is quite technical, with untranslated Latin and use of Greek. The transition from dissertation to book clearly poses some problems. Having said all this, Stanley's volume remains a good read, with critical material to chew on and much to agree with. It would be an excellent volume for any scholar's bookshelf. Those of the Stone-Campbell movement will be especially appreciative of his carefully crafted conclusions. Stanley says in effect that salvation and our repentant-faith-deeds are much more nuanced and complex than is generally thought. One's deeds matter to God, and even relate to one's pilgrimage of salvation.

JON H. MCFARLAND

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James D.G. DUNN. *A New Perspective on Jesus: What the Quest for the Historical Jesus Missed*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005. 136 pp. \$12.99.

This volume contains three lectures given by James Dunn at Acadia Divinity College. Dunn's presidential address for the 2002 meeting of the SNTS, later published in *New Testament Studies* 49 (2003) 139-175, appears as an appendix. The present work advances some of the conclusions from Dunn's more comprehensive *Jesus Remembered* (Eerdmans, 2003). With these lectures Dunn intends to critique three flaws in the "quest for the historical Jesus" and to offer a new perspective on Jesus that considers these issues. Specifically, the earlier quests have ignored the faith-creating impact of Jesus on his disciples from the outset, the oral culture in which the Jesus tradition has been preserved, and the characteristic Jesus within the context of Judaism.

In the first lecture, "The First Faith," Dunn argues that the proper "starting point for any quest for Jesus should be the historical fact that Jesus made a lasting impact on his disciples" (22). Previous quests for the historical Jesus have viewed faith with suspicion, removing expressions of faith from the Gospels in order to recover the historical Jesus. However, Dunn insists that, even if post-Easter faith has provided the present Gospel contexts for the Jesus tradition, the pre-Easter faith of the disciples has shaped the Jesus tradition from the beginning. Such a point is well illustrated in contemporary research of Q, which has often noted the absence of any passion narrative in Q and the Galilean character of Q material. Dunn contends that these features are more likely explained by the origin of the material during Jesus' Galilean mission and before Jesus' crucifixion.

In the second lecture, "Behind the Gospels," Dunn questions the primary conceptualization of the transmission of Jesus tradition through literary means (the two-source hypothesis). Instead, Dunn asserts that the earliest transmission of the Jesus tradition more likely occurred through oral processes common in first-century Palestine. Such transmission of oral material allows for the preservation of valued traditions that is both stable and flexible, and this oral process provides a helpful explanation for the variations in parallel accounts in the Synoptic Gospels (a point further developed and illustrated in the appendix, "Altering the Default Setting," 79-125).

In the third lecture, "The Characteristic Jesus," Dunn objects to looking for a distinct Jesus, one different from his own Jewish environment, through the use of criteria used to determine the probability that a particular saying derived directly from Jesus (dissimilarity, coherence, and multiple attestation). Instead, Dunn advocates a shift from the pursuit of a "distinctive" Jesus to a "characteristic" Jesus (63-70) and illustrates the effectiveness of such a search with five examples: the Jewish interests of Jesus, the circumstances of Jesus' Galilean homeland, the announcement of the kingdom of God, the Son of Man tradition, and the use of the term "Amen" (70-75).

Dunn's work presents a compelling critique of certain guiding assumptions used in contemporary Gospel research. The volume provides a helpful but brief overview of the last two hundred years of critical scholarship relating to Jesus and the Gospels. His "new perspective" on Jesus affirms the essential reliability of the Synoptic Gospels, but his comments on the transmission of oral material raise intriguing questions about "the idea(l) of an 'original' version" (50). The work would be useful as a supplementary text for graduate (or upper-level) courses in NT introduction or Gospels, but any detailed study in these areas should undoubtedly consult this volume.

CLAY ALAN HAM

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Dean FLEMING. *Contextualization in the New Testament: Patterns for Theology and Mission*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2005. 344 pp. \$26.00.

Targeted toward largely apathetic and biblically illiterate church cultures (in both the east and west), this is a fresh, timely and much needed resource. An effort to bridge the horizons between biblical studies, missiology, and contextual theology (23), Fleming's work achieves this end by offering a welcome blend of sound exegesis, practical application, and high accessibility. Theologically rich, Fleming's opus is predominantly rooted in his understandings of the contextual nature and character of God. As he notes early on, "The Incarnation . . . establishes a paradigm for mediating God's redeeming presence in the world today" (21). Christological in its aim and missiological in its scope, this volume draws on the wide array of NT examples for practicing both theology and missiology in a multiplicity of settings.

While the lion's share of the volume is devoted to dialoguing with Pauline texts, credence is also given to Acts, the four Gospels, and Revelation. Altogether absent from the mix, though, are any direct emphases on the Pastoral, General, or Johannine epistles—perhaps one of the few weaknesses of this work. In chapter one, Fleming analyzes Acts. Locating it in a multicultural setting himself, he illustrates how the document, in terms of arrangement, language, and history, is culturally conditioned (26-29). Further, he shows that Acts, via the stories of persons such as Stephen, the Ethiopian eunuch, and Cornelius challenge the society and culture-at-large with the Gospel—a Gospel which is evangelistic, not syncretistic. The thrust of the second chapter, which focuses on the sermons of Paul in Acts, is quite similar. Though the apostle addresses *different* audiences in *different* locales in *different* ways, his "end-goal" is always the same: to "herald the saving content of the 'good news'" (85).

