

# Book Reviews

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

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

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

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

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

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

two parts: “Selected Writings by Robert Richardson” and “Selected Writings about Robert Richardson.” “For Further Reading” should have been listed in the Table of Contents. Perhaps the reader would have been better served by a chronological rather than an alphabetical arrangement of works by Richardson.

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

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

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**Tona J. HANGEN.** *Redeeming the Dial: Radio, Religion, and Popular Culture in America.* The University of North Carolina Press, 2002. 220 pp. \$18.95.

Following the fundamentalist debacle of the Scopes Trial in 1925, many seemed certain that conservative Christianity was nothing more than a vestige of a bygone day that would soon cease to exist. By the 1970s, however, conservative Christianity reemerged as a cultural and political force that wielded greater influence than any could have imagined. An important tool in the resurrection of conservative Christianity’s influence on their society, according to Hangen, is their incorporation and successful use of radio as a means of mass communication. “Religious radio,” Hangen argues, “changed the evangelical movement’s self-perception and strategic position in American life from marginalized outsider to ubiquitous cultural presence, preparing the way for an aggressive assault on moral and political fronts in the latter half of the twentieth century” (158).

American religious leaders recognized the value of radio as a means for propagating their ideas almost immediately after the first radio broadcasts of

the early 1920s. With the inception of the first national radio network, the National Broadcast Company (NBC), in 1926, however, regulations for religious broadcasting began to develop. Along with their decision to forgo selling air time for religious broadcasts, NBC decided to donate blocks of time for the three main religious groups of America: Judaism, Catholicism, and Protestantism. To coordinate the Protestant broadcasts, NBC offered free airtime to the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America (forerunner to the National Council of Churches), an organization that represented mainline liberal denominations.

The conservative Christian response to the Federal Council's control of Protestant network radio broadcasts, according to Hangen, was to purchase commercial broadcast time from independent stations and thus create their own network of listeners. "Despite the apparent discrimination," Hangen writes, "doctrinally conservative programming demonstrated genuine staying power and generated financial support, surpassing mainline programs in popularity" (16). To demonstrate this fact, Hangen examines the careers of Paul Rader, the first fundamentalist radio preacher, Aimee Semple McPherson, and the immensely successful *Old Fashioned Revival Hour* of Charles and Grace Fuller.

By the late twenties and early thirties, conservative Christians became convinced that the Federal Council intended to monopolize all radio broadcast time and squeeze the conservative message off of the air. Conservatives fought the Federal Council in the forties and fifties by establishing their own organizations—American Council of Churches of Christ in America, National Association of Evangelicals, and National Religious Broadcasters—to lobby for their cause. "Clearing the airwaves for conservative religious radio," Hangen contends, "may have been the first issue of national import around which evangelicals and fundamentalists rallied in the postwar era, setting the stage for their gradual but irreversible reentry into American popular culture" (141).

*Redeeming the Dial* provides a needed survey of the beginning of conservative Christian radio broadcasting in America, the struggles faced to sustain these broadcasts, and the success evangelicals experienced as a result of radio. After reading Hangen's book, one is left to wonder about the legacy the evangelical broadcasters handed down to current radio broadcasters and the influence they may have had on the appearance of televangelism. Aside from these few queries and the disruption of her analysis with the valuable, though misplaced, chapters on Rader, McPherson, and the Fullers, Hangen's insightful handling of this topic makes this text a useful resource for students of American religious history. Nevertheless, much research remains to be done with this topic of study.

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**John R. POLKINGHORNE.** *Traffic in Truth: Exchanges between Science and Theology.* Minneapolis: Fortress, 2002. 54 pp. \$6.00.

The relationship between science and religion is one of the most discussed questions in contemporary theology. I know of no better guide through the intricacies of this debate than mathematical physicist turned Anglican priest John Polkinghorne, the author of twenty-five books on science and theology. Evangelical and conservative Christians often find his approach more palatable than that of others—such as Robert Russell, Arthur Peacocke, and Ian Barbour—who bring more liberal theological leanings to the dialogue.

Now Polkinghorne's instructive and inspiring take on the science-theology roundtable has been brought to Fortress Press's delightful "Facets" series. This volume is an amazingly compact introduction to the basic issues in a positive and optimistic take on the interplay between science and theology. The book is one long metaphor, picturing science and theology as two countries sharing a common border, and pursuing the question of what kind of relationship these neighboring principalities can and should have. It is Polkinghorne's contention, and the thesis of the book, that "the border between them must be open and there will be fruitful traffic across it in both directions" (11).

The first chapter is an overview of three alternative models of the relationship between science and theology that Polkinghorne rejects: "Denial" (where one side simply ignores the presence or importance of the other), "Conflict" (where war rages between the two, and loyalties must be cast with one or the other), and "Sealed" (where each side is seen as separate and unrelated, and there is no need for, or even possibility of, interaction).

The next two chapters trace insights from each discipline from which the other can benefit. Contributions from science include the apparent fine-tuning of the universe revealed by contemporary cosmology and the death of the mechanistic universe model exemplified in quantum mechanics and chaos dynamics. On the other hand, theology brings to the table such issues as the intelligibility of the universe and its role as the breeding ground for sentient life. The cross section and union of these issues (and others) produces an understanding of creation that simultaneously satisfies the mind's thirst for understanding and the heart's hunger for purpose.

In chapters four and five Polkinghorne looks at some of the potential for border skirmishes, such as the doctrines of special revelation and miracle, and argues that a healthy respect for these doctrines need not conflict with a healthy respect for the explanatory power of science. After all, the quest of both science and theology is truth. Polkinghorne does warn scientist and theologian alike, however, that the best either can hope for is an ever sharpening *approximation* of truth. There will always be room for further insight, always opportunity for the abandonment of cherished beliefs, always the need to traverse across the border to learn from the neighboring discipline.

One point at which many conservative Christians will part ways with Polkinghorne is in his embracing of biological evolution and his attempt to incorporate it into an overall theology of nature. This is a theme foreign to many who believe that a proper respect for Scripture requires nothing less than a categorical rejection of all things Darwinian. But the massive literature produced by Bible-believing Christians who accept or are willing to entertain an evolutionary biology is testimony that the issue is not as cut and dried as many suppose. Polkinghorne's incorporation of the theory into an overall picture of a universe continually creating itself is appealing enough to catch the attention of anyone open to the sharpening of our approximations of truth alluded to above.

This book is an excellent tool for the library of any Christian leader, encapsulating the key ideas of one of the most important and wide-ranging discussions in contemporary theology. I recommend it without reservation.

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**John W. RIGGS.** *Baptism in the Reformed Tradition: An Historical and Practical Theology.* Louisville, London: Westminster John Knox, 2002. 200 pp. \$22.95.

In this work John Riggs questions whether today's Reformed baptismal rite as found in *The Book of Common Worship* (BCW) reflects a correct Reformed historical-theological view of baptism. Riggs's thesis is that the BCW does not accurately reflect the Reformed historical understanding of baptism, but rather has been influenced by the current liturgical renewal movement. Because the scope of the text is limited to an investigation of the BCW, it is necessarily aimed at Reformed believers and scholars. An introduction begins the book, and the remainder consists of five chapters divided into two sections, "The Foundations of Reformed Baptismal Theology" and "The Trajectory of Reformed Baptismal Theology." Riggs's presentation and analysis of the Reformed view of baptism is fair, and his conclusions are well substantiated. However, he leaves some important questions unanswered and needs to clarify other matters.

The book begins with an introduction that serves to explain the worship and theological perspectives of the liturgical movement. Riggs then identifies how the *Lutheran Book of Worship* (LBW) does not represent Luther's own baptismal rite in his 1526 *Taufbuechlein*. Riggs's implication is apparent. If the LBW does not reflect Luther's baptismal rite, then it is also possible that the BCW does not reflect the historical Reformed view of baptism. This clearly supports Riggs's thesis and is therefore a good beginning point. The only negative

of this chapter is that it assumes a common understanding of the liturgical movement. Some readers may not possess this knowledge, and thus some may not be able to follow the beginning of Riggs's argument.

The first section of the book focuses entirely upon an historical survey of baptism within the Reformed tradition. It contains an immense amount of historical data that may be rather laborious for some readers. Nonetheless, it overall accurately represents the development of the Reformed view of baptism and is necessary for Riggs to accomplish his objective. From Zwingli to Calvin, Riggs gives clear and concise quotes of the Reformed view that baptism is based upon the everlasting covenant of grace (which gives unity to the OT and the NT). He appropriately credits Zwingli with the inception of this idea (25). One clarification that is needed however, is whether Riggs views Zwingli or Bullinger as the originator of the idea that the covenant began with Adam. He comments early that underlying Zwingli's belief that infants are to be baptized (just as children in the OT were circumcised) was "the idea of a single, unified covenant that God had first made with the fallen Adam" (25). Later he states, "Among the intriguing aspects of covenant is Bullinger's assertion that the covenant began with Adam" (38). Was the idea that the covenant began with Adam unique to Zwingli or to Bullinger? Riggs's comments appear contradictory, and therefore need clarification.

The second section of the book is devoted to an analysis of the Reformed view of baptism as it developed from the time of Calvin to the twentieth century and concludes with Riggs's assessment of the BCW. Among the analysis are the Reformed confessions, Reformed Orthodoxy, and a section devoted to Schleiermacher's theology of baptism. The presentation of these various confessions and parties aids Riggs's thesis very well. It allows the reader to observe the Reformed wing's slow divergence from the historical Reformed view of baptism. Thus Riggs's conclusion that the BCW does not represent the Reformed view of baptism is convincing. The BCW particularly does not clearly express two of the most important elements that ground the Reformed doctrine of baptism: gracious divine sovereignty and covenant theology. His conclusion is well supported by the historical data.

This book would be a nice addition for one's Reformed library. For those of Reformed persuasion, it challenges them to reconsider their own baptismal rite as contained in the BCW. Since the book contains the views of many of the Reformers who contributed to the Reformed doctrine of infant baptism, it is clear that the BCW does not accurately represent Reformed baptismal theology. Although the book claims to be "practical" and a part of a series "intended for scholars, professional theologians, and for pastors and lay people," it hardly would be an easy read for "lay people." It includes many Latin and Greek terms and an immense amount of historical and theological data. It would be accepted best by Reformed theologians and scholars. For readers of

SCJ, this book would be unacceptable in regard to theology but a good historical study of Reformed baptism. The objective to discern whether the BCW is compatible with Reformed theology would most likely be irrelevant as well. Nevertheless, it is a good thorough study of how the Reformed baptismal rite practiced today does not reflect the historical-theological view of Reformed baptism. Both the Reformed believer and the Restorationist can certainly benefit from such an observation.

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**John HARE.** *Why Bother Being Good?* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2002. 216 pp. \$15.00.

