Book Reviews

Richard J. CHEROK. *Debating for God: Alexander Campbell's Challenge to Skepticism in Antebellum America*. Abilene, TX: ACU Press, 2008. 224 pp. $34.95.

In the current volume Cherok asserts that Alexander Campbell was the "most significant Christian apologist of America's antebellum period" (11), and he proceeds to explore this neglected aspect of Campbell's career. The book begins with a brief summary of the skeptical strains of the Enlightenment and explains Campbell's own relationship with the rationalism of his era. Cherok does not focus on the legacy of the iconoclastic *Christian Baptist* (1823–1830) because it was not aimed primarily at rationalistic "skepticism." In his brief treatment of those years, however, Cherok ably demonstrates that Campbell was prepared for the skeptical challenge. He describes the fascinating discussion that began in September 1826 as Campbell addressed the letter of an anonymous reader known simply as "D." He then explains the colorful exchanges that led in 1829 to Campbell's famous debate with Robert Owen.

Predictably, an entire chapter is devoted to the Owen debate. By the end of that chapter, however, Cherok's book is only halfway complete. He takes his readers in the following chapters through the *Millennial Harbinger* years that include Campbell's published discussions with Humphrey Marshall, Samuel Underhill, Charles Cassedy, Dolphus Skinner, Jesse Ferguson, and others. This is a remarkable survey drawn from nearly thirty years of the *Harbinger,* and Cherok attempts to explain the context and the substance of the most significant controversies. In each case, the reader is treated to biographical information that cannot be gleaned from the *Harbinger* itself.

This volume demonstrates that Cherok quite appropriately admires Campbell. Some of the discussions in this book, however, seem to beg for greater objectivity. For instance, Cherok is remarkably generous with Campbell's acerbic bravado, while Campbell's opponents are blamed for haughtiness and animosity. Moreover, Campbell's arguments, as ingenious as they were, had some significant shortcomings, and Cherok does not provide the critical assessment that a reader might reasonably expect. Granting Campbell's triumph over the incompetent Robert Owen, it would be instructive to compare him with the genius of Hume, Kant, or Schleiermacher.

Nonetheless, this volume deserves a high recommendation. Aside from being well-written and documented (with substantial appendices), it achieves its intended purpose: it covers a neglected aspect of Campbell's life, and provides a fuller sense of the convictions that drove him onward. Campbell scholarship is well-served by research that moves beyond the anticlerical sensationalism of the *Christian Baptist* and pays closer attention instead to the volumes that Campbell produced subsequently. Cherok has done this: he has grasped the disparate threads

of an untold story, and he has woven them together into a compelling presentation. He has painted a picture where Owen, Marshall, Underhill, and others can be understood rightly, as contestants in Campbell's lifelong quest against various kinds of skeptical currents. In the process he has described controversies that were simmering throughout the antebellum United States, and he has helped his readers to understand the larger picture of American Christian history.

As students and teachers have rediscovered this aspect of his ministry in recent years, Campbell has provided an inspiration for Christian unity, In a similar way, Cherok hopes that Campbell's debates might be inspirational and might lead his heirs "to rise up" in defense of the Christian faith. In the midst of "postmodern" skepticism that Campbell could not have envisioned, it is difficult to know if his apologetics can be as compelling as his ecumenicity; it is surely important, however, for those in the Stone-Campbell Restoration Movement to remember this part of their collective DNA. Students, scholars, and preachers will be well-served to have this book on their shelves.

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Charles SIMPSON. ***Inside the Churches of Christ: The Reflection of a Former Pharisee on What Every Christian Should Know about the Nondenomenation Denomination.*** **Bloomington, IN: AuthorHouse, 2009. 296 pp. $12.25.**

Simpson has worked through a very tragic religious experience that was traumatic for both him and his family, especially his mother who stated that his growing habit of visiting a Baptist church was "'the biggest disappointment' in her life." He described his life in an "ultra conservative" Church of Christ (non-instrumental) as one that was served a spiritual diet of a negativism and suspicion, long on condemnation, short on love, leading eventually to the above maternal reaction. He eventually found spiritual fulfillment in the Southern Baptist church but could barely bring himself to the point of forgiving the Church of Christ (whom he calls CofC) for having deprived him of this fulfillment all of his life and for having led people like his mother into such narrow Phariseeism. The remainder of the book is an acrimonious screed against the mentality of the CofC, which he contends basically states that they are the only true church and all others are going to hell. He carefully documents such conclusions by numerous citations from CofC publications, noting that proportionately the CofC publishes more per member than any other denomination in the U.S. Chapters are dedicated to the key tenets of the church which are: no human creeds (yet they have noncreedal creeds); unity of believers (only if you believe what we teach); one true church (it's ours, not yours); no instrumental music in worship (instruments in worship are the devil's devices); baptism as an essential part of the conversion experience (blasphemy to the evangelical mantra, "faith alone"), etc.

With so many references to CofC publications accurately given, one has to give some credence to what Simpson is contending. Many of the references reflect the judgmental and exclusivist nature that the author senses. On the other hand, what

is often overlooked is that Churches of Christ, though overall quite conservative, nonetheless represent a wide range of attitudes toward their "tenets of faith." As in all conservative groups, some are much more condemnatory on the one hand, and others are much less so. Simpson, perhaps without realizing it, quotes primarily from the most conservative side of the church, thus reinforcing his point, without recognizing that the mainstream majority, though holding to the same tenets, would not be nearly as condemnatory. There was a time when the church tended to be overall more judgmental, but for most, those times have long passed.

Is the CofC guilty of Phariseeism? Yes, to the extent it practices that, as would be true with anyone who practices Phariseeism, which is a tendency of any conservative group. But to have definite views of doctrine in itself does not make one a Pharisee. Simpson's own personal, tragic experience has made him sensitive to a Phariseeism that was true for his life but which he has projected onto a whole church. In the main this is not accurate, though for a part it may always be true.

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Lawrence A.Q. BURNLEY. ***The Cost of Unity: African-American Agency and Education in the Christian Church, 1865–1914.*** **Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2008. 307 pp. $45.00.**

The story of African Americans in the Stone-Campbell Restoration Movement remains an undertold and understudied narrative. Thanks to the diligent labor of Lawrence A.Q. Burnley, an administrator and professor at Messiah College, we now better understand the struggles of African Americans in that religious fellowship to educate themselves after emancipation. Dr. Burnley painstakingly undertakes to convince readers that the educational efforts among Disciples of Christ did not occur in a whites-only vacuum.

In part one (chapters 1–5), Burnley assesses the challenges African Americans faced when seeking literacy before and after the Civil War. Like their northern and southern neighbors, whites in the Disciples of Christ imbibed the racist assumptions about African Americans, namely, that they were childlike and innately inferior. Such fallacious perspectives inspired white Disciples to design schools "to keep black people in a subordinated and controlled socioeconomic and political station in the U.S. Indeed, black and white Disciples education reformers held very different views on the form and function of schooling for Blacks" (54). Burnley further points out that the founding brothers of the Stone-Campbell Movement, primarily Alexander Campbell, were more committed to religious unity than they were to racial unity and social justice. Burnley posits that white Disciples of Christ, like most white Americans, remained self-interested and self-serving.

In part two (chapters 6–9), Burnley contends that black Disciples of Christ refused to sit idle and wait for their white counterparts to determine blacks' educational destiny. He argues that the launching of the Jarvis Christian Institute in Hawkins, Texas, demonstrates that African American Disciples of Christ in the Lone Star State "did not respond to an initiative taken by CWMB and the Jarvis

family to establish JCI. I would argue that the reverse is true. Black Disciples had the desire, vision, and initiative to raise funds" (234).

The significance of Burnley's volume lies in its insistence that African Americans in the Stone-Campbell Movement refused to be passive recipients of white donations and white domination. Instead, they worked as "proactive participants" (178) in molding and shaping their own educational agenda. Burnley carves out examples from the states of Texas, Alabama, and Kentucky.

The background information Burnley provides helps readers to see more clearly the complex worlds of white and black Disciples. Yet the text quotes excessively from secondary sources. For instance, in chapter 3, "Schooling, Race, and the Education of Blacks in the United States Prior to 1865," the author incorporates lengthy block quotes to sustain his arguments. The quotes, while insightful and impressive, are a bit excessive. A similar issue surfaces in the other chapters.

The two-decade period from 1895 to 1915 comprised the Age of Booker T. Washington, and the persona of Washington affected whites in the Stone-Campbell Movement. They praised Samuel Robert Cassius as the "Booker T. Washington of Oklahoma," and white Disciples of Christ in Texas crowned J.N. Ervin, the first president of Jarvis Christian College, as the "Booker T. Washington of Texas." Such coronations teach us much about the racial assumptions and social expectations white believers shared. They desired black preachers and leaders who were "meek" and nonthreatening. Much the same pattern of thought permeated other branches of the Stone-Campbell movement, and perhaps Burnley's thesis would have been stronger had he examined Booker T. Washington's influence more extensively in its broader reach.

More than a history of black and white Disciples of Christ's efforts to furnish educational opportunities for formerly enslaved Africans, this book is an important study for historians of American education as well as students of the African American religious experience. Burnley's well-researched and well-written book compels historians and scholars of the African American religious experience to reevaluate their view of blacks' roles in seeking to control their own educational and spiritual destinies in the Stone-Campbell Movement and beyond.

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Richard S. NEWMAN. *Freedom's Prophet: Bishop Richard Allen, the AME Church, and the Black Founding Fathers.* New York: New York University Press, 2008. 368 pp. $23.00.

When historians and other scholars of the African American experience think of civil rights heroes and heroines, they commonly conjure up images of Martin Delaney, Frederick Douglass, Rosa Parks, James Baldwin, W.E.B. DuBois, and particularly Martin Luther King, Jr. Richard S. Newman, a history professor at Rochester Institute of Technology, convincingly places Richard Allen (1760–1831) at the forefront of agitators and advocates of racial equality and social justice. Newman considers Allen "essentially the forerunner of modern civil rights activists,

for his belief in nonviolent but confrontational reform offered lessons for virtually every black leader who followed in his wake" (4).

Newman's book, far more than a biography of Richard Allen, draws readers compellingly into the complex worlds of antebellum America. The first world consisted of white and black founding brothers. Newman skillfully juxtaposes George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and Ben Franklin with such counterparts as Richard Allen, Paul Cuffee, James Forten, and Absalom Jones. Newman defines black founders as men and women who "fought against racial oppression in some public way, shape, or form during the early republic and thereby set models of public protest for later activists" (16). A salient difference between white and black founding brothers was that the former remained eerily silent on the slavery issue, but the latter, most notably, Allen, refused to keep silent about this pivotal matter.

Allen never remained quiet about the "bitter pill" (28) of slavery because he was part of that miserable world. Born into chattel enslavement in Pennsylvania, he felt firsthand the sting of racist stereotypes, witnessed the stagnation of black ignorance, and experienced the excruciating pain of family separation. Certainly Allen did not denounce slavery with the fiery rhetoric of militant abolitionist David Walker, but he did join him in insisting that white slaveholders would "rot in hell" (124). Allen, while more tactful, spoke just as boldly.

Allen's opposition to black chattel enslavement drew him into the world of literature. Newman masterfully reconstructs Allen's library, demonstrating impressive reading habits. While the Bible remained his "vital text" (116), he immersed himself in both sacred and secular texts. Allen read contemporary black authors such as Prince Hall and white writers such as Benjamin Franklin and George Washington. Indeed, Allen patterned his autobiography, *The Life, Experience, and Gospel Labours*, after Franklin's classic work. Newman notes that "From this assemblage of literary models—Exodus and Josephus, Franklin and Washington, Hall and Marrant—Allen learned how to fold edgy commentary into enlightened discourse" (120).

The worlds of wars and diseases collided with the life and ministry of Richard Allen. The Revolutionary War, the watershed event of early America, prompted the issuance of several abolition measures in northern states. Allen's birth state, Pennsylvania, passed the first incremental abolition act in 1780. A decade later, a yellow fever epidemic and the War of 1812 compelled Allen and other black preachers to step beyond the pulpit to address the physical and material needs of white and black Philadelphians. In Allen's complex worlds, the Methodist minister functioned as author, abolitionist, social activist, church builder, husband, preacher, and community organizer.

Newman's current volume emerges as an indispensable read for church historians and scholars of the African American religious experience. While thoroughly researched, persuasively argued, and penetratingly written, Newman's book does suffer from the occasional redundancy. For instance, a quote, "my dungeon shook," in chapter 1 (40) resurfaced in chapter 10 (286). But such minor mishaps fail to diminish the significance of this path-breaking work of brilliant and thought-

provoking analysis. This volume will doubtlessly stand as the definitive work on Richard Allen for many years to come.

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Herman J. SELDERHUIS. *John Calvin: A Pilgrim's Life*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2009. 304 pp. $25.00.

Selderhuis presents to readers a personal, even heartfelt, image of the great reformer John Calvin. Selderhuis, professor of church history and director of the Institute for Reformation Research at the Theological University Apeldoorn (Netherlands), claims to approach Calvin as "neither friend nor enemy" and states, "I feel nothing for Calvin either way" (8). This volume reflects the truth of this claim, and readers will most certainly be drawn to the story of Calvin offered in this volume.

In ten solid chapters, Selderhuis accomplishes his goal of revealing the interesting person hidden behind the perceptions of Calvin as a "somber academic" (8). Each individual chapter focuses on a period of Calvin's life, moving chronologically and, like most biographies, begins with his birth and ends with his death. Each chapter carries with it a theme.

Chapter One, "Orphan 1509–1533," begins to explain Calvin's devotion to God as his Father and to the church as his mother. Here, Calvin's respect for certain father figures, particularly Farel and Bucer, becomes clear. Chapter Two, "Pilgrim 1533–1536," tells of Calvin's flight from France to Geneva. The image of a pilgrimage, however, is fitting for Calvin's entire life. As a pilgrim both in the worldly and spiritual sense, Calvin understood that he would find no permanent home and no rest until he reached his final heavenly home. Chapter Three, "Stranger 1536–1538," describes Calvin's initial years in Geneva. Selderhuis helpfully examines the city of Geneva itself, both before and after Calvin's arrival, showing that Calvin did not rule Geneva as a tyrant. In fact, Calvin did not possess much authority at all in those initial years. Chapter Four, "Refugee 1538–1541," informs readers of Calvin's activities during his time away from Geneva and his growing relationships with Bucer and Melanchthon. It is during these years that the author sees the real birth of Calvin as a "theologian and church leader" (86). Chapter Five, "Preacher 1541–1546," illustrates Calvin's work as a church leader upon his return to Geneva. Selderhuis emphasizes that for Calvin knowledge was not merely intellectual but was also existential (133). For this reason, Calvin "felt there was no room in the church for cold pastors" (134). Chapter Six, "Victim 1546–1549," points out the rising tension between Calvin and Geneva. Calvin and Geneva were "not exactly on the same wavelength" (145). Problems regarding the church's authority over against the authority of political officials plagued Calvin's work in the city, especially in regards to church discipline. Chapter Seven, "Widower 1549–1551," addresses Calvin's marriage to Idelett van Buren and his views on courtship, marriage, and divorce in general. Here, readers will find it difficult to maintain the customary, stoic image of Calvin as they read of his loving devotion

for his wife and his grief over the death of their infant son. Selderhuis's comments on Calvin's opinions on courtship exemplify the author's often lighthearted and humorous interaction with Calvin, suggesting that "there was little for couples to do except read the *Institutes* together" (181). Chapter Eight, "Patient 1551–1554," presents Calvin in light of his many physical and mental pains. Calvin was a sickly person his entire life, but, as the author points out, his illnesses were undoubtedly irritated by his many personal conflicts with others. They were, perhaps, also the cause of some of those conflicts, leaving Calvin with "less resistance and patience" and a "tendency to overreact" (196). This chapter also describes a shift in political power within Geneva, a shift which was certainly in Calvin's favor. Chapter Nine, "Sailor 1555–1559," focuses on Calvin's strong work ethic and leisure activities, which included sailing. A portion of the chapter is devoted to Max Weber's thesis that connects Calvinism and capitalism. Chapter Ten, "Soldier 1559–1564," depicts the last years of Calvin's life, which Calvin himself often spoke of as military duty. This final chapter highlights Calvin's view of the Christian life as military service, explaining his final role as a "field commander" sending his trained troops out into the world. Here, the author also describes Calvin's view of political resistance and rebellion.

Selderhuis accepts Calvin's claim that "we learn most about people from their letters" (8). Thus, his main sources are Calvin's numerous letters. Though he claims there is a "clear distinction between the Calvin of letters and the Calvin of personal conversation," Selderhuis believes "that the real Calvin is to be found in his correspondence" (165). Individual readers must decide whether or not to accept the claim shared by Calvin and Selderhuis.

The strength of this work comes in its simplicity and thematic organization. Certainly, each chapter theme could, in some sense, be the organizing theme of Calvin's entire life. But these themes are general motifs for the various stages of Calvin's life, helping readers identify with the interesting person of John Calvin. Each chapter contains numerous subheadings, which allow readers to view Calvin's life in scenes, much like watching a documentary film.

This text would serve well as an introduction to the person of John Calvin. It may also provide an alternative image of the great reformer for those already familiar with his life and work. While Selderhuis does identify a few of them, he does not expatiate much on the theological aspects of Calvinism, or more properly, Reformed Christianity. Thus, readers looking for a primer on the theology of Calvin or Calvinism will not find it here. Selderhuis refrains from using in-text citations including footnotes and endnotes. Sources are cited at the end of the book by page number. This allows for a more fluid reading, though it may frustrate readers interested in noting sources with a quick glance.

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Brian STANLEY. *The World Missionary Conference, Edinburgh 1910*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009. 352 pp. $45.00.

Stanley's volume is the 17th title in Eerdman's *Studies in the History of Christian*

Missions series, in which he also serves as one of the general editors. It represents the best of historical research, with special attention given to primary sources, including correspondence between the original planners of the World Missionary Conference. Stanley's analysis puts a new slant on the Conference, questioning the oft-repeated declaration that Edinburgh served as the starting point for 20th-century ecumenism. In truth, it was neither the beginning of the ecumenical movement, nor was it entirely ecumenical.

His first chapter places the conference in the context of early 20th-century expectations: this was to be a conference that would launch a new wave of missionaries bolstered by the church's adoption of the new methodologies of the social sciences. The groundwork of the Conference took place in eight preparatory commissions that prepared reports on the following subjects: (1) Carrying the Gospel to All the World; (2) The Native Church and Its Workers; (3) Education in Relation to the Christianization of National Life; (4) The Missionary Message in Relation to Non-Christian Religions; (5) The Preparation of Missionaries; (6) The Home Base of Missions; (7) Relation of Missions to Governments; (8) Cooperation and the Promotion of Unity.

Stanley goes on in chapter 2 to describe the political maneuverings that led to the makeup of the commissions, especially with regard to the mix between British and American members as well as the delicate care that was taken to include the Anglo-Catholic wing of the Church of England. Much of the success of the Conference was due to the careful diplomacy of Joseph Oldham, the young secretary of the Conference.

In chapter 3 the issue becomes: what is the world? Where does Christendom end and the world begin? Are nations with an established Catholic presence, such as those in South America, part of the mission field or the church? In the end, and more for political than strategic considerations, the planners of the Conference divided the earth between the workers and the fields, glossing over the complexities that most of the participants would have recognized.

Chapter 4 looks at the Conference in session, including logistical concerns, the program, and the conduct of the meetings as chaired by John Mott.

Chapter 5 gives consideration to the small minority of representatives from "younger churches," most of whom came from Asia. In spite of their paucity, their contributions served to challenge and even disrupt the almost unified sense of paternalism on the part of the "sending nation" delegates.

Chapters 6–10 go back to preparatory commissions 2, 3, 4, 7, and 8, with special attention given to the personalities within each commission. In each chapter Stanley examines not only the results contained in a commission's final report but what parts of the discussions never found their way into the report. While Stanley does analyze some of the results of Commission 1 in chapter 3 with a brief nod to what might be considered the home base of missions (Commission 6), it was disappointing that there was no treatment of Commission 5.

Finally, Stanley dedicates a chapter to a backward look at the Edinburgh Conference, from the missiological perspective of the early 21st century.

Stanley does an excellent job of relating history in context. He gives the Conference its due while acknowledging its shortcomings, particularly with regard

to the attitudes expressed toward the animistic peoples of the world. Edinburgh did represent a significant step in cooperation between certain Christian groups, but it also represented a type of naïve triumphalism and Darwinian assumptions about Western cultural superiority. In the end, the most significant decision made at the Conference was to form a continuation committee.

This volume deserves a place in any theological library. Students would do well to take special note of Stanley's extensive bibliography that covers far more than the Conference itself.

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Paul L. MAIER, ed. *Eusebius: The Church History, A New Translation with Commentary.* Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1999. 412 pp. $26.99. Repr., 2007. 368 pp. $15.99.

Eusebius's *Church History* is one of the most important works of ancient Christian literature extant today. Written in the early fourth century by a bishop known to the first Christian emperor, it traces the rise of the church from Christ to Constantine. The last three books of the *Church History* cover the period witnessed by Eusebius himself, from the great persecution of Diocletian to the peace between the church and the empire in the time of Constantine. In the first seven books Eusebius draws on a multitude of sources, often quoting them extensively. Many of these quotations preserve all, or nearly all, that is known to us of the writings of second century Christians such as Hegesippus, Papias, Gaius, Polycrates, Rhodo, Apolinarius, and Apollonius.

Maier published a new translation of this important work in 1999. The book is finely produced on glossy paper and contains numerous photos of ancient sites, the busts of emperors, and maps. Technically, the work is nearly flawless. The only error I noticed was on page 218 (Eusebius 6.14), where "Bishop Dionysius" appears when it should be "Bishop Demetrius."

The book consists of a short introduction, a translation of the ten books of the *Church History*, each followed by a very brief commentary, two short appendices, a bibliography primarily of books about Eusebius, and four indices. It should be noted that the commentary is not commentary in the ordinary sense but is a 2-3 page discussion of what Maier considers the central theme of the book in question followed by a very brief presentation of what he calls the "concurrent Roman imperial history" (20). Oddly, the two-volume translation and commentary by H.J. Lawlor and J.E.L. Oulton published by SPCK in 1927 and 1928, the most extensive commentary on the *Church History* in English, or in any other modern language to my knowledge, is never mentioned by Maier.

Maier provides three justifications for his new translation of the *Church History*. First, he wants to make the text more readable for modern readers. This is clearly his major objective. To achieve this, he asserts that he has (1) broken up Eusebius's long sentences into more understandable segments, and (2) eliminated useless verbiage (18). The former is certainly necessary if Eusebius is to be read with under-

standing by most modern readers. The latter may also be justified, but runs the risk of occasionally skewing what Eusebius said. I cite the example that Maier himself gives to show his methodology. In book six Eusebius says, in the translation of Oulton printed in the 1932 Loeb Classical Library volume quoted by Maier, "Now while Origen was plying his accustomed tasks at Caesarea, many came to him, not only of the natives, but also numbers of foreign pupils who had left their own countries." Maier then gives his abbreviated version as follows: "While Origen was teaching at Caesarea, many students, both local and from many foreign countries, studied under him" (19). There are two issues here. First, why did he not compare his translation with the more recent one by G.A. Williamson (1965), revised by A. Louth in 1989 in the Penguin Classics series, which he refers to as "the best recent translation" (18)? Their translation, which does not abbreviate Eusebius's text, is quite understandable and much more accurate: "While Origen was performing his normal tasks at Caesarea, his services were in constant demand not only by the local people but also by innumerable foreign students who had left their own countries" (Williamson, Louth, 204). Maier's version gives the impression that Origen's work at Caesarea was that of a teacher and that local and foreign students were attending his school in great numbers. What Eusebius says, however, is that while Origen was going about *his normal tasks* at Caesarea—which included preaching daily in the liturgical cycle of the church and writing books for publication with the aid of the stenographers and calligraphers provided for him by his friend Ambrose—numerous foreign students began showing up requesting to study with him. This may seem a slight variation, but it illustrates the pitfalls that lurk when parts of an author's statements are telescoped to make the text more succinct. Maier's concern to make Eusebius's text more understandable to a modern reader is certainly valid. My question is whether he actually does this better than Williamson and Louth do in their only slightly earlier translation. I have no criticism of Maier's second and third reasons given for providing a new translation: to eliminate some errors occurring in earlier translations, and to provide pictorial illustrations for Eusebius's text.