Chapter three is in large part an apologetic for a narrative framework to Paul's letters. Fleshing out the definition of Paul's "end-goal," Fleming argues here that the one constant residing at the center of the apostle's storied world is "God's loving and saving intervention in Jesus Christ" (94). The subsection titled "Conclusion" in this chapter, though brief, is one of the most valuable portions of the entire volume. It is at this point that Fleming—using Paul as his example—so artfully deals with the issue of faithfully contextualizing the Gospel, as opposed to simply watering it down or cheapening it. The balance between "fidelity and innovation," he argues, is to be found in none other than the overarching metanarrative of what "God has done 'for us' in Christ"—a particularly uncomfortable notion for those who advocate a nonoffensive, all-inclusive, postmodern hermeneutic (117).

In the following two chapters, one in which Paul is considered an engager of the Greco-Roman culture and the other, whereat he is viewed as an interpreter of the OT texts, the apostle's narrative centerpiece continually comes to the fore. It is shown that Paul is both a creative and christocentric exegete of both the cultures and texts intrinsic to his world. Chapters six and seven are case studies concerning Paul's letters as contextual documents. The former examines the Corinthian correspondence and the latter the Colossian epistle. Here again, one of Fleming's foremost conclusions is that Paul was not a syncretist but rather an evangelist.

Chapter eight, which deals with the Gospels, is at points instructive and insightful, but also probably undersized and overfull. Fleming simply attempts to cram too much into this chapter—a mere 30 pages in length. Perhaps a chapter on each of the Gospels themselves or more reflection on them in a sister volume would have allowed him to be less minimalistic. The ninth chapter focuses on Revelation, which Fleming contends is a work that urges believers to resist the bowing of their knees to a pagan and persecuting empire. The short but succinct discussion of the "noncontextual" approach to Revelation in the opening paragraphs of this chapter would be especially helpful to new students of the Bible—maybe even shocking. The final chapter, a type of call to do faithful, contextual biblical study, missiology, and theology, brings Fleming's work full-circle.

This volume is a must-read for those who desire to reach persons—in their own contexts—with the gospel.

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Stanley E. PORTER and Gordon L. HEATH. *The Lost Gospel of Judas: Separating Fact from Fiction*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007. 135 pp. \$16.00.

The well-timed, synchronized release of the *Gospel of Judas*, a television documentary by the National Geographic Society, and a number of books on the Gospel in the days leading to Easter in 2006 generated a high level of public attention to the declarations made about the document. The trailer for the National Geographic Society's documentary, for instance, was filled with exaggerated assertions that the document tells a story that could "challenge our deepest beliefs" and create a "crisis of faith." The sensationalized claims about the *Gospel of Judas* seem to represent the latest version of claims about lost Christianities and secret first-century Gnostic teachings that promise to revise our understanding of Christ and the founding events and history of early Christianity. The hype notwithstanding, what are nonexperts to think about the *Gospel of Judas* and its purported importance and implications?

Two scholars from McMaster Divinity College in Hamilton, Ontario—Stanley E. Porter (president, dean, and professor of NT) and Gordon L. Heath (assistant professor of Christian history and director of the Canadian Baptist Archives)—collaborate to create this volume. The subtitle of the volume is apt as Porter and Heath expertly sift through all the relevant evidence to set the record straight. Concise, it opens with an introduction to initial responses to the discovery of the *Gospel of Judas*, including fair appraisals of various media and book contributions. Porter and Heath recognize many cases of thoughtful and balanced reporting while lamenting the extravagant claims that were made and the resultant uphill task to refute them.

After the introduction, Porter and Heath follow with nine succinct but informative chapters (along with a brief interview of themselves as the conclusion) as they attempt to set the record straight. The NT portrays Judas as the culpable and cursed betrayer of Jesus, a depiction commonly shared throughout church history. The representation of Judas as doing Jesus' bidding in the *Gospel of Judas* fits with a variety of sympathetic interpretations of Judas's life that has been a minority voice historically (chapter 1). Chapters 2–3 situate the *Gospel of Judas* in the context of Gnosticism and the early church's response to this diverse movement. A survey of the content of the *Gospel of Judas* shows that it fits within the key convictions that characterize the Gnostic movement (chapter 5). It further belongs within the subcategory of Gnostic rehabilitation documents that try to promote marginal figures to central positions (chapter 7). However, when it is considered in the context of other relatively recent discoveries—ancient papyrus manuscripts, the Nag Hammadi Coptic library, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and ancient ossuaries—the *Gospel of Judas* pales in importance (chapter 4).

Despite questions about the manuscripts' discovery and early trail, the *Gospel of Judas* is likely not a modern forgery and was probably written some time between AD 300 and 350. It may even be the document Irenaeus referred to in his *Against Heresies* (chapter 6). Nevertheless, an examination of its contents demonstrates that the *Gospel of Judas* uses all four canonical Gospels in one form or another and so its material cannot be dated earlier than the second century (chapter 8). Chapter 9 brings together the cumulative case built so far to critique claims that recent discoveries of Gnostic (and other) texts are the equivalent of the recovery of lost Christianities (by evaluating the biased perspective of a representative proponent, Bart Ehrman) and to defend (by reason of dating, authorship, and reliability) the canonical documents as representing the true teachings of the apostles.