Hare is a philosopher not a theologian, who shows how severing theology from the context of life deteriorates moral responsibility. His book develops from a series of lectures that simplify difficult concepts covered in other texts he has written, *The Moral Gap* (Clarendon) and *God's Call* (Eerdmans). Chapters 1–4 present several answers to “how can we be morally good?” and chapters 5–10 seek a single answer to “why should we be morally good?” His order of questions makes sense halfway through the book’s reading.

A moral gap exists between human behavior and moral norms established “by a central directive that constrains the actions we are morally permitted to do and the sorts of people we are morally permitted to be” (7). This moral gap, Hare says, cannot be closed through human effort, because God’s organizing directive—covenant-based ethics—places too high a demand upon our self-centered natural capacities to maximize the “right” along with the “good.”

Historical and current approaches for closing this moral gap without God are unsatisfactory (chapter two). Theologies of atonement, justification, and sanctification present partial mergers in closing the moral gap since these doctrines show what Christians are “becoming” in relation to Christ (1 Cor 13:12) but not what they are. Moral perfection expected by our Lord Jesus (Matt 5:48) will not be attained in this lifetime (Heb 12:2). Hare says, “These three doctrines remain mysterious in different ways; however, this is a reason to try to understand them as much as we can, not to abandon them in despair” (73).

Moral faith in providence (chapter four) is essential. Providence, however, provides only a partial picture about God’s moral authority. In answering the question of chapters 5–10, Hare wants readers to see that the authority of morality is not a priori, nor is it derived from human nature. Similarly, the capacities of human reason fail to establish moral authority, so do the relativistic and defunct moral standards of communities.

What is the source of moral authority? Why should we be morally good? Hare saves answers for chapter 10's discussion of autonomy. Subsequent to this discussion, he explains a preference for "call" to "command," because he desires to "stress the love relation between God and us rather than the power relation" (110). God's call, whenever appropriated into the praxis of life, develops a tension "between our defective loving and the conviction that we are joined by adoption to Christ's love" (208). This tension maintains attachment to God's moral authority expressed through covenant-based ethics.

Some scholars from the Stone-Campbell Restoration Movement will object to Hare's placing theology as a prerequisite to understanding and doing ethics. Many will argue that doing "good" in "right" ways is possible without theologies devised and refined by man throughout Christian history. Doing "good" when we don't want to holds potential for developing "right" motives in the doing (Gal 4:17–5:21). In order to appreciate Hare's presentation by those who cherish such views, a shift in thinking about "right" is necessary. "Right" by Hare is a term of constraint, whereas "good" is a term of attraction. "Right is not the source of good," he says. "Right" fits "some particular good with the good of the whole, seen in terms of the equal and unique value of each person" (25). This is a statement that resonates truth when you think about it. We are attracted to doing "good" through "right actions" in the name of Jesus Christ, but the "good" is not dependent upon, it exists apart from, "right actions."

Others might argue from a pragmatic point of view where experience capably answers Hare's questions. The pragmatic "good" is whatever the Bible communicates as desirable around which human energies can be organized and empowered by the Holy Spirit through seasoned leaders. This is the book's weakest link, for we have to guess what Hare's responses might be. He omits pragmatic moral competence exercised through prudence, consisting of moral wisdom and discernment that comes through years of leadership in God's kingdom. Human experience is equally important to human reason and autonomy whenever discussing moral authority.

The book's greatest value is its clarity that leads the conscientious reader into affirming covenant-based ethics as God's preferred ethical system. "What is the relation between morality and God?" he asks. His answer is covenant. God's initiative in covenant relationships, those based upon divine promises, reveals the true foundation, the final authority, for morality. Covenant-based ethics in praxis makes life coherent; without it, we fill the moral gap with "various attractions, or self-realization schemes, or rational systems, or communal attachments" that leave us morally empty (210). Hare makes his case clear and in doing so develops a valuable extra-reading resource for undergraduate courses in ethics, moral philosophy, and moral theology.

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**Gregory A. BOYD.** *Satan and the Problem of Evil: Constructing a Trinitarian Warfare Theodicy.* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2001. 456 pp. \$25.00.

In 1997 Boyd published *God at War* (InterVarsity), a sophisticated biblical theology of spiritual warfare. Now Boyd has followed up that large and important work with a large and important sequel which provides a philosophical and theological foundation for its predecessor and the framework for a sophisticated and creative response to the problem of evil.

Central to Boyd's development is the concept of a "trinitarian warfare theodicy." This notion contrasts with the "blueprint theodicy," which tries to explain all evil and suffering in terms of God's will (express or permissive). The main difference between this and the trinitarian view is that the latter "does not assume that there is a specific divine reason for what Satan and other evil agents do" (15). Evil is not something that needs to be explained, so much as something against which God constantly strives.

The first six chapters of the book defend six theses that develop the trinitarian worldview theodicy. According to these theses, the origin of evil is love. God in love creates free beings, and all evil is attributable to the rebellious actions of those beings, human and supernatural. God does war against that evil but must do it in a way consistent with the love that led to its advent in the first place. In the second half Boyd argues that natural evil ultimately reduces to moral evil, that what is not attributable to the actions of human beings is attributable to those of supernatural beings (Satan and his angels). The book concludes with two chapters on the doctrine of hell in which Boyd introduces a new model that attempts to bridge the gap between eternal punishment and annihilationist models and five appendices addressing philosophical, theological, and exegetical issues left hanging in the development of the book proper.

This volume is huge in scope, vast in research, and deep in philosophical and theological implications. It is without a doubt the most impressive scholarly achievement I have encountered from a publishing house that is not purely academic. The book contains an eighteen-page bibliography of works cited and utilized in its development. There were very few times when I thought of an important philosophical or theological issue that Boyd did not go on to address. (One notable exception is his failure to deal with Daniel Dennett's unique and attractive conception of free will compatibilism.) And the footnotes and appendices bear witness to the fact that this book could easily have been three times its size for the amount of study, thought, and preparation that went into it. Nonetheless, it is (as is Boyd's wont) a model of clarity, accessibility, and comprehensibility.

Boyd is best known today for his advocacy of open theism, the view that the future is partially undetermined and that God works his providence based on a knowledge of probabilities regarding that future rather than certainties

(which don't exist). This doctrine is highly controversial, and many even consider it dangerous or heretical. However, the doctrine figures prominently in the development of his trinitarian warfare theodicy, and the book is an impressive demonstration of the fruitfulness and cohesiveness of open theism. Along the way, Boyd answers many of the criticisms of the doctrine while showing its usefulness in constructing a powerful theory about free will, evil, and redemption. For anyone unhindered by an oppressive need to defend hyper-Calvinism at any cost, the book should prove a challenging and refreshing study.

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**Veli-Matti KÄRKKÄINEN.** *Pneumatology: The Holy Spirit in Ecumenical, International, and Contextual Perspective.* Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002. 195 pp. \$15.99.

Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen is a Finnish scholar presently at Fuller Theological Seminary with a keen interest in ecclesiology and ecumenism. The book under review is a textbook that aims to give an overview of some of the most significant pneumatological theories from an ecumenical and contextual perspective. Kärkkäinen's interesting suggestion that every pneumatology should be both ecumenical (understood here, it seems, as "nonexclusivist") and contextualized is not really developed in any detail. Instead, the book offers an at times rather elementary overview of some of the main doctrines of the Spirit.

After an introductory chapter there follows a chapter dealing with the biblical sources of pneumatology (13 pages). Chapter three is historical in character, covering in a somewhat cursory manner some of the main Church Fathers (including the Cappadocians), Montanism, Augustine, some medieval mystics (Hildegard of Bingen, Bernard of Clairvaux, Bonaventure, Catherine of Siena), the Anabaptists, Hegel (some jump!), Liberalism and Barth. Chapter four continues this historical overview, dealing with "Ecclesiastical Perspectives on the Spirit." Here we are treated to an introduction to Eastern Orthodox, Roman Catholic (Vatican II), Lutheran, Pentecostal and Charismatic, and Ecumenical pneumatologies. Chapter five deals with "Leading Contemporary Theologians on the Spirit." This is perhaps the best part of the book because it focuses on a more limited number of theologians (John Zizioulas, Karl Rahner, Wolfhart Pannenberg, Jürgen Moltmann, Michael Welker, Clark Pinnock) in some more depth. The final chapter ("Contextual Pneumatologies") treats of Process, Liberation, Ecological, Feminist, and African pneumatologies. A brief epilogue concludes the book.

I have a number of reservations about this book. First, as a historical-the-

ological reconstruction, it fails (especially in chapters three and four), as it is impossible to follow a thread in a text which attempts to cover so much material in too few pages; some of the discussions are really too short to be meaningful (Bernard of Clairvaux and Bonaventure get one and a half pages each); there are some extraordinary jumps (straight from the Anabaptists to Hegel) and the selection of some of the material seems somewhat arbitrary. Why include Hildegard of Bingen and Catherine of Sienna and not, for instance, some of the Victorines who transformed the Augustinian legacy in the 12th century?

A more serious criticism of this volume is the fact that Kärkkäinen relies too often on secondary literature in a rather uncritical manner, and he hardly ever refers to the primary sources. This takes away from the usefulness of the book, since readers cannot check the original quotation (unless they have access to the secondary resource. One example, quite representative, occurs in a discussion of “Feminist pneumatology.” Here, he states: “Even though under Augustine’s influence in the West all feminine references were eliminated from theology, due to his unfortunate view that women were not fully made in the image of God, his writings also display God’s immanence in a warm, loving spirituality. By expressing the feminine quality of cherishing love, the Holy Spirit points to a distinctively feminine aspect of God—the preservative, receptive aspect of God. Thus, Augustine likens the Holy Spirit to a mother hen” (166).

To back up the erroneous claim that Augustine denies women have been fully made in the image of God, Kärkkäinen refers to a book by J. Comblin. When I consulted the book by Comblin, I found no reference of any kind to Augustine’s own texts. It is worrying that an erroneous claim is being so uncritically adopted by Kärkkäinen. If Kärkkäinen himself had consulted Augustine’s *De Trinitate*, Book XII, 10-12, he would know that Augustine deliberately interprets 1 Cor 11:7 *symbolically* in order to safeguard the claim that women too have been made in the image of God, the exact opposite of what Comblin and Kärkkäinen argue. To back up the claim that Augustine compares the Spirit to a mother hen (a claim which is clearly opposed to the idea that Augustine was influential in eliminating feminine references to God) Kärkkäinen refers to a book by Blair Reynolds. Again no references to primary sources are included.

Still, my reservations run deeper than this. My major reservation is that the different pneumatologies are often deeply incompatible with biblical sources and (closely associated with this) with traditional patristic accounts, or with one another, and the author fails to critically engage them with one another. The book therefore raises more questions than it answers. What is lacking is a profound theological discussion as to how the different pneumatologies can be theologically justified. The fact that Kärkkäinen fails to do this creates the

impression that the Holy Spirit is, if I may put it somewhat provocatively, a theological *Mr. Fixit*, a theological *handyman*.