My problem with this translation is the niche it might fill. It seems to be intended for students and first-time readers of Eusebius, and if there is a niche for it, this would have to be it. I would like to have seen it justified, however, in comparison with the excellent modern translation of Williamson and Louth, and not the older versions of Eusebius such as that in the Loeb Classical Library or that of McGiffert (1890) in the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers series.

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S.J. McGRATH. *Heidegger: A (Very) Critical Introduction.* Conor Cunningham and Peter Chandler, eds. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008. 144 pp. $16.00.

McGrath's (very) critical approach attempts to display how Heidegger is unable to maintain a consistent distinction between the ontological and the ontic. McGrath hopes, in his reading of Heidegger, to demonstrate this inconsistency and

thus regain confidence for certain theological claims which he perceives to have been lost in Heidegger's philosophical wake. If McGrath could ground such a critique in *Being and Time* then he would successfully undo Heidegger's major contribution to the philosophical community.

McGrath believes he is able to sidestep Heidegger's highly privileged phenomenology by exposing the way Heidegger supposedly "proceeds in principle, without religious and ethical presupposition" (85). To uncover these tacit presuppositions, McGrath identifies terms in Heidegger's vocabulary (fallenness, guilt, conscience, temptation, etc.) that come from Luther's Eckhart's, and Dun Scotus's theology. In drawing connections from theological sources, McGrath wants to expose the religious ghosts that allegedly haunt Heidegger's corpus.

McGrath is threatened by the backhanded way Heidegger purportedly deals with theology by undercutting its ability to claim "an ontology of creation" or "a natural consciousness of God" (104). For McGrath, this means that theologians must give up the doctrine of *imago Dei* as humanity being-towards-God. Not only does Heidegger's phenomenology do away with transcendence for McGrath, but it also unnecessarily puts philosophy and faith in direct conflict. In such a conflict, McGrath says that the situation is best described as "unbelief setting the agenda for theology" (115).

In the postscript of the book, 'Why I Am Not a Heideggarian,' McGrath pays lip service to the influence of Heidegger in his own journey and parts ways with him claiming that Heidegger does not allow for an inalienable dignity of persons in which "resides a mystery that images the divine" (127). For McGrath, this characterizes "Heidegger's antihumanism, which impelled him to reject *a priori* any notion of human dignity, [and] made him a ready ally for fascism" (128). This may be, in McGrath's reading, a reason for not being, what he labels, a 'Heideggarian.' But I must say that this condemnation in the postscript should not be confused with what Heidegger actually claimed. What is missing in this brief 'commentary' of sorts is an engagement with *Being and Time*, which would sufficiently encourage the reader to *read* Heidegger on his own terms. In focusing on themes in Heidegger without citing where he sees these themes arising in the text, McGrath's intervention into philosophical discourse goes awry. To be more charitable, perhaps McGrath assumes that the reader is already well versed in *Being and Time*. But if this is the case, then why publish the work with Eerdmans and not a major philosophical publishing house?

For the philosophically inclined pastor or theology student, McGrath's reading of Heidegger is more confusing than helpful. Instead, consult some other introductions to Heidegger that indeed are more helpful: Mark Wrathall's *How to Read Heidegger*, Michael Inwood's *Heidegger: A Very Short Introduction*, David Cerbone's *Heidegger: A Guide for the Perplexed*, and Stephen Mulhall's *Heidegger and Being and Time*.

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James R. PETERS. *The Logic of the Heart: Augustine, Pascal, and the Rationality of Faith*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2009. 304 pp. $32.99.

The current volume is a significant work in analytic philosophy that carries broad sympathies with Alvin Plantinga's proper basicality of belief in God. Peters offers a closely reasoned work of philosophy of religion and religious epistemology. His purpose is to defend the Socratic and Augustinian way, as he explains them, of understanding the nature of reason and the relation of reason and faith. Pursuing this goal, Peters gives a thorough analysis and critique of David Hume's religious epistemology before turning to Blaise Pascal as a modern expositor of the Augustinian way. Peters's work then ends with a substantial engagement, on Augustinian grounds, with several postmodern philosophers.

This volume has as a central concern exactly what reason is, and what it therefore means for a person to be reasonable. Peters promotes a "Socratic" understanding in which the role of reason is to help us know ourselves, assisting us to make sense of our lives. Socratic philosophy denies human possession of final certainty concerning the meaning of life yet calls for a thorough questioning—testing—of all our central beliefs. The purpose of this philosophy is to help us live excellent lives by (re)discovering who and what we really believe and are. Socratic reason is thus an "embedded" reason that functions within the context of a life.

Within the Christian tradition, Peters finds the Socratic ideal especially fulfilled by Augustine. Augustine expounds a passionate reason that is, and ought to be, directed by our fundamental nature as lovers. A person is functioning most reasonably when living out a life of love. The desire that motivates and shapes our process of intellection is not a stranger to reason; rather, desire provides the necessary context for right reasoning and the ability to follow what our reason discovers. Augustinian "believing in order to understand," therefore, is recognition that without being placed in a position of humility and love our reason will achieve no good end.

Peters has three targets in this work: the Enlightenment view of rationality represented by Descartes and Locke, David Hume's skeptical and psychopathological critiques of religion, and "radical postmodernism" (to be defined below). Creatively, Peters's first engagement with Hume is to analyze the way Hume savages the overrational theism of Locke. According to Locke, religious (or any other) belief is only admissible if justified rationally, and the nature of rationality is to produce deductive proofs from certain foundations. Peters claims fairly that an Augustinian theist owes Hume a debt of gratitude for dismantling Locke's claims. Peters goes on to show—with great thoroughness—that Hume's criticisms of religion are not well founded if applied to Augustinian theism, a theism that, like Hume, insists on a logic of the heart.

Turning to Pascal, Peters finds a philosopher/theologian in the Augustinian tradition with whom to oppose the Enlightenment's reductionist and antireligious program. Examining especially Pascal's *Penseés*, Peters cogently explains the way Pascal argues for a Christianity that is not irrational but is beyond reason, a faith in God that is known through the heart. Thus, Pascal presents many arguments for faith but expects none of them to work well if the reader is not equipped with a receptive attitude of humility and love.

In the volume's final chapter, Peters examines the claims of "radical postmodernism," analyzing such seminal figures as Deleuze, Derrida, Foucault, Lyotard, Rorty, and de Man. Peters's purpose is to argue that an Augustinian logic of the heart, exemplified by Pascal, can address and ameliorate many of the claims and concerns put forth by these authors. Perhaps the greatest difficulty here is that all of these thinkers (with Bishop Berkeley and Gordon Kauffman thrown in) are quite different one from another. As David Tracy remarks, we need really to speak of different postmodernisms. Peters strives to address each of their main concerns, but understandably strains to provide the kind of thorough contextualizing he gives to Pascal and Hume.

The best way I can commend this book is that in the process of reading it I repeatedly thought to give it to colleagues of mine I thought would find it helpful. Especially in his examination of Pascal and Hume, Peters does yeoman's work. I would recommend it for a graduate-level class in apologetics or philosophy of religion.

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Bruce A. WARE, Paul HELM, Roger E. OLSON, and John SANDERS. *Perspectives on the Doctrine of God: 4 Views*. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2008. 273 pp. $24.99.

There is no shortage of these multiple view books, a fact with which I am quite pleased. There is a real advantage in being able to get the perspective from an advocate. While the current volume has four authors it basically has only two views: determinist and free will; or if you prefer, Calvinist and Arminian. On team Determinism we have Paul Helm of Regent College Vancouver who gives the Classical Calvinist view and Bruce Ware of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary who gives a modified Calvinist view. On team Free Will we have Roger Olson of Baylor University giving the Classical Free Will view and John Sanders of Hendrix College who gives an Openness view.

All four authors explain their respective views rather well but the standouts are clearly Bruce Ware and John Sanders. The weakest chapter, however, was the opener. Paul Helm simply spends too much time explaining and critiquing the other three views and does not use his space to develop his own approach. Helm begins by claiming that there is no such thing as the "Classical Calvinist Doctrine of God" for it is "the mainstream Christian doctrine of God" (5) and that "the 'perspectives' on the doctrine of God offered by the other three contributors . . . must be regarded as deviating from the main spine of Christian theism" (6-7). Helm enlists what he calls the "A Team," Augustine, Anselm, and Aquinas as well as Calvin to support his view of total and meticulous divine determinism. For Helm determinism is *the* doctrine of God, it is the light by which all other teachings are illuminated. While Helm does a reasonable job of reviewing "the A team" and Calvin, his treatment of scripture is limited to predestination. Certainly Helm must think that there is more to the Calvinist doctrine of God than effectual predestination.

Bruce Ware begins his Modified Calvinist approach by explaining that he is thoroughly in the Reformed tradition and affirms its commitment to the sovereignty of God, but he also affirms that some "contemporary rethinking" has helped the doctrine. Some of Ware's modifications suggest that God is "in time," "mutable," and that "the God of the Bible actively seeks intimate relationship with those he has made" (83), implying that God is seeking the whole world and not simply the elect. He also approvingly quotes Jürgen Moltmann who speaks of God's "humiliation," "self-surrender," and "helplessness" (83).

When Ware turns to the biblical evidence for his position, the focus shifts to providential governance. His goal is to establish both "the genuineness of human choosing" and divine "ultimate and exacting control over just what happens" (93). Ware is basically arguing for compatibilism, the philosophical teaching that free human choice and determinism are compatible. Ware turns to "middle knowledge" to explain how humans can freely choose but God have the ultimate control over those choices.

In regard to the Calvinist doctrine that God decrees evil, Ware tries to distance God from being the author of evil while simultaneously affirming God's absolute sovereignty. He does this by arguing that God does not cause evil but permits it. God's will is "permissive," not "causative." But this does not mean God does not use evil as God so wills. Ware states, "God's relation to evil is indirect . . . yet controlled altogether by his wisdom, authority, and power" (117). He also affirms that, "in the Reformed model, God's permission of evil is meticulous, specific, and particular. He does not permit evil in general, but he does permit each and every instance of evil that occurs in human history" (109).

Roger Olson's Classical Free Will model includes Arminians, but he would like to speak of a larger tradition that also includes Wesleyans, Pentecostalism, and "the entire Restoration Movement" (164) as well as "the ancient Greek church fathers, most of the medieval Christian philosophers and theologians" (149). Olson's focus is on explaining the distinctions between the Classical Free Will model and the Calvinist approaches. Olson clearly sees libertarian freedom as the key distinction between the two models. God is totally sovereign but limits himself so humans can freely respond to God's offerings of love. Libertarian free will is born out of God's own freedom, for God is free to enter into relationship with humanity and humanity free to respond. Regarding Calvinist notions of determinism and salvation Olson shows his claws saying, "Satan, so it is usually believed, wants everyone in hell. The all-determining God of divine determinism wants some people to go to hell. Therein lies the difference. But is it sufficient to rescue God from looking like Satan?" (162).

The only disappointment in Olson's chapter is that he spends almost no time at all dealing with the differences between Classical Free Will Theism and Openness. Olson devotes only one paragraph to explaining God's absolute foreknowledge and one paragraph defending it against determinism and openness. This author is curious to know how devoted to Classical Free Will theism Olson actually is, especially in light of the fact that, in a footnote, Olson reveals his influences for his chapter to include David Basinger, William Hasker, Vincent Brümmer, Adio König, and Richard Swinburn, all of whom affirm limited foreknowledge.

John Sanders, who has become the leading voice for Open Theism, finishes the book. Sanders argues that the Openness model is not a separate doctrine from the Free Will or Arminian approach but is an "internal dialogue among free will theists about the best way to affirm the core beliefs and values in the family heritage" (201). He notes that the two main differences concern God's relation to time and whether God has exhaustive definite foreknowledge. While Arminians have traditionally affirmed God as "outside of time" and thus able to fully know all future free choices, Sanders believes divine timelessness and exhaustive foreknowledge are incompatible with genuine free will.

A future open to genuine choice allows for authentic relationship between God and humanity, according to Sanders. God does not determine the world's future but "calls believers to be collaborators with God in redeeming the world" (209). Herein lies the relationship: God and humanity working together. Sanders argues that an open perspective aids the Arminian approach in better understanding prayer, salvation, divine guidance, and suffering and evil. The real strength of Sanders offering, however, is his modesty. In presenting the biblical arguments he begins by stating, "other well-informed Christians interpret these texts differently. The reading I give these texts is not the only possible one" (214). And in his response to Olson, Sanders wrote, "I am not adverse to giving up my belief in dynamic omniscience. If classical free will theists can figure out how to answer the questions open theists have raised . . . then I am more than ready to affirm it" (188).

A highlight of the book is the response section after each chapter in which the other three critique the author's perspective. While they are typically friendly they can get a bit fiery at times. It is in these responses though that we come the closest to real dialogue. I think it would have been helpful, however, for each author to respond to the criticisms.

The books strengths are also its weaknesses. This book is limited to evangelical views. It would have been helpful to see how a process or feminist perspective or a nonwestern, evangelical offering would have added to the conversation. Also the topic is simply too immense. While other multiple view books narrow their focus, this book takes on the monumental task of the doctrine of God. While the four chapters are useful in that they each give a good snapshot of each perspective, the authors cover ground that has been discussed in greater depth in other books.

I would certainly recommend this book for undergraduate classes, pastors, and laity. The chapters are clearly written and the philosophical and theological jargon is kept to a minimum. The book would be especially helpful in Stone-Campbell churches and schools. At times members of the Stone-Campbell movement have given a caricature or one-dimensional picture of Calvinism. Or they have positioned the movement as being anti-Calvinist. But as demonstrated in this book Calvinism is not one-dimensional. There are nuances and modifications we need to be ready to hear. And for positioning ourselves as anti-Calvin—the movement, to quote

Campbell, "is no more anticalvinian than antiarminian" (*Millennial Harbinger*, 1835, 597).

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Robert B. STEWART, ed. *The Future of Atheism: Alister McGrath & Daniel Dennett in Dialogue*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2008. 212 pp. $19.00.

This is the book version of a "Point-Counterpoint Forum" held at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary highlighting Alister McGrath and Daniel Dennett. McGrath's *Twilight of Atheism*, *Dawkins' God*, and *The Dawkins Delusion* signify his passion to address the claims of atheists, whether old or new. His dialogic partner is Daniel Dennett, an eminent atheistic philosopher who published *Darwin's Dangerous Idea* and *Breaking the Spell: Religion as a Natural Phenomenon*. Of the "four horsemen" of the new atheists, Dennett is by far the most philosophically astute, and his tone typically differs from the caustic, rhetorical rampages of Richard Dawkins, Sam Harris, or Christopher Hitchens.

The work touts a misleading title; it is not 200 pages of McGrath and Dennett. Only one chapter offers unmediated access to their expressed positions (c. 9 pages each), their specific interaction (c. 9 pages), and their responses to audience questions (c. 6 pages). While the other seven chapters address related issues, these two stars rarely make an appearance in the show. Aside from Stewart's substantive and perceptive Preface and the Dialogue chapter, three chapters do not mention Dennett at all (Fales, McCann, Moreland), and five chapters make no specific reference to McGrath (Craig, Fales, McCann, Moreland, Copan). As a result, the book suffers from a lack of focused coherence.

Dennett is both disturbing and dazzling. He prompts us to "pretend we're Martians" trying to make sense of the phenomena of global religion. His statistical jabs are intended to humble Christian optimism—like how the homicide rate is "much higher" in the U.S. than in "godless Europe" (20) or his claim that, with current trends, "only 4 percent of teenagers will be Bible believing Christians as adults." (He fails to note, however, that his cited source, Goodstein's *New York Times* article, includes Christian Smith's response that this "4 percent problem" is "inconsistent" with his research in *Soul Searching*.) Dennett says he does not "hate religion" and he is "not an enemy" of religion; he is "a student" of religion (22). He wants to tame "the wild memes of religion" (18).

McGrath responds to Dennett's (and Dawkins's) use of *memes*—ideas (including religious ones) that replicate like genes, and potentially like a virus. He contends that the notion of *memes* is both unscientific and superfluous. As a result, a memetic atheistic approach discards religion on the basis of a hypothetical, unobserved entity, which is precisely a "core atheist critique of God"—that God is an easily dispensed unobserved hypothesis (30-31)!

Keith Parsons ("Atheism: Twilight or Dawn") qualifies, refines, and restricts Dawkins's accusations against religion to show that McGrath's critique of Dawkins

cannot adequately address the "deep problems" (57). He claims that the rising sun is shining on atheism.

Evan Fales ("Despair, Optimism, and Rebellion") grants as sensible the theistic rationale that God and an afterlife are necessary for the (ultimate) meaningfulness of life. However, he claims that life can also be meaningful for those who reject these ideas. He discusses and insightfully criticizes the atheist options of despair (Nihilism) and optimism (Secular Humanism). While admitting their "tug," he concludes that *if* the God of the Bible exists, then "rebellion" is "legitimate and justified." If God is hidden, it is because "God has too much to hide" (112).

Hugh McCann ("Getting Scientific about Religion") rightly explains that religion is not just an object of scientific study but a "source of knowledge claims" (114). The classic God-arguments employ the "method of hypothesis" (116), and science and religion can even find "considerable common ground on the subject of miracles" (121).

Ted Peters ("The God Hypothesis in the Future of Atheism") agrees with McCann that both science and theology share "a hypothetical structure." But theologians stress God's transcendence and character, allowing eschatological confirmation, not natural-world confirmation (164). Peters proposes a kind of God-hypothesis [GH] that both natural and special revelation leave as "ambiguous" because we can still choose to believe or disbelieve (173-176). For Peters, the GH can be confirmed only by "existential or practical decision" (178) or by "God's eschatological consummation" (181). I maintain that Peters's process-oriented theology constructs a severely watered-down GH that establishes few, if any, genuine *similarities* with scientific hypothesizing, especially the kind that posits theoretical entities (quarks) and one-time events (the origin of the cosmos and of life).

SCJ readers may be more familiar with the evangelicals represented. William Lane Craig ("In Defense of Theistic Arguments") provides one of his most cogent essays (of many) on this topic. Paul Copan ("God, Naturalism, and the Foundation of Morality") argues for the inescapability of objective moral values and the inability of naturalistic ethics to explain our moral sensibilities. J.P. Moreland ("The Twilight of Scientific Atheism: Responding to Thomas Nagel's Last Stand") identifies a "pattern" in successive naturalistic attempts in various disciplines, first to dismiss, and then to reinstate, inexplicable entities or normative properties (e.g. consciousness, moral prescriptions, Platonic universals). Moreland claims that this exposes the implausibility of the earlier reductionistic strategies and suggests that naturalism is "taking on water" (130). Specifically, he examines Nagel's trump-card "dismissive strategy" that rejects theism's answer to how humans "should have access to universally valid methods of objective thought" (131) because it goes "beyond reason" to justify reason (132). (It is self-refuting, somewhat like relativism, which *uses* reason to refute reason.) Nagel's "last stand" is that reason "just is"; it is "self-justifying" (132). Moreland's complex contention is that, because Nagel's dismissal strategy is itself dismissible, Nagel actually "provides grounds that strengthen the force of the theistic alternative" (137), as does the readmission by naturalists of various inexplicable, recalcitrant entities in other areas.

While the book is not organizationally coherent enough for a stand-alone textbook, it provides an insightful and balanced background on prominent issues that

divide atheists and religious believers. It would be a valuable resource for the interested reader or a useful supplemental textbook in apologetics or philosophy.

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James W. SIRE and Carl PERAINO. *Deepest Differences: A Christian-Atheist Dialogue*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2009. 203 pp. $15.00.

With the popularity of Dawkins and Hitchens, Christian publishers have tried to get books out on the market that might offer a rebuttal to the perceived attacks. In what has become a hostile environment of ideas, this book by IVP is a refreshing way to display how atheists and Christians can have an open and honest dialogue.

Apologist James W. Sire and retired biochemist Carl Peraino exchange over eighty emails in hopes of persuading the other into adopting their own way of thinking about the universe. This book traces their email correspondence about topics of religion, science, morality, and mind-body dualism.

What is favorable about this book is the way in which both parties are able to maintain an amiable friendship while asserting discordant opinions about reality. When Peraino admittedly falls short of this standard, he is quick to apologize, and it is Peraino who does a superior job of trying to understand the other side of the debate.

What is the most frustrating about this book is Sire himself, who does not miss a chance to recommend his own books when an impasse in the dialogue arises. While Sire may do a fine job keeping the tone of the debate cordial, he fails miserably when it comes to making sense of the other position. In addition to that, Sire tends to hide behind unhelpful labels such as "nihilism" in an effort to pigeonhole the opponent. Consistently, Peraino has to ask Sire to clarify what he is trying to say because Sire uses so much label jargon in the discussion that it impedes progress.

This book does not claim to resolve any issues, and it is not until the last few pages of the book, that the reader is enlightened regarding the 'deepest differences' among these two friends. In his summation, Peraino rightly identifies the major philosophical reason why disagreement exists among them: Sire is a dualist. Alternatively, in his summation, Sire says that the point of divergence is as follows, "I say they [atheists] need a foundation in something outside human opinion or human desire. He [Peraino] says no" (177). Sire believes that what is central to the Christian faith is not the risen Jesus but rather, "the notion of a transcendent foundation for both morality and rationality" (177). In fairness, Sire would probably want to say that this is not an either/or choice but that the risen Jesus *is* that transcendental foundation for morality and rationality. However, Peraino argues that Sire's point is unnecessary "within a relatively stable physical environment. Natural selection leads to the extinction of a species in which self-destructive tendencies prevail, and it favors the survival of a species that creates a cultural environment that fosters the realization of that species' potential" (40).

What happens when Sire is shown his indefensible weak spots? Sire claims that the reason why all his good arguments failed in the book is because of Peraino's "spiritual blindness" to the truth (181-182). This response is a cop-out. Instead of letting atheism into dialogue to help aid theology in its weak spots, Sire demonstrates how to warmly batten down the hatches.

Readers would do well to search out trained theologians or philosophers that handle these debates in much better ways. Merold Westphal's, *Suspicion and Faith: The Religious Uses of Modern Atheism* (Fordham, 1999), Alister McGrath's latest two volumes, *The Open Secret: A New Vision for Natural Theology* (Blackwell, 2008) and *A Fine-Tuned Universe: The Quest for God in Science and Theology* (WJKP, 2009), and David Bentley Hart's, *Atheist Delusions: The Christian Revolution and Its Fashionable Enemies* (Yale, 2009), are all books that are recommendable.

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John MILBANK. *The Future of Love: Essays in Political Theology*. Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2009. 404 pp. $44.00.

Arising in Britain in recent decades, Radical Orthodoxy represents one of the most provocatively interesting, if diverse, movements in contemporary theology. Milbank is its most prominent and controversial exponent. Well known for his *Theology and Social Theory* [TST] and *Being Reconciled*, in the current volume Milbank collects a number of his essays that have been published in a variety of journals over the last twenty-five years. TST's powerful critique of the dominance of the secular social sciences in liberal western society and its aggressive assertion of theology's proper, if not regal, place in scholarship places Milbank as a significant voice in theology. His distinctive Anglo-Catholic perspective joined with a scathing critique of neo-liberalism and capitalism is expressed in what maddens many as a "Blue Socialism" or "Red Toryism" (as Red and Blue do not have the same connotations in Europe that they do in the United States). While Milbank is a demanding read, this book welcomely makes his social thought more accessible as these essays range from analyzing socialism and British society, to response to TST's critics, to relating theology to philosophy and religious pluralism, and his distinctive theology of gift-exchange.