Porter and Heath ably equip readers with the relevant background and evidence needed to properly evaluate the content and significance of the *Gospel of Judas*. They also make a strong case that "Gnosticism has no claim to the earliest Christian texts, creeds, documents, or tradition, nor was Gnosticism remotely close to affirming any core convictions of the orthodox church" (112). Brevity and clarity are two virtues evident throughout their informative discussion. To separate fact from fiction about the *Gospel of Judas*, the reader will be hard-pressed to find a better resource.

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Scot McKNIGHT. *Jesus and His Death: Historiography, the Historical Jesus, and Atonement Theory*. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2005. 451 pp. \$54.95.

Surprisingly, modern scholarship on Jesus' mission and identity has overlooked the importance of how Jesus viewed his own death, an oversight McKnight means to correct with this volume. Though divided into four parts, it perhaps actually functions as three. Part One includes an introduction to current historiography debates as well as a review of scholarship on Jesus' conception of his death. Part Two is a sustained argument demonstrating that Jesus did indeed expect to die prematurely. From this platform, McKnight moves on to Parts Three and Four, which are both in-depth analyses of exactly *how* Jesus conceived of that premature death, focusing primarily upon the ransom saying of Mark 10.45 and the Last Supper traditions.

This volume has much to commend it. McKnight writes in not only an accessible style but also an entertaining one, making the discussion move quickly. Certain sections are highlights, and foremost among these is the opening chapter on historiography. This serves as an excellent introduction to those unfamiliar with its territories, reviewing the debate between postmodern historiographers like Keith Jenkins and the more modern G.R. Elton. McKnight places himself between these two, taking on board the importance of narrative and story from the postmodern approach but tempered by the critical realist assumption that one can in fact know *something* about the past and proceed to have an informed discussion about it. This is certainly a welcomed and appropriate position. Another highlight is McKnight's discussion of "Scripture Prophets" (a term borrowed from Michael Wise), and his placing of Jesus in this long tradition of individuals who sought the Scriptures for paradigms for their own lives (177-187).

This study also, however, has a few weaknesses, one of which is harmless while the other, potentially, fatal to McKnight's entire project. The harmless one is simply the other side of the coin for his accessible and entertaining style. While this style does make this lengthy work more readable, it, at times, does no favor for the reader intent on understanding his criticisms fully. So, for example, when McKnight describes a theory as "slightly overcooked" (132, n. 48), one is left wondering exactly what about the theory opens it to the accusation of culinary zeal, and what that means anyway.

The more harmful weakness is methodological. McKnight's first chapter, on historiography, sounds a promising note of a nuanced approach to the Jesus traditions that takes seriously the relation of "story" to world in terms of the creation of meaning-making narratives. However, the rest of the study progresses as if independent and ignorant of the first chapter, relying upon the dated methodologies of source and form criticism (156), and attempting to reconstruct "original" units via redaction criticism (122, 229). More recent developments in the fields of orality, literacy, and memory have pronounced strongly against the legitimacy of these approaches to the Jesus tradition, demonstrating that scholarly attempts to reconstruct authentic material (or "raw data") from later accretions are stillborn projects. Though no one can be aware of all new developments, McKnight invites this criticism when he attempts to identify "genuine memory" from later redaction (229). McKnight's larger aims with this text are reliant upon his confidence in his ability to "sift through the various interpretive accretions of the early churches" (277), and for those who are less confident in his (or anyone's) ability to actually accomplish that goal, as I am, the entire study will seem less persuasive and dated already.

However, for those who, like McKnight, are confident of scholarly ability to separate the Jesus traditions into early/original and later/redactional piles, this study puts forward a strong argument that Jesus did foresee his death and viewed it with atoning significance. Scholars will find it to be an intriguing and excellent survey of the important issues in answering this question, combined with detailed exegesis. Benefit for a lay reader or undergraduate student, however, will be limited.

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Frank STERN. *A Rabbi Looks at Jesus' Parables*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006. 292 pp. \$29.95.

Intended to appeal to both Christians and Jews, this volume provides an introduction to the teachings of Jesus and compares the similarities and differences in Jesus' thinking to other Jewish sources from first-century Palestine. The goal is to uncover hidden messages within each of Jesus' parables and to discuss each parable within its first-century religious and historical context. According to the back cover, "The book attempts to build bridges of understanding between Christians and Jews by exploring the notion that we share a common history."

According to Stern, Jesus kept the referents of the parables deliberately vague to encourage the listeners to uncover layers of meaning. He assumes that the parables of Jesus recorded in the Gospels accurately reflect his teachings. He purposefully ignores the writings of the church fathers and later Christian theologians. He examines each parable of Jesus as a rabbinic *mashal*. He also chooses to name the parables himself in a nontraditional way so as not to prejudice the meaning.

A good example of Stern's methodology can be seen in his exposition of "The Parable of a Rich Man Who Decided to Enjoy Himself." He begins with a brief discussion of the parable in Luke 12:16-21. He then examines the story of Hannah and its implications regarding the rich and the poor. He moves to Ps 82:3 and discusses the importance of "doing justice." He illustrates his point with stories from the rabbinic sages. He explains how rabbinic tradition enlightens an exposition: (1) the rich man is a fool; (2) rabbinic tradition frequently warns of the danger of accumulating wealth; (3) God will judge a person not on wealth accumulated but spiritual and moral qualities; and (4) had the rich man not been a fool, he would have realized the vanity of hoarding wealth. Stern then moves to discuss the Jewish encounter with Epicureans and their view of wealth. He then examines how Ecclesiastes considers the same issues. He concludes by discussing Jesus' teaching about worldly possessions.