If there is a feminist agenda to be pursued, then we'll call in the Spirit to provide the theological props. A pneumatological interpretation of Whitehead's idea of divine immanence will allow us to overcome metaphysical dualism and bridge the gap between traditional theology and process thought (see Blair Reynolds). Pentecostal movements emphasize the role of the Spirit as the one who facilitates an immediate experience of God. A pneumatological reading of life forces (Spirit as life-giving force) will allow us to foster a more respectful attitude towards our ecosystem (see Moltmann; Sallie McFague in *The Body of God*), despite Irenaeus's sound observation (152) that the breath of life which animates us is not to be confused with the Spirit that sanctifies us. Again, liberation theology has found a useful purpose for the long-neglected Spirit by identifying the experience of God in the new Christian communities of Latin America with the experience of the Spirit (noted on p. 155 in J. Comblin, *The Holy Spirit and Liberation*, Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1989).

I could continue, but I obviously am not suggesting that these (ecological, liberational, feminist) concerns are insignificant. The issue that troubles me is that in this so-called "pneumatological renaissance" the doctrine of the Spirit is being used in a manner that subordinates a key theological doctrine to an agenda, however valuable and important, which is not pneumatologically inspired as such.

There may be very good reasons (both Christian and non-Christian) to argue for equality between man and women, for preservation of our ecosystem, for emancipation and liberation of people living in the developing countries, and so forth, but I am uneasy with a strategy which uses pneumatology to "back up" these concerns, especially if the biblical and patristic sources to pursue these concerns are rather tenuous, to put it mildly. One is in danger of instrumentalizing and subordinating the Spirit to one's own agenda, trying to give some theological justification to the pursuit of ideals that have very little to do with the Spirit. Moreover, when "allocating" these different "tasks" to the Spirit, one is in danger of developing a Unitarianism of the Spirit (like McFague), or one ends up, on the other side of the scale, with a tri-theism.

So what is missing in modern pneumatology (and in the book under review) is a profound discussion of a number of issues, such as: which "personal names" can be attributed to each of the three Persons? Which characteristics can be "appropriated" to each of the Persons, and how can we back up this appropriation, given our scriptural sources? In doing this we should refrain from using Scripture as a treasure house of "proof-texts" but we should be sensitive to how the Scripture (and especially the NT) develops an implicit trinitarian history of salvation. Doing this will allow us to flesh out the "appropriations" (which is not a matter attributing arbitrary characteristics to each of the

Persons but should be linked with the processions of the Son and Spirit) in a theologically responsible manner (a manner that avoids tri-theism, as it remains aware that the external operations of the three Persons are indivisible). One can meet these requirements by emphasizing that the common outward action of the trinitarian Persons expresses the reciprocity of their relations, as scholastic theology proposed, and more recently, W. Pannenberg (*Systematic Theology* Vol. II, p. 1-9; I, p. 308ff).

Insofar as the book, albeit rather uncritically or, at times, even inaccurately, catalogues the different pneumatologies, it is useful. Insofar as it fails to critically question their theological coherence or plausibility, it falls seriously short. After all, the purpose of a textbook is not just to impart information but also to make students think critically.

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**Leonard SWEET, Brian D. MCLAREN, and Jerry HASELMAYER. *A Is for Abductive: The Language of the Emerging Church*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003. 338 pp. \$16.95.**

This book is intended to be a single, comprehensive, dictionary that introduces various concepts related to Christian ministry within the postmodern ethos. Authors Sweet and McLaren have received critical acclaim for their ability to identify emerging trends that should be addressed within the context of ministry in the local church and the current cultural climate. This current work runs in the same vein and there is much to be gleaned from its pages.

Perhaps the most helpful aspect of this work is their attempt to somehow place useful “handles” on the world that we must minister in and to. Their too brief but helpful entry on postmodernity hints at the problem: “A controversial term with a maddening number of contrary definitions, generally referring to a philosophy that we believe does not yet exist” (239). The very notion that postmodernism has not yet completely emerged, and that we remain in the “birthing” stage comes complete with suggestions and strategies for ministers, students, and scholars, for navigating the world we live in.

Key to this navigation is the notion of “abductivity.” After brief paragraphs showing the shortcomings of both the deductive and inductive methodologies the authors propose the “abductive method.” This method,

Seizes people by the imagination and transports them from their current world to another world, where they gain new perspective. Abductive reasoning has powerful implications for preaching—and all communication, really! To go

abductive, get rid of your inductive/deductive outlines and points and make your sermons pointless! In other words, don't build your message around analysis, but instead, build them around an abductive experience. (31)

It is no coincidence that this is the first entry in the "dictionary-like" structure of this book. This methodology forms the foundation for many of the strategies, (like Sweet's EPICtivity), that are suggested in the rest of the volume.

By using entries, based on a well-rounded number of the social sciences, Sweet and McLaren capture our imagination, no matter what discipline we are interested in, and force us to think holistically about what we do, how we do it, where we do it, and who we do it to or for. Most notable among the 140 some odd alphabetized entries are: "categorical imperialism," "genetic predestination," "neurological pre-wiring," and "the Way." All that point to ways our world is changing and how we must place these changes under the Lordship of Christ.

Each entry is in some way intended to alert, educate, or challenge the reader past "what has been." That is not to say that the authors devalue or otherwise diminish the 2000 years of history, both sacred and secular, that have preceded our current culture. Quite to the contrary both Sweet and McLaren strive for a balance that recognizes the contributions of the past (traditions) but breaks with history where those contributions have become ineffectual or outdated in praxis (traditionalism). Nearly every entry shows how the proposed paradigm or methodology surpasses what has, or is currently being held, and then causes us to stretch our views forward towards what is emerging. Each entry causes the reader to rethink our current, sometimes long-held, assumptions and presses for paradigms, strategies, vocabulary, and methodologies that will somehow enable us to bridge the transitional gap from what has been to what will be.

As a "primer" this work will be helpful for students of ministry, culture, postmodernity, and theology. Readers who are familiar with the other works of Sweet and McLaren will find much overlap and will have to work harder to ferret out the new ideas and material. In light of recent works in the Stone-Campbell Restoration Movement concerning evangelicalism this volume denotes some common struggles with those in other theological traditions. Conversely, this book also highlights the strength of our heritage, at the expense of mainline denominations, by calling for unity, the priesthood of all believers, and the authority of the Word (see "M is for Mainline").

This work has two primary weaknesses. First, it seems as if Sweet's contribution is primary as opposed to "co-authoring." Readers of his other works will notice immediately that he is the key author. Co-author Brian McLaren, pastor of Cedar Ridge Community Church in Spencerville, MD, seems to have contributed more as an editorial advisor. Though there is little doubt that

McLaren and Sweet share many of the same ideas and methods it seems as though McLaren is content to be in Sweet's shadow. Haselmayer's "EPICTivities" (pragmatic activities or discussions starters) that accompany some of the entries may be helpful for some small groups who enter the discussion at the "beginner" level, but they are not well suited for individuals or groups who have background in this field.

Secondly, many of the entries are too brief for a "primer." Students or ministers who chose this volume as an entry-level edition into the world of postmodernity will struggle to fully grasp Sweet's postmodern approach to writing: the authors assume too much when choosing language and vocabulary. I shared my volume with an older minister in my very "pre-modern" community and he was very confused as to what the authors were trying to accomplish. Though there is much material that is worthwhile, it is not easily accessible for those without some preliminary study in postmodernism.

Many will find this volume helpful in understanding our changing world, some will find it indispensable in challenging them towards "thinking forward," and a few will find this work highly questionable and will accuse the authors of capitalizing on current cultural trends and felt needs at the expense of the more rational and modernistic Church. This work is clearly a call for change not only in the church but in the disciple as well. However, it is not about shifting paradigms (premodern, modern, or postmodern) as much as it is about recognizing where we are and mapping out strategies and methodologies that effectively minister in that ethos and beyond.

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**Philip JENKINS.** *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity.* New York: Oxford University Press, 2002. 304 pp. \$28.00.

Philip Jenkins collates data and trends from a number of sources into a cohesive argument about the future of Christianity's shifting its "head offices" from Europe to Africa and Latin America. Jenkins points out for at least the first 1000 years of its history, Christianity was a Mediterranean movement headquartered and entrenched in the Middle and Near East, North Africa, and the Italian and Greek peninsulas. That as recently as 1915 there were still some 400,000 Christians in Turkey, the former head office of eastern Orthodoxy, before a pogrom virtually wiped or drove them out. He describes the far-reaching influence of the Syriac, Nestorian, and Coptic Christians, and how these strands were subjected to outbreaks of attacks from Muslim majorities.

As a cultural phenomenon, Jenkins insists Christianity tends to inculturate itself wherever it goes, notably pagan Europe where pagan high holy days were adopted as Christian holy days, including Easter and Christmas. As he develops this theme, Jenkins points out parallels with the inculturation which the Roman Catholic Church encouraged in Latin America and which now unfolds in Africa. Sometimes it becomes a syncretism, but Jenkins notes that the Christianity of the global South tends to have more in common with ancient Christianity than with the bloodless, soul-less (faithless?) variety practiced by European and North American liberal Protestants. He further traces the influence of Pentecostalism as a world influence even pushing the Roman Catholic Church to adopt certain of its characteristics in some mission fields.

Jenkins picks up the thread of Christian-Muslim conflict as it is unfolding in Africa and Asia in both Muslim and Christian majority countries: Islamic states replete with Sharia law versus self-proclaimed Christian countries . . . in effect, Christendom recreated.

Overall, the author gives the lie to the secularist, antisupernaturalist, global North who would ignore or misrepresent the ongoing global influence of supernaturalist Christianity. He notes that what has been described as “American exceptionalism,” with respect to the durability and growth of organized Christianity in the United States, is mainstream when considered globally. According to Jenkins, “European (and Japanese) exceptionalism,” exemplified in its thoroughgoing secularization, is closer to the current situation. Far from fading away, in Philip Jenkins’s account, Christianity is still a global force to be reckoned with.

What Jenkins doesn’t address adequately is the extent to which the Christian worldview has been removed from public discourse and the cultural mainstream in the United States. While certain churches are full to overflowing and are multiplying congregations, Christianity’s cultural, intellectual, and discursive power, where it exists, tends to be confined to a ghettoized influence among practicing Christians, albeit a “ghetto” that claims a significant share of the American populace. The question he could have raised and addressed might go: While Christianity claims an increasing number of Americans, why does its cultural, intellectual, and discursive influence wane or, at least, remain static?

Nonetheless, while students of missiology won’t be surprised by Jenkins’s conclusions (he cites David Barrett’s *World Christian Encyclopedia*), they may find it a helpful tool in educating undergraduate and graduate students about Christianity’s historical and contemporary scope and the challenges it faces from, notably, Islam. Jenkins’s book also presents a challenge to Christian political theorists as to how Christian-majority countries emerging in the global South can learn the lessons of both pre-Enlightenment, western Christendom and post-Enlightenment, western secularization. That is, how



should Christian-majority countries arrange their politics and treat religious minorities?

Anyone concerned about developing into “a world Christian” will want to acquire a copy of this accessible, yet appropriately researched and documented treatment.