Viewing capitalism as a Christian heresy that tends toward totalitarianism, Milbank contends for a robust nonstatist Christian socialism rather than a Christian Marxism. He would not exclude ethical value from economic exchanges. His approach to love emphasizes reciprocity as does his valuable notion of gift-exchange. The giftedness of life and love are not one-way streets and that has implications for political theology. The essay "Liberality and Liberalism" particularly makes Milbank's case for a democracy based in that gift relation, rather than the contracts of markets, with monarchic and aristocratic elements, not unlike the civic republicanism of American civic thought. He realigns his basically Left position with "more primordial, 'classical' modes of thinking" (243) in order to criticize "this neoliberal slide into despotism" (245).

While at times vague, these essays make a place for a broadly conceived church. With some sympathy to the notion of Christendom, Milbank believes "along with Radical Orthodoxy in general, that only the church has the theoretical and practical power to challenge the global hegemony of capital and to create a viable politico-economic alternative." (xi) Capitalism, not Islam, is the principal foe of Christian faith.

Ecclesiologically, in contrast to current church growth trends, in one essay Milbank devastatingly critiques the market orientation of evangelical Christianity while lauding the orientation of geography and parish found in the Church of England.

Milbank is not shy about taking on received wisdom in secular or theological society. His Anglo-Catholicism is anything but humble as Anabaptists are irrelevant and Calvinism deplorably enables capitalism. Seeing himself as something of an Augustinian, he finds the Middle Ages comfortable at least until the debacle of Duns Scotus and his successors that eventually enabled the Enlightenment project of liberal society and capitalism. The neo-Platonism and the counterintuitive affirmation of some form of hierarchies and aristocracy in a democratic context that imbues much of his approach will trouble many as will his resort to argument by intellectual genealogy.

The essay format of Milbank's volume makes it perhaps one of the best ways to access Milbank's demanding and dense prose that is laden at times with post-modernist jargon. While Radical Orthodoxy might now be seen as an influential post-modernist exercise in the modern academy, the political themes raised in some of the pieces in this book point it toward a political theology with the potential for enabling a politically active confessionally Christian presence in society. Milbank's thought is well-worth engaging, though this collection of essays is best suited for a seminary course in contemporary or political theology. Frequently provocative, Milbank's essays join political theology and ecclesiology for a distinctively Christian approach to democracy that merits serious consideration.

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John Howard YODER. *Christian Attitudes to War, Peace, and Revolution.* Ed. by Theodore J. Koontz and Andy Alexis-Baker. Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2009. 480 pp. $34.99.

This book on the historical pilgrimage of Christian pacifism is a well-edited redaction of a course that Yoder taught with this name from 1966 at Goshen College to his last year alive in 1997 at Notre Dame. Over several years the lectures were transcribed and a first edition of this book was published in 1983. The book originally was intended to be a companion to the main text of the course: Roland Bainton's *Christian Attitudes toward War and Peace*. However, this edition of the book allows Yoder's work to stand on its own as an argument for pacifism. Primary audiences for this book would include ethicists, pacifists, and students of Yoder's life and work. Secondary audiences could easily include missionaries who will be

involved in violent contexts, majority world scholars who wrestle with their own issues of violence and Christian relief and development practitioners.

The reading is very engaging since it is primarily representative of classroom lectures. The book dives right in to complicated topics and addresses them with fervor and devoted scholarship. It also has impressive historical depth. From the early church to liberation theology, this course covered a massive spread of history. Included in all this history is Yoder's typology of war and his evaluations of the Just War and of the pacifist movement. A strong element of the book is that Yoder is not just concerned with this as a topic of historical debate. For him it is the historical and theological underpinnings for issues that Christians face today. Laws for conscientious objectors and the disciplining of soldiers are issues that must be addressed in light of a pacifistic view on violence. Yoder seems to hope that this work will shed light on those ideas. It is a broad and well-written book.

However, three foundational difficulties arise in the book. The first is Yoder's personal pilgrimage. If a reader is not familiar with the foundations of pacifism and Mennonite theology, some of his logical jumps could be questioned, such as the belief that Jesus was a pacifist. The second difficulty is that Yoder relies heavily on logic alone as his primary tool to critique Christianity's historical attitudes toward war. In this a clear dualism emerges that does not take into account the Holy Spirit or demonic entities as components in the violence debate. It also means that much of the thought and worldview of the Bible (as a near-eastern document) is viewed through only a modernist, western lens. The third difficulty is that the book comes at the topic within the context of a political system that embraces and protects the pacifist under its military strength. Regardless of argument, it is a very hard stance to maintain emotionally since many have suffered for the very freedom Yoder uses to express his thoughts.

Nonetheless, Yoder brings a strong mind and a caring heart to this work. Violence is a vastly complicated topic full of pitfalls and obstacles, but Yoder's desire to be faithful to Jesus and be a clear thinker shines out. As Yoder wraps up the book you can hear his frustration with the nature of the debate within Christian circles. He notes that few people want to engage the topic with clarity or scholarship. Part of the problem is that opponents to pacifism are both numerous and strong, and emotions run high about this topic. If nothing else, Yoder's life and research was such that his book deserves to be read so that multiple voices can be heard about something so deeply important in any age.

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Richard T. HUGHES. *Christian America and the Kingdom of God.* Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2009. 232 pp. $29.95.

As I finished Hughes's book, *Christian America and the Kingdom of God,* I was reminded of why he deservingly holds the title of "senior fellow" at the Ernest L. Boyer Center at Messiah. In this work, Hughes demonstrates his talent as a creative and investigative researcher. As a skilled historian he integrates ideas from such var-

ied fields as biblical and theological studies and the sociopolitical realm; and through his intellectual insights and his gift for telling a story, this book provides a means of teaching and shaping public opinion about the ever-looming question: "Is America a Christian nation?"

Although much has been written about whether America is a Christian nation, this is the first book to lay out such an exhaustive biblical perspective (with chapter and verse) on the nature of God's "kingdom" and "chosen people," through the entirety of the Bible. Hughes uses the criteria gleaned from the Bible to compare the attributes of the biblical kingdom to the attributes of the United States. He makes a compelling case for claiming that God's kingdom "is a kingdom of justice, especially for the powerless and the poor, and a kingdom that always trumps the violence of this earth with the peace of God" (49). Thus, he boldly proclaims that "the notion of Christian America and the notion of the kingdom of God are polar opposites whose values could not be further apart. . . . The idea of Christian America is in every key respect an oxymoron—essentially a contradiction in terms—when measured by the most sacred document of the Christian tradition: the Bible itself (4)."

This emphasis on establishing what the Bible means by "kingdom of God" and "chosen people" is important because Hughes has shifted the starting point of the longstanding debate over the question "Is America a Christian nation?" Instead of beginning with the more traditional civil religion approach, which entails arguments about the founding leaders' religious beliefs, the correct interpretations of the nation's sacred documents (i.e., the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution), and the rhetoric of politicos from the birth of the nation forward, he focuses on a biblical-theological discussion (chapters 1–3 of 5).

One reason he does this is because he agrees with Stephen Prothero: a large number of Americans are biblically illiterate. Another reason that such a distinctive approach is significant is because the Bible represents the authoritative word of truth to Evangelicals, and Fundamentalists regard it as inerrant. Clearly, in over half of the book this is Hughes's primary concern: to provide a well-reasoned scriptural counterpunch to the religious right; to help them see the error of their way as they continue to proclaim the myth of Christian America. Is the counterpunch successful?

Yes and no. Certainly, his thematic tracing of the concepts of "kingdom of God" and "chosen people" through the earliest biblical period, the Gospels, Paul's writings, and Revelation shed great insight into the big picture of the radical nature of the true "kingdom of God," and he demonstrates how countercultural it is to the American nation, and to any other nation for that matter.

On the other hand, there are those in the religious right, those devotees to The Left Behind series whose numbers reach between 20% and 30% in recent elections, who rely heavily on the book of Revelation for their eschatology. It is from that text that they primarily make their case for God marching alongside America in her redemptive violent efforts against the evil powers of the world. Hughes's treatment of Revelation is limited. He discounts the violent Jesus as portrayed in sections of Revelation by saying that it does not match up with the stronger nonviolent biblical teachings; therefore, because the humble, meek, and nonviolent Jesus exemplifies the true biblical principle, the violent Jesus of Revelation cannot be accepted as the metaprincipal. This explanation may not be sufficient to convince a group of biblical inerrantists who are awaiting the rapture and Armageddon. Also, it may not be sufficient for those who continue to pledge their allegiance to what has been our nation's civil religion. As Jewett and Lawrence point out in their book "Captain America and the Crusade against Evil," in the case of American civil religion "the redemptive capacity of righteous violence—in the hands of the right men—still predominates" (247). A stronger theological explanation of Revelation is needed if the religious right is to be convinced that their interpretation is flawed.

In chapters four and five, Hughes provides an excellent overview of the religious, political, and social history behind America's image of itself as a Christian nation. His storytelling skills are evident as he pulls in details of compelling human interest. In these chapters he discusses people, events, and the myths that have led many to believe the United States is a Christian nation, and he persuasively rejects the well-known arguments including "manifest destiny" and the myths of being a chosen nation, an innocent nation, or a millennial nation (all discussed in greater detail in his earlier work, *Myths America Lives By*). He also provides valuable insights into how fundamentalist theology about end times has dangerous implications for American foreign policy in the Middle East.

Perhaps the most underdeveloped but most intriguing section of the last two chapters is his reference to the fact that all fundamentalists and evangelicals are no longer harmoniously singing the same song, perhaps not even from the same hymnal. The book was finished before the 2008 election, but, as was witnessed in the last election, the more "progressive evangelicals" as Hughes refers to such people as Ron Sider and Jim Wallis (156), continued to work for social reform based on what they believe the Bible calls upon Christians to do.

The social reform of the fewer but more progressive evangelicals has close links to what other scholars of civil religion would call prophetic civil religion—a civil religion that emphasizes a transcendent realm in which all peoples are judged equally. Those members of the religious right who want to return the American nation to the purity of its Christian beginnings and believe that the U.S. is directly fulfilling God's will by doing so (Toulouse) are usually identified with priestly civil religion. The topic of civil religion has been somewhat of a nontopic in academia since the 1980s. However, the role religion plays in politics in America has been even more obvious since the 1970s and 1980s because of what Hughes refers to as the "latter-day fundamentalists" decision to seek their objectives primarily through exercising political power (153); thus, we had the era of Dobson, Falwell, Robertson, and others.

Despite the fact that the term "civil religion" has not been front and center, religion and politics have not been unimportant. It may be more accurate to say that the relationship between the two continues to sway in both directions between the priestly and prophetic roles. Regardless, Hughes's treatment of the growing progressive element among evangelicals needs more attention.

Perhaps we are on the threshold of another shift—back from the priestly and toward the prophetic. The voices behind the prophetic role include a large number of progressive evangelicals, mainline Protestants, and many Roman Catholics.

Another indicator of this shift is not only the election of Barack Obama, but also the change in the presidential rhetoric from Bush to Obama. Whether it be the pre-election speech on race or the spring 2009 speech in Cairo, as David Gibson of *Political Daily* says, "Obama is trying to recover the lost gospel of America's civil religion—the doctrines of tolerance and of personal responsibility for the common good." Sociologist Phillip Gorski goes on to say that Obama has "redefined patriotism in terms of civic engagement, rather than military engagement"(Gorski SSRC blog).

If one believes "the times they are a-changin'," then Hughes has written an extremely timely book. If the nation is in the process of moving toward a more prophetic understanding of its identity, and I believe that it is, then Hughes's work provides one more path that allows those evangelicals in the middle, as well as others, to discern the importance of the distinction between the biblical kingdom of God and the lesser and imperfect kingdoms of the world's nation states.

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Richard T. HUGHES. *Christian America and the Kingdom of God.* Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2009. 232 pp. $29.95.

Millions of Americans view America as a Christian nation and approach political and social issues through this lens. But is the idea of Christian America defensible from a Christian point of view? In his new book, *Christian America and the Kingdom of God,* Richard Hughes subjects the notion of "Christian America" to a devastating barrage of criticisms. He contends that America never was, is not now, and can never be a Christian nation. This "myth" is historically and descriptively false, morally perverse and theologically erroneous. It serves as justification for violence against America's "enemies" and cover for greed's injustice against the poor. And it fosters such other dangerous myths as America's manifest destiny, divine election, and the illusion of innocence. Hughes unfolds these criticisms in four theses: (1) The ideal of Christian America stands in "polar opposition" to the biblical idea of the kingdom of God. (2) "Christian" America often behaves in anti-Christian ways. (3) Christians should behave consistently with their faith (i.e. the kingdom of God), "especially America's public square." (4) Proponents of "Christian America" are biblically and theologically illiterate; and only such ignorance can explain the myth's hold on millions of fundamentalist and evangelical Christians.

My goal in this essay is theological analysis and critique. I will refrain from assessing Hughes's historical claims or voicing agreement or disagreement with his political philosophy. I won't address his charge that America is an empire morally equivalent to the Roman Empire. Nor will I assess his critical description of American evangelicals and fundamentalists. I will focus rather on Hughes's theological argument that comparison of the biblical ideal of the kingdom of God exposes the notion of Christian America as nothing but another ideological justification for the perennial violent and greedy ways of the world.

In his 2003 book, *Myths America Lives By,* Hughes did not engage in direct the-

ological critique but used the stories of the American poor and disenfranchised, especially African Americans, to unmask the pretentions of the Christian America myth. In contrast to this earlier work, in *Christian America and the Kingdom of God* Hughes shifts to direct theological analysis. Although *Christian America* begins by addressing "every citizen of this republic" (1), the major argument, occupying over one half of the book, is theological and assumes common ground with the advocates of "Christian" America, that is, it presupposes adherence to the Bible as the standard by which to determine what is Christian. Hughes proposes to test the Christian credentials of this idea by comparing it "with the biblical vision of the kingdom of God" (1). The concept of the kingdom of God is highly suitable for this comparison because it envisions the world as it would be if God's will were done on earth. Hughes commends John Dominic Crossan's definition of the kingdom as "what this world would look like if and when God sat on Caesar's throne."[1] According to Hughes, the hallmarks of the kingdom are "(1) equity and justice for all human beings, especially the poor, the marginalized, and the dispossessed, and (2) a world governed by peace and goodwill for all human beings" (32). Whenever people promote justice, reject war, and "work on behalf of policies that are favorable to the long-term health of this island planet . . . the kingdom of God is present" (33). Hughes understands the kingdom in ethical rather than religious, natural rather than metaphysical, social rather than individual terms.

According to Hughes, the central teaching of the Hebrew Bible envisions a human community ruled with justice and bound together by peace. First Samuel 8:4-22 contains the classic text to which Hughes returns again and again. The Israelites asked Samuel to set up a monarchy so that they could be like other nations. The Lord acquiesced to their request but warned that the king would institute a rule of violence and exploitation. In Hughes's interpretation, this story suggests "that the kingdom of God would be both nonviolent and just, while human governments would inevitably practice both violence and oppression" (34). The Lord's warnings proved true. A long line of kings directed Israel in the ways of the nations of the world rather than in the way of the kingdom of God. The Hebrew prophets Amos, Isaiah, Jeremiah and others called Israel to return to "Samuel's vision of a kingdom ruled by God" (35). According to Hughes, these prophets railed against the greed of the ruling class, denied the legitimacy of violence and efficacy of war, and proclaim the kingdom of God as a "radical alternative to politics as usual" (48). Hughes explains: "Based on the premise that war does not work and that human kingdoms are deeply flawed, virtually all the later Hebrew prophets became proponents of peace, and they did so in the context of their vision of the coming kingdom of God" (44). Some readers familiar with the Old Testament may find Hughes's interpretation of the Hebrew prophets somewhat forced and anachronistic.[2] However, this issue is not where Hughes chooses to take a decisive stand.

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[1]John Dominic Crossan, *God and Empire: Jesus against Rome, Then and Now* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2007) 116-17; quoted in Hughes, *Christian America,* 31.

[2]The idea that the Hebrew prophets rejected war because it "does not work" seems especially anachronistic to me.

What are we to do with the texts that justify Abraham, Moses, Joshua, the Judges, and kings of Israel making war, sometimes even at the command of the Lord? Hughes confronts these questions head on early in his discussion of the Hebrew Bible. Relying heavily on OT scholar Gordon Brubacher[3] and NT scholar John Dominic Crossan,[4] Hughes argues that the OT contains a dual vision of human society. The earlier vision, which includes violence, oppression, and war, is irreconcilable with the vision of the kingdom of God as taught by the Hebrew prophets. Hughes rejects attempts to harmonize these visions and asserts that we must choose between them. But on what basis can we make the choice? Quoting Brubacher, Hughes argues that we should "take Jesus as guide for deciding *which* stage of the OT journey constitutes the OT witness for the church today."[5] The message of the "historical Jesus" was of nonviolence and justice for the poor and not of violence.[6] Hence, according to Hughes, as Christians we are justified in receiving the prophetic message of the kingdom of God as normative for today and rejecting the earlier message of conquest, genocide, war, and oppression as reflecting the thinking of "human civilization" rather than the mind of God (36).

In his treatment of the NT witness to the kingdom, Hughes contends that Jesus and Paul consciously and consistently present the kingdom of God as a "radical alternative to the violent and oppressive Roman Empire" (49). He explains that "when the New Testament uses the phrase "the kingdom of God," the context is almost always a struggle between the reign or rule of God on behalf of the poor and the dispossessed, on the one hand, and the empires of this world that serve powerful and privileged elites on the other" (52). God always takes the side of the poor, powerless, and weak against the rich, powerful, and strong. Jesus defines his ministry as coming to the aid of the poor, captives, blind, and the oppressed (Luke 4:16-21). Hughes rejects the traditional spiritualizing of the Beatitudes (Matt 5:3-12), interpreting them, rather, in the prophetic mode of giving hope to the literal poor and oppressed. The hunger for righteousness for which Jesus promises satisfaction is the longing of the oppressed for justice, "justice" being a better translation for the Greek word *dikaiosune* than righteousness.[7] Jesus rejected violence, advocating instead "turning the other cheek" and loving one's enemies (Matt 5:38-45), actions that contradict the values of the nations of the world. And Jesus' blessing the "peacemakers" with the title "sons of God" was an act of subversion to the Roman Empire, for Caesar had designated himself as peacemaker and son of God

[3]Gordon Brubacher, "Just War and the New Community: The Witness of the Old Testament for Christians Today," Princeton Theological Review 12 (Fall 2006) 19.

[4]Crossan, *God and Empire.*

[5]Brubacher, "Just War," 19.

[6]The emphasis on the "historical" Jesus comes from Crossan, *God and Empire;* quoted in Hughes, *Christian America,* 37. To use the "historical Jesus" and the "good" Paul to criticize the Bible begs the question of how we decide who the real "historical" Jesus and the "good" Paul are. The temptation is almost overwhelming arbitrarily to create a "Jesus" and a "Paul" made in our own image and use these illusions as theological norms to undermine views we don't like.

[7]Hughes cites Warren Carter, *Matthew and the Margins: A Sociopolitical and Religious Reading* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2000), as making convincing arguments for this interpretation.

(71). Hence Hughes interprets Jesus' ethical teaching as directed primarily to the unjust and violent sociopolitical situation of his day rather than to the individual mired in the universal condition of sin.

Although Paul is best known for his assertion of the primacy of grace over works and his doctrine of justification by faith, Hughes contends that Paul also championed the kingdom of God as an alternative to the world's empires. The apostle urges the Philippians to follow Jesus as he empties himself in the way of "radical self-giving love" (Phil 2:5-8). He contrasts the divine wisdom revealed in Jesus with the "wisdom of this age" followed by those worldly powers who crucified "the Lord of glory" (1 Cor 2:8). The classic text for Paul's "theology of social justice" (77) is Gal 3:27-28, which proclaims that Jew and Greek, slave and free, and male and female "are one in Christ Jesus." According to Hughes, this text exalts the principle of equality to normative status in Paul's social ethics (77). Paul thus declares all racism, oppression, and hierarchy out of bounds within the kingdom of God. In words remarkably reminiscent of Jesus' teaching, Paul urges the Roman Christians to love their enemies and leave revenge to God (Rom 12:14-21). In sum, Paul as a true disciple of Jesus envisioned the kingdom as an egalitarian community given wholeheartedly to peace and justice, standing in self-conscious and visible opposition to the hierarchical, violent and unjust Roman Empire (or the American empire).

Perhaps students of the NT will question whether even the texts on which Hughes relies really support his picture of Paul as a social revolutionary.[8] But other texts undermine Hughes's portrait of Paul, and to his credit Hughes does not ignore them. First Timothy 2:11-12 decrees that women are forbidden to teach men but are to remain silent.[9] Colossians (3:22-24), Ephesians (6:5-8), and Titus (2:9-10) teach slaves to remain submissive to their masters. Hughes views attempts to harmonize these texts with his vision of Paul the revolutionary as futile. Instead, he adopts the approach he took to the dissenting voices in the OT. Again relying on Crossan, Hughes contends that there are two contradictory views of human community within the NT. One arises out of a vision of the kingdom of God, the other remains stuck in the values of the empires of the world. We should opt for the kingdom. According to Hughes, "when the New Testament offers a choice between gender equality, on the one hand, and subjugation of women, on the other, the choice is no choice at all, at least for people who take seriously the biblical vision of the kingdom of God" (78-70). Reinforcing this point, Hughes asserts, "The truth is, one can find in the Bible not only support for liberating slaves and women, but also support for keeping both slaves and women in bondage. One is in keeping with the kingdom of God, the other is not" (82-83).

[8]Is Galatians 3:27-28 about social ethics? The context is the discussion of the place of the law in relation to grace and faith. And would not Hughes's picture need to be modified if Paul's eschatology (1 Thessalonians and Romans 8), his doctrine of human solidarity in sin (Romans 5), and his doctrine of the Holy Spirit (Romans 8) were taken into account?

[9]Hughes does not take up other Pauline texts that comment on women's subordination or restrict their activities: 1 Cor 11:3-16, or 1 Cor 14:33-35.