The real value of Stern's work is his reference to the OT and rabbinic sources. However, because he does not consider what Christian theologians have said, he often misses some significant insights.

At times Stern's Jewish prejudice shows through. A good example of this can be seen in Stern's exposition of Luke 4:16-29. The crowd in Nazareth initially responds favorably to the message of Jesus. He then says that they will ask for miracles like the ones he did in Capernaum. Jesus then notes that Elijah was sent to a widow in Zarephath and Elisha to Naaman the Syrian. The people are filled with wrath and seek to throw Jesus from the hill outside the city. Stern asks, "What got them so angry, angry enough to throw Jesus off the nearest cliff?" Stern believes it was not the text from Isaiah 61 Jesus chose to read since that was likely a part of the lectionary for the day or because Jesus drew messianic images from the text. Stern concludes that "What enraged the population was something far more disturbing. . . . Jesus was challenged to do what Isaiah said: 'give sight to the blind,' as . . . he had done in Capernaum. He refused to do it." Although he considers several reasons for the anger of the crowd, it would seem that Stern has missed the obvious. The crowd is angered because Jesus is suggesting that God will go to Gentiles before the Jewish people.

The volume, when read alongside some more traditional works on the parables, does provide a worthwhile resource as to the Jewish background of the parables and at times a Jewish hearing of the parables.

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Tom THATCHER. *Why John Wrote a Gospel: Jesus—Memory—History*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2006. \$24.95.

Professor of NT, Cincinnati Christian University, since 1992, Thatcher completed his undergraduate and seminary degrees from CCU and his PhD from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

The argument of this volume is divided into four parts. Part One sets the question in the contexts of both the original setting and the history of interpretation. For the most part, scholars have been satisfied to see the writing of the Gospels as attempts to archive information about Jesus, meaning, to transcend space and time. However, Thatcher is not satisfied with this answer to the “why write” question. He points out that for John “the Spirit is the archive of the community’s Jesus tradition, preserving both the content of his memory and the correct interpretation of that data. The implications of this doctrine for the present study are evident in 1 John 2:20-27, a passage that clearly indicates that the Johannine Christians did not feel an inherent need for a written Gospel to store information about Jesus” (32f.).

Part Two deals with John’s persistent memory of Jesus and the rhetoric of the fourth Gospel. Here Thatcher begins his reconstruction of the disagreements within the Johannine community, as they are clearly seen in the epistles of John and as they appear subtly in the Gospel. The bottom line is, “The fourth gospel is not merely a record of John’s dealing with his situation, but an aspect of John’s dealing with his situation, a strategy he used to confront the problems that faced him” (49). This means that the written record could itself be used as a symbol of authority—as a norm for the community memories.

Part Three is the hardest section of the volume to follow, leaning heavily on the erudite work of several scholars of social memory—a discipline not easily comprehended. However, the argument is carefully laid out: John’s understanding and application of the memory of the community was being misused by those called AntiChrists in the epistles of John. His was a dogmatic memory and theirs a mystical one. “The AntiChrists presented the challenge that motivated John to commit his memory of Jesus to writing; the Johannine churches, with the baggage of all their experiences, were the field of contest.” (63) Thatcher contends that the AntiChrists were presenting an understanding of Jesus they claimed came from the Holy Spirit and was more relevant to their new situation. He points out that John could have just denied that the Holy Spirit works in this way, but that would have undermined his contention that the Spirit was the guarantor of the memory of Jesus. So, Thatcher argues, “For John, the Spirit does *not* function as a direct interface between Christians and the world, helping believers make sense of their situation. Rather, the Spirit functions as an interface *between Christians and the historical Jesus*, who himself continues to abide in believers and in whom believers abide and find peace in their present circumstances (John 14:27; 15:1-10).” (91, emphasis in the original) This sets the stage for Thatcher’s conclusion.

Part Four presents not only Thatcher’s answer to the question, but also his suggestions for issues that need further analysis that perhaps he will answer in later volumes. The “final answer” to the question of why John *wrote* a Gospel is that “John wrote a Gospel not to preserve a liquid memory of Jesus, but rather to replace that substance with something more solid. John did not, in other words, write a Gospel to help people remember information about Jesus, but rather to ensure that they remember Jesus in a specific way, a way consistent with his own thinking about Christ” (157). Thus the general purpose of the Gospel is apologetic, not evangelistic. It is written for John’s Christian community to keep them from being led astray by the mystics he calls AntiChrists.

Two issues remain unaddressed, however. The first is the oral performance of John’s Gospel. How would his disciples have used the written Gospel to prepare for their presentation of the Gospel? The fourth Gospel has so many long discourses, it would present special challenges to a teller. The second issue is that of the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit once John’s Gospel was inscribed and available. If John wrote to give his followers something substantial as a normative record of the life and nature of Jesus, where does that leave the Advocate sent to lead into all truth? These would be worth at least articles, if not books.