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**David A. ENYART.** *Creative Anticipation: Narrative Sermon Designs for Telling the Story.* Self-Published. Printer Xlibris Corporation, [www.Xlibris.com](http://www.Xlibris.com), 2002. 230 pp. \$18.69. \$8.00 (e-book).

What do you mean by “narrative preaching” beyond just telling stories? Isn’t it obvious just telling stories is not really preaching?

David Enyart not only discusses these questions but gives examples sufficient to demonstrate six different forms of narrative for preparing such sermons. Without demeaning or belittling deductive preaching, he urges inductive messages for today’s mind-set, and for the ears and hearts of today as well. He is convinced narrative is best because of the story of our faith: “The gospel, therefore, is the ultimate form of creative anticipation, a model for all our stories—and sermons” (29). Early on he states the purpose of the book is “to help the preacher grasp the “nuances of narrative” and thereby be able to shape a variety of narrative sermon designs” (27).

Enyart, professor of homiletics at Johnson Bible College, begins with a prologue simulating a particular preacher’s efforts to discern the effect of his sermons on the congregation with whom he ministers. Some of these insights and conclusions form touchstones for later referral as the book develops.

For several chapters Enyart presents the case for inductive, particularly narrative, preaching by declaring that current thinking is directed best this way, so hearers actually participate in the developing message. He states a recurring definition of preaching: “the integrating of your story, their story, and God’s Story in such a way that souls are saved, wounds are healed and Christ is exalted.” He elaborates: “‘God’s Story’ gives the sermon authority; ‘their story’ gives the sermon relevance; and ‘my story’ gives it passion and genuineness”(30). Further he says, “*Narrative sermons come into existence at the point where the message of the text, the preacher’s experience of the text, and the congregation’s need overlap*”(53) [italics his].

He also frequently refers to plotting messages on the basis of “a question, a quest, and a discovery.” In a chapter by that title he explains the first as a “living question” or “central question,” often presented through story. The

“quest” is the difficult but realistic struggle that may well involve tension and conflict because it reflects real life. Then the “discovery,” like a well-delivered punch line for a joke, brings listeners to the right destination—even (especially) if that is a surprise. Discovery does not always provide perfect answers, but it will always lead to The Answer. He likens good narrative preaching to murder mystery genre: keeping attention by “creative anticipation.”

While the first portion of the book presents the case for inductive and narrative preaching, it is not the strongest part. Well done and reflective of wide literary support, it seems somewhat tedious in places with extensive quoting and referencing, but is probably necessary because of the reversion to deductive forms. Yet some gems are here: “Learning to compose and preach narrative sermons is a good bit like learning to drive on the opposite side of the road; we must retrain our instincts. . . . One might *think* a deductive sermon into existence, but story sermons must be *thought and felt* into existence”(69); and the repeated, “we must cultivate a feel for story.”

When he discusses, then demonstrates, different types of narratives, the book rises in strength. Enyart prepares the reader for this by saying earlier that his strategy for developing such sermons is his own and others are available. Likewise the forms he presents are only examples, but they are very helpful.

From “simulating” (a story presenting a parable), he demonstrates “sustaining,” “supplementing,” “segmenting,” “sequencing,” and “suspending” the narrative. Bravely using his own creations for models, he gives explanations before and after each. Making no claim that these are the best ever, he presents the process which led to each and the resulting analysis of some. This is both helpful and instructive.

Overall, this is excellent for students of homiletics to see varieties of ways narratives may be used. And it certainly can help preachers seeking to present sermons that communicate with people today.

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**Knofel STATON.** *The Biblical Liberation of Women for Leadership in the Church: As One Essential for the Spiritual Formation of the Church.* Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2002. 235 pp. \$24.50.

At a time when the church needs to deal seriously with the issue of women’s place in church leadership and ministry but for the most part wish to avoid it, Staton has offered a challenging but loving vehicle for discussion. With the underlying emphasis found in the subtitle, he sensitively but strongly addresses the subject. He stresses that the church needs to come to terms on

the matter because it is essential for the spiritual formation of both the individual and the church as a whole.

Although he recognizes that this subject is “exegetically complex and emotionally volatile” (4), and even honestly admits his own occasional desire that the whole problem would just be “left alone” (235), Staton urges church leaders to take up the “Berean challenge” and study the issue thoroughly from Scripture rather than reacting to it solely in defense of tradition. I appreciate his loving approach and real concern for the maturation of the body of Christ. I also appreciate that he periodically gives wise words of caution to both genders as they deal with the issue.

One of the greatest strengths of this book is the broad scope of its contents. Staton delays dealing with the “silencing” texts (1 Cor 14:34-35; 1 Tim 2:9-11) and the headship issue (1 Cor 11:3) until after he has surveyed Genesis through Acts to present: God’s plan for a “community of unity” at creation, the effects of the Fall on that plan as seen in man’s reductionistic response, God’s pre-Christian inclusiveness of women as a corrective to that reductionism, Jesus’ modeling of God’s intention for women, and the Holy Spirit’s guiding of the early Church to “perpetuate Jesus’ ministry to and through women as well as men” (126). He also presents the “enlisting” aspect of baptism and the empowerment of the Spirit’s charismata as evidence of God’s intention for all in his new community to be involved in ministry.

Although the book would be highly beneficial reading for any denomination, it is especially appropriate for those in the Stone-Campbell Restoration Movement. Staton offers statistics on Stone-Campbell Bible colleges, relates his personal experiences from years of pondering and studying the issue in our setting, and gives some of the movement’s history with regard to women. Being sensitive to the structure and thinking of the Christian Churches (independent), he deals with the texts (1 Tim 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9) and issues related to women as elders in an appendix. There, he simply lists “issues to ponder” and encourages church leadership to seriously consider these things “without dragging the a priori thinking into the analysis” (231).

This book needs careful editing for its next printing. The book’s format is that of a *typewritten* academic paper. Grammatical errors, typographical errors, and even repetition of entire lines are all present. At times the thought-flow is interrupted by ad hoc thoughts, by new ideas which are inserted without enough explanation or support, and even by seemingly unrelated lists (not unrelated or unimportant to the overall theme but to the specific section in which they are introduced). Part of the problem with thought-flow is also a need for better transitions. This is especially true in the earlier sections of the book, but not so much when dealing with the texts. The book, which has much to offer, may not get the wide reading it deserves due to its unappealing and unsuitable format.

Much writing in the area of church growth and development, as well as much in the area of the liberation of women, has focused on many of the themes Staton brings into this discussion. For example, topics such as the priesthood of all believers, gift-based ministry, the triune godhead and its implications for the *imago dei*, and God's plan for man to live in community (team-based churches) are all currently receiving much attention. Staton has done a good job of bringing these diverse topics together specifically for the purpose of discussing the roles of women, making his book timely, relevant, and comprehensive.

This book is a valuable research and classroom tool. It is a good model of a proper hermeneutic which includes language studies, cultural and historical background considerations, and an awareness of the various layers of context. It also offers a comprehensive bibliography, along with the appropriate and respectful examination of various viewpoints. Additionally, Staton has much to contribute to the discussion of this issue because he submits several unique thoughts to consider. For example, he offers an "alternative angle" in which to frame the entire discussion, as opposed to a strictly egalitarian or hierarchical approach (8). Sometimes, his unique reflections are such that one's initial reaction is that they cannot be accurate, but closer examination of the texts involved lend credibility to his assertions. A good example would be his proposing of "another spin" on the Parable of the Persistent Widow in Luke 18 (84).

While Staton's book has obvious value in the academic realm, it would also be a good study aid for church leaders and could possibly even be used for church Bible studies, given an adequate teacher. Staton's message is for the corporate church and that is the setting in which it is needed. Use of the book in that setting would be beneficial as an overview of the subject and would show that the church will not deal adequately with this topic simply by quoting a few texts and declaring it to be a simple, clear-cut issue.

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**Darrell L. BOCK, ed.** *The Bible Knowledge Key Word Study: The Gospels.* Colorado Springs: Victor, 2002. 430 pp. \$39.99.

This volume is the latest supplement to Victor's *Bible Knowledge Commentary*, edited by John Walvoord and Roy Zuck. The entries in this volume (along with those entries in the companion volumes) seek to "highlight the use of the word in a specific passage and help to explain why it has that meaning in that given locale" (13). This current volume makes no pretense of trying to bring itself into complete agreement with views found in the previ-

ously published commentary. Rather, it helps to focus the student's study of a passage on the important terms, while recognizing there will be valid differences of opinion among scholars.

In this volume, David K. Lowery (Matthew), W. Hall Harris (John), and Darrell K. Bock (Luke), all of Dallas Theological Seminary, along with Joel F. Williams (Mark) of Columbia International University come together to provide valuable insights about Greek words and phrases in the Gospels. Some words and phrases are identified because of their theological weight in their respective passages, while other terms draw the attention of the author (and reader) because their translations or interpretations represent diverse opinions among biblical scholars. The authors also identify words or phrases that have important background information not readily available to the English reader who does not have training in Greek.

The work is not intended to offer a comprehensive word study on each term that is identified. Instead, in canonical order, the authors choose important key words or phrases to develop within a verse or passage, then give short explanations of the words or phrases. Each entry lists the chapter and verse where the word or phrase is found, the author's translation, and the transliteration of the Greek word or phrase in question. A brief one-paragraph discussion of the phrase constitutes the body of the entry, with the transliterated lexical form of the word or words in question closing out the entry.

Unfortunately, the terms are not identified according to Strong's or other common numbering systems. This is the book's biggest weakness and may cause readers who are accustomed to these systems to pass over this insightful book. However, the reader with a little savvy can still use the transliteration to look up further information in Strong's or elsewhere, such as the *NIDNTT*. The missing *epsilon* and suspicious looking final *sigma* in the transliteration table (37) stick out to the student of Greek, but the body of this work lacks these obvious, but forgivable oversights.

One passage and one topic of interest to those in the Stone-Campbell Restoration Movement will highlight the value of this book as an addition to the "recommended reading" lists of hermeneutics and Gospels teachers. In Matthew 16:18 (79), Lowery identifies the "rock" as the "future ministry" of the apostles, upon which Christ will build his "church." He further identifies "church" as the "assembly of Jews and Gentiles joined together by their mutual faith in Jesus."

On the topic of baptism, Lowery says about Matt 28:19 (112): "Baptism testifies to the beginning of a relationship with God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit." Bock, in commenting on John's "*baptism of repentance* for the *forgiveness* of sins" (the longest single entry in the volume), Luke 3:3 (193), says that John's baptism was one of "eschatological preparation" for a nation that needed to "repent" not only of its individual sin but of its collective national

sin as well. In turn, this “repentance” opens the door for the sinner to receive “forgiveness” by the grace of God.

Whether or not you agree wholeheartedly with the conclusions of these four scholars is not nearly as important as how this volume enables students of the Bible in their personal search to discover truth for themselves.