In posing this dichotomy, Hughes is not making the hermeneutical point that the offending texts do not really teach what they seem to teach. No, what they teach—what they *really* teach— is simply wrong. For example, Hughes charges 1 Tim 2:11-12 with being "fundamentally out of step with everything we know about Paul's [and Jesus'] theology of social justice" (78). According to Hughes, Titus 2:9-10, and to some extent Col 3:22-24 and Eph 6:5-8, "offer slaves the same kind of advice that slaveholders in the American South offered their slaves on a regular basis: don't talk back, don't pilfer, obey your masters with fear and trembling" (80). This text (Titus 2:9-10) "is out of line with the passionate concern for social justice that dominates the biblical vision of the kingdom of God, whether we find that vision in the Hebrew prophets, in the Gospels, or in Paul's epistles" (82). In view of the Bible's mixed message Christians must choose:

> Will they pledge their allegiance to the Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible, or will they pledge their allegiance to the principles of the kingdom of God . . . to the radical teachings of Jesus? The decision is up to them. But one thing is certain. Those Christians who read the Bible in a flat, uncritical fashion risk placing the Bible above the biblical vision of the kingdom of God, above the teachings of Jesus, and even above God himself. In this way, the Bible becomes an idol that sustains injustice, violence, and war. And in an ironic sort of way, the Bible becomes the text that can also sustain the traditional vision of Christian America. (83)

This provocative book includes much to appreciate. The first page contains the effusive praise of thirteen illustrious personages. And I am sure many more worthy persons will add their voices to this chorus. However, I must save my praise for another time and on this occasion interrupt the choir with a little song written in different key. As I said above, my aim is analysis and criticism of Hughes's theological argument, not his politics or historiography or cultural criticism. First, I think the book one-sidedly criticizes the Christian right and does not make a clear principled rejection of "Christian" politics of every stripe, right, left, and center. In this regard, far from being too radical, the book is not radical enough. And this failure is rooted in Hughes's narrow vision of the kingdom of God. For Hughes, the kingdom is a this-worldly socioethical movement set in contrast to, or even in protest of, the world's empires. This understanding neglects the eschatological, religious and metaphysical dimensions of the teaching of Jesus and Paul. Paul's does not ask Christians to respond to the evil Roman Empire and the surrounding pagan culture by protesting them and trying to ameliorate their worst features. Paul thinks quite differently about the life in this age. He tells the Corinthians, "The time is short. From now on those who have wives should live as if they had none; those who mourn, as if they did not; those who are happy, as if they were not; those who buy something, as if it were not theirs to keep; those who use the things of the world, as if not engrossed in them. For this world in its present form is passing away" (1 Cor 7:29-31). For Paul, all worldly relationships, social positions and ordinary human ambitions amount to nothing in the presence of one coming in judgment and redemption. In other words, from the eschatological perspective, our status in this world—rich or poor, man or woman, American or Iranian, slave or free, married or single—is no longer important. We should not live for it, get too

passionate about it, spend too much time on it. It's indifferent. The individual's relationship to God in faith and obedience overshadows and conditions every other relationship and circumstance. Paul's ethical reasoning here is neither socially conservative nor socially liberal. It is radically eschatological. From Paul's eschatological perspective, investing your life energy in social conservatism or social liberalism, nationalism or internationalism, political pacifism or just war theory, egalitarianism or patriarchy is to become worldly.

My second criticism concerns Hughes's use of the Bible. The book begins by chiding the advocates of "Christian America" for not reading the Bible closely enough to see that it does not support this myth. From this I gather that Hughes hopes to persuade those lovers of the Bible (evangelicals and fundamentalists) that they have misread the holy book. But when he begins to make his argument from the Bible, he adopts an approach to Scripture that evangelicals and fundamentalists consider anathema; yet they are the very ones who, according to Hughes, most need educating. Labeling vast swaths of the OT as unethical, calling the judgment scenes in Revelation "an ethic utterly foreign" to the kingdom, and rejecting much of the ethical teaching of Paul's letters because it "is out of line with the passionate concern for social justice that dominates the biblical vision of the kingdom of God" (82) will not recommend his argument to a lover of the Bible. As a rhetorical strategy, it is an utter failure . . . unless Hughes has in mind another audience. This approach to theological argumentation departs from the principle that disputants in an argument about Christian doctrine must submit their ideas to the rule or canon of Scripture. Since Christian theologians too are fallible and sinful human beings, differences of interpretation can be expected. But rejecting what you admit Scripture teaches when it blocks your way to your preferred conclusion places you outside of any serious deliberation about what the church should proclaim and confess. It is of utmost importance for a Christian theologian to listen reverently to the whole Bible, *especially* the parts that we don't like or that cut against our intuitions about justice and equality, wealth and poverty, men and women, or preconceived ideas about divine nature.

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Justo L. GONZÁLEZ and Catherine Gunsalus GONZÁLEZ. *Heretics for Armchair Theologians*. Illustrations by Ron Hill. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2008. 200 pp. $16.95.

For the Armchair Series, which typically centers upon the life and thought of a prominent theologian, such as Aquinas, Augustine, or, more recently, Martin Luther King, Jr., this new entry, with its emphasis on ancient heresy, marks somewhat of a departure. This short volume does not address a single theologian but a cluster of heresies and controversies from the first five centuries of Christian thought. Between introductory and concluding chapters dealing with the issue of heresy generally, the Gonzalezes treat the heresies of the Ebionites, Gnosticism, Marcion, the Montanists, the Donatists, and Pelagius along with the Trinitarian and Christological controversies of the fourth and fifth centuries.

In the first chapter, "Why Heretics?" the Gonzalezes portray heretics as "believers struggling with truth" (14). They were neither open-minded martyrs persecuted by a narrow-minded church nor intentionally deceptive warriors against established doctrine. Rather, these heretics represent clashing perspectives stemming from the diversity within early Christianity. According to the authors, the main distinction between heretics and the church is revealed in the designation "catholic": the church, striving to define a faith "according to the whole," allowed diversity, while heretics narrowly focused upon their own views (10-12). This theological claim, which deserves a fuller treatment, is here supported by contrasting the inclusiveness of the Christian canon to the heretical insistence upon a smaller canon or single book. Certainly the church was not as narrow-minded as some scholars and novelists would have it, but the reverse does not necessarily follow.

The central chapters of the book are well-organized, appropriately detailed, and accurate. Each chapter describes the historical beginnings of the heresy, what is at stake theologically, the catholic response, and later religious developments that resemble ancient heresies in some way. The longest part of each chapter explains the theological issues, and here the book is at its strongest. The lucid descriptions and frequent analogies make these complex figures and controversies understandable. Though the work is by nature a short survey, the Gonzalezes include an impressive amount of material and specificity. The major figures are given full treatments, but lesser-known figures such as Basilides, Celestius, and Lucian of Antioch also make appearances. More importantly, the authors present this complex material straightforwardly and accurately. Of course, one could quibble with certain aspects of the presentation; for example, they state that after the Council of Nicaea in 325 controversy focused upon the term *homoousios*, though even Athanasius was reticent to argue for the term until the 350s (88). Still, specialists would generally be pleased that the Gonzalezes describe the intricacies of the debate and emphasize the long struggle rather than simplistically and anachronistically portraying the fourth-century christological controversies as a debate between Athanasius on the side of established orthodoxy and Arius on the side of faithless philosophy. Unfortunately, the connections between later religious developments and the ancient heresies are often tenuous. The authors are more interested in recurring theological problems than historical connections and occasionally exaggerate certain issues. They admit a bit of exaggeration at the end of a chapter in which they claim that Pelagianism denies the essentiality of grace—something Pelagius himself would never have done (128). Each chapter is an interesting introduction to the topic.

Regarding the diversity within the early church and the development of doctrine—development largely spurred by heretics—the concluding chapter asks "What Now?" The Gonzalezes suggest that "neither a 'simple' return to the New Testament nor an absolute reliance on the authority of the church" is the appropriate response (152). Doctrines developed out of struggle, and contemporary Christians should look to the ancient controversies for help in avoiding similar errors.

Ron Hill's playful illustrations, which appear on approximately every other page, are generally innocuous, sometimes helpful, and occasionally distracting. On

the one hand, the goofy illustration accompanying the discussion of gnostic myths partially subverts the authors' attempt to make the attraction of Gnosticism intelligible to contemporary readers (34-35). On the other hand, Hill's baseball-themed sketches throughout the discussion of christological controversies helpfully illustrate a recurring analogy in the text: that describing the divinity and humanity of Christ is like attempting "to produce a square baseball" (137).

The book concludes an index and suggestions for further readings, which are geared for a nonscholarly audience: more-detailed surveys (several of which are written by Justo L. González). Only a few scholarly monographs appear, and those are dated.

The current volume certainly achieves its purposes, providing a balanced introduction to the important and controversial world of early Christian thought, with brief reflections upon heresy in general and the ongoing significance of ancient heretics. It is not intended for the scholar, but scholars will find some material presented in a way that translates well to the introductory classroom. The book will be most valuable to those reading for nonscholarly reasons; anyone who is interested should benefit from this brief, accurate, and enjoyable work.

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Rufus BURROW, Jr. *Martin Luther King Jr. for Armchair Theologians.* Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2009. 187 pp. $16.95.

This volume delivers exactly what is advertised. From beginning to end, King's thought is accessibly presented with special attention to its origins and further applications that pertain beyond his times. Burrow does an excellent job of weaving the historical setting of King's life and times with the theological influences that together shaped his views. The reader is led through the development of King's thought and practice from one point to the next in a way that keeps one always mindful of the many forces that drove him to be such a powerful figure.

A good example of this is found when Burrow moves from the direct formation of King's theology in chapters 2 and 3 to a brief account of the conditions faced by those who later became associated with King in chapter 4. While this might not be helpful in maintaining a narrative thread, it definitely accomplishes the purpose of pulling together the academic and practical aspects that lay in the background of King's words and work. From the early teaching of his parents and grandparents to his time at seminary to his interaction with those on the frontlines of civil injustice to his confrontation with principles of nonviolence, all of the formative stimuli resulting in the uniquely prophetic and inspirational life of Martin Luther King are accounted for here.

Since this is a work that targets an audience less concerned for in-depth analysis, it is unfair to expect a more critical examination of King's thought and practice. It is the stated goal of this book to merely provoke interest in further study on King's life and work. For this reason, the reader should be ready to forgive a lack of probing investigation into the more controversial parts of King's theology. That

said, there are at least two issues that warrant a closer inspection in even this broad a treatment.

First, King's thought contains latent tensions that affected his overall mission. The concept of nonviolence is complex as an academic study, as an element of Christian theology, and as a strategy for civil disobedience. The placement of Gandhian principles into Christian interaction with the world is not nearly so comfortable a fit as seems to be suggested. This is most easily demonstrated by the difficulty in talking about the civil rights movement led by King without including words like "fight," "struggle," "protest," and "confrontation." This tension is crucial in understanding the pressures surrounding King and the movement as a whole.

Second, Burrow makes an effort near the end of the book to demonstrate how King would have approached other important issues. While King's primary focus was the improvement of social conditions for African Americans, Burrow aptly points out that this was only insofar as King understood the good of all to be found in doing good to all. That being true, Burrow makes the case that King would have advocated for equal rights for women and homosexuals, despite the forthright discussion he presents to show that King demonstrated no deliberate interest in civil rights for women or homosexuals.

Overall, however, this volume offers concise but enlightening insight into the mind of one of America's greatest religious figures. It invites a deeper respect and a greater appetite for the ideas that produced such an influential movement in this country's thought and policy. For these reasons, and more, Burrow has given us something for which we can be grateful.

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Harold SHANK. ***Listening to His Heartbeat: What the Bible Says about the Heart of God.*** **Joplin, MO: College Press, 2009. 340 pp. $28.99.**

"What does Scripture say about God's inner being? What makes God smile? What pleases him?" (18) What makes God angry? These are some of the probing questions that Harold Shank, Professor of OT at Oklahoma Christian University, asks in his study of Scripture's revelation concerning the heart of God. He sets the stage for the journey by placing the reader in the shoes of the prodigal son returning to his father's embrace as depicted in Rembrandt's painting "The Return of the Prodigal Son." The son is on his knees, being embraced by his slouching father, with his ear firmly placed on his father's chest, perhaps listening to his heartbeat. The Luke 15 account does not give this detail, but it does say that the father was "filled with compassion" and that "he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him." (Luke 15:20) Shank speculates that "Rembrandt captured in a unique way how the son learned that his father was 'filled with compassion.' While the embrace and kisses surely followed, Rembrandt's painting depicted a crucial moment. What the younger son heard was the life of his father. He listened to his heartbeat" (17).

Shank limits his work to the nature of God's heart: "Our thesis is to listen to

what the Bible says about the heart of God" (17-18). This is not a study of the names of God, proofs for God's existence, theodicy, a history of views on God, or the numerous qualities of God. Instead, the journey to discover God' s passions and desires will focus on five major tasks: (1) "focus on appropriate passages which speak of the 'heart' of God," (2) "study passages with talk of God's intentions," (3) "concentrate on what delighted and what hurts God," (4) "examine the passages in which God reveals Himself and His nature," (5) talk "about Jesus," in which "we see the fullness of God" (21). Shank covers 28 of the 31 biblical texts that refer to the "heart" of God, the majority of which come from the OT. God speaks of His own heart in 15 of the texts, and others speak about God's heart in the other 16. His aim is to give thorough attention to these relatively few texts: "We will settle in with the meat of one text, growl [meditate] over it, and enjoy the banquet" (27). From this point, he then seeks to follow "canonical trajectories" as Scripture presents a particular aspect of God's heart. Thus, this biblical theology takes a theological and topical approach, beginning with Genesis and following the concepts through the rest of Scripture. Examples of chapters are as follows: "Loyalty: God's Heart for Change (Genesis 6–9), Immanuel: God on Our Side of the Street (Isaiah 7), Jealousy: There Can Only Be One (John 14), Brokenness: The God Who Cares (Psalm 34), Violence: God, and the Sword (1 Samuel 15), and Care for the Fatherless: Running Home to God (Psalm 68)" (13-14). Shank's topical limitations could be considered a weakness. His work certainly does not explore all of the things that God desires. However, Shank does not intend to do a comprehensive study. Such a study could be rather large and perhaps lack focus.

Each chapter demonstrates a high degree of scholarly competence, balanced with very accessible, interesting narrative. The reader will no doubt come away from this text with a significant amount of insight concerning the biblical passages deeply explored. However, as is consistent with the author's aim, the greater value to the reader will be in gained depth of insight into the nature of our Father's heart. Shank works to help the reader find not only theological connections to God the Father, but also emotional and personal connections, through the use of colorful exposition of Scripture and the telling of stories to illustrate his points. This book will cause the reader to reconsider the way he reads Scripture. Namely, it will help one consider the heartrending truths about God and his relationship with the world and His people.

Shank's volume would serve well as a supplemental text to an undergraduate course in biblical theology, or more specifically, OT theology. It would also serve exceptionally well as a text for an intermediate or advanced study in adult church-based education, such as Sunday School or a small group. Beyond its merit as a resource for the teacher, Christians looking for a deeper understanding of the nature of God would gain much by delving into this text. This book does much more than show the reader the nature of God. Instead, "This book seeks to do in print what Rembrandt did on canvas. It seeks to turn us into listeners. It puts our

ears next to the heart of God, so we can hear the beat of the divine heart" (33). Shank has succeeded in this endeavor.

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Anthony N.S. LANE. *A Reader's Guide to Calvin's Institutes.* Grand Rapids: Baker, 2009. 174 pp. $14.99.

A renewed interest in the theology of John Calvin in recent evangelicalism and the influence of the Reformed tradition on the history of the Stone-Campbell Restoration Movement demonstrates the value of studying the primary sources of this tradition, especially the *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Lane's work offers a flexible, contemporary guide to the study of the *Institutes* for the specialist, student, and general reader. Anyone interested in examining Calvin's theology would benefit from this guide.

Lane designed this volume for use with the McNeill-Battles translation of the *Institutes* (Library of Christian Classics series). He identifies the key sections to read, offers critical commentary, and suggests contemporary application (a detailed reading plan is appended). He focuses on Calvin's "positive theology" while omitting long polemical sections and much historical material. The introductory chapter includes a brief biographical sketch of Calvin, a description of the five editions of the *Institutes*, and a discussion of the purpose and structure of the text. In the subsequent material, Lane introduces each of the four major divisions of the *Institutes* with a brief summary; each of the major sections within the divisions begins with an overview and suggested questions for discussion. He then guides the reader through the text of the *Institutes,* explaining important elements of Calvin's thought and calling attention to the most significant footnotes in the McNeill-Battles edition. He briefly describes the content of the omitted sections. His style is a dialogue, often encouraging the reader to explore noteworthy questions and themes.

This volume addresses all of the major elements of Calvin's theology in a clear outline and gives good insight into Calvin's methodology, style, perspective, tendencies, and favorite analogies. Lane identifies Calvin's summary paragraphs when present, perhaps the best feature of the content aspect of the book. The author provides excellent historical contexts for understanding the sources of Calvin's thought in the church fathers, medieval scholars, and, especially, Augustine. He often compares Calvin's conclusions with those of other Reformation era leaders such as Luther, Zwingli, and the Anabaptists. His perspective is also valuable: he points out that the *Institutes* were primarily intended to be used as a complement to Calvin's biblical commentaries for the purpose of developing Christian piety. Lane is certainly appreciative of Calvin's theological positions and takes opportunity to defend his doctrines and correct misunderstandings; but he also recognizes when Calvin is inconsistent, outdated, or simply wrong.

The current volume is caught between the desire to be concise and "user-

friendly" and a thorough introduction to Calvin's *Institutes*. There are places where exposition of the omitted material would have been very helpful, especially in the polemical sections where Calvin is answering important questions raised by his opponents. By ignoring polemics, he excludes significant criticism of Calvin's positions. Lane makes brief comments without explanation (i.e., "unfortunate," "mistakenly")—more extensive footnotes would be welcomed by the reader.

This work would be very useful for the serious student of Calvin's theology and best employed in a classroom setting. It could be read for single topics of interest and is accessible enough for the general reader who would like to become familiar with this important source of Reformation theology. The specialist should also use Battles, *Analysis of the Institutes of the Christian Religion of John Calvin* (Baker, 1980) as a companion volume. Lane's work is especially relevant for Stone-Campbell interests as it gives insight into Calvin's covenant theology, the relationship between the Testaments, the nature of faith, essentials and nonessentials ("Calvin is delightfully vague here"), church discipline, and the sacraments.

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Andrew R. WHEELER. *Together in Prayer: Coming to God in Community.* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2009. 184 pp. $15.00.

The current volume aims to lay out the groundwork for establishing responsible, meaningful prayer ministry within a church small group. Wheeler starts by highlighting the connection between God and the believer that comes through prayer. In the Foreword it is noted that the tone of this book—"the fact that he, in all of his splendour, will stop and listen intently to our every word, as if nothing could be more important to him at that moment, is truly breathtaking. God desires relationship with us, and our dialog with him through prayer is where he reveals the deep things of his nature" (7). Throughout this book Wheeler also makes the comment that as with an individual so with a community (he is particularly talking about small groups in the life of a church), prayer reflects the relationship of the community also with God.

Wheeler commences by making a case for community prayer. He acknowledges that many Christians struggle with an effective prayer life and particularly that community prayer has a bad reputation. This book is not an academic examination of prayer but an impassioned plea for good communal prayer in small groups. Wheeler does not set out to write a "how to do it step by step" manual but seeks to give small group leaders skills and prods that will enable them to better develop their particular group's prayer life. Scattered throughout the book are a number of tips for the group leader.

I was particularly impressed by first examination of the NT to elicit an understanding of the importance of prayer in the life of the early church. He also looked at what principles could be gleaned from these NT references. Whilst not referring specifically to Stone-Campbell churches, he comments: "Even churches that strive to base themselves on the New Testament model often neglect this crucial area of

life together" (25). This would be my experience from ministry in churches in both Australia and New Zealand within the Stone-Campbell Movement.

Wheeler concentrates particularly on the person we are addressing in prayer and how our understanding of God should influence the content of our prayer. Too often our prayers are more about ourselves than they are about God, and we often neglect the whole area of praise and honour. I was reading the current volume while attending a minister's refresher and was particularly struck by the terrible content of the public prayer in contrast to what Andrew Wheeler was suggesting should be the content of prayer addressed to God.

It was refreshing to read about some of the areas of difficulty in group prayer (praying in tongues, spiritual warfare, prayer and healing) and have reflection on dealing with these issues as the group leader. Wheeler's comment should be a guiding principle in any church small group ministry: "Entire prayer theologies are sometimes developed around a couple of oblique references and key terms. The accuracy of these beliefs and practices is not provable" (135). Wheeler's approach is to look at problems sensitively and then encourage group leaders to help their groups come to a consensus so that all were brought together.

The one section that I had some difficulty with was his advocacy of confession in the group prayer life. The depth of confession he was advocating would need a very mature and loving group to ensure that it did not end in real problems. It is an area that we need to be more honest about in church; however, discretion is very much needed for this to work well.

Overall I would recommend this book to anyone looking at developing the prayer life of small groups or of developing a prayer ministry within the life of a church.

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Todd D. HUNTER. *Christianity beyond Belief: Following Jesus for the Sake of Others*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2009. 198 pp. $22.00.

This volume is a valuable book for those wishing to reflect on discipleship, faith, and the Christian journey. Hunter, who is well known for his work with Alpha Course, has published a work that challenges readers to focus on discipleship in their spiritual growth in the kingdom. Hunter begins by discussing his conversion to Christ as a desire to "get to heaven." As the book unfolds he discusses his maturity process in moving from "desiring to be saved and go to heaven," to Christianity as a journey and development of faith.

Hunter explains that many Christians are taught that salvation is based on a desire to end at heaven. However, in this volume he describes Christianity as a journey that involves spiritual growth, aligning with God's story, and calling others to this same journey. Hunter engages the reader in his personal story of reaching people, engaging others in the vision and ministry of Jesus, and moving together for the kingdom of God. This involves not only understanding the vision of Jesus but

truly desiring to become a part of this vision. Aligning with God's story is also a call to discipleship. Christians are called not just to come to salvation, only to walk from the faith years later, but to become part of God's story of transformation, grace, love, and outreach.

Hunter also discusses engaging others in the journey through outreach and community involvement. He suggests that outreach involves connecting with others, becoming active in the community, and embracing community issues. He has obviously grown from his initial conversion experience where preaching salvation involved a Sunday morning revival and outreach consisted of inviting people to a special meeting. His emphasis on small groups engaging communities and its empowerment of others is evident from the Alpha Course.

This book was engaging and challenged my faith and my preaching. I didn't expect to be stirred when I first began to read the book but found that Hunter's ideas work in the back of my mind to subtly help me question things I have been taught in the past. Two days after finishing this book I was explaining the faith as a journey to a person visiting our church and wanting to know more about the faith. I wondered where I had read some of the ideas I had shared with her. It didn't occur to me until I saw the book on my shelf that evening that I was quoting much of what Hunter wrote. His thoughts are very helpful in a quiet and subtle way.

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Mark HUSBANDS and Jeffrey P. GREENMAN, eds. *Ancient Faith for the Church's Future*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2008. 272 pp. $24.00.

This volume contains the preferred essays from the 2007 Wheaton Theology Conference, dedicated to the late Robert E. Webber. The topic is Protestant *ressourcement* theology, directed to the emergent movement. The term derives from twentieth-century French Catholic theologians who looked for revitalization to the major patristic and medieval thinkers. The book consists of an introduction by Husbands (9-23); four sections—Evangelical Ressourcement (25-89), Reading Scripture (91-140), Social Practices of the Early Church (141-186), Theology of the Early Church (187-245) ; and an epilogue (247-263). It concludes with a list of contributors (264-265), name index (266-268), subject index (269-271), and Scripture index (272).

The introduction by Husbands, a Barthian specialist, states two major themes: "We should be eager to hear the witness of Christians throughout the history of the church who likewise have been moved by God's Word" and "respect for the place of tradition is a matter of considerable importance." (9) He summarizes the articles and gives a brief encomium of Robert Webber. The first article in this section by Christopher Hall, the conference keynoter, may be the crux: Tradition, Authority, Magisterium: Dead End or New Horizon? (27-52). Brian Daley, S.J., distinguished professor at Notre Dame, emphasizes "old books," surveys the major ressourcement figures and the interplay of Scripture and tradition in Irenaeus, Origen, and Augustine (52-68). D.H. Williams (69-89) is the place to start. He surveys evan-

gelical interest in Patristics (primitivism, citing Richard Hughes) with cautions for what such study should and should not be used. A hymn of Victorinus (music by Kurt Kaiser) closes.

On Patristic exegesis, OT expert Michael Graves (93-109) tackles the issue of pagan influences on Origen, Diodore of Tarsus, and Theodore of Mopsuestia. He acknowledges the pagan connection in allegory but considers it secondary. He cites the hypothesis method for orators as more useful although its use in drama is ignored. Peter Leithart (110-125) argues, strikingly, for something like the fourfold sense of Scripture, which he characterizes as a "speed bump to slow fantastic traffic on the interpretative highway" and "presents the best way of integrating the various demands of preaching and teaching". The section concludes by comparing Irenaeus and Lyotard (126-140).