The charm of Thatcher’s volume is that the reader has the feeling of getting acquainted with the author while following his argument. He uses several personal experiences to illustrate memory and other issues. These time switches can be disorienting, but I found them to be welcome breaks from heavy academic reasoning. The volume is an important addition to scholarly works on the Gospels. I would highly recommend it to scholars, students, ministers, and others interested in early Christianity.

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Will DEMING. *Paul on Marriage and Celibacy: The Hellenistic Background of 1 Corinthians 7*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004. Second Edition. 271pp. \$28.00.

This is the second edition of the author's revised dissertation, now issued through a new publisher. Deming states in his preface that his challenge and results have not drawn the attention they deserved, and a more rigorous discussion is still needed (xiv-xv). He argues vigorously that "sexual asceticism" is a phenomenon that began after the first century AD (i.e., after Paul's time) and that the Cynic-Stoic debates on marriage and celibacy form a far more tenable context for understanding Paul's "Stoic" argument: "while under normal conditions it was one's moral obligation to marry, special considerations in one's life, such as poverty or the advent of war, could force a person to forgo marriage and concentrate on the philosophical life" (xxi). In that (1) strong studies have continued to appear linking Paul with Stoic argumentation and (2) asceticism studies continue to mine various religious traditions and worldviews *prior to and contemporary with* Paul, there does seem to be room for more discussion and debate on Deming's proposal. Hence, this edition with slight revisions, corrections, additional appendices, and a more affordable price is most welcome.

The volume begins with a review of scholarship on 1 Corinthians and celibacy. It locates interpretative angles based on the use of different sources ranging from the 1st to the 4th century AD. It provides a good introduction to the wide-ranging nature of the problem(s). Following this section is a very extensive and inclusive discussion of the sources and interpretations regarding the Stoic-Cynic marriage debate. Deming handles each of the moralist figures and their sources carefully. In sum, he concludes that Cynics opted to refrain when possible from the distractions of marriage in order to pursue philosophy. The Stoics, on the other hand, promoted marriage as an obligation to the city-state. A hybrid position developed among some Stoics that advocated marriage during normal times and celibacy during difficult times because of necessity. Paul, with his apocalyptic and *parousia* worldview, correlated this hybrid Stoic view to various social challenges at Corinth. Deming follows with a section that compares the strikingly similar vocabulary and ideas between his findings among Stoic moralists and the context of 1 Corinthians 7.

Deming concludes that this historical context for understanding Paul's discussion in 1 Corinthians 7 need not include any indication of sexual asceticism whatsoever. According to his conclusions, this is a later and anachronistic view attributable to the church fathers and their attempts to understand Paul in the midst of heretical teachings of that later time. While this may have some elements of truth, it does seem necessary to consider that antecedents to such teachings as Gnosticism might contain the seeds of asceticism (maybe even sexual asceticism) in such aspects as, say, modified Platonic views on the body/soul in relationship to material/divine paradigms. If ascetic views existed at the time of Paul, it is possible that Paul is using the modified Stoic teaching for correction and challenge. The results of Deming's analysis, then, would be helpful in shedding light on how Paul operates. These results however, would not necessarily dismiss the possibility that there was a variety of practices with regard to sexual asceticism in Roman Corinth. An early remark certainly invites caution: "As this century [first century AD] passed into the second, intellectuals of the age turned their attention away from the city-state to notions of earthly and cosmic *empires* [and hence, a worldview developed for asceticism among the church fathers]" (xxi). It would seem that consideration of "empire" stems from the period after Alexander the Great (323 BC) into the Hellenistic period *contemporary with Paul* (60 AD+)—and far ahead of the turn of the second century AD.

Deming provides us with a well-argued and accessible work that gives solid information and results. How those results are to be used and with what paradigms is open for more discussion. Direct response to Deming's challenge is indeed warranted.

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John Dominic Crossan and Jonathan L. Reed. *In Search of Paul: How Jesus' Apostle Opposed Rome's Empire with God's Kingdom. A New Vision of Paul's Words & World.* New York: HarperCollins, 2004. 476 pp. \$29.95.

Much interest of late has centered on the larger cultural milieu of the ministries of both Jesus and the Apostle Paul. Many *SCJ* readers will, no doubt, be familiar with the “search for the Historical Jesus” studies of the last 25 years or so and their use of the media to manipulate reading audiences. A similar scenario has been playing out with the Apostle Paul over the last decade as well—hence our title: *In Search of Paul*. A growing recognition in the scholarly world is that early Christian identity forged from the contexts of both the historical Jesus and the historical Paul was in many ways worked out in response to the Roman imperial governing authorities.

The first half of this work is one of the best syntheses of the current work being done on Christianity in its imperial environment. It is worthy of use in the classroom or for guided discussions among lay people in the church. The strength and intention of Roman imperial beginnings from Julius Caesar and Octavian forward are introduced, given significance, and richly portrayed from literary, inscriptional, and archaeological evidence. The “itinerary format” that examines cultural mores and imperial persuasion in key cities of Paul’s travels (Ephesus, Philippi, Thessalonica, Corinth, and Rome) helps to bring both the background of Paul and his audiences alive. A variety of charts and pictures (27 of which are in color) illustrate the argument in helpful ways.