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**Philip J. KING and Lawrence E. STAGER. *Life in Biblical Israel*.  
Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2001. 440 pp. \$39.95.**

This volume joins seven others in the Library of Ancient Israel series edited by Douglas A. Knight. The co-authors are eminently qualified to write this volume, which makes use of the archaeological data available at the end of the twentieth-century to describe what life was like among the ancient Israelites. Philip King is past president of the American Schools of Oriental Research and of the Society of Biblical Literature. He currently is Director of the Shelby White–Leon Levy Program for Archaeological Publications. Lawrence Stager is Dorot Professor of the Archaeology of Israel at Harvard and the Director of the Harvard Semitic Museum. He directs the Leon Levy Expedition to Ashkelon. The authors represent that school of thought that assumes an earlier date for the Hebrew Bible and seeks to interpret and illustrate the biblical text by reference to the discoveries of “Biblical Archaeology.” They, however, focus on portraying what everyday life was like throughout the social order rather than engaging questions about the historicity of biblical persons and events.

The co-authors organize the vast range of archaeological and textual information into six chapters: “Introduction: The Importance of the Everyday Life,” “The Israelite House and Household,” “The Means of Existence,” “Patrimonial Kingdom,” “Culture and the Expressive Life,” and “Religious Institutions.” The volume provides two maps in the index section, one of the ancient Near East and the Eastern Mediterranean, and the other of ancient Palestine. The bibliography is massive—eighteen pages. There are indices of biblical citations and ancient sources, of modern authors, and of subjects. The authors illustrate their discussion with over 230 photographs, most in color, and drawings of everything from pottery and artifacts to two skulls with rectangular holes illustrating ancient medical procedures. They include within their discussion a most helpful map of Philistine territory and Israelite territory in Israel’s early days (141). A few more such maps in the text itself would aid the reader.

The authors write clearly. Their treatment is carefully organized and

becomes almost predictable. First, they provide archaeological evidence for their description and then cite and/or quote passages from the Hebrew Bible which bear on the subject. They sometimes include textual material from outside the Scripture. This strongly organized pattern makes the book very readable and usable as general reading for those interested in the OT, as well as a textbook for college and/or seminary. It may even serve as a reference work since it frequently becomes encyclopedic with up-to-the-minute discoveries and interpretations of recovered materials. Chapter six on religious institutions is particularly helpful.

In spite of the book's many pluses, this reviewer noted several problems. Some are minor, some of greater concern. As a minor annoyance, the text is printed on very slick paper which requires the reader to get the light just right on the page or face a terrible glare. Another, occasionally the illustrations are separated from the illustrated text so that one must hunt for the illustration. While most of the photography is exceptional, a few photos are below par. For example, the full-page photo of the Black Obelisk of Shalmaneser III on page 261 is not helpful. On the other hand, the photo of the Mesha Inscription (129) is excellent, even readable off the page. More annoying, this reviewer found the indices woefully incomplete. Some major topics are omitted altogether, while others provided only partial references. I found myself inserting missing page numbers for future reference, as well as making fresh entries. Perhaps the most problematic quality of the book is the strange repetitions of discussions on a particular topic. It almost seems that the co-authors wrote separate parts which were then combined without much editorial contracting of text. For example, descriptions and pictures of palmette capitals appear on pages 207 and 237. Chariot accouterment is described twice on succeeding pages (241 and 242). This reviewer would have been pleased to see some reference to the significant work of M.T. Larsen and K.R. Veenhof on economics and trade in the ancient Near East as drawn from the Old Assyrian cuneiform texts.

These annoyances must not be taken to diminish the outstanding level of scholarship and usability this magnificent work provides. This book belongs in every college, seminary, and graduate school library where Hebrew Bible and biblical backgrounds are studied. It will make an outstanding textbook for a class covering the life and institutions of the ancient Israelites. Pastors and Christian educators will find it a valuable mine of current information about OT backgrounds. Those unfamiliar with archaeological terminology may find it a little difficult at first, but would do well to study page xxiii, "Chronology of the Levant," before tackling the text.

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**Mark S. SMITH.** *The Early History of God: Yahweh and Other Deities in Ancient Israel.* 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002. 289 pp. \$25.00.

Mark Smith is the Skirball Professor of Biblical and Ancient Near Eastern Studies at New York University. He is one of the most erudite and prolific scholars within the field and is on the editorial boards of various journals, including *Maarav*. He earned his doctorate at Yale University, writing his dissertation on Kothar-wa-Hasis (the Ugaritic craftsman god) under Ugaritic and biblical scholar Marvin H. Pope.

Smith published the first edition of *The Early History of God* in 1990, and it immediately became a standard reference work within the field. The most consistent feature of the volume was the fact that Smith summarized the complex biblical and epigraphic data with lucidity, documenting each detail and secondary source thoroughly. Moreover, eccentric positions about the biblical and ancient Near Eastern data were dismissed with cogent arguments, not pugilism. This revised edition reflects the substantial progress that has occurred within the field during the past decade, and also retains the acumen and thoroughness of the first edition. Indeed, the lengthy introduction (xii-xxxviii) is a veritable lode, with fine summaries of virtually every recent publication of note in English, German, French, Italian, and Spanish. Certainly, Smith has a peerless ability to write the most perceptive synthetic analyses.

Smith begins by summarizing his methodology and historical assumptions. For example, he states that “the Bible is not a history book in the modern sense,” yet he does affirm that much of the information in the Bible “may rightly be called the works of ancient Israelite historians” (14). In addition, Smith also avers that modern biblical scholars must attempt to understand the confessional and nationalistic nature of the Hebrew Bible. Moreover, he posits that judgments about semantic domains of the Semitic words, genres of the literature, forms of the literature, ideology of the literature, and historicity of the material, must be determined on the basis of inductive study, not preconceived notions. Furthermore, he also affirms that the Hebrew Bible can be best elucidated through the lens of the ancient cultures that were part of the Old Testament world (Ugarit, Phoenicia, Mesopotamia, Egypt). That is, Smith argues that the biblical text must be excavated, the various strata analyzed (*passim*). Obviously, some components of contemporary Christianity and Judaism reject such thorough and nuanced historical analyses of ancient Israelite religion. However, this is perilous, for the result is that facile treatments of the religion of Israel are produced. It should be noted here that Alexander Campbell actually argued that the Bible is to be “translated, interpreted, and understood according to the same code of laws and principles of interpretation by which other ancient writings are translated and understood.”<sup>1</sup> Campbell was a rigorous philologist, textual critic, and historian. Therefore, it is not surprising that



he believed that the biblical corpus must be studied inductively, using the best philological, historical, and critical tools. Smith is, in essence, making the same sort of arguments.

For some time, the Biblical Theology Movement argued that there was a distinct cultural discontinuity between ancient Israel and the ancient Near Eastern cultures surrounding it. Ancient Israel was understood as very unique, a complete cultural aberration. For example, Israel was assumed to be as an oasis of monotheism and historiographic sophistication in an ocean of ancient Near Eastern polytheism and primitive historiography. With the majority of modern interpreters, Stone-Campbell scholar J.J.M. Roberts has argued that such broad generalizations are not tenable, and are even detrimental for the interpreter of the biblical text.<sup>2</sup> Smith, of course, also eschews the assumptions of the Biblical Theology Movement. He argues that Israel was Canaanite in origin (cf. Ezek 16:3), and that early Israelite religion often reflects Canaanite religion and nomenclature. Smith's discussions, therefore, of Ba'al, El, 'Asherah, 'Anat, and Yahweh reveal the complicated nexus of relationships that were part and parcel early Israelite religion. Iron Age Hebrew epigraphic material such as Kuntillet Ajrud and Khirbet el-Qom (that refer to Yahweh and his Asherah) figure prominently in such discussions (48, 81, 118-119; 124-125), as is appropriate.

Smith's volume also includes a learned discussion of the origins of Israelite monotheism. He details the data demonstrating that Israelite monotheism arose late, during the period of the late Judaeen monarchy, and reached an apex with Jeremiah, Deutero-Isaiah, and Ezekiel. It should be noted that he has recently dealt with this issue at length in a (superb) separate monograph, namely, *The Origins of Biblical Monotheism: Israel's Polytheistic Background and the Ugaritic Texts* (New York: Oxford, 2001).

Both of Smith's two recent volumes should be required reading for courses in Israelite religion, and Old Testament theology. Scholars within the field will also find reading these volumes most profitable. No one has written volumes that summarize the data with the clarity and judiciousness characteristic of Smith's works.

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1. Alexander Campbell, *The Christian System* (Reprint; Nashville: Gospel Advocate, 1980) 3.

2. J.J.M. Roberts, "Myth versus History: Relaying the Comparative Foundations," *CBQ* 38 (1976) 1-13. This article has been republished in a volume consisting of the collected writings of Roberts entitled *The Bible and the Ancient Near East* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2002). See G. Ernest Wright's *The Old Testament against Its Environment* (London: SCM, 1950), for an example of older scholarship, which argued that Israel's religion exhibited a modicum of cultural continuity with the cultures surrounding it.

**William DUMBRELL.** *The Faith of Israel: A Theological Survey of the Old Testament.* 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002. 352 pp. \$25.99.

This volume is a revised and enlarged edition of a book published originally in 1988. A basic strength of this volume is that it approaches the theological content of the OT holistically, focusing on how each book stands in the Masoretic text. Dumbrell notes, “Literary criticism provides no assured results” (10).

In discussing the theology of each biblical book, Dumbrell divides his effort into four parts: Books of the Law, Books of the Prophets: Former Prophets, Books of the Prophets: Latter Prophets, and Books of the Writings. He intends this volume to be used by English readers, Hebrew words being transliterated, but specialists will also find things to appreciate. His approach to the thirty-nine books overall is balanced. He traces the concepts of covenant and promise throughout the OT, beginning with Abraham, as well as concepts of love and fear, commenting, “Trustful behavior (love) stemming from a changed heart (fear) is what Deuteronomy seeks” (67).

Dumbrell fairly assesses the contrasting views held on notorious problem passages such as Gen 6:1-4. At times, though, stating his own views on these matters more directly would be helpful. I would also have appreciated evidence supplied for such assumptions as: Joshua was “written much later” (75), a “general antimonarchical stance of the Former Prophets” (80), “Second Isaiah” (118), “elements of fantasy and exaggeration” in Ezekiel 38–39 (165), and “the person of the preacher is discussed by the book’s editor (284).

This volume goes beyond normal introductions to the OT by treating with greater depth and breadth the theology of each book. Dumbrell’s conservative treatment of the material on the whole is a welcome change from most volumes of this sort which tend toward a liberal, theological bias.

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**Melissa MUNRO and Judith COUCHMAN, eds.** *Discipleship Journal’s Best Bible Study Methods.* Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2002. 141 pp. \$10.00.

Since 1994 *Discipleship Journal* has featured a column to aid readers in their self-study of the Bible. First labeled “Bible Study Methods,” then later, “Getting into God’s Word,” it ranged from tips on thirty-minute methods to thirty-day methods, from book studies to studies of the entire Bible, from left-brain studies to right-brain studies. This power-packed volume compiles 32 of the best columns from this eight-year period.