Regarding social issues, Christine Pohl (143-155) pursues theological dimensions to hospitality. George Kalantzis (156-168) comments on Chrysostom's sermons on Lazarus and the rich man. Alan Kreider (169-186) movingly describes not only ancient evangelism but its deep connection to church life. He ascribes Christians' "inexplicable strength" and character to worship and a lengthy period of catechesis, a long overdue emphasis.

In the last section, John Witvliet (189-215) seeks liturgical wisdom, especially in form. His caveat (215) "it is difficult to mean the words that someone else speaks" deserves pondering. Paul Kim (216-229) defends Cyril's "impassible suffering," adding Asian perspectives. D. Stephen Long, a Methodist at Marquette, discusses (230-245) Augustinian realism, and offers a back-to-Rome proposal. He need only consider his own communion's position on ordaining women to see its impracticality. His comments on Augustine's view of "the lie" (232) for a group that built its transnational power base with help from forgeries carry an obvious irony. The epilogue by Jason Byassee, a *Christian Century* editor, is generally balanced and pointed. He sees vitality in varying approaches.

Books with multiple authors are invariably uneven; this one is also subject to events. If emergents mushroom, it may be seminal; if not, a period piece. The book obliquely states well the problem. Evangelicals clearly seek new approaches, and evangelical interest in that before Augustine is overdue, but Williams's cautions are especially noteworthy. The articles are a nice size for seminar topics for advanced seminarians. It is a good start for an undoubtedly recurring emphasis.

The now popular distinction between *scriptura sola* and *scriptura nuda* needs rethinking. No writing is "naked" since the structures of language, genre, and context must be taken into account. Scriptura nuda should not be interpreted by *nudior traditio*, since tradition is often textually poor, obscure, and chronologically distant. Does anyone think medieval stories of Joseph of Arimathea illuminate the NT? The fragility of many Patristic texts includes important authors (Irenaeus); many survive in translations of doubtful accuracy (Origen, de principiis). When a scholar of Fr. Daley's stature cites an 1857 translation (60), that suggests what is available. Allegory, however creative, effectively precludes any prophetic statement. Figures about the young and mature church need qualification; little is final. Origen was lionized in 325 and condemned by 553. The Old Roman Rite was augmented, then restored, then revised. Ressourcement may not *ultimately* prevail in Catholic theology.

Finally, a sober balance should prevail beyond cherry-picking the doctrines literarily dominant and admiring virtuosity. Athanasius may interpret with a "pure soul" (35) but also employed gangs of "monks"; similarly, note the anti-Semitism of Chrysostom and Ambrose. Benedictines said the liturgy daily but took bribes and oppressed serfs. Jerome believed biblical writers consciously lied. Whose view on infant baptism is to be preferred? Whose view of the soul? How much does deification imply? A cavalier attitude seems present toward pagan influence. Will Evangelicals be bold enough to filter out *inter alia* Platonic, Stoic, Pythagorean, Neo-Platonic views and their doubtful epistemologies? Will the long pagan pedigree of Confessions 1.1 just be ignored?

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Mark DRISCOLL and Gerry BRESHEARS. *Vintage Church: Timeless Truths and Timely Methods.* Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008. 336 pp. $21.99.

Driscoll (pastor) has linked up with Breshears (professor/theologian) again to offer this volume, the second "Vintage" title in the Re:Lit series. Many church leadership books are lacking in that they are either all leadership philosophy/theology, with little or no hands-on practicality, or they are how-to manuals with little or no philosophical/theological foundation. This volume overcomes that disparity by adjoining "timeless truths and timely methods;" questions are answered by means of the timeless truths of Scripture and connected to timely (contemporary) methods for the church.

The writers pick up where *Vintage Jesus* closed: focusing on the person and work of Jesus, which leads them to the following: "Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to enable and empower Christians to continue his ministry on the earth, which is an overriding theme of this entire book" (9). They also identify one of the underlying beliefs and hopes (as well as a general structure): that through "humility and discernment" the church will become "biblically rooted (prophetic/confessional), grace centered (priestly/experiential), and culturally connected (kingly/missional)" (11).

Each chapter of this volume answers an ecclesiological question. In terms of individual contributions, Driscoll states that it is his voice that we hear in the majority of the book, though admitting that many of the concepts (and editing) were provided by the professor, Gerry Breshears, as well as the writing of the Answers to Common Question sections found at the end of each chapter. The sequencing of the questions provides a practical and natural development of ideas. The authors begin by establishing the nature of the Christian life and defining the church, and continue by laying out the leadership structure of the local church, the importance and necessity of preaching, and the meaning and practice of the sacraments of baptism and communion. This is followed by such priestly/experiential topics as church unity, church discipline, and love. The final chapters are devoted to what is

meant by missional in terms of the call of the church, a statement/defense of the multisite church philosophy (especially as utilized by Mars Hill Church), the use/misuse of technology in the church, and a look at how the church can transform the world.

This volume contains far more to commend than to criticize. It is an excellent tool for all Christians who desire an understanding of the doctrine of the church from a biblical perspective, especially as it relates to recent developments in how the church is choosing to engage culture (emerging, emergent, missional). Those teaching an introductory course on ministry or the nature of the church would do well to consider using it for supplementary reading. The writers have taken great care to provide biblical answers for each question raised, questions which are both relevant and pertinent. For instance, the chapter on church discipline is both timely and much needed. It provides a step-by-step biblical process for resolving both discipline and conflict situations, making the important distinction between *formative* and *restorative* discipline. Those who only think of formative excommunication when they hear the words "church discipline" are reminded that "Biblical discipline is, first and foremost, training."

By way of criticism, and of particular note from the Stone-Campbell perspective, is a statement made regarding baptism. It should not come as a surprise to readers since the writers "stand more in the Reformed tradition and the teaching of John Calvin" (126). This theological perspective is evidenced early in the book when they emphasize that the saved are "those who are *saved by grace alone through faith alone in Jesus Christ alone without any false notion that they can in any way contribute to their salvation through human works such as morality, spirituality, or religious devotion* (21, emphasis mine). Thus, when dealing with 'the necessity of baptism' they make the rather bold statement, "Someone can be unbaptized and yet be a Christian who is destined for heaven" (119).

Their biblical defense/reasoning for such a statement is weak, using a twofold approach. First, they point to how the thief on the cross was not baptized. Second, in the case of the Philippian jailer, they cite that Paul "did not mention baptism but simply said, 'Believe in the Lord Jesus.'" The use of the thief on the cross is to be expected, but the Philippian jailer came as a surprise, especially since Luke will go on to record that "at that hour of the night . . . immediately he and all his family were baptized" (Acts 16:33). Driscoll does lessen the force of his statement by immediately noting: "Nonetheless, even though one can be a Christian without being baptized, a Christian should be baptized" (119). In fact, he develops the fact that both Jesus and the apostles command us to be baptized. Notwithstanding this criticism, the majority of the material dealing with baptism is first-rate and very biblical—including an excellent discussion as to the merits of credobaptism (believers' baptism) as opposed to paedobaptism (infant baptism).

This volume was an enjoyable read, the writing style engaging and clear. One final comment must be made. Having included excellent chapters on the importance of unity and love, it is hard to understand why Driscoll would resort to sarcasm and barbs (though not extensive). Such language is always divisive and cer-

tainly not necessary for the development of their ideas; it took away from the book, rather than adding anything.

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Frank VIOLA and George BARNA. *Pagan Christianity: Exploring the Roots of Our Church Practices.* Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale, 2008. 295 pp. $17.99.

One could argue that George Barna has made a career out of promoting controversy. From his early work *The Frog in the Kettle* to his more recent *Revolution*, Barna has never held back from presenting shocking information about the American church and its relationship to the culture. This is no less true of this volume, coauthored with Frank Viola, a leader in the contemporary house church movement. This volume is actually an updated edition of an earlier book by Viola covering similar ground.

Since its release, the book has generated a fair amount of hype and controversy. (Even the youth minister at my church informed me that the book has caused quite a stir among our students.) The publisher (Tyndale) anticipated the controversy by adding a disclaimer at the beginning: "Tyndale does not necessarily agree with all of the authors' positions and realizes that some readers may not either." Even the publisher of this volume seems to be second-guessing itself.

The authors' goal is to demonstrate that many of the practices in evangelical Christianity originated not from the Bible but from cultural practice throughout church history. Furthermore, they assert that these practices prevent the church from becoming a fully functioning Christian community as pictured in the NT. The bulk of the book is devoted to uncovering the history of such practices as the use of church building, the order of worship, the sermon, the paid minister, Sunday morning dress, music ministers, tithing and clergy salaries, baptism and the Lord's Supper, and Christian education.

It is not difficult to imagine why Christian leaders would react negatively to the book. The vast majority of Christians practice their faith in and through local churches—communities that feature the very practices Viola and Barna repudiate in this volume.

However, this volume does have a number of strengths in its favor. Readers of *SCJ* will certainly appreciate Viola and Barna's emphasis on the local church. They advocate a way of "doing church" that is perhaps more focused "restoring the NT church" than any Restoration Movement church I have ever seen!

Throughout the book, the authors correctly identify many of the problems and excesses of modern Christianity. For example, in the chapter, "The Church Building," they state, "The disjunction between worship and everyday life characterizes Western Christianity. Worship is seen as something detached from the whole fabric of life and packaged for group consumption" (39). Anyone who understands biblical worship would be hard-pressed to disagree here. One of the difficulties of the book is that it is long on identifying problems, and short on offering solutions to the problems they raise. (To the authors' defense, Viola's follow-up,

Reimagining Church, is a sequel of sorts that offers much more detail on positive solutions to the issues raised in this volume.)

Another strength of the book—and this gets to the heart of its primary intention—is that it causes us to look at many of our church practices and ask, "Why do we do that?" This is a valuable question because our tendency as humans is to elevate traditions simply because "we've always done it that way." This volume would have us examine our practices to see how they compare with Scripture. This is always a valuable process.

This brings us to some shortcomings in the book. While the questions they ask are extremely valuable, some of the assumptions they bring and the conclusions they draw leave something to be desired.

First, a word about the footnotes (whose tiny font size makes them nearly impossible to read). The book would have been much better served by either using endnotes in a bigger font size or increasing the physical size of the pages to accommodate larger footnotes. This may seem like a small complaint, but the tiny footnotes make the reading quite laborious after a few pages since the authors use dozens of footnotes per chapter.

Second, and more significant, Viola and Barna seem to write from an interpretive standpoint that views the house church model as the only true biblical expression of the church. At times the NT shows Christians meeting in homes (Acts 2:46; 5:42; 12:12; Rom 16:5; 1 Cor 16:19; Col 4:15; Phlm 2), yet Acts shows Christians meeting in other place as well: Solomon's Portico (5:12), the temple (5:21,42), a meeting hall (19:9), and even a riverside (16:13). Acts also shows Paul and his companions meeting with people in the synagogues (13:14; 14:1; 18:4,19,26; 17:2,10,17; 19:8). Although the authors go to great lengths to point out problems in the modern evangelical church, they cannot point to the house church model as the only biblical solution to these modern maladies. If one goes looking for a "Thou shalt only gather in the homes of believers," it simply isn't there. Christians gathered in houses out of necessity, not divine command.

Two key verses seem to form the basis for the interpretive lens of this volume which is upholding the house church as the primary model for Christian gatherings. The first is 1 Cor 14:26: "What then, brothers? When you come together, each one has a hymn, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation. Let all things be done for building up." (The ESV is used here and in other Bible quotations in this review.) The authors spend much of their time arguing that modern church services forsake this model of open participation; they do not encourage or allow participation by everyone, but instead force the congregation to sit passively most of the time. The real question here is whether the gathering pictured in 1 Corinthians 14 is *prescriptive* or *descriptive*. I would argue, against the authors, that it is *descriptive*; it gives a picture of what a gathering of Corinthian believers looked like. Christians everywhere, at all times, are not commanded to hold meetings that are open to participation by everyone.

A second passage that seems to form the crux of their argument is Heb 10:24-25: "And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near." This volume rightly refers to

these verses as a model for Christian community, yet Christians meet together and encourage one another in all different types of settings. There is no logical connection between these verses and the specific house church model they advocate.

Space does not permit a more detailed examination of the book's arguments. For those who want to dig a little deeper, Ben Witherington has an excellent series of blog posts interacting with the book in detail, and allowing Frank Viola himself to respond. You will find much to chew on in these posts (see http://blog.beliefnet.com/bibleandculture and search "Pagan Christianity"). You will also get a clear sense of Viola's heart.

What value might this volume hold for those in the Stone-Campbell movement? Although I have taken space to point out some of the book's shortcomings, we can resonate with its high view of Scripture. I don't agree with all of the conclusions the authors draw, but I certainly appreciate their effort to model the values of the NT church today. As people who identify ourselves as a "New Testament church" and "people of the Book," do we hold an equally high commitment to putting the Bible into practice, both in our lives and in the church?

What value might the book have for Christian leaders? First and foremost, despite the shortcomings I have raised, it's important to hear what Viola and Barna are saying. I would encourage any Christian leader—particularly ministers, teachers, and professors—to read the book because of the questions it raises about the validity of modern church practices. Each person should interact with the book and come to his or her own conclusions. If our students and church members are reading this volume, we need to read it as well and be able to respond accordingly.

In a way I'm thankful for books like these because they bring an interest and awareness to the biblical and historical basis for our faith. Although we may have our disagreements with the content, at the same time it provides a wonderful opportunity for learning and discussion.

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Bonnie THURSTON. *For God Alone: A Primer on Prayer*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2009. 227 pp. $18.00.

Thurston's primer on prayer will be an eye-opener for many Christians because she explores methods of prayer which some will consider foreign. She says "three historic Christian modes of prayer" (5) should be considered as one tries to discover what works best for them. The prayer modes Thurston investigates are: *oratio* (prayers with words), *meditatio* (prayers of thought) and *contemplatio* (prayers of waiting).

Thurston is clear at the outset that she understands some readers may view portions of the book as "useless (or incomprehensible)" (6) due to the fact that for most Christians prayer is simply *oratio*. Chapter 2 deals with this aspect by addressing nine familiar types of praying with words (confession, adoration). Thurston continues by inviting readers to experiment with other modes of prayer as well,

reminding them that the more passive forms of prayer, such as meditation, have been neglected by the Western Church.

In chapter 5, Thurston provides a bridge of sorts that slowly moves a person from *oratio* to both *meditatio* and *contemplatio*. She introduces the "Jesus Prayer," an inner mystical prayer made famous by the monks of the Eastern Church. It is "a spoken prayer that is a means to the contemplative state, a word prayer that is intended to lead us to wordless prayer" (88). Making use of the Jesus Prayer involves silence, relaxed breathing, imagination, repetitions, and chanting.

Thurston continues by addressing how one can pray with the body. She says, "if you want to bring your whole self to God in prayer, you need to bring your flesh along" (126). Thus, she provides the reader with suggestions for "exploring breath, heart and walking meditation" (111). The ultimate goal is to "prepare the body for quiet prayer" (128).

Chapters 8–9 address *contemplatio*. This form of prayer involves listening, solitude, silence, and focus. Thurston draws attention to many biblical passages that address "waiting on the Lord." With passion Thurston argues that the current generation is one of too much noise and overactivity. Christians must seek silence and solitude so that they can focus on God and really come to know him.

While Thurston provides a well-rounded picture of prayer, many readers will be disturbed over her continual references to Buddhist and Islamic practices. Second, Thurston states many times over that the Christian wanting to learn more about some of these modes of prayer may want to contact a spiritual guide for help, something which may be impractical for some. Third, while placing Thurston's comments in context makes a tremendous difference, some of her statements still sound odd. For example, "thank the various parts of the body" (114), "Jesus' Name is a carrier of divine energy" (91) and "the prayer of waiting helps us to become aware of God within" (163).

On a more positive note, Thurston will cause the reader to explore methods of prayer which are not purely vocal. Therefore, the thrust of her argument is on target as she says, "To pray is to become aware of his presence. . . . Thus prayer is more a matter of attention than it is of any particular thing we say or do" (15). What follows is that prayer must be distinguished from prayers (19). Thurston also notes how both the Incarnation and Holy Spirit remind us that God is always with us. She maintains that "all of our difficulties in prayer begin with the assumption that God is somewhere else" (20).

Thurston says with honesty that prayer is difficult due to the problem of distractions, feelings of isolation, boredom, and the unwillingness to persevere. Yet, we should move forward in our efforts because "As long as you are praying, you are doing the right thing" (187). After all, it expresses that we desire "to be in loving relationship to God" (17).

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Calvin MILLER. *The Path of Celtic Prayer: An Ancient Way to Everyday Joy.* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2007. 170 pp. $18.00.

It is not surprising that the author of *The Singer* and *The Song* would be drawn to the beautiful lyric poetry which is Celtic prayer. Miller's current volume seeks to introduce the contemporary reader to 'the glow of an old lamp whose flame is rekindling anew today'. The Celts' prayer was inspired by their love for the natural world. It was outdoors in nature that the Celts lived their daily lives and encountered the presence of the creator God. Miller sees in Celtic prayer an antidote for our sedentary, secular lifestyles which are dominated by automobiles, work, and worries. The book offers a rich sampling of prayers, but it is not an anthology of Celtic devotional literature. Rather, it is a book of practice which leads the reader into the discipline of this ancient tradition. Miller distills out of Celtic devotion six types or forms of prayer: Trinity Prayer, Scripture Prayer, Long Wandering Prayer, Nature Prayer, Lorica Prayer, and Confessional Prayer. Admittedly these overlap, yet this organizational feat provides a pragmatic tool which sets the book apart from others of its kind.

Trinity Prayer is the "art of loving all of God." Legend holds that St. Patrick used the shamrock to teach the Celts the doctrine of the triune God. The Celts did have a concept of a tri-fold deity which may account for the almost seamless conversion of Celtic culture to the Christian faith. In their litanies to the Holy Trinity, the Celts crafted poetry "fit for high royalty," yet they experienced God as one who was concerned with the details of their everyday lives. Their tri-part prayers sought the blessing of each member of the Trinity for ordinary tasks. In the poetic discipline of Trinity Prayer, Miller sees a model of high praise fit to counter our chatty, spontaneous, and sometimes superficial prayer life.

In Scripture Prayer, the Celts practiced "praying the Bible back to its Author." When people pray the Scriptures, God becomes the voice that they hear. For the Celts, the most powerful word was the spoken word. Scripture, especially when spoken aloud, mediates that thin line which separates the material and spiritual worlds. Praying the Scriptures aloud in daily devotion can be applied to each of the other prayer types. Scripture may serve as a "lorica," or prayer for protection; it can accompany the pilgrim on his way; it may provide the context for nature prayer; and it can certainly give voice to confessional prayer.

Perhaps the Long Wandering Prayer is one best suited to contemporary life and most easily applied to daily experience. Miller relates his own experience of commuting to work. He says that he is a twenty-first-century "goer" in search of a settled Sabbath. His wandering prayer transforms his car into a monastic cell. Miller introduces his readers to St. Brendan and St. Columba, those Celtic missionaries who embraced the white martyrdom, who left all to wander wherever the Spirit led. Seeing life as single, unending prayer can transform our journeying as well.

In Nature Prayer, the Celts celebrated creation and her Creator with poetry and prayer in ordinary life. Miller states that the Celts were Franciscans before St. Francis. Celtic Christianity is well known for its "creature praise." Living outdoors in the elements, the Celts hallowed simple tasks with prayers of blessing and protection. Miller warns of the contemporary tendency to create an entirely "indoor God." He reminds his readers that creation and redemption go hand in hand (Rom

8:19-20). The God of creation is the God of Calvary. The earth is our first temple of worship. As St. Columba said, to know the Creator, one must seek him through creation.

Lorica (plural *loricae*) is the Latin word for a breastplate which covers the heart. In the Celtic tradition it becomes a type of prayer invoking God's protection. The word's use is similar to that of the Pauline admonition in Eph 6:10-12. For the Celts, life was short and filled with all manner of danger and illness. They faced life's battles armed with the breastplate of the Victor. With their loricae, the Celts enveloped themselves in God's safety, so that they might fulfill God's kingdom purpose. Miller gives three examples of selfless lorica prayer. The prayers invoke God's protection in order that: 1) we might complete the dream we have for God, 2) we might live until our season of worship is complete, and 3) we might live long enough to share the gospel with one outside of grace. Miller offers contemporary, real life examples of the healing power of lorica prayer.

Confessional Prayer is about finding agreement with God. Miller reviews three meanings for the word confession. First, confession means assent to a proposition or creed. Second, confession means that a person admits his/her guilt for a wrong act or thought. Third, a confession can be a spiritual autobiography, as is the case with St. Augustine and St. Patrick. Confession doesn't mean that people merely inform God of their sins. Rather, it is agreeing with God that they are sinful. Miller outlines a three-step pilgrimage of confession. Like Augustine, it requires a desperate longing for God. Like Patrick, it requires agreeing with God that our sin is sin. Like Christ, confession requires losing oneself to serve God in the world. Ultimately, the goal of confession is the marriage of the forgiver and the forgiven: union with God.

Miller has crafted a beautiful and inspiring book. Each page is bordered with a simple Celtic knot design. Each chapter is prefaced with salient and inspiring quotations from a broad range of Christian authors. Prayers at the end of each chapter provide models for "trying out" the discipline of Celtic prayer. These prayer exercises are the highlight of the book and belie Miller's breadth of experience as a pastor and leader of spiritual formation. Anyone interested in the Celtic heritage of Christian prayer would benefit from the book's pragmatic approach. The book is suited for individual use or for an intimate small group setting. With its wealth of reference to the Celtic Christian literary genre, the book could serve as a primer to a broader study of Celtic devotional literature.

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Scott T. GIBSON. *Should We Use Someone Else's Sermon? Preaching God in a Cut-and-Paste World.* Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008. 128 pp. $14.99.

A recent Clemson University study found that almost 80% of undergraduate students surveyed admitted to cheating at least once in their academic careers. While it is staggering that such a large percentage of students cheat, competing studies suggest this number could be too low. Academic cheating has gone mainstream and signals an emerging American cultural value, summarized in the mantra, "If you ain't cheating, you ain't trying."

Unfortunately this attitude has permeated the pulpit as more and more ministers are choosing to engage in homiletical plagiarism. Gibson, the Haddon Robinson Professor of Preaching at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, tackles this issue in the current volume. Gibson was first exposed to the controversy as an adolescent when the minister of his home church lifted an anecdote from a popular devotional book, altering the specifics of the situation to make it seem as if the incident had actually happened to him. After the minister was confronted with his fib, his accusers were the ones put on trial, thus, arraigned for stirring up trouble in the church. The sting of this affair remained with Gibson throughout the years and was a motivating factor behind his work.

Gibson presents a brief examination of the history of plagiarism, offering examples from various professional disciplines before honing in on its role in homiletics. He assures the reader this is not a recent phenomenon, noting that King James of England, disgusted by rampant plagiarism among clergymen, enacted a law demanding that preachers deliver at least one original sermon each month. If this was the tendency of clerics long before the advent of the worldwide web, we can begin to grasp how difficult it can be for some ministers to offer originality in the pulpit.

In staking his position, Gibson does not demand that preachers be completely innovative with their messages. Rather, he suggests that ministers adopt a posture of total transparency in the pulpit, letting the congregation know when others have served as a source of inspiration. Gibson fully acknowledges that this is not a perfect science; at times ministers will claim an unprecedented idea that actually belongs to another. This transgression, Gibson offers, will be more readily forgiven if the messenger has a history of homiletical integrity.

Not only does Gibson identify the problem, but he offers solutions; both giving tips to preachers on how to avoid plagiarism altogether as well as suggesting how to seek repentance when the deed has been committed. In fact, the only shortfall of this text is the author's lack of reference to the changing American ecclesiastical landscape, namely, the development of the multisite movement. As more messages are being developed communally, among teaching teams and campus ministers, what obliges anyone to acknowledge the ideas of "teammates" in the pulpit?