Augustan imperial ideology is richly portrayed in an analysis of the two marble monuments in the Forum of Augustus. The Temple of Mars the Avenger portrays Octavian’s rise to power with force and finality, his consolidation of kingdoms into a ruled empire, and his divine status attributed through priestly and ruling functions. The Altar of Augustan Peace is a second significant sculpture in which Crossan and Reed’s description keenly locates the motif of lasting peace through military means. This brings to the foreground the *Pax Romana*, the saving peace of Octavian with benefits to the whole world. In analyzing archaeological remains, great emphasis is placed on understanding the artifacts and iconography as “propaganda” for the new imperial program. Our authors are following the important works and perspectives of Simon R. Price and Paul Zanker: namely, cooperation of local elite rulers in propagating Roman imperial ideology was a means of operating and profiting from and within the patron-client culture.

Another engaging aspect of this volume is its enumeration of Pauline communities within a variety of social spaces. By describing a variety of locations and situations in which early Christians might have met, the analysis of archaeological information is thickly interspersed with possible indications of how to understand forms of Pauline communities. Would house churches have met in villas? (if so, of what size?), In tenement (multifloored apartment) dwellings? Or possibly in rooms connected with excavated “shops”? In each case, Reed and Crossan demonstrate the close proximity of persons of differing social strata within a common shared social space. This illuminates certain passages such as the issue of meat sacrificed to idols in 1 Corinthians 8–11.

Having said this, biblical studies books by HarperCollins count heavily on provocative titles and novel perspectives. Crossan and Reed suggest on their basis of correlating Luke’s secondary source writings about Paul with Paul’s own primary sources that Paul was more an Apostle to the God-fearers than an Apostle to the Gentiles (38–40). This theme, weightier at the beginning and almost forgotten by the end, is, to my mind, flawed and unpersuasive. Much contemporary NT scholarship attributes a strong historical core to Luke’s writings amidst his “so-called” tendentiousness in such a way that it can be synthesized with Paul’s perspectives, allowing for minimal disagreement. In sum, this volume has much to offer in relating Paul and his believing communities to the Roman ideology round about and the sociology of households and neighborhoods within it. But it must be read with some care.

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N.T. WRIGHT. *Paul in Fresh Perspective*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005. xii, 195 pp. \$25.00.

This volume certainly lives up to its hype; it throws down the gauntlet to the traditional view of Pauline studies. In chapter 1, Wright sets the stage to view Paul and his writings in light of second temple Judaism and the Greco-Roman world. For Wright, Paul lived in three worlds. Paul saw the world through the eyes of second-temple Judaism, a Christian, and Greek and Roman philosophy of God and life. It is these contexts that Wright describes as he discusses various Pauline texts and the Gospel of Jesus. Wright explains these themes in Part 1, which includes chapters 1–4.

In chapter 2 Wright begins with the Jewish theme of Creation and Covenant. This theme was expressed in the return from captivity in that the God who initiates covenant also creates anew. The new heavens and new earth are representations of this new creation and covenant. Yet, Paul explains (Colossians 1) that God the creator is alive through Jesus. He suggests that Jesus the Messiah is the initiator of a new covenant as well as the creator of all. For Paul, Jesus is the God of creation and covenant. In chapter 3 Wright indicates that “apocalyptic language” does not suggest a desire for war or the end of the world. Second temple Judaism saw apocalyptic as the intervention of God into a world needing justice and peace. This was also illustrated by the Roman Empire’s use of *parousia* (presence) when the king intervened in politics and war through a personal visit. For Paul, Jesus is the personal visit (*parousia*) and intervention of God. Through Jesus, God came to bring peace and justice in a world needing a “visit.” In chapter 4 Paul’s use of “kingdom” or “empire” suggested that Jesus and the church were promoting a counter-empire policy. Wright sets this theme in the context of the Roman Empire and reminds us (as Paul does in Phil 3:20-21) that the kingdom is a movement that is counter-cultural. Yet, the kingdom is an empire of peace, love, justice, and freedom—unlike the Roman Empire.

In section 2 Wright focuses on “Structures” in the study of Paul. Chapter 5 is a challenge to “Rethink God.” For Wright, Paul is suggesting that God’s ultimate self-expression as a human is in Jesus. Jesus, therefore, is God in relationship with human beings. In chapter 6 Wright indicates that there is a “Reworking of God’s People.” If Jesus was a “faithful Jew” and came to unite Jew and Gentile, the implication for “election” is that God’s people must also “unite” and “reconcile” human beings. “God’s covenant faithfulness is revealed, through the faithfulness of the Messiah, for the benefit of all who believe, Jew and Gentile alike.” (119) For Wright, the concept of “faith in Jesus” could also mean “the faith of Jesus.” Wright does not suggest that faith is not a key to salvation, but that Jesus’ faith is a model for all who follow him.

In chapter 7 Wright has an excellent writing on Reimagining God’s Future. For Wright the apocalypse is also a past and present event. God came in Jesus as a manifestation of God’s presence, a confrontation of paganism, and a judgment on sinful Jews. The *eschaton* was a real event where God intervened in the world to bring the message of hope, judgment, and salvation. For Wright, Paul’s daily announcing of the Gospel to churches was similar to the Romans who preached the power and coming of the Roman kingdom to a world joining this government (willingly or unwillingly). In chapter 8 Wright discusses Jesus, Paul, and the task of the Church. In this chapter Wright pulls everything together to call the church to see Jesus as the manifestation of God and the call for the church to be different than the power structures that exist in the world today.