The volume is divided into four parts. Part One: Pull Your Stuff Together includes three chapters, successively focusing on getting oneself spiritually prepared for the impact of regular personal Bible study, choosing a translation, and basic reference resources. The chapter on translation does a good job of simply explaining the differences between literal, dynamic equivalent, and free, and even a little about the Septuagint. The chapter on reference tools, written by John R. Kohlenberger III, recommends building a small library which includes an English dictionary, a Bible handbook, a Bible dictionary, a topical Bible, and a concordance. I question the recommendation to collect multiple one-volume commentaries. These kind of commentaries tend to be way too old and skewed to the predilections of the commentator. Preferable is buying popular commentaries on individual books, like InterVarsity's Bible Speaks Today Series or Zondervan's NIV Application Commentary, decide which format fits one's interests best, then sticking with that series as other Bible books are studied.

Part Two: Begin with the Basics contains eight chapters introducing time-tested, classic study approaches, like summarizing chapters in your own words; investigating individual, key words; color-coding various aspects of a passage; and searching topically beyond the passage. Some of these chapters incorporate similar techniques but organize them differently and recommend various ways to record them in a personal study notebook. Students would probably sample and then settle in on an approach that fits them. The "As Easy as ABC" chapter is probably the simplest, asking the student to give the passage or chapter one is studying a title, identify the "best" verse, a personal challenge, any difficulties in the passage, and making a summary. Popular author of *The Purpose-Driven Church* and minister of the Saddleback Valley Community Church, Rick Warren, contributes two chapters to this section.

Part Three: Keeping It Interesting adds eleven chapters which direct students to unearth parts of the Bible they may avoid because they don't know what to do with them, like Kings and Chronicles, Proverbs, or the OT in general, as well as encourage the student to try some creative approaches of various kinds. One chapter directs the student on how to study nature in the Bible. Another advances ways to get to know Jesus better. Still another shows how just asking questions of the text can really advance the student's understanding. In this section, Clint Arnold, more known for his books on spiritual warfare, offers an informative chapter on recognizing and dealing with the various literary features of the Bible.

Part Four: Live What You Learn concludes with ten chapters to help the students apply what they learn from their studies to themselves. Here, chapters explore journaling, memorizing, reciting biblical poetry, meditation, and other methods. One of the easiest to apply methods simply suggests replacing the appropriate pronoun with one's name in the process of paraphrasing the passage.

This volume has the potential to change people's lives. The need that all of us have, not just young people and novice believers, to appropriate God's Word to ourselves, never fades. Not appropriate as a classroom textbook, this book might be about right to hand out at Freshman Orientation for undergraduates. It's the kind of book ministers could recommend to new believers. It could also be an interesting Sunday School or Bible Study resource. For the price, a church couldn't go wrong just ordering a case and just passing them out.

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**John F. HAYWARD.** *Through the Rose Window: Art, Myth and the Religious Imagination.* Boston: Skinner, 2002. 192 pp. \$18.00.

The beauty of a stained glass window is paradoxical: the shapes and colors which permit the passing light also dim it. So it is with every person who thinks deeply about art and religion. Our backgrounds color and at times dim the light. John Hayward, Unitarian pastor, professor of religious studies, and editor of *The Journal of Liberal Religion*, admittedly sees religious faith and life through the hues and shapes of his own experiences. Each reader will have to determine how clearly the light has permeated the interesting and powerful essays gathered in this book. Each reader will have to determine whether Hayward's refraction has enriched the light or merely bent it.

Hayward is at his best when discussing the intersection between art and religion. He challenges the church to recognize worship as the core of its life and to infuse its worship with the playful, delightful, celebrative joy of artistic expression. Although he respects the fine arts and their place in the worship and education of the church, Hayward also encourages the church to find a place for the "home arts," the more amateurish, but no less meaningful expressions of faith of which all believers are capable. Over and over Hayward turns to the arts as the lens through which he and humans in general can see the unseeable, translate the transcendent. His advocacy of an encounter with the arts as the most personal and powerful to theological understanding and expression needs to be heard and practiced by all believers.

Another area of strength among these deliberately disparate essays is Hayward's discussion of the tension between traditional forms and creative freedom in the arts. After exploring the importance of the interplay of inherited forms and innovation in music and art, he suggests that a similar dynamic should be at play in the worship of the church. His approach may be the key that unlocks the ongoing tension between historic liturgical forms and con-

temporary experimentation. Hayward's application of the tradition/freedom principle to the interpretation of Scripture is less convincing.

Although Hayward's indiscriminate use of the word "myth" for traditional Greek, Roman, Jewish, and Christian stories alike will unsettle many readers, he does make an interesting attempt to identify and distinguish the Greek and Jewish roots of Christian theology. He concludes that biblical (Jewish) models are more fundamental than classical (Greek) models and that Christianity's "perversions" have often resulted from leaning in a Platonic rather than a prophetic direction.

Readers should be prepared for an invigorating treatment of the Genesis creation stories which, Hayward thinks, display a "divine surprise." Along with divine power and will, he sees improvisation, change, and mystery woven throughout Genesis 1–2. The differences in order and emphasis in the two chapters suggest not contradiction but complementary perspectives on the nature of the Divine and the nature of creativity. Although Kenneth Olliff's introduction speaks of "creating something original," Hayward prefers to talk about creating "out of the heart of preceding debris," a provocative approach to God's creative work and a suggestive approach to the human creative enterprise. But readers should also be prepared for decidedly unorthodox handlings of the identity, birth, death, and (especially) resurrection of Jesus. For Hayward the resurrection accounts are metaphors for the renewal of hope that must characterize the authentically religious life. His agenda focuses more on hope than on faith, and even then his hope appears to be hope in hope itself.

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**R.T. FRANCE.** *The Gospel of Mark: A Commentary on the Greek Text.* The New International Greek Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002. 756 pp. \$55.00.

At long last we now have a commentary on the Gospel of Mark in the New International Greek Testament Commentary, edited by I.H. Marshall and Donald A. Hagner. It is a fine contribution by the distinguished British evangelical R.T. France, who a little over a decade ago gave us *Divine Government: God's Kingship in the Gospel of Mark* (1990).

According to the editors of the NIGTC series, these commentaries "are for students who want something less technical than a full-scale critical commentary," yet wish for treatments that "interact with modern scholarship and . . . make their own scholarly contribution to the study of the New Testament." Moreover, in line with the current emphasis on the theology of the biblical

documents, the NIGTC attempts “to provide a theological understanding of the text, based on historical-critical-linguistic exegesis” (x). These are apt descriptions of France’s contribution.

France’s work is arranged in the following manner. The commentary proper is prefaced by a twenty-one page bibliography divided between commentaries, books, and articles. A forty-five page introduction discusses genre, structure, narrative style, theology (christology, discipleship, kingdom of God, secrecy, eschatology, Galilee and Jerusalem), authorship, date, place of composition, and issues pertaining to the synoptic problem.

France’s treatment of individual pericopae commences with a treatment of major text-critical issues, if any, followed by a global interpretation of the passage under consideration. France then treats individual verses, but at the outset he cautions readers that his verse-by-verse comments only supplement the earlier discussion, and thus “may not represent all or even the most important part” of what he has to say “about the significance of that verse in its setting” (2). For a bibliography for each pericope France refers the reader to Pesch, Gnlika, and the WBC contributions by Guelich and Evans.

To the commentary France has appended a four-page summary of the textual evidence for Mark’s ending and a series of helpful indexes (modern authors, Greek words and phrases, biblical and other ancient sources).

One would expect France, as a British evangelical, to be attentive to authorial intent and to offer occasional apologias for the historicity of certain aspects of Mark’s presentation (for example, the parable of the sower as authentically Jesuan, 202-203). In the main, however, France devotes himself to a narrative-critical reading of Mark as a dramatic story. This means, as he himself points out, that his proposals concerning this Gospel’s authorship, date, and literary relationships with Matthew and Luke do not materially affect his interpretation. That France executes his work while eschewing the technical jargon of literary criticism will be welcomed by many a reader and will prolong the shelf life of this commentary. Ministers will appreciate France’s occasional suggestions as to how Mark’s story impinges on contemporary church controversies (for example, Pentecostal theologies of the Holy Spirit, 73).

France is sympathetic with Martin Hengel’s defense of a traditional version of the origin of Mark’s Gospel, although he inclines toward a date *before* Peter’s death, a view supported by several later authorities. At any rate, regardless of the author’s identity, his purpose was “to write about Jesus, drawing on information available to him, and . . . in the process a number of his personal concerns and the circumstances of the church within which he wrote will have guided his writing, without any of them being so dominant as to be . . . *the* purpose” (23). In the process Mark wrote a biographical three-act drama, prefaced by a heading (1:1) and a prologue (1:2-13) which introduces “the *dramatis personae* in a context separate from that of the succeeding narrative” (54).

The three “acts” of the drama are structured by geography: (1) Galilee (1:14–8:21), (2) On the Way to Jerusalem (8:22–10:52), and (3) Jerusalem (11:1–16:8). Unpersuaded by the likes of Lee Magness, France rejects the notion that 16:8 represents the ending of Mark’s Gospel *as the author planned it*. The planned ending would probably have paralleled (or actually did parallel) that which appears in Matthew.

France’s narrative reading of Mark is reminiscent at various points of that proposed by Rhodes and Michie in 1982 (Dewey joined these authors for the revised edition of *Mark as Story*, 1999). (One especially notices this in France’s repeated use of the dichotomy of “human thoughts” vs. “the thoughts of God” (8:33) to elucidate the paradoxical character of Jesus’ messiahship and the kingdom which he announced, as well as the repeated failures of the disciples.) At one point, however, France follows a different path and, in my opinion, an erroneous one. He argues that the “coming” of “the Son of Man” in 8:38 and 13:26 refers not to Jesus’ “second coming,” but to his vindication—experienced by Jesus in his resurrection/exaltation and made known to the disciples in the resurrection appearances, pouring out of the Spirit, and the destruction of Jerusalem. The payoff, of course, is that the temporal delimitations of 9:1 and 13:30 are defused. This move, however, presents a gaggle of problems: one must argue that 13:27 predicts the missionary efforts of the church (but compare Matt 13:37-43; 24:31), that 13:32 suddenly introduces the parousia, and that Mark understood “the coming of the Son of Man” differently than did Matthew and Luke, who used it of the parousia (Matt 13:37-43; 16:27-28; 24:30-44; 25:31; Luke 12:40-48).

On the whole, however, I found France’s reading of Mark to be careful and persuasive. While this work is not intended to be a full-scale critical commentary—thus readers will look in vain for extensive interaction with secondary sources—I predict that it will become one of the more significant resources for Markan study in English. Scholars, along with students and ministers with a working knowledge of Greek, will find numerous reasons for renewing their appreciation for the labors of Dr. France.