The question that plagued this reviewer concerns the book's intended audience. Since the focus of Gibson's work is so narrow, in what venue could this book be most effective? While it might be too concise to be included as a textbook for a homiletics course (it is a mere 103 pages minus the endnotes), it could be a beneficial resource for launching into a class discussion. The book could be used to spark dialogue between a preacher and his eldership so that both sides have a compatible view on what is permissible in the pulpit. Ideally, this book could be studied in a minister's group where preachers could wrestle with the topic in a nonthreatening venue. The book includes a case study, complete with discussion questions, presenting the opportunity for a constructive colloquy on preaching and plagiarism.

Sadly, Gibson's work will never be as influential as it ought to be, for the

preachers who desperately need to read it will most likely never pick it up in the first place.

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Audrey BORSCHEL. *Preaching Prophetically When the News Disturbs: Interpreting the Media.* St. Louis: Chalice, 2009. 160 pp. $19.99.

Audrey Borschel serves as a minister of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). She is a featured speaker for many justice activist groups. Because Borschel served both as a pastoral and music minister in several congregations of different denominations, this book comes from a pastor's heart.

Containing six chapters and six appendices, this book discusses how the pastoral minister needs to understand and deal with the disquieting and unsettling aspects of bad news. The author's introduction establishes the book's value by pointing out the power and strength of the news media, and the need for preachers to interpret today's news in the light of the gospel.

Chapter 1 looks at the biblical authority to preach the news that disturbs: those things that "shake the faith and well-being of the community." Chapter 2 examines the evolution of the news media and the decisions that determine how news is gathered and distributed. Chapter 3 introduces some important media literacy tools used to create, construct, and present news to the public. This helps the preacher weigh the merit and bias of any news story. Chapter 4 deals with the art of pastoral, biblical preaching when news disturbs. The author emphasizes the need to tie today's news with the Good News of consolation, hope, and resurrection. Chapter 5 discusses what preachers can learn from the way secular journalists deal with issues. Reminding us that the first-century church leaders were not unbiased or neutral in their proclamations, the author urges today's preachers to tackle difficult subjects with God's justice and mercy. Chapter 6 shares ideas, methods, and activities gleaned from an Indianapolis workshop dealing with the concepts of the book.

The appendices present the following: an explanation of liberation theologies and human rights movements that help determine how news is reported; four examples of sermons preached on sensitive topics or troubling news; and a survey developed by the author to "test (the) thesis that preachers need to respond to disturbing news events by addressing them from the pulpit."

We live in a complicated world where initial and incomplete news stories are immediately presented as truth, where anyone can become a reporter with a following via the internet, and where bias, prejudice, gossip, and slander can be presented as gospel. Many people react to both worldwide and local events through the sole source of the news media. The author gives preachers the needed and necessary tools to analyze how the media creates and reports the news. More importantly, she challenges and inspires preachers to boldly and compassionately present Jesus Christ as the hope of the world even as terrible news erupts around them.

The book was published in March 2009. But because information today is shared at lightning-fast speed, the examples of cutting-edge news stories the author

refers to can now appear to be less relevant today. Borschel's concepts, however, are timeless.

The author emphasizes that the reader should always be aware of the bias and slant of those providing the news. Likewise, every preacher has his or her own bias and slant. Though Borschel takes positions on issues with which some readers of *SCJ* might disagree (such as the death penalty, illegal aliens, and the holding of suspected terrorists), her call to offer the compassion and love of Jesus Christ must be heard.

This volume can be a significant tool in homiletics and practical ministries classes in Bible colleges and seminaries. It will become an invaluable aid for the preaching minister who needs to proclaim Jesus as the hope of the world to people who are bombarded with hopelessness.

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William Sloan COFFIN. *The Collected Sermons of William Sloan Coffin.* The Riverside Years, Volume One. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2008. 597 pp. $49.95.

Coffin (1924–2006) served the noted Riverside Church in New York City from 1977 to 1987. The two volumes under consideration contain his sermons during this period and are arranged in chronological order, divided by the individual years comprising the ten-year period (Coffin composed five other works, one of which is also devoted to his sermons—of a specific subject). Each sermon is dated, titled, and the text(s) is provided. Practically every sermon contains brief but vital comments by Coffin concerning the life-setting at the time of each sermon. Over 550 sermons fill these two volumes.

On the subjects of social activism, civil rights, justice for the poor, gay rights, and world peace, few Christian personalities of the twentieth century can compare to Coffin; and these two volumes are a window—a huge one—into his activist rhetoric (as well his activist activities). These sermons are raw and striking making for educational and enjoyable reading: a rare commodity among sermon books. For this reason, and many others, these two volumes are a welcomed addition to the subject of the history of preaching. In addition, the reader will be enabled to observe a preacher who exhibits a token nod to traditional hermeneutics of the texts of scripture, and a concerted nod to reader-response interpretation. For instance, the title of Coffin's sermon preached on November 22, 1981, was "It's a Sin to Build a Nuclear Weapon." The scriptural texts for that day were Psalm 91 and John 7:53–8:11.

Since these two volumes offer no biographical information on Coffin, a trained eye would be helpful in deciphering Coffin's homiletic and hermeneutic persona as well as the anthropological milieu that propelled his passion for social activism. To the "armchair quarterback," there lies the danger of homiletic thievery that exhibits itself in the preacher who becomes "inspired" by Coffin's agenda and rhetoric and sets out to duplicate his life's work without clear knowledge and an iron will to flesh

out such demanding work as social activism. To the scholar and the curious, additional research into the person that is Coffin would be necessary. This is easily accomplished by the ubiquitous internet. For instance, besides web sites, one would discover that two autobiographies of Coffin are in print.

These two volumes are a must in the college/university and seminary classroom. Of particular importance, these volumes supply historical and, of course, homiletic materials of one of the prime movers and shakers of social activism of the 1970s and 1980s. Specific courses dedicated to prophetic preaching would greatly benefit from these volumes. Professional academies would find Coffin's Riverside sermons to be an ample supply of discussion—and debate—material on the tension between the so-called social gospel and the evangelistic gospel. The practitioner, with the note of caution contained in the aforementioned paragraph, can expect an education in the issues and language of social activism and the courage it demands: a courage Coffin possessed.

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Kent and Barbara HUGHES. *Liberating Ministry from the Success Syndrome.* Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008. 208 pp. $14.99.

This volume is a new edition, with a new introduction, of the original work of the same title, which was originally published in 1987. While over twenty years old, however, this volume is as timely as if it had been published yesterday. In the new introduction, the authors suggest that it may be even more relevant, "due to the pervasive, sub-biblical emphasis on 'success' that has fallen on the church like a black rain" (10).

Part I: A Dark Night of the Soul, consists of two chapters, written alternately by both Kent and Barbara Hughes. In the first, Kent Hughes relates how, after more than a decade in pastoral ministry, he spiraled into a period of depression and anxiety in which he was beset by the feeling that his ministry was a failure, and that he should leave pastoral ministry (13-19). In the second chapter, the text alternates between both authors. Barbara relates how, as she and her husband analyzed what essentially became a crisis of faith for them, they concluded that "the problem was 'success'" (27). Kent Hughes explains that he had "bought into the idea that success meant increased numbers" and that, as he conducted his ministry, pragmatism had become his conductor (29). While Kent had started out with a motivation to simply serve Christ, he came to want "a growing church and 'success' more than the smile of God" (30). By assessing his ministry through the world's lens of quantitative analysis, his ministry never measured up, hence the burnout and despair.

Part II: Definitions, consists of eight chapters in which the Hughes seek to define "success" (35-111). In chapter 3, "Success Is Faithfulness," the Hughes observe that, as they searched the Scriptures, "we found no place where it says that God's servants are called to be *successful.* Rather, we discovered our call is to be *faithful*" (35). The authors point to a story of Moses, in which, after listening to the Israelites complain about his having led them into the desert, apparently to die,

Moses became distraught. Moses became angry, struck a rock twice with his staff, water gushed out, and Moses was likely restored to "hero" status in the eyes of the people. The Hughes point out,

> But that was earth's point of view. From heaven's perspective Moses had sadly failed. In his fury Moses had disregarded God's direction to speak to the rock, and instead had struck it twice. His tragic failure was of such proportion he would not fulfill his life's cherished dream of leading Israel into the Promised Land (36).

This passage has a crucial lesson, "that one can be regarded as hugely successful in the ministry and yet be a failure" (36), and the reason Moses so miserably failed was that he was not faithful to God's word. Success in ministry, therefore, does not call pastors to an obsessive-compulsive workaholism that neglects one's family. Instead, it calls pastors to study God's word and seek to faithfully obey it. The Hughes go on to define "success" as serving (chapter 4), loving (chapter 5), believing (chapter 6), prayer (chapter 7), holiness (chapter 8), and attitude (chapter 9). These chapters are full of important lessons based on Scripture. In chapter 5, for example, the Hughes show how it is possible that one can pastor a huge church and yet not love God (53-61), and in chapter 8, through a discussion of Samson's desensitization to his own spiritual state and the consequent danger he placed himself in, the Hughes show how "there are untold numbers of successful pastors and Christian workers who are abysmal failures" because of their own failure to pursue holy living. The final chapter in this section, titled "Sweet Success!" (chapter 10), discusses how the Hughes found success in a small church that was not growing: "We found success in the midst of what the world would call failure" (106). The authors refuse to quantify success, and they reiterate that the pastoral call is not to success, but to faithfulness, and that, defined in this way, "success is within your reach" (110).

Part III: Encouragements, consists of five chapters that explore sources of encouragement, including God (chapter 11), one's call (chapter 12), the ordinary (chapter 13), fellow workers (chapter 14), and rewards (chapter 15). These chapters contain nuggets that anyone with experience in pastoral ministry will relate to, especially the "anatomy of a ministerial depression," based on an episode in the life of Paul (144-149).

Part IV: Helps, includes a chapter on how the pastor's wife can help (chapter 16) and another on how the congregation can help (chapter 17), and are intended to be read by the pastor's spouse and by the congregation. Of special interest is the discussion in the latter chapter on understanding your pastor, the difficulty of his calling, and his vulnerability, all of which are all too often very poorly understood by many church members (178-186).

As one who has served in pastoral ministry for over fifteen years, five part-time and ten full-time, this book spoke to me in important ways. At all three of the congregations where I served as a full-time pastor, the church leadership compared our "family-size" congregations with the megachurches down the road, constantly giving our constituency the impression that our congregation was just not good enough and often fostering an overall sense of dissatisfaction. The pressure on me, as the pastor, was to figure out ways that we, too, might be successful, like the

megachurch. I know that many other pastors struggle with these same issues and their toxic effects. This book contains the antidote. It is written in an easy-to-read, almost devotional style, and is accessible to general readers. I heartily recommend it for pastors, their spouses, and the leadership teams and elder-boards in their congregations.

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Mark A. YARHOUSE and James N. SELLS. *Family Therapies: A Comprehensive Christian Appraisal.* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2009. 496 pp. $35.00.

This volume is divided into four parts: a Christian look at the family, existing family therapy theories and a Christian analysis of them, common issues in family therapy and a guide for ". . . integrative Christian family therapy/counseling/ministry"(10-11). In their prelude Yarhouse and Sells claim one of their purposes is to provide guidelines for students, Christian therapists, ministers, and lay leaders by presenting "some ideas for critical engagement and practical applications" in family therapy (9).

Although the authors mean for this book to reach a wide audience (10), the predominant focus of this work is academic as opposed to practical. This book could be assigned reading in a collegiate counseling program, but it is unlikely that a minister or lay counselor would be interested, in part due to the length. In addition, even professional counselors would struggle to complete this work considering its comprehensive nature and the overwhelming caseloads they often experience.

Yarhouse and Sells also indicate they are attempting to provide counseling professionals a new resource, but in reality they have merely repackaged therapeutic surveys in a Christian framework. Truly lacking in the field are new strategies to implement in the faith-based treatment process, so a fresh, new presentation of ideas and techniques would better suit the Christian family therapist.

On the other hand, part three of this book, which addressed current family issues such as divorce and its effects on both children and parents, has strong appeal. The same is true of the crisis and trauma section, which challenges helping professionals to empathize with the client's unique situation by considering his present position. For example, the authors compare the "'compassion-fatigue' literature" and "crisis/trauma counseling literature" (326) and suggest that the "compassion-fatigue literature" is better able to "track the family's experience more closely."(326). This finding prompts the family therapist to seek out new tools that will enable him or her to have a more complete picture of the family's circumstance.

Another helpful strategy was the "multi-directed partiality" technique (359) which validates each family member's own experience in a given situation. The authors do a sufficient job of explaining this technique, and others such as empathizing with families (360). This reminds professional counselors to integrate

these techniques into their own practice; however, these approaches may prove difficult for lay persons or ministerial staff not so familiar with the counseling process. It would have been better for the authors to have provided more of a "how-to" for both professional and nonprofessional audiences.

Furthermore, part three could have given examples of how the life and teachings of the "Wonderful Counselor," Jesus Christ, could be used to help families. For instance, Paul exhorted husbands in Ephesus to love their wives in the same manner Christ loved the church, through self-sacrifice. The application relevant in this volume would be that family members could respond to each other with the same love and compassion Christ showed by putting each other above themselves and actively loving and accepting each other.

Even though some sections of the book are very useful, Yarhouse and Sells fall short of a full integration of family therapy theories and Christian perspectives. A more successful integration of therapeutic theories and biblical example would have emphasized Christ as the ultimate example and used his Word to incorporate new techniques into treatment, thus completing the connection between the church as family and the modern family. Professional Christian counselors who have taken faith-based integration courses will likely have been exposed to a stronger integration than that presented in the current volume. Consequently, this book provides nothing new for a professional Christian counselor and leaves one longing for more practical, biblical application.

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Gerd THEISSEN. *The Bible and Contemporary Culture.* Trans. by David E. Green. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007. 163 pp. $16.00.

"Why should anyone read the Bible, let alone devote time to studying it?" asks a prominent biblical scholar after decades of teaching in a state university (ix). The word *anyone* in the question is deliberate, since the author aims in this book to make the Bible comprehensible to everyone apart from any particular religious conceptions of it. Asked another way: "Why should people who consider themselves educated study the Bible, even if biblical faith means nothing in their own lives?" (ix).

Theissen, Professor of NT at the University of Heidelberg, Germany, believes that the time is right for a renewed public interest in the Bible not only because of a shallow and one-dimensional use of it in public political discourse but because the rise of the postmodern situation has made the conditions favorable for the Bible's reception. "A postmodern mentality," he writes, "can more easily enter into the convictions of other people without feeling pressured to agree with them" (xv). The end result, he believes, will be a greater mutual understanding between the religious and nonreligious and hence the possibility of genuine dialogue in an increasingly pluralistic society. After all, why is it incumbent upon religious adherents to understand and accept the secular world without expecting secularists to understand and accept a religious one?

Theissen's appeal for an open, public study of the Bible rests firmly on the Bible

itself. The NT in particular evinces a "journalistic thrust" that assumes a wider reading audience than just the small cohesive groups of Jesus' followers scattered throughout the Roman empire. Theissen envisions a role for the Bible somewhat analogous to the works of Homer. Even after the collapse of the ancient world, Homer's epics continued to be part of a humanistic and literary education. So, too, the Bible commends itself to be read by educated modern men and women whose scientific and evolutionary worldview has eclipsed the prescientific and mythological world of the Bible.

One element of a general education, Theissen believes, is to make the Bible accessible as a *language* of religious experience (23). The Bible gives concrete expression to experiences of transcendence, contingency, and absolute value that modern men and women often have difficulty articulating. Thus the most important reason for exposing even secularists to the Bible is "instruction in a religious language that can—but need not—become the language of vital religious experience" (90). According to Theissen, any educated person should at least want to know the conditions that make religion possible: "Even those who do not wish to adopt the symbolic language of the Bible as their own can, with its help, better understand those who do. This insight alone provides an important reason for promoting an increased public biblical literacy, in both educational systems and our general culture" (97).

Theissen believes that Christianity's chief symbols of God (monotheism) and Christ (redemption) as well as many of the Bible's core themes (he identifies fourteen of them) can provide an important interpretive framework for understanding human existence, thus enabling dialogue with the secular world, other religions, and differing confessions. On the first score especially Theissen employs a kind of method of correlation to demonstrate the Bible's relevance for a scientific age. Against the selective pressure of biological and social evolution the Bible witnesses to an ultimate reality that does not privilege the most fit and adaptable forms of life to the exclusion of unfit variations. In one of the most powerful moments of the book Theissen writes: "what is 'unfit' and 'lost' is saved by God's creative power—the very things marked for destruction by natural selection. The crucified Jesus had been rejected; he was to vanish from the stage of history, the weakling whose impotence was vividly demonstrated. But to this very Jesus God gave new life. In the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, God's creative power interrupts the course of history with an anti-selectionist protest" (92).

Theissen writes this book for anyone wanting to engage the Bible thoughtfully irrespective of belief or disbelief. But herein lies the book's central problem. Theissen assumes that to understand book religions such as Judaism, Christianity, or Islam one has only to *read* their texts without imbibing their rituals or walking their paths, certainly a modernist notion. The author's goal of promoting public access to the Bible meets another, more practical, obstacle in this book: unclear and imprecise prose that leaves one searching for clues at times. Chalk it up to the limitations of English translation or to this reviewer's readerly shortcomings, but I find statements such as the following unnecessarily obtuse: "In our discussion of the biblical tradition, we anticipate the 'domination-free communication" that historically has been impossible under 'earthly' conditions but is operative as a regulative ideal" (151).

The overriding value of this book is Theissen's perceptive analysis of the modern predicament and the vital role that religion and the Bible can play within a scientific worldview. The author's low bibliology and evolutionary perspective could bother some evangelicals, but even they, I think, will laud Theissen's efforts at giving the Bible a prominent place both in general education and contemporary culture.

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Brendan SWEETMAN. *Why Politics Needs Religion: The Place of Religious Arguments in the Public Square*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2006. 256 pp. $19.00.

Sweetman's thesis is that healthy pluralistic and democratic societies need religious reasoning in political debates (13). He supports this thesis by employing the concept of worldview analysis to bring elements from the fields of religious studies and political philosophy under the same methodological rubric. His thesis and method demonstrate how many contemporary Christian philosophers are seeking to reconcile their philosophical and religious commitments in modern society. Readers should note that Sweetman's purpose in the book is to address the philosophical relationship between religion and politics, not the legal or constitutional matters regarding the separation of Church and State.

In chapters one and two, Sweetman introduces readers to the concept of "worldview" and how it affects their view of reality, the nature of persons, and the nature of moral and political values. In chapters three through six, he argues that religious beliefs can stand the test of public reason, criticizes the central arguments for keeping religion out of politics, and engages the influential work of John Rawls and his successors, whose arguments undergird most contemporary attempts to sequester religious reasoning away from the political deliberation. In chapters seven and eight, he provides a model for religious and political engagement and examples of how this engagement might operate in American society.

Since the concept of worldview is central to Sweetman's thesis, it is necessary to explore how that term functions in his overarching argument. He distinguishes between the *formal structure* of a worldview and its *content*; the former being "a structure that is common to all those worldviews with which we are concerned," and the latter being "beliefs, principles, values, [and] practices" (26). Sweetman uses this distinction to draw both secularism and the religious worldview under the same methodological rubric and position them as legitimate conversation partners in the marketplace of ideas. He goes on to make an important move in support of his thesis when he states, "the main difference between a secularist view and a traditional religious view is not the process by which the beliefs were arrived at, but the content of the beliefs" (98). Further, he distinguishes between *higher* and *lower order* beliefs, with *higher order* beliefs being those that require a significant amount

of faith to believe, and *lower order* beliefs being those that are based mainly on reason and evidence and require less faith (51). By this point in the book, Sweetman hopes to have solidified the crucial component of his overall argument: "that all worldviews are *faiths* (in the sense that they hold some beliefs for which they do not have conclusive evidence or proof), that a faith must be *rational* in order to be taken seriously, especially in politics, and that the religious view of the world in general is a rational faith" (18). The remainder of the book is Sweetman's attempt to apply his thesis.

An overall strength of the book is the author's ability to draw together and make intelligible for the wider public the numerous voices in contemporary political philosophy. Sweetman analyzes the arguments for prohibiting or limiting the role of religion in the public square and proposes an alternative method by which all citizens can debate their most reasonable beliefs in a democracy. Many readers of this journal will find Sweetman's thesis and method helpful as they seek to discern the public nature of the Christian faith. Additionally, the book's layout is conducive to preparing lessons for the classroom or small group. Ministers or teachers may find this book helpful for teaching their relative constituencies about worldview analysis in general, and the implementation of the religious worldview in the public square specifically.

Notwithstanding this book's pedagogical appeal, two of Sweetman's central assumptions should be discussed before his thesis and method are embraced. First, it needs to be recognized that the concept of using "worldview analysis" as a tool to defend and promote the Christian faith is one that has largely come on the apologetic scene in the last thirty years and seems particularly to hold the attention of Anglo-American audiences. Why is this so and how is it relevant to Sweetman's thesis? Also, questions need to be asked about the adjudication between rival worldviews. No person or forum is free of the influence of particular worldviews, so in the words of a popular cable news station, how do we know these judgments will be "fair and balanced"? Further, Christians should consider what effect, if any, the translation of Christian doctrines into worldview categories could have on the substance of the Christian faith.

Second, Sweetman's distinction between *higher-order* and *lower-order beliefs* assumes a willingness on the part of religious persons to categorize their beliefs as such. These categories may be satisfactory for certain religious bodies, but for many subsets of the major world religions their beliefs are irreducible (the Amish within the Christian tradition and Muslim traditions with strong commitments to Sharia law). What will happen to the growing numbers of religious persons in the world who reject the very philosophical categories that Sweetman proposes?

These questions, and others, need to be asked of the worldview analysis project in general, and Sweetman's work in particular. This book will augment the libraries of many ministers and teachers in America who are interested in these types of questions. This writer's reservations about this work only find their place as a result of Sweetman's magnanimous effort to call on pluralistic democracies to be true to

their own ideals. Brendan Sweetman has done us a service for continuing the rich conversation about the relationship between religion and politics.

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Ronald B. FLOWERS, Melissa ROGERS, and Steven K. GREEN. *Religious Freedom and the Supreme Court.* Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2008. 1202 pp. $69.95.

Flowers is John F. Weatherly Emeritus Professor of Religion at Texas Christian University. In 1977, he and Robert T. Miller of Baylor coauthored a casebook entitled *Toward Benevolent Neutrality: Church, State, and the Supreme Court*, which included edited versions of all the major opinions of the U.S. Supreme Court dealing with religion and the state. This casebook went through several editions and expanded into two volumes until finally Flowers, collaborating this time with coauthors Melissa Rogers, Director of Wake Forest's Center for Religion and Public Affairs, and Steven Green, Director of Willamette's Center for Religion, Law, and Democracy, completely revised and updated the original work to produce this new casebook. Published in 2008, the current work is a single but extensive volume, supplementing the old cases with some new editorial content as well as the Court's most recent church/state opinions.

The Introduction section of the book is the section that reads least like a casebook; most of the content consists of editorial essays. Spanning nearly one hundred pages altogether, these five introductory chapters are nicely balanced between the need to provide accurate foundational information and the need to avoid bogging down in detail. These and other editorial passages of the book are written at a level that seems accessible to undergraduate and graduate students alike. Students who come to the text without any detailed understanding of American judicial systems or church-state relations in Western history will surely find the Introduction section very helpful. Even law students, particularly those who have not studied in this field before, would likely profit from many portions of this section. The essays cover topics such as how and why the U.S. Supreme Court has been important to the church-state debate; the influence and terms of the church-state debate during the colonial and founding periods of American history; who has standing to bring a lawsuit challenging state interaction with religion; what counts as "religion" in this context; how judges came to conclude that states and local governments were bound, under the incorporation doctrine, by the strictures of the religion clauses of the First Amendment; and some of the major themes and trends in church-state relations, including a discussion of the fields of most frequent conceptual disagreement in church-state jurisprudence.