I found *Paul in Fresh Perspective* very interesting and at the same time challenging. First, Wright holds a traditional view of Paul as an apostle of Jesus, called, and inspired to help the world become a better place. Wright does a great job defending Paul from critics and suggests that Paul can be better understood in his ancient context, rather than a modern one.

History, theology, and exegesis are always done—not only sometimes, and not only by preachers—with at least half an eye on the results that may be expected in the scholar’s own world. Those who regard Paul as a pestilent, self-contradictory, rambling neurotic are just as eager that their hearers should see him this way too (so that, for instance, they might then the more cheerfully reject Paul’s ethical teaching) as are those who regard his every word as proceeding directly from the mouth of God. Neutrality is impossible.
(15)

For Wright, to embrace Paul is a desire and willingness to embrace all of Christianity and its call in this generation and culture. This volume is not a defense of Paul but a renewed look at Paul. All readers will be challenged to return to the biblical text and experience fresh new readings. For Wright these readings will still “bounce back with renewed challenge” and call us to action and reflection on our mission today. Wright also suggests that new readings will also bring to light the “mysterious and hidden work of the Holy Spirit” which also challenges us daily to live and walk with Jesus and in the mission of God.

This is an excellent resource for ministers and biblical scholars. Every minister should have it in their library. This is also a powerful text for graduate students and upper class students in biblical studies. I found that it not only provided greater insight into Pauline texts, it challenged me as a minister to live in an empire that is not of this world but manifests the intervention of God in a world needing peace, hope, and justice.

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Leander E. KECK. *Romans*. Nashville: Abingdon, 2005. 400 pp. \$22.00.

This volume is part of the Abingdon New Testament Commentaries series, aimed primarily at higher education students, pastors, and teachers. These commentaries are organized around “literary units” rather than verse-by-verse exegesis. This approach enables the reader to view the “forest” of Romans rather than detailed examinations of trees and leaves, as found in numerous other commentaries (as excellent and necessary as they are). Keck has produced a clear and concise introduction that eschews minutiae unless necessary to the overall meaning of the letter and its important issues. No translation is provided, but comparisons of and comments on numerous English translations are helpful and interesting (248-249). Occasional references to Greek grammar and vocabulary (words are transliterated) are made. Keck employs rhetorical analysis where helpful but cautions against attempts to force the letter into a preconceived structure.

The volume begins with typical introductory material: authorship, structure, historical context, purpose, themes, and theology. Keck believes that Romans is a discourse that must be understood as a whole, the purpose being to explicate the “importance of the Christ-event for the human plight” (33). It is not a systematic theology nor a response to problems within the Roman churches. The letter has three major parts: (1) the indictment of all humans (1–8); (2) God’s response to this predicament (9–11); (3), exhortations and religious practice (12–16).

The commentary proper is divided into sections reflecting the literary units of the letter. Each section consists of an overview, generally followed by three types of examination: (1) genre, style, structure, (2) purpose, themes, important words and phrases, historical and cultural context, and (3) comments on the theological and ethical dimensions.

A few examples suffice to give the flavor of the commentary. Keck believes that *pistos christos* in 1:16-17 (and *passim*) refers to “the faithfulness of Christ” (52-53, 104-110), in disagreement with James Dunn and others. The discussion of Abraham in 4:9-12 is an opportunity for Keck to critique the “new perspective” on Paul. Keck argues that Paul’s argument does not concern the *relationship* between Jew and Greek, but how God has *rectified* both apart from works of the law (125). Romans 7:13-25 contains the cry of all humans, rather than a personal or Christian plea (184-193). Chapters 9–11 are an independent section (223-256), addressing a problem among Gentile Christians who saw Jewish rejection of the gospel as resulting in God’s rejection of the Jewish people (225). Throughout, Keck notes the history of scholarship and interpretation options when important. The volume concludes with a select bibliography and a concise subject index, but no modern author or Scripture index.

This commentary fulfills the purpose of the ANTC admirably: to present the essence of scholarship to pastors, college students, and church leaders. While there is nothing new here, no major issues of interpretation or scholarship are short-shrifted or omitted. (The lack of reference to non-English works is probably due to the perceived audience). This work excels as a brief introduction, and Keck’s writing style is enjoyable and lucid. Numerous tables and charts are included and quite helpful (77-79, 114, 192). A lack of footnotes in such works can frustrate scholarly readers, but Keck’s presentation and argumentation make this unproblematic. The volume should find a welcome spot in church libraries and in the studies of ministers, though it might expect a bit much in terms of Greek language and some terminology. It would serve well for an introductory college or seminary course, though it would require supplementation with more in-depth works.

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Martin M. CULY. *I, II, III John: A Handbook on the Greek Text*. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2004. 155 pp. \$19.95.

Newer commentaries and handbooks must demonstrate their unique contributions in a market already crowded with good choices. Culy's handbook (he is very careful not to call it a "commentary," xii) is surely justified for its narrow, but much needed, focus on the details of Greek forms, syntax, and textual criticism. More to the point, the handbook is especially useful in its relentless pursuit of the fecund dialogue between Greek language and linguistic theory, particularly in the areas of verbal aspect and discourse structures. Culy brings helpful insights from this conversation to light on almost every page of the text with clear and frequently compelling explanations.