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**Robert H. GUNDRY.** *Jesus the Word according to John the Sectarian: A Paleofundamentalist Manifesto for Contemporary Evangelicalism, Especially Its Elites, in North America.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002. 154 pp. \$14.00.

Gundry’s short book with the long title grew out of a presentation to the Institute for Biblical Research meeting in November of 2000. The presentation

had the same title and essentially the same thrust of argument. Gundry's book consists of three chapters, each titled by a part of the title of the book.

The first chapter is "Jesus the Word according to John." Here Gundry presents a careful overview of the Gospel of John paying attention to the theme of "language," or "message." This is the emphasis of "Word" in Gundry's title. Analyzing the Gospel with this as a guiding paradigm leads Gundry to several interesting observations. For example, Gundry notes that the word *ἐντολή* (*entole*, "commandment") never refers to OT commandments in the Gospel of John but only to the teaching of Jesus. One problem occurs near the end of this chapter. When analyzing Thomas's reaction to Jesus' appearance (48), Gundry suggests it is Jesus' Word which causes belief. It is surprising that Gundry, who is careful to note the use of language about language throughout John's Gospel, fails to recognize the significance of the disciples' own future testimony in this passage. It is not only Jesus' Word, but also the disciples' testimony about the Word which brings the possibility of belief for consequent generations and leads to Jesus' pronouncing a blessing on those who would believe without having seen. Overall, Gundry's analysis in this chapter can be summarized by saying that the Word in the Gospel of John refers not only to Jesus himself but also to his message. In the end, both become one. Both are God's revelation of himself, so both the message and the messenger are God's Word. As Gundry concludes "In John, Jesus is what *is* spoken even as he *does* the speaking"(49).

Gundry's second chapter, "The Sectarian," builds upon the current consensus of Johannine scholarship but fails to note the changes that are beginning to be felt in Johannine studies. This, the shortest of the book's three chapters, is also the weakest. It shows reliance upon dated paradigms with little original contribution. It is ironic that some of Gundry's conclusions in chapter one—for example his observations on the use of "we" in the Gospel of John (16)—could have been as well used to show the weakness of the old consensus and the need for a fresh consensus. Essentially Gundry is seeking to show that the author of the Gospel intentionally chooses antilanguage in order to set the community apart from "outsiders."

The third chapter, "A Paleofundamentalist Manifesto for Contemporary Evangelicalism, Especially Its Elites, in North America," is Gundry's strongest and most important. Gundry here does intelligent and on-target cultural analysis of North American Evangelicalism at the turn of the second millennium. He provides correct and sometimes painful critique of many beliefs and practices of contemporary evangelicals—who are his prime target. In brief he calls Christians to become less influenced by the culture in which they live. He calls into question how comfortable we have become with our surroundings. He also criticizes the way that cultural norms have bled into our worship. It is another irony that Gundry's careful, cogent comments are so reliant upon the



questionable conclusions regarding the Johannine community and the author's use of antilanguage.

One further critique of this book's approach should be noted. Gundry calls for making the canon "situational." That is, he suggests that certain parts of Scripture speak most strongly to certain times and places. Gundry's defense of this is to say that, after all, the individual parts of the canon were written at various times to various circumstances. Therefore, he has chosen John's sectarian nature (at least as he perceives it) as carrying an important message for Evangelicals *today* and living in *North America*. Many in the Stone-Campbell Restoration Movement (myself included) who have attempted to take the biblical message as a whole seriously and who see it as eternally relevant in its entirety are going to be extremely uncomfortable with this approach. This is not *only* having a canon within the canon, but rather it is intentionally choosing a part of the canon to emphasize over others on the basis of the current situation, or perhaps more exactly one person's *perception* of the current situation. In my opinion this is opposed to allowing all of God's Word to be God's Word and to speak to his church. The implications of this approach should be carefully considered.

This book is certainly too advanced for the college classroom. Its exegetical weaknesses and experimental method would also make me leery of assigning it in the seminary classroom without careful and thorough explanation. However, all thinking Christians who are concerned about the current state of the church (those "elite" whom Gundry addresses) would do well to pay attention to the third chapter of this book. Though based upon questionable exegesis and theological practice, Gundry provides some thought-provoking analysis on the current direction of the Church. The third chapter can be read on its own and is the most valuable part of this book by far.

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**David WENHAM. *Paul and Jesus: The True Story*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002. 208 pp. \$20.00.**

Many scholars today believe that there are discontinuities between the teachings of Paul and Jesus. They see little evidence in Paul's letters to indicate a strong degree of interest in, or familiarity with, Jesus' earthly ministry. Wenham's primary purpose in this volume is to show this theory to be false by providing evidence that much of what Paul writes is grounded firmly in a knowledge of, and respect for, Jesus' life and teaching.

Wenham does this by looking "behind" Paul's letters to find indications of

what he initially taught the churches he writes. He looks for indicators of any knowledge of Jesus' life and teachings and finds many suggestions that Paul was familiar with much of Jesus' life and teachings, nor did he alter Jesus' teaching as some have asserted. He believes that through careful "detective work" in Paul's letters much of Paul's knowledge of Jesus can be determined with a relatively high degree of certainty.

He offers many convincing examples of Paul's instruction. For example, in Galatians he finds strong evidence that Paul taught them about Jesus' life (Gal 4:4-6), as well as his death and resurrection (Gal 2:20; 3:1). In 1 Thessalonians, Wenham sees Paul's description of Jesus' Second Coming as a "thief in the night" as further evidence that Paul knew Jesus' teachings. While he acknowledges the possibility that Paul could have thought of this on his own, he finds this unlikely for two reasons: (1) Matthew and Luke attribute the teaching to Jesus (Matt 24:42-44; Luke 12:39-40) and; (2) Paul tells the Thessalonians that they know "very well" that Jesus will come like a thief, indicating that this was a well-known tradition.

A secondary, yet still important, concern for Wenham is whether or not the book of Acts presents a historically accurate picture of Paul's life and ministry. Throughout the book he attempts to show how Paul's letters support the information about his life given in Acts. He presents a convincing case for the idea that Acts and Paul's letters can be harmonized, dealing with difficult issues like the relationship between Acts 15 and Galatians 2. One of the book's strong points is that he is also honest about some of the difficulties in harmonizing some of the information in Acts with Paul's own information about his journeys.

Wenham divides the book into three sections. The first section deals with what can be known about Paul's origins and conversion. This is the weakest part of the book, partially because it is primarily a retelling of information from Acts, and partially due to his speculation about how Paul received the theological information he later passed on to the churches. He seems to favor the idea of a "big bang": that Paul immediately received much of his theological knowledge upon his conversion.

The second section makes up the majority of the book. This is a more in-depth look at four of Paul's letters: Galatians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, and 1 Corinthians. Wenham follows the same pattern for each of them. He first gives a historical overview of Paul's activities for the time surrounding the events dealt with in the letter, most of which comes from Acts, and attempts to synthesize the Acts account with any information given in the letter. He then deals briefly with the major themes Paul addresses in the letter, usually only devoting a couple of pages to this discussion.

In his concluding section he devotes several pages to a very brief look at some of Paul's other letters, including Romans and Philippians. His treatment

here may provide a springboard for further study, but offers no evidence for his assertions. He also offers several ideas as to where his research may be of value, including the field of source criticism.

Although this kind of study is by nature speculative to a certain degree, at times Wenham is overly speculative in his detective work. For instance, he theorizes a great deal of tension between the churches in Jerusalem and Antioch over the issue of Gentile Christian observance of Jewish customs. He believes that this tension was so strong that it was the reason Peter appointed James to lead the church in Jerusalem; he views James as a much more strongly conservative Christian than Peter and Paul, and asserts that it was his conservative stance on these issues that led to his appointment as leader. While it is certain that there was some level of disagreement within the church on these issues, the text does not warrant such speculation about such a strong level of disagreement. However, the majority of his work in determining what Paul knew of Jesus is of great value and should certainly lead scholars to take another look at the relationship between Jesus' teachings and Paul.

This volume is written on a popular level, and thus is primarily of value to students and those looking for an introduction to this particular area of Pauline studies. It is in no way comprehensive, and Wenham suggests that those looking for a more complete, scholarly treatment of the topic may be more interested in his previous book, *Paul, Follower of Jesus or Founder of Christianity?* However, it does serve as a strong conservative introduction to the question of Paul's interaction with the life and teachings of Jesus.

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**David W. PAO.** *Acts and the Isaianic New Exodus.* Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000. 311 pp. \$34.99.

What Rikki Watts did for Mark (*Isaiah's New Exodus in Mark*), David Pao now does for Acts. Pao's work, revised from his 1998 Harvard doctoral dissertation, is thorough, informed, judicious, balanced and convincing. Baker Academic is to be commended for making this work, originally published in the renowned but expensive *WUNT* series, available to American readers at a reasonable price.

Influenced by the converging lines of literary and canonical approaches to texts, Pao argues that Isaiah's motif of the New Exodus has played a decisive role in the construction of the Acts narrative. In particular, the development of this motif in Acts identifies the Christian movement as the only true people of God. Acts thus becomes not a Hellenistic romance but a historical monograph addressing the expectations of second-temple Judaism.

These conclusions are made possible by several assumptions that underlie Pao's method. One, per the work of David Instone-Brewer, is that the exegesis of second-temple Judaism was considerably more contextual than has been commonly thought. Hence, "fulfillment" language is likewise more contextual and subtle, less a matter of isolated prooftexting and more the assertion that recent events belong in the framework of the sacred past so that those recent events stand as the climax of God's actions in history. In Acts such assertions belong in the second-temple Jewish social context that understood the exile still to be a reality (per N. T. Wright).

Pao's method primarily involves close reading of Isaiah's New Exodus language, noting allusions to material from Exodus and tracing the appropriation and development of New Exodus motifs in second-temple Jewish literature. In keeping with welcome trends, Pao treats Isaiah as a literary unity, a method that yields the reward of locating New Exodus language scattered throughout Isaiah, not just in chapters 40–55. Pao then turns to Acts, considering not just explicit quotations of Isaiah but allusions and motifs that suggest the Isaianic New Exodus as a controlling concept in the composition of the book.

Pao first examines the significance of Isaiah at the beginning of Jesus' ministry as portrayed in Luke, considering especially the quotation of Isa 40:3-5 in Luke 3:4-6 and the use of the phrase "the Way" in Acts. Establishing this quotation as the "hermeneutical lens" for all of Luke-Acts, Pao turns to later quotations of Isaiah (Luke 4:16-30; 24:44-49; Acts 1:8; 13:46-47; 28:25-28), all of which have been termed "programmatic" for the two volumes. These provide justification for seeking a wider Isaianic program in Acts, developed throughout the book with four motifs: the restoration of Israel, the progress of the Word of God as a powerful force that conquers the world, anti-idol polemic as the assertion of God's sovereignty over the opponents of his people, and the enlightenment of the Gentiles, which Acts takes beyond the Isaianic expectation as Gentiles are incorporated as equals, not as subject people, into the true people of God.