The lengthy remainder of the book is where most of the Supreme Court opinions are reproduced, in nicely edited versions, with a few editorial comments appended. This portion of the book is divided thematically, taking the religion clauses of the First Amendment as a cue. Thus one major section is devoted to rights under the Free Exercise Clause, while the other two major sections are devot-

ed to Establishment Clause issues: one of these sections deals with cases involving governmental funding of religious persons and organizations, while the other treats establishment cases that do not directly involve government funding, such as religious exercises in public schools, religious displays on public property, and governmental proclamations endorsing religion. Also included in this final section is a chapter addressing the trend in some legislatures toward "accommodation" of religious exercise.

While the authors do not write from any discernable religious perspective, all three authors seem to share a certain similarity of legal and historical perspective on church-state issues. Two of the three have formerly held leadership positions with Americans United for Separation of Church and State, and the third (Professor Rogers) formerly served as general counsel of the Baptist Joint Committee on Religious Liberty. Occasionally the careful reader may find that the book reflects their common perspective, as when the authors seem to assert that James Madison singlehandedly generated popular opposition to Patrick Henry's assessment bill in Virginia (18-19)—a political episode which, they assert, served as "a laboratory school for the writing of the Constitution" (21)—or when they imply that scholars have authoritatively proven the controversial historical claim that the Establishment Clause was originally intended to protect individual rights and was not understood primarily as a guarantee of noninterference with state establishments (38). Indeed, the precursory casebook was called *Toward Benevolent Neutrality*, a title which itself reflects a certain contested understanding of what the religion clauses have meant, and should mean, for the government as it interacts with religion. But these are rather insignificant flaws in such a comprehensive work, especially since authors can hardly pretend absolute impartiality when writing in a field that has been so controversial and widely discussed.

This book is clearly designed to function as an assigned casebook in a college or graduate school classroom, and it performs that role admirably. It could easily be utilized in a law or divinity school classroom, or perhaps even in an undergraduate course on church-state relations. Adding to the pedagogical appeal, each chapter concludes with a list of about five to twenty questions designed to enhance comprehension and promote deeper thinking. Compared to other casebooks, the greatest strength of this text is its comprehensive scope within this discrete legal field: every Supreme Court decision bearing on religion seems to be covered, as well as several appellate court decisions that illustrate particular trends or controversies. These include not just cases interpreting the Constitution, but some cases interpreting relevant federal statutes intersecting with religion, such as naturalization statutes, military conscription statutes, or the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act.

This is not a casebook for instructors who are looking for a rather short, carefully selected set of cases interpreting the religion clauses of the Constitution. Nor is it likely to satisfy those who prefer editorial descriptions or explanations of the case law in place of the opinions themselves. But for those who want a comprehensive set of statutory and constitutional cases involving religion, carefully edited and concisely introduced, along with some very useful introductory materials providing even laypersons a sufficient foundation for understanding the cases and the

larger church-state debate of which they are a part, this casebook is very nearly ideal.

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John DRANE. *After McDonaldization: Mission, Ministry, and Christian Discipleship in an Age of Uncertainty.* Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008. 166 pp. $19.99.

Drane writes to equip church leaders in understanding and responding to cultural attitudes in a post-9/11 world. He opens by noting how all major denominations have been declining in attendance for over 20 years. Thus, congregational leaders must "re-imagine church life" or commit "institutional suicide."

This volume was preceded by Drane's *The McDonaldization of the Church* (2000) which has been regarded as one of the six most influential books on the emerging church by Daniel Pink. This current volume is a follow-up publication. The term "McDonaldization" was coined by sociologist George Ritzer to describe a certain form of overrationalized life.

Concerning the topic of Culture, Drane argues our consumerist and inclusivist society has relegated all religions, including Christianity, as leisurely activities where all are "equally unimportant and meaningless." In the so-called Conceptual Age in which we are living religion is just another experience to consume. After outlining some interesting insights throughout his first chapter Drane asks how churches can reach the oftentimes destructively indulgent hedonists the church is failing to reach. Herein lays one of the book's major weaknesses: long on problems, short on solutions.

In Community Drane continues to outline insightful cultural changes industrialized nations like America have undergone. Increased hours of work have created fatigue and isolation. Material possessions have increased while deep relationships have decreased. Cars have enabled us to work far from home, in effect, diminishing community. Furthermore, the suburbs in which we live intentionally isolate neighbors from one another. In short, Americans are increasingly lonely. In effect, churches must create genuine communities that practice hospitality.

A real strength of Drane's work is asking difficult questions. For example, he quotes Ray Anderson's inquiry, "Which century is normative for our theology?" (52). It is suggested no one century, including the first, is normative. As a result, church leaders must recognize the gospel is oriented toward both the past and the future.

By ignoring ways in which the church must change, ministry often includes silly judgments. For instance, Drane mentions a youth minister who is expected to work from nine-to-five every day. Apparently, the question of how one reaches youth *from an office* at such times never occurred to otherwise intelligent men and women of faith. Problems of bad church models must be met with better ones.

Beginning on page 104 Drane denounces the model of the omnicompetent "heroic leader" as well as that of the "servant leader." He argues both models are

ultimately unworkable and unbiblical. The former model creates "an unhealthy dependency on their clergy" while the latter often leads to a lack of leadership as the notion of "'the priesthood of all believers' can easily become an excuse for doing nothing" (107). A biblical solution to these models is to equip congregations to operate with a shared vision and a shared sense of duty.

The book's five chapters cover the issues of culture, community, mission, ministry, and theology. Drane's line of argument is cyclical rather than linear and consists of many personal stories where his experiences are assumed to be normative. A major weakness is the book's lack of specificity. His applications are broad and thus vague.

This volume will be especially useful to professors who teach courses in Practical Ministry. Likewise, ministers looking for a book to prod their thinking over ministry issues may want to read this book.

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James K.A. SMITH. *Desiring the Kingdom: Worship, Worldview, and Cultural Formation*. Cultural Liturgies: 1. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2009. 238 pp. $21.99.

Smith, Associate Professor of Philosophy at Calvin College, builds on his previously published material, such as *Speech and Theology: Language and the Logic of Incarnation* (Radical Orthodoxy Series, Routledge, 2002). This volume is the first work in a series of three volumes. It focuses on the formative aspects of both Christian and secular liturgy and how they relate to education, while the second volume is expected to detail philosophical anthropology in its formative aspect, and the third volume will deal with political theology.

This volume is laid out in an introduction chapter and two main parts, each with three chapters. The introduction outlines the format of the volume, which will be to note the liturgical aspects of culturally significant items and then point out how they form the individual to love items that may or may not be according to the Kingdom. In the first two chapters of Part One, Smith will define anthropology. In the last chapter of this section he will illustrate how the shopping mall, sports arena, and the university form individuals in negative ways. Here, he raises the suggestion that many Churches and Christian universities form their people according to the same desires as these secular institutions. In the first two chapters of Part Two, Smith explains Kingdom liturgy. In his final chapter, he re-addresses the Christian university and suggests ways in which the university can assist the Kingdom in correctly forming both students and faculty.

In an anthropology that hails back to Augustine, human beings are described as entities that primarily love, and only later think and believe. Heidegger pushed back Descartes' maxim, "I think, therefore I am" a step, noting the noncognitive aspects of being. He decided that people care or feel before they ever think. Smith pushes Heidegger's thought one step further noting that love or the need to love is the primary way people interact with their environment. He makes connection

between his ideas and the thought of Augustine (50). Education is then defined as that formative process which shapes our desires.

Smith's insight on the formative aspects of the shopping mall, sports arena, and university are compelling and insightful. The mall forms an individual for consumerism, an extremely wasteful materialism. The sports arena, among other things, forms an individual for patriotism. Other things which form patriotism include certain school functions and certain movies. The university forms an individual for progressivism primarily although it may form an individual for consumerism and patriotism as well. Smith's "take" on patriotism may be offensive to various heroes of our nation, but his statements fairly warn readers especially when the aim of their patriotism might run counter to Christian ideals. In a footnote (104), Smith draws a parallel between Roman Empire patriotism and that within the United States. Here, he makes no distinction between nation and empire, equating national patriotism with empire patriotism. Historically, nationalism forced the demise of empire. It seems unfair to note the similarities without addressing the possibility of a moral difference. If he understands the United States as an empire, then equating its patriotism with nationalism may be inaccurate.

Smith notes that the liturgy of the Church is unique from secular liturgy in that it has an aim to form us into beings fit for the Kingdom. This formation is not a direct result of the liturgy, but an end result of having been brought "face to face" with God (150). The Christian university should not emulate a secular university in forming students to be consumers, hedonists or humanists, but should form students to perform the Great Commission. Smith points out that accreditation can be a hindrance to solving the dilemma since the government controls what the Christian university teaches (218). Smith highlights three ways the Christian university forms students: chapel, community, and in connecting body to mind by getting students involved in missional work. It is hoped that Smith will follow through with his promise to further develop a work which addresses faculty at Christian universities (230).

This volume is written at the popular level with several technical terms which are explained in the text. It could be used as a supplemental text in a class on Christian culture or as a book in a discipleship class. While this work is useful for research since it has many footnotes which connect the reader to various scholarly works which support the discussion, it does not overwhelm the casual reader with too many details. This enhances the readability of the work. This volume contains an index of names and an index of subjects. Since this volume does not contain a bibliography, the reader will have to peruse the footnotes for sources. This work has several excurses containing either an illustrative narrative or a challenge to the reader's thought, which serve to enhance the current volume for use as a textbook.

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Juan Francisco MARTINEZ. *Walk with the People: Latino Ministry in the United States.* Nashville: Abingdon, 2008. 148 pp. $18.00.

What is the role of the Latino church in the 21st century, especially among a rapidly growing and increasingly diverse Latino population? How can and do Protestant Latino churches help members navigate their lives between the Latino community and the majority culture and its institutions? These are two of the most important questions addressed in this brief but informative introduction to Latino ministry by Juan Francisco Martínez, Assistant Dean for the Hispanic Church Studies Department at Fuller Theological Seminary.

The author's important observations, insights, and recommendations are informed by interviews with more than twenty-five Latino pastors and denominational leaders serving throughout Southern California, the largest Latino community in the United States. Though seldom ever cited in the body of the text, insightful and illuminating quotations from these leaders are scattered generously throughout the book in shaded boxes. The selected quotations illustrate the diversity of opinions on several of the topics addressed in the current volume. The book's first four chapters focus on Latino ministry past and present. The final two chapters focus on the future, including the author's dreams and vision for Latino ministries in the U.S.

Martínez begins by examining the complexities of the Latino reality in the U.S. According to Martinez, living in the hyphen between Latino culture and the majority culture leaves Latinos, especially the children and grandchildren of immigrants with "polycentric identities" (14). The author analyzes several factors that contribute to the different levels of identity with Latino culture and different levels of adaptation and assimilation to the majority culture observed among Latinos today.

In the second chapter Martínez describes various approaches employed by Protestant churches and denominations to evangelize Latinos and address the challenges they face. His brief account of the history of ministry *to*, *with* and *by* Latinos demonstrates a positive trend toward "greater autonomy and responsibility" (41). Without idealizing Latino culture, the third chapter focuses on the often-overlooked resources found among a people too frequently seen though the lens of "deficiency." These resources include a living faith in God, a willingness to work hard, and a strong concept of family and community. This is followed by a chapter that examines various models of ministry presently found in Latino communities. The author insists that demographic and cultural changes taking place in the Latino community call for new ministry models that are flexible, multicultural, and interdependent. The author also insists that Latino churches must focus more attention on multiculturalism, racial reconciliation, community, and the preservation of Latino ethnic identity. This discussion leads naturally into the final two chapters concerning the future as well as the author's dreams and vision for Latino Protestant ministry, especially among second- and third-generation Latinos.

Under tremendous pressure to assimilate, Martínez insists that younger U.S.-born Latinos need to find ways "to develop their identities as Latinos" (94). He insists that "Latino young people will be able to affirm their confession of faith in Christ with more clarity to the extent that this confession is done from an affirmation of their Latino identity" (98). Therefore, the author insists that an important

"function" of the church is "identity and cultural formation" including "the celebration of the Spanish language" (99). While Martinez may be correct, this final recommendation illustrates an obvious weakness in an otherwise outstanding resource concerning Latino ministry. Martínez often fails to provide readers with the evidence (e.g., pertinent literature or case studies) upon which he bases his observations, analyses, and sometimes counterintuitive recommendations. This is surprising since the author has listed many outstanding printed and on-line resources in Appendix A. Another related weakness is the author's tendency to generalize without providing concrete examples. This is especially true when describing the nature and impact of various ministry models in Chapter 4.

Nevertheless, church and denominational leaders will agree that the current volume is an "indispensable resource for ministry in Protestant Latino churches" (From back cover). Martínez has provided readers with valuable insights into the past, present, and future of Latino Protestant ministry in the U.S. This book will certainly find its place beside related studies by experts such as Justo González, Manuel Ortíz, and Daniel Sánchez.

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Raouf GHATTAS and Carol B. GHATTAS. *A Christian Guide to the Qur'an: Building Bridges in Muslim Evangelism.* Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2009. 446 pp. $24.99.

Raouf and Carol Ghattas are a husband-wife team dedicated to the evangelization of Muslims. Raouf is a native of Egypt, and although growing up as an evangelical, he was surrounded by a strong Islamic culture in which he was intensely interested from his early years. Along with his American wife, they have been involved in missions among Islamic populations in African and Middle Eastern countries. Carol has also become an expert in reaching out to Muslims from a Christian perspective.

Together they have published one of the best guides to the Qur'an for the uninformed Christian audience. A brief but helpful introduction to the life of Muhammad and compilation of the Qur'an is given, with a note of how the Islamic world views their holy book. The book is not intended to be so much an apologetical contrast between the Bible and the Qur'an as much as a comparison between the two with the intent of providing a bridge to opening discussions between Islamic and Christian believers. Since this is only a guide to the Qur'an, the exact text of the Qur'an is not cited. It is therefore advisable to have the Qur'an at hand so one can read the precise wording of the text.

Each of the Qur'an's 114 Suras (chapters) is dealt with separately and given a brief but meaningful overview. The remainder of a chapter is then dividedly topically and briefly explained. In each of these subsections the Ghattases point out the similarities and/or contrasts with the Bible, but, as noted above, with the intent of showing how Christians can use these similarities and contrasts to "bridge" into a discussion of the Christian perspective of the respective subject matter. For exam-

ple, the first Sura introduces the Fatiha or most sacred prayer of Islam, with which anyone must familiarize themselves with if they want to have a meaningful conversation about faith with a Muslim. The Ghattases suggest that allowing the Muslim to recite the Fatiha as a statement of his faith could serve as an opportunity for the Christian to recite the Lord's Prayer and thus serve as a bridge for discussing the similarities. There are of course differences, but initially in the early stages of such conversations similarities are more important and less controversial, yet laying a ground work of friendliness and openness that will make the more controversial contrasts less abrasive.

Another key example is found in Sura 2: Al-Baqara (*The Heifer*; although each Sura has a name, even Islamic experts have no idea why some Suras have names completely unrelated to the subject of that Sura). Here verses 30-37 present the creation of man and the origin of sin. According to the Qur'an Adam and Eve (never mentioned by name, but only as Adam's wife) were made in matters of knowledge at a higher level than angels. The angels feared that if God made man, he would shed blood. Nonetheless, God made man and commanded the angels to bow down to him, which all did except Iblis (Satan), who refused to out of pride. This was Satan's fall and the origin of sin. In verse 36, it appears that Satan made Adam and Eve sin. The Qur'an simply does not have a very meaningful explanation of the origin of sin nor of the absolute free will of mankind. Since all things come from Allah, who is the only true being of free will, then man was destined from the beginning to sin, making Allah ultimately responsible for sin. Adam learned from Allah "words of inspiration" (v. 37), evidently meaning repentance, which when followed, would lead to Allah's mercy in forgiving man's sin. The Qur'an has no meaningful explanation of Law and Mercy. In the Islamic system, man sins, Allah forgives with no explanation of how a perfect law can be just if it is broken: mercy cannot abrogate a perfect law. Here the Ghattases suggest explaining an understanding of how Jesus was the fulfillment of the law broken, thus the sacrifice for our sins through which God could show his mercy.

Another area helpful in understanding Islam is the many contradictions in different sections of the Qur'an which on the one hand preach the use of violence for the cause of Allah and in other passages teach mercy. The common explanation is that in the early days of Islam (Medina period), when it was suppressed, violence for defense was necessary, whereas in the later years (Mecca period), it was not under duress, and thus preached tolerance. However, as the Ghattases' point out, the Qur'an itself does not date these periods clearly, leaving the contradictions problematical.

Those of the Stone-Campbell Restoration Movement heritage will note the occasional reference to the Evangelical mantra "salvation by grace through faith alone" as the Ghattases (Southern Baptists) overemphasize the contrast of Islamic works salvation with the grace of Christ.

With the Qur'an in hand, along with Ghattases' *Guide*, those unfamiliar with the basic text of Islam will find a quick and helpful introduction. The similarities and much more the contrasts between the Qur'an and the Bible will be pointed out

within a context of how to use them as bridges to meaningful discussions with Muslim friends.

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Daniel TREIER. *Introducing Theological Interpretation of Scripture*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008. 221 pp. $19.99.

According to Treier the purpose of this volume is "to tell the story and map the major themes of this movement (theological interpretation), as well as to address some tough questions to clarify its future direction" (11). This is no small task since, as Treier points out, theological interpretation began in the Patristic period and has found a revival in the last two decades of biblical scholarship. However, Treier is up to the task.

Treier divides his material into two parts. In the first part, he discusses theological interpretation as an historical phenomenon that is worth recovering. Treier entitles this section "Catalysts and Common Themes." In the first three chapters, which comprise the first section, Treier navigates the world of precritical exegesis well by pointing out what is beneficial about the early church's handling of Scripture such as reading the Bible canonically and as a unified narrative, reading with Christ in mind, reading with a view toward application for Christian practice and reading according to the Rule of Faith as well as questioning the legitimacy of some Patristic exegesis, particularly typology and allegory. Treier also points out the necessity of reading Scripture in community. By encouraging interpreters to read Scripture in community, Treier wants to emphasize the necessity of allowing the particular "convictions, practices and concerns" of our church communities to both influence our interpretation of Scripture and be influenced by it.

In the second part of the book, Treier outlines several challenges that scholars face in moving forward with this discipline. This section also contains three chapters. Here Treier helps the reader see the tensions that exist between exegesis and systematic theology. Treier is advocating interpreting Scripture "with all the interests of systematic theology" in mind, while neglecting neither the historical aspect of the text nor the contemporary applications of such an interpretation (117). In other words, systematic theology provides categories in which exegetes can do their work so that the resulting interpretation is not simply focused on what the text meant, but also what the story of Scripture means. Treier's discussion of contemporary hermeneutics (chapter five) further addresses this issue. The author desires a greater appreciation for the role of the reader in interpretation without moving to a full-blown reader-response approach. This reflects the theological interpreter's concern for multiple possible meanings in texts when they are interpreted in/among different Christian communities. The goal of such interpretation is not simply knowledge of the text, but performance of the text. Chapter six is a challenge to the reader to engage in reading Scripture with the global church. For interpreters in the Western world, the challenge is to allow their Scriptural interpretation to be influenced by the voices of the non-Western church. As a conclusion,

Treier sees theological interpretation drawing together the disciplines of exegesis, biblical theology, historical theology, systematic theology, and practical theology.

Positively, Treier's volume offers a broad introduction to a very nebulous concept. He has laid out the primary historical and contemporary issues surrounding theological interpretation. For a person interested in this trend in biblical scholarship, this volume will provide a basic summary of the issues involved in theological interpretation. Aside from Treier's awareness of the historical, exegetical, theological, and practical issues surrounding theological interpretation, two other positives stand out. First, Treier applies the principles of each chapter to the exegetical and theological concept, *Imago Dei*, thereby demonstrating theological interpretation. In this, Treier provides his readers with concrete examples of the issues presented in each chapter. The second positive is not particular to Treier but he is careful to point it out. Exegesis (and biblical studies as a discipline) must not be a purely academic exercise; it must influence both the life of the local church and the Church at large. In addition to being a recovery of an ancient practice, theological interpretation is also a reaction to the privatization of biblical studies in the academy. Any preacher or teacher will appreciate this emphasis.

Two primary concerns arise. First, those schooled in historical-critical or grammatical-historical exegesis will have to wrestle with theological interpretation's claim that texts have meaning beyond the intention of the author. This difficulty may be settled once one understands that the author's meaning plays a role in interpretation, just not the final role. The final role belongs to the church and how it applies (discovers meaning) the text today. However, a related concern is how reading Scripture in community and finding meaning in Scripture for various communities relativizes Scripture. Is this not what Treier is seeking to avoid, reader-response criticism (or should we say reader*s*-response)? Is the community the final arbiter of meaning of a text? These are issues with which the theological interpreter must grapple.

The second concern relates to Treier's intention in the book. This volume cannot be the only book on theological interpretation one reads. Treier assumes that his readers have knowledge of other experts' works on theological interpretation (Steve Fowl, Kevin VanHoozer, Francis Watson and Brevard Childs among others). He also assumes knowledge of Patristic interpretation and a wide knowledge of various theological methodologies. This book is less introduction and more survey.

Nevertheless, this book is essential reading for the seminarian interested in an evangelical perspective on theological interpretation. Also, scholars who are interested in this discussion will benefit from Treier's ability to draw together many varied streams of thought as well as move the discussion forward.

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John N. OSWALT. *The Bible among the Myths.* Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009. 204 pp. $17.99.

Oswalt has done the evangelical world a tremendous service by authoring the

current volume. His purpose is to respond to the question of how unique OT Israel's religion (and thus the OT's description of it) truly is. Currently, as Oswalt states in his introductory chapter, "It is widely affirmed that Israelite religion is simply one more of the complex of West Semitic religions, and that its characteristic features can be fully explained on the basis of evolutionary change" (11). Oswalt desires to challenge such thinking and to articulate which theological and philosophical convictions best explain the contents of the OT record. The result is a compelling apologetic that is on a par with Kenneth Kitchen's *On the Reliability of the Old Testament* (Eerdmans, 2003), but without the hard data that Kitchen's work includes. It would be highly useful as required reading in a seminary class on OT backgrounds, OT criticism, or cultural settings. The book would also be a helpful resource to recommend to a Christian in a secular educational setting who is facing attacks on the integrity of the OT record.

Oswalt's book is divided into two main sections: the Bible and myth, and the Bible and history. Regarding the topic of myth, Oswalt observes that much of the controversy surrounding the Bible and myth revolves around the definition of myth. He carefully examines this pivotal issue and makes the case for distinguishing the Bible from the realm of myth in terms of transcendence versus continuity. Transcendence is the biblical perspective: "God is radically other than his creation" (81).

What Oswalt repeatedly stresses in his discussion of these concepts (and it really cannot be overstated) is that whereas one may find certain OT principles (monotheism, for example) in other writings or records from the ancient Near East, it is *only* the OT that *consistently* promotes such a principle. "What is unique about the Bible is that it maintains monotheism as the only ruling principle throughout. It is not an idea to be considered from time to time along with other possibilities" (64, n. 3). Furthermore, "one can repeat this point [on consistency] on concept after concept; it is not that Israel is the only people who ever thought of an idea, it is that Israel is the first, and in most cases, the only culture to have carried that idea to its exclusive and logical conclusion" (144).

The same methodology is used in analyzing the Bible and history. The term *history* is defined (again contrasting the perspectives of transcendence and continuity), then the OT's unique view of history is boldly set forth, highlighting the necessity of giving revelatory status not only to God's acts in history but also to the *interpretation* of those acts as recorded in the OT. Oswalt nicely builds a bridge to the NT event of the incarnation of Jesus, which was, as he puts it, "the logical continuation of what had been taking place since the beginning of the human race" (147).