The volume is neither overly technical nor in any way simplistic. It achieves a striking balance of concise, pertinent information delivered in such a way that Greek students, pastors with moderate Greek skills, and NT scholars will repeatedly benefit from its contents. Figures of speech are regularly identified and helpfully defined; syntactical categories are labeled (though not always explained); brief word studies, especially those related to words of heavy theological import, appear with some regularity.

While Culy may be a bit ambitious in saying that the handbook "does attempt to address all significant questions arising from the Greek text," still he recognizes its limitations and, in the final analysis, sees the handbook as providing something of a textual *preview* of the great theological insights to come in the longer commentaries which the handbook is intended to complement. In fact, he calls it a "prequel" (xii).

Identifying 1 John as "hortatory discourse," Culy turns to the work of R. Longacre (and others) for guidance in analyzing the volume's structure, particularly its peaks (xiii). Whether the trajectory of John's discourse gathers around theological themes or grammatical forms (or some combination of these) is a question whose answer remains unsettled (xv-xvi). Specifically, there is much debate about the role of the vocative case as a boundary marker in hortatory discourse. Culy regularly comments upon John's many vocatives and their possible discourse implications.

Culy also relies heavily upon Stanley Porter's verbal aspect theory throughout the volume. In particular, he subscribes to the idea that verbal tense/aspect signals the relative prominence of specific information within 1 John. In Porter's scheme, aorists mark "background" material, presents and imperfects mark "foreground" material ("part of the storyline"), and perfects and pluperfects mark foreground material ("particularly prominent" information, xvii). While admitting that "In the end, this handbook takes a cautious approach to identifying the semantic or discourse significance of verb tenses within the letter," Culy invests much in Porter's work. He believes that the theory works well "particularly with respect to the aorist and present tenses" (xvii).

What is especially significant in this regard is the fact that, while some commentaries and handbooks name a theory in the introductory matter and rarely return to it in the actual coverage of the text, Culy conspicuously allows the theory to be tested by repeatedly identifying its potential merits in actual coverage of specific verses throughout the handbook, often with fairly thorough explanations of the theory's implications (for example, 41). Readers are thus allowed to see how Porter's theory plays out in the text itself over the course of several chapters and thus to formulate judgments about its tenability in a textually informed and sustained way.

Regular attention to things like "mitigated exhortation" (via R. Longacre) and the unsettled state of affairs with the middle voice (via C. Conrad and J. Pennington) occupies much space throughout the work as well. While the mitigated (or softened) command may, and in 1 John clearly does, appear as a third class condition (a point which Culy visits frequently), the problem with middles is more acute. Are these verb forms actually representative of true middle semantics or should not many of them be considered deponent? Repeatedly, the notion of deponency is questioned as today we are hearing that verbs like εφθεασαωμεθα (1:1), ψευδοσωμεθα (1:6), ε{ρχεται (2:18), γνωσωμεθα (3:19), and ειπρωγασαωμεθα (2 John 8) are actually middle both in form *and* meaning. Culy makes a compelling case for doing away with the notion of deponency, at least in many (if not most) instances. And, here again, we hear the full argument against deponency in the introduction and witness its consistent application throughout the whole of the handbook. Indeed, the thorough synthesis of introductory issues and the ways in which these issues play out in the text is one of the really great achievements of this handbook. The author can be counted upon to follow through with his arguments time after time.

The great strength of this volume may well be very closely tied to its chief weakness. That is, while Culy

has picked up upon and admirably covered current issues within the academy's research on Greek text linguistics (verbal aspect, discourse analysis, and middle voice), he has perhaps left other matters less well attended. Word studies, while fairly numerous, often consist of definitions from the Louw Nida lexicon and little more, with no explanation of his preference to Louw Nida over BDAG in so many cases. Noun taxonomy, frequently mentioned in passing (16-17), is not evenly explained from text to text. Traditional verb taxonomy is dropped in favor of contextual influences on verb meaning. Culy observes that the traditional labels for verbs ("ingressive aorists") stem "not from a careful analysis of Greek *syntax*, but rather from grappling with the challenges of *translating* Greek verbs into English" (xxiii). The point is well taken, but it begs a better conceptual framework for explaining just how verbs *should* be translated, and why.

On the other hand, coverage of significant elements of textual criticism is regular and thoughtful. So are explanations of difficult verses like 1 John 3:6, with its present tense ἀμαρτάνει (*hamartanei*). In this instance, Culy wisely observes that John's "concern is not with projected eschatological realities," a point interpreters frequently miss. It is best then not to "water down [John's] statement by pressing the present tense to imply a focus on continual or habitual sin" so as to let John's readers off the ethical hook (73). Point well taken.

Finally, the volume contains an abundance of internal cross-referencing, a feature which spares the trees but at times becomes a tad annoying. Also, a brief glossary of frequently mentioned Greek terms would surely prove helpful.

On the whole, this is a very satisfying volume, one that attracts this reader to the series as a whole. Were more books of this kind available to students currently enrolled in Greek courses, Greek itself would be far more attractive. The volume will really help discerning pastors as well. More than anything, I love the way Culy takes us from rigorous contemporary theoretical debates to concrete application in the text of 1, 2, and 3 John. The volume is warmly received and highly commended. May there be many others to follow.

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