Pao's argument is persuasive for a number of reasons. His work is refreshingly informed by recent exegesis of Isaiah (though the seminal evangelical commentaries by Oswalt and Motyer are surprisingly uncited). Likewise the work is thoroughly informed on all significant points of Lukan research (not surprising for a dissertation supervised by François Bovon, whose survey of scholarship on Lukan theology is definitive). Pao works within the recent stream of Lukan scholarship that sees Luke-Acts as decidedly Jewish in orientation, aimed at confirming Jesus as the messiah of Jewish expectation and the church as the true people of God, heirs of Israel's promises. With its impressively coherent reading of Acts, Pao's study confirms that this trend is right-headed. Most especially Pao works without novelty in method or reductionism in conclusions. Such balanced, reasonable work shows that it is still possible for young scholars to make significant, mature contributions to biblical scholarship.

Beyond its broad confirmation of the Isaianic structure of Acts and its focus on confirming Christian identity, Pao's work draws a number of provocative conclusions on particulars, many of which offer highly cogent explanations of details in the text of Acts. Noting, for example, that Samaria is the only entire region whose conversion is noted in Acts, Pao suggests that its conversion in Acts 8 is an element of Israel's reconstruction as twelve tribes according to the Isaianic New Exodus model. Acts 1:8 is thus less a geographical outline than an ethnotheological program. Similarly the numbering of men converted in Jerusalem evokes the numbering of men for military purposes in Israel, suggesting the victorious progress of the Word against Jewish opposition in Jerusalem.

Thorough as it is, the book shows a few oversights. Discussing the significance of the Ethiopian eunuch for Isaianic themes in Acts, Pao does not note the role of "Cush" as a part of Isaianic expectation (Isa 11:11; 43:3; 45:14). Likewise, Pao is apparently unaware of Richard Bauckham's work on the apostolic conference of Acts 15, much of which would reinforce his own conclusions. These oversights do not weaken the book's argument, but it is noteworthy that Pao's work is reinforced by data and research that he does not mention.

If there is a significant weakness to this study, it is Pao's tendency to read Acts, despite its pervasive Jewish orientation, as reflecting a situation in which Gentiles dominate the church numerically. Whether this is the actual situation in early Christianity or the situation portrayed in Acts is more than debatable. Pao's reading of Acts should not depend on Gentile-majority situation. Rather, all the issues of Gentile inclusion that he notes would still be highly relevant for a Jewish-majority church with a substantial Gentile minority. Nevertheless, Pao is clear that though Jewish rejection of the gospel is connected to the Gentile mission in Acts, that mission would go forward in *any* case as the fulfillment of God's program as announced by Isaiah. When many persist in reading the Gentile mission in Acts as the direct consequence of Jewish rejection, Pao's insistence otherwise is most welcome.

Pao's dissertation ranks among the outstanding works on Acts in the last decade. It is a model of fruitful biblical research and will be profitably read by researchers, teachers and advanced students at the master's level.

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**Gene L. GREEN.** *The Letters to the Thessalonians.* Pillar New Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002. 400 pp. \$42.00.

Pity the commentator on 1–2 Thessalonians whose book appears after Abraham Malherbe's magisterial Anchor Bible commentary. Green suffers this

fate. This latest entry in the Pillar series is thorough and competent in many respects and will be worth consulting for some time. Whether it should supplant other volumes on the shelves is debatable.

The focus of this commentary is clear from its introduction: Twenty percent of its pages are devoted to introductory matters, largely providing a detailed description of the political and social history of Macedonia and Thessalonica. Green deals carefully with the full range of available primary sources for the history of the region from before Philip of Macedon through the Roman period. His conclusions are temperate, though at the same time the thoroughness of his discussion sometimes takes him beyond what is clearly related to the exegesis of these letters.

Green's focus in his introduction on the Macedonian setting of the letters is reflected in the comments as well. He notes carefully the connections between the text of the letters and their social setting in Thessalonica, especially in regard to client-patron relationships. Acknowledging the value of rhetorical criticism for identifying elements of Paul's compositional strategy, Green takes the letters off the Procrustean bed that forces Paul's letters into strict rhetorical forms. Much of the focus of the commentary is on lexical analysis of Paul's text, what is popularly called "Greek word studies," largely comparing Paul's usage to examples from Hellenistic literature. Again, Green's work is very thorough in this respect, and his habit of quoting translations of extrabiblical sources, not just providing references, will make the commentary much more useful for students and ministers who are not inclined to look up references without quotations. The main value of the commentary is probably to be found here. Greek syntax receives less attention, except in cases where specific ambiguities arise. Such discussion remains accessible to readers without Greek, for whom Green's evaluation of the renderings of the NIV will be welcome.

Green's focus on Hellenistic backgrounds means that the commentary gives little attention to Paul's Jewish thought or to the ferment in Pauline scholarship prompted by re-evaluation of Paul's relationship to Judaism. The book makes no reference to the work of E.P. Sanders or N.T. Wright, and little to James Dunn. While work on the "new" Paul has largely focused on the so-called *Hauptbriefe*, consideration of the implicit Jewish worldview of 1–2 Thessalonians would be welcome in light of that work.

Attention to Paul's Jewish worldview could bring focus to another matter that receives little attention in this work, namely, the connection of specific issues in these letters to the larger matters of Paul's gospel or his "theology." How, for example, does Paul's autobiographical discussion in 1 Thessalonians 2–3 reflect the message of Christ crucified? How does the ethics of these letters not just stand in contrast to Hellenistic ethics but genuinely flow from a specific view of God and his purposes? How does the eschatology of these letters relate to Paul's worldview as transformed on the Damascus road and thereafter?

If the Pillar series is genuinely aimed at pastors and Bible teachers, such consideration would do more to help such readers see the relevance of these letters to Christians in other settings than do the rather bland attempts at theological or moral application with which Green often concludes a section of comments.

Popular and scholarly controversy on the Thessalonian correspondence largely centers on the letters' eschatology. Green keeps to a line that characterizes much of current evangelical scholarship: conventionally premillennial but rejecting the notion of a pretribulational rapture. His reading of 1 Thess 4:13-18 highlights Paul's expressed purpose to bring comfort, as his reading of 1 Thess 5:1-11 gives due attention to the idea of alertness in light of a parousia whose time is both imminent and unknown. Like most recent commentators, Green does not connect the problem of the idle in 2 Thess 3:6-15 to eschatological expectation, seeing its roots instead in the customs of patronage. Such conclusions are balanced and welcome.

Green's discussion of the "man of lawlessness" in 2 Thess 2:1-12 is less satisfactory. His consideration of the social setting of the letters remains helpful here, as he offers that the cult of emperor worship provides the prototype for Paul's discussion. But other elements of his exegesis are less convincing. Acknowledging that *katechō* can signify something other than "restrain," Green still takes little account of Wanamaker's observations about the intransitive use of this verb to mean "prevail," taking it instead in the transitive sense of "seize" even though the verb lacks an object in this section. More seriously, he does not note at all Paul's consistent use of the present tense in this section, especially in verse 9, taking for granted that the description is about things that lie entirely in the future. Green must therefore explain the problem that Paul names in 2 Thess 2:2, belief that the day of the Lord has come, as something that still lies in the future, belief that the day of the Lord is imminent. This he does by arguing that the verb ἐνεστήκα (*enestēka*, "have come") signifies an impending event, but his examples all occur in the future tense, not the perfect tense found here. Closer consideration of these linguistic matters combined with a more comprehensive view of Paul's theology and of Jewish apocalyptic thought might yield a more satisfactory reading of this text.

In short, although this commentary is not all for which one might hope, it has many useful features. For understanding of these letters in light of Hellenistic social history, Malherbe is still definitive, but Green will provide a helpful supplement. For consideration of the "new" Paul in these letters, we still wait. For the solution to the riddle of the man of lawlessness, we may have to wait until the end.

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**Grant R. OSBORNE. *Revelation*. Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament. Baker: Grand Rapids, 2002. 799 pp. \$49.99.**

Osborne's commentary follows a typical format. In the introductory chapter (1-49) he covers the topics of authorship, date, social setting and purpose, apocalyptic genre and mind-set, interpretation of symbols, methods of interpretation, text, canonicity, language and grammar, use of the OT, unity and structure, and theology. The commentary argues for John the Apostle as author and a probable date in the mid-90s. Osborne is familiar with the modern interpretive theories of A.Y. and J.J. Collins, L. Thompson, E. Fiorenza and others when he discusses social setting as well as the apocalyptic mind-set of the Apocalypse of John. Although he dialogues with D. Aune's source and redactional theories about Revelation, Osborne settles on the traditional view when he writes, "theories of composition are ultimately unnecessary" (29).

Each section of the text is prefaced with a brief introduction and summary of the unit of verses under discussion. Next, Osborne leads the reader through an exegetical examination of 2-3 verse units. Then each larger exegetical unit ends with a "Summary and Contextualization" section. It is here that the reader is exposed to not only summary material, but also to contemporary devotional, apologetic, and homiletic thoughts.

On the central issue of modern interpretive framework, Osborne is most comfortable with the futurist paradigm (21-22) which states that the bulk of the Apocalypse was written to depict "events that will take place at the end of history and usher in the eschaton" (20-21), with, of course, analogous applications for our own time. Osborne does acknowledge that no one hermeneutic approach, not even the futurist, can explain all of Revelation. Accordingly, he does offer an eclectic approach that relies most heavily upon the futuristic perspective, supplemented by the preterist and idealist hermeneutic. Even though Osborne is critical of "tabloid" futurists who wish to interpret the book of Revelation in light of the most recent news and sensational world events, the deepest flaws of the futurist's hermeneutic still tether his commentary.

The author's futurist assumptions, for example, about a "one-world" government, "one-world" religion, and "one-world" economy of the Endtime pervades his commentary and his applications. Regarding the Red Dragon and Two Beasts of Revelation 12-13 he writes (522),

It is the thesis of this commentary that the passage [Rev. 13:11-18] describes the final 'tribulation period' of history. . . . After the Antichrist is assassinated and comes back to life, the false prophet will erect a statue and bring it to life, thus inaugurating the period when every person will accept the 'mark' or die. It will be a capital crime to refuse to participate in the universal worship of the beast. . . . If anyone could solve the terrorist crisis, the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, and the unrest in Africa and bring peace to our troubled world, people would rush to worship such a person.



Osborne's constant reliance upon the term "Antichrist," a term not found a single time in the Revelation of John, typifies a fundamental problem with the futurist approach he embraces. Futurist scholars must again and again import external and anachronistic materials to assemble their futurist paradigm. Likewise, this approach is often guilty of serious distortion as it skips back and forth between first-century, twenty-first-century, and Endtime settings. For example, Osborne's attempt to correlate what he sees as our contemporary "secularism" with the pagan outlook of the Emperor cult or Graeco-Roman culture seriously misunderstands the latter (388).

Unless one is interested in the futurist interpretation of the Apocalypse, there is no significant redeeming contribution or quality of this commentary that would commend its purchase.

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