The book's final chapter (prior to the conclusion) offers a critique of current alternatives to the biblical worldview—those proposed by John Van Seters, Frank Cross, William Dever, and Mark Smith. With each position, Oswalt poses the question of whether it is truly "sufficient" to explain the particularities of the OT as they now stand. His conclusion is that each raises more questions than it answers.

The contemporary relevance of Oswalt's discussion is powerfully presented in the concluding section of the book, where he explains how the continuity mind-set associated with myth has become ingrained in the contemporary mind-set. The ten

outcomes of embracing the continuity point of view found on pages 191 and 192 will demonstrate how the contemporary Western world is indeed reaping what it has sown.

I must also add a word about the very first footnote in chapter 1 (21), where Oswalt admits to writing as a Christian. He therefore will refer to the sixty-six books of Scripture as *the Bible*, calling the first thirty-nine the OT and the last twenty-seven the NT. And he will refer to the time prior to Christ's birth as BC (not BCE) and the time since that event as AD (not CE). Good for him!

I recommend this book without hesitation or reservation.

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Daniel I. BLOCK, ed. *Israel: Ancient Kingdom or Late Invention?* Nashville: B & H Academic, 2008. 346 pp. $27.99.

This focused collection of essays emerged from an unspecified conference hosted by the OT faculty of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in 2004. The gathering sought "to explore the significance of archaeological discoveries in the past century for the interpretation of the Bible and our understanding of the nation of Israel" (6). The presenters represent evangelical interests, while being highly regarded within their respective disciplines. "Readers," however, "will observe that the scholars represented here do not set out 'to prove the Bible.' Their goals are more modest" (6). Their objective is to place the OT squarely in the larger ancient Near Eastern historical and cultural contexts in order to increase awareness and new insights. Moreover, the book engages the contemporary debate between "maximalists" and "minimalists" regarding the history of Israel and attempts to reconstruct that history based on the biblical text and ancient artifactual evidence. With the exception of John Monson's contribution on "Contextual Criticism," the rest of the chapters are the revised and updated papers presented at the original conference. Although the chapters are not numbered, Daniel Block, the editor, begins the book with an introductory chapter, and each chapter is set off with a textbox that contains an abstract and a biographical sketch of the author.

Alan Millard was the invited keynote speaker for the conference, presenting three papers: "The Value and Limitations of the Bible and Archaeology," "Were the Israelites Really Canaanites?" and "David and Solomon's Jerusalem: Do the Bible and Archaeology Disagree?" Among the more significant other entries are Joel Drinkard, "North-West Semitic Inscriptions and Biblical Interpretations," Daniel Flemming, "From Joseph to David: Mari and Israelite Pastoral Traditions," James Hoffmeier, "Major Geographical Issues in the Accounts of the Exodus," Harry Hoffner, Jr., "Slavery and Slave Laws in Ancient Hatti and Israel," Richard Hess, "Syria and the Bible: The Luwian Connection," Gerald Mattingly, "Who Were Israel's Transjordanian Neighbors and How Did They Differ?" K. Lawson Younger, Jr., "Shalmaneser III and Israel," Simon Sherwin, "Did the Israelites Really Learn Their Monotheism in Babylon?" Edwin Yamauchi, "Did Persian

Zoroastrianism Influence Judaism?" John Walton, "Interpreting the Bible as an Ancient Near Eastern Document."

The strength of this volume is its diverse coverage of material. "Readers will notice that the subjects of these essays span the entire region geographically and politically. In this remarkable collection, they will be introduced to ancient Egyptians, Hittites, Assyrians, Luwians, Canaanites, Moabites and Ammonites" (7). Indeed, readers are treated to expert discussion of these topics, though the treatments vary considerably with respect to intended audience and explicit evangelical pleading. Some chapters seem to be directed to scholars steeped in the particular subject matter, while others seem to address a less advanced general group of beginners. The footnote citations reveal much of this imbalance. In a couple of cases there appears to be an evangelical plea tacked on to the end of an otherwise neutral piece. In addition, there are several glaring typographical errors scattered across the first fifty pages. Probably the most stimulating essay in the book is that by Monson, in which he proposes a new methodology, or better, names and defends a method that many readers will realize they already practice: "Contextual Criticism as a Framework for Biblical Interpretation." He insists that the Bible be read with careful attention to geography, archaeology, and extrabiblical literature, with contextual criticism providing "a catalyst" as well as "a constraint" against "ideological misuses and methodological excesses" (51). Unfortunately, his concluding sections seem to be compressed or abbreviated, as if he ran out of space.

Overlooking its shortcomings, the book is a valuable contribution to the contemporary debate over the reconstruction of Israel's history and what evidence should be included in the task.

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Peter C. BOUTENEFF. *Beginnings: Ancient Christian Readings of the Biblical Creation Narratives.* Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008. 240 pp. $22.99.

This important study in hermeneutics will be of value to those interested in the OT, the early church fathers, and the history of exegesis and hermeneutics. Bouteneff, professor of theology at St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary, focuses on the exegesis and significance of Genesis 1–3 in the OT, early Judaism, the NT, and the early Eastern Church fathers, with the majority of the book concentrating on the latter. These fathers are defined as those of the first four centuries who wrote in Greek. However, he also includes Tertullian, a westerner, since he wrote in Greek.

The basic question that Bouteneff asks is: how literally did the early fathers read the creation narrative? He seeks the answer in looking at three topics. How did the fathers interpret the six days of creation (the Hexaemeron), the creation of man/Adam, and the garden narrative of Genesis 2–3. Along the way Bouteneff reflects on the relationship between historicity, story, and truth. He also explores the meaning and use of such terms as typology, allegory, and myth.

In chapter 1 Bouteneff establishes a baseline by examining Genesis 1–3 within

the OT itself and early Judaism. He notes the ambiguity of the Hebrew *'adam* in 1:26-27 and chapters 2–3, how 2:4b–3:24 complements 1:1–2:4a, the lack of mention of Satan or of a "Fall," and that creation-redemption is one continuous act in Genesis. He also notes that there is not much mention of Genesis 1–3 in the rest of the OT, including Adam. Only in the second and first centuries BC did interest in Genesis 1–3 rise sharply.

Chapter 2 examines Paul's views on creation and groundbreaking interpretation of Adam. Paul introduces three key ideas: Adam as the forefather of humanity, as the progenitor of sin, and as a type of Christ. Paul's christological focus took him in new directions and established a Christian tradition that continues.

Chapter 3 examines the second-century apologists: Ignatius of Antioch, Justin Martyr, Melito of Sardis, Theophilus of Antioch, and Irenaeus. This was a period when a rule of faith (Irenaeus), typology (Justin), and a NT canon began to be established. Also during this period the development of the codex made the Scriptures available to anyone who could read and shocked the Jews who saw their Bible becoming available to Christians all over the Mediterranean.

Chapter 4 examines Origen and the revolution in hermeneutics he introduced. Origen's concerns were pastoral and that all exegesis should lead to morality because Scripture is moral, pastoral, and soteriological. Thus, spiritual exegesis (allegory) was necessary, for to stress only the literal level was to act as if Scripture had only a human author. What really matters is the elucidation of the "gospel."

Chapter 5 examines the Cappadocian fathers: Cyril of Jerusalem, Athanasius of Alexandria, Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nazianzus, and Gregory of Nyssa. These fathers shied away from an allegorical interpretation of Genesis 1 but they recognized multiple exegetical approaches to the text.

The last chapter summarizes the conclusions of the study and its implications for understanding history, truth, myth, allegory, and typology. The Hexaemeron was sometimes ignored or allegorized. Genesis 1 was not interpreted scientifically but was important as establishing the beginning of the world (understood christologically by some) and God's providence for the world. Adam was both the first man and the ideal man. He was the first sinner and through him came death, but all did not sin through him. He was the antitype of Christ. Allegory and typology were often nearly indistinguishable, but they both were necessary because of multiple layers of meaning in the text. Of all the valuable insights the church fathers have offered on interpreting Genesis 1–3 the most important is to remember that the focus is ultimately on Christ.

The book concludes with the text of Genesis 1-3 presented in three parallel columns that present the LXX text, the New English Bible translation of the LXX, and the NRSV translation. It also has an extensive bibliography and indices.

Bouteneff has provided a valuable examination of early Christian exegesis of Genesis 1–3. The early fathers wrestled deeply with the text (and both the OT and the developing NT) and struggled to maintain the authority of Scripture against many heresies. For this believers today are deeply indebted to them. Ironically, their views on Genesis 1 would not be welcome in fundamentalist and some evangelical

circles today. Yet, the issues the church fathers struggled with are still current, and it is important we understand how they dealt with them.

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Thomas B. DOZEMAN and Konrad SCHMID, eds. *A Farewell to the Yahwist? The Composition of the Pentateuch in Recent European Interpretation.* Symposium Series 34. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006. 197 pp. $24.95.

This book is a sort of sequel and response to the 2002 German Volume *Abschied vom Jahwisten*, but with the question mark added. The book, which arises from the discussion over nearly three decades in the Pentateuch Section of the Society of Biblical Literature, debates the thesis that it was the postexilic priestly writer (P) and not the Yahwist (J) who first combined the traditions about Israel's ancestors in the book of Genesis with the story of Moses, the exodus, and the journey to the promised land. The German volume is entirely in favor of this theory and therefore asserts that the thesis of a Yahwist is no longer necessary and we can say adieu to it. This book presents voices on both sides of the debate, some affirming that the Yahwistic source is gone and others affirming the necessity of continuing to assert its existence, even if we must redate it or radically redefine its nature and purpose. The discussion flows from Rendtorff's theory that source criticism does not provide an adequate bridge between the smaller units of tradition which were oral and the final literary development of the Pentateuch. The stated purpose of the volume is to "facilitate communication between European and North American scholars and to provide a critical discussion of recent directions of pentateuchal studies in Europe" to a wider audience (5).

The book begins with a review of the history of the hypothesis of a Yahwistic source in the Pentateuch with the many changes in the scholarly consensus over the existence, date and ideology of J. This is followed by Schmid's rehearsal of the argument that the patriarchal traditions in Genesis and the Exodus traditions in Exodus lack narrative unity and that they are only combined in the Priestly literature. There follows an explanation of the implications of this for theology and the history of Israel's religion should this J-less theory be sustained. The second section of the book contains three detailed studies of the relationship between Genesis and Exodus, two affirming the thesis that the patriarchal traditions and the exodus traditions were only combined by a postexilic P (de Pury, Gertz, and Blum) followed by Dozeman's argument that the two stories of the commissioning of Moses (the "J" version in Exodus 3–4 and the P version in Exodus 6–7) suggest that the prepriestly author (J), and not P, was the first to combine patriarchal and exodus traditions. The last section of the book contains three responses to the other essays. Levin takes a mediating position in terms of the evidence but finally identifies a prepriestly Yahwistic editor (J) who first created the Tetrateuch's narrative coherence even though he was not responsible for the books of Genesis and Exodus. Van Seeter's solves the problem by dating J in the postexilic period. Carr questions the

criteria for the identification of priestly and post-priestly material in the seam between Genesis 50 and Exodus 1. While affirming a pre-priestly combination of the patriarchal and exodus traditions, Carr argues that this is not the J of traditional source criticism.

With the disappearance of E from JEDP and the assertion that J is no longer a necessary hypothesis, we are left with a supplemental hypothesis in which a still postexilic P combines the ancestral story with its inclusive view of God and the exodus story with its exclusive view of God. JEDP becomes DP with one or more final redactors who put them together. The sheer complexity of the arguments and the naïve confidence with which scholars still trying to answer the traditional historical-critical questions about the composition of the Pentateuch assert competing theories should serve as a caution to those who are not directly engaged in the debate. Anyone who claims certainty or even a high level of confidence for any particular theory of the Pentateuch's origins is either misinformed or laden with a sort of hubris which must be rejected. More than 130 years after Wellhausen we are left with the conclusion that while Mosaic authorship of the entire Pentateuch is simply not plausible for a variety of reasons, our ability to reconstruct exactly how the Pentateuch came to be in the form we have it is severely limited. For ministers and scholars who are not OT specialists the volume cautions you to distrust older volumes entitled OT Introduction or the like when they rehearse Wellhausen's theory as though it has carried the day with a few minor modifications. It should encourage them to read something more up to date and to read with a hermeneutic of suspicion when authors of such volumes seem to suggest that there are simple answers to such complex questions.

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Bill T. ARNOLD. *Genesis*. New Cambridge Bible Commentary. Cambridge University Press, 2009. 432 pp. $26.99.

Arnold's commentary is a welcome addition to the vast array of interpretive literature generated by continued interest in the Bible's first book. Though brief (400 pages including the NRSV text) this commentary is more than a primer. Its ambitious format offers clear and concise comment on the text of Genesis as well as a brief look at various scholarly methodologies that have been applied to the book. Arnold's work gracefully dances between often competing schools of interpretation gleaning valuable insights from both diachronic and synchronic readings of Genesis. Seeing these scholarly disciplines as complementary rather than competitive, Arnold follows a number of scholars in proposing an interpretive method that reads Genesis on two levels—first to explore its compositional history (source, form, and redaction criticism) and second to examine the various literary features of its canonical form (narrative criticism and discourse analysis). Through this "holistic" approach Arnold lays an interpretive foundation from which he attempts yet a "third" reading designed to explore salient philosophical, theological, and

ethical implications of the text for the modern reader. These he discusses in a series of excurses called "Bridging the Horizons." In another set of excurses ("A Closer Look") Arnold puts the text in dialogue with its historical and literary contexts in ways that deepen the reader's grasp of the author's meaning.

Insights drawn from Arnold's holistic method abound on every page. Especially valuable are his discussions of the relevance of ANE context and Hebrew literary features for our understanding of the authors' (JE, P, H) intents. In the opening creation narrative (1:1–2:3), for example, Arnold posits that, though the Genesis account does offer apologia against the prevailing ANE cosmogonies, its primary purpose was not polemical but theological. It was designed to explain the unique and exalted position of humanity in God's world and provide a rationale for Israel's dietary laws and Sabbath observance. As such this initial pericope of the Hebrew Bible serves as formal prologue to the salvation-history and religious response found in Exodus–Numbers. In similar fashion Arnold argues that 3:1-24 is not merely an Israelite version of ANE myths but, more intentionally, a theological explanation of the current human condition = human misuse of freedom to ruinous effect. The "ancestral narratives" (chs. 12–36) should likewise be read not as loosely connected folk tales but as part of a continuous theological story of the God who created the world, choosing to create Israel. The "Joseph Novella" (chs. 37–50)—an independent short story in its own right—serves as a theological and structural bridge between the ancestors and the exodus.

Arnold's commentary is an excellent introduction to the current state of Genesis scholarship. It not only invites the reader into a serious search for the authors' intended meaning, it also informs the reader of the interpretive tools necessary to that task. Especially valuable are the author's investigations of the ANE backgrounds to the biblical text. Arnold is able to demonstrate the biblical authors' awareness of the ANE myths and to clearly delineate how the text of Genesis employs them for its own unique theological interests. Helpful, too, are his explorations of the importance of genre studies for the reader's understanding of the text. Arnold's appreciation of rhetorical criticism informs his respect for the book's canonical form and results in insights that heighten the reader's appreciation for the literary genius of the biblical writers. The one area of weakness in this work—few and limited explorations of biblical intertextuality—does not undo an otherwise exemplary investigation of the meaning and purpose of the Bible's first book. This commentary says much in few words and will quickly establish itself as an essential first read in Genesis studies.

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Telford WORK. *Deuteronomy*. Brazos Theological Commentary on the Bible. Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2009. 333 pp. $29.99.

The series aim must be kept in mind when considering its individual volumes. General editor R.R. Rino notes that the philosophy of the series is to view the individual books of the Bible as part of a unified whole, as a mosaic (7-8). The convic-

tion of the editors of the series is that "dogma clarifies rather than obscures" (9), and that the Nicene Tradition (leaving ample room for differing interpretations of that tradition) gives adequate guidance to the commentators in the series.

Work's aim in the Deuteronomy volume is "to form and discipline a contemporary apostolic imagination by reading every passage of Deuteronomy according to the sensibilities of the New Testament church" (18). Work intends to achieve this by using three key concepts: faith, hope, and love, plus the plain sense of the book (19). The order of these four basic approaches is not ". . . terribly significant, since each sense informs the others" (20). Although Work *generally* uses the order plain sense, faith, hope, and love (23-24), he feels free to vary this when he thinks it desirable.

However, Work *also* notes that "the plain sense" grounds all the other senses of the text (19). This seems to be in some tension with the contention that the order may be variable, and that all the senses inform all the other senses.

Work does not entirely "disdain" modern critical scholarship, but expresses his intention not to make many references to it (21). He also indicts modern critical biblical scholars and theologians for their own "fanciful literal readings" (20), and for intimidating into near silence or driving underground "a style of exegesis that yielded our New Testament " (22). While Work acknowledges that some will think that his approach "imposes a foreign agenda onto the text" (21), he holds that he is doing exactly what Paul and the evangelists did (21).

The major strength of this approach may also be its greatest weakness. Reading the book of Deuteronomy in conversation with the rest of the OT and NT does yield interesting insights. However, reading Deuteronomy in conversation with the other books of the canon, may make it more difficult to hear Deuteronomy's unique voice. When too many conversational partners are talking at once, the conversation can become a cacophony.

In a nice, sit-down dinner, certain foods will be served together, yet they will be kept separate on the plate so that each type of food may be tasted in accordance with its own taste. Of course, there are casseroles which mix varied and diverse foods together. Work's commentary is for those who like casseroles.

Preachers and teachers will find the commentary helpful to their work, if its aims and limitations are recognized. It will prove less useful for those who want a commentary which considers Deuteronomy simply on its own merits, or who want a large quantity of detailed philological analysis and verse-by-verse background information.

Those in the Stone-Campbell tradition will appreciate Work's emphasis upon the NT, although the very mention of the Nicene Tradition may put some of us off. However, Work's commentary might also be read as a refreshing attempt to reestablish "the ancient order of things," a phrase which is near and dear to our hearts.

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Gerald H. WILSON. *Job*. New International Biblical Commentary. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2007. 494 pp. $16.95.

Best known for his influential work on the editorial shaping of the Psalms, Wilson exhibits the breadth of his acumen with a stand-out volume in the New International Biblical Commentary series. For the length of Job the commentary comes in at a relatively concise number of pages, at least fifty more than necessary due to the editorial format of the text in 167 short units followed by blank space. Wilson provides a balanced treatment of the text within its original literary, cultural, and later canonical setting. As a result he leads his reader away from the question of innocent suffering and to the heart of Job's test: will Job or any person fear God even if there is no profit? Wilson aptly identifies and cogently explains the passages and ideas most perplexing for the lay educated reader, while saving most technical and translation matters for the footnotes—insofar as possible for the problematic text of Job. Experienced readers in Joban literature may find little new here, except perhaps for Wilson's special affinity for hearing echoes of the Book of Psalms in Job. Nonetheless, the end result is a highly readable commentary that practices the *believing criticism* espoused by the NIBC series, and a commentary I will recommend among first works for students beginning work on the book of Job.

Given the author's lifelong pursuit of holistic readings of the Psalms and the well known problems standing against such readings of Job (the apparent secondary relationship of the narrative prologue and epilogue to the poetic dialogue and the difficulties in the third cycle of speeches), it comes as no surprise that Wilson reads the book of Job in its present literary form without recourse to rearrangement of the text or reassignment of speeches. Over and again he points out the hypothetical nature of any rearrangement and then seeks meaning in the present form of the text, an approach that most often repays his efforts. Along this path of reading Wilson views Elihu's appearance as preparation of the reader for God's unexpected arrival (not a late intrusion into the text), the theophany not as "a description of divine anger and rebuke, but simply the ineffable otherness that separates God from humans" (421), and Job's final words not as "repentance" but a withdrawal of his demand for vindication of his righteousness.

Wilson also draws the book of Job into modern life and the reader into the ancient world of Job by a light touch of personal story: his youth near the Gulf of Mexico and hurricane season (297, 449), a recent trip to a Welsh slate mine (301), or his own experience of pain (168) and reference to contemporary events such as gated communities and drive-by shootings (225), preferential care for a "white" cemetery in Southern California (237), or urban desperation (273). Even more, Wilson brings life and the text together through his interest in Christian ministry. He understands intense suffering, its effect on our faith, and the need of believing friends to come alongside us (61). He challenges our naïve affirmations of light for those who are teetering on the brink of excessive pain and sorrow (190). And he works from a well-thought-out position of how we may best approach an ancient text (344-346).

The psalmist in 116:15wrote, "Costly in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints." Unexpectedly, prior to the release of this commentary Gerald Wilson passed on to be with his Lord in November 2005. His passing is both the Lord's

and our loss. As this commentary demonstrates, we have lost a wise guide—one who understood ancient texts and was devoted to the cause of Christian ministry.

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Craig G. BARTHOLOMEW. *Ecclesiastes.* Baker Commentary on the Old Testament Wisdom and Psalms. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2009. 448 pp. $39.99.

On many levels, the book of Ecclesiastes resists an easy and straightforward approach. Translation, interpretive and background issues, and canonicity are all somewhat elusive. Bartholomew's current volume represents a welcome foray into the often murky waters in which Qoholet swims.

Introductory matters occupy the first quarter of the commentary. Bartholomew provides a thorough and useful survey of the history of interpretation of Ecclesiastes and deals with the typical introductory issues regarding biblical literature. Much of the introduction is a reutilization of material from his 1998 revision of his doctoral dissertation (Reading Ecclesiastes: Old Testament Exegesis and Hermeneutical Theory). He posits a postexilic date for Ecclesiastes, although its origins—date, setting, author—are ultimately uncertain. And, while microgenres are easily identified, the macrogenre of the text is difficult to determine, with comparative literature shedding an obfuscated light on the matter. Bartholomew synthesizes several of the various possibilities, suggesting that Ecclesiastes represents "a developed wisdom form of the royal testament or fictional autobiography cast in a frame narrative" (74). The prologue (1:1-11) and epilogue (12:8-14) provide the frame within which the wisdom content is placed. He methodically moves through Ecclesiastes, tending to engage the text at the primary point of difficulty, be it structure, translation, or interpretation.

Each pericope discussion is followed by a "Theological Implications" section in which Bartholomew filters the text through a contemporary theological lens. These discussions effectively place Ecclesiastes at the center of Christian faith, leaving little doubt that Bartholomew has long stood and reflected at the intersection of Ecclesiastes and the contemporary world. Bartholomew maneuvers postmodernism, consumerism, Nietzsche, epistemology, justice, Derrida, poverty, theodicy, politics, economics, ecology philosophy, and worship into productive conversation with Qoholet's conclusions on death, love, work, pleasure, and wisdom.

Bartholomew concludes with a brief but engaging postscript entitled, "Postmodernism, Psychology, Spiritual Formation, and Preaching." Ecclesiastes functions much like postmodernity, deconstructing the assumptions of modernity, while providing a viable faith as an alternative to modernity's "unraveling." And while Bartholomew's conclusion that "Ecclesiastes cries out for a psychological reading" may be somewhat overstated, Ecclesiastes addresses the legitimate need to find the appropriate balance between the ego (self) and the divine.

Strengths in Bartholomew's book are numerous. He discusses comparisons with ancient Near Eastern and Greek contexts to offer illumination to Ecclesiastes'

use of royal lists, treatment of death, and hedonism. He interacts well with intertextual issues, particularly in relation to Proverbs. He alludes to Ecclesiastes' intertextual connection to Genesis—an idea meriting more development. He also deals well with the interpretive fallacies, such as the kind of chronological fallacy that sexualizes texts like 4:11.

Weaknesses in the book are few, but serve as minor distractions for the reader. Arguments are occasionally repeated, no doubt reflecting compilation from his other work in Ecclesiastes. For example, Bartholomew opts for and effectively argues for translating *hebel* as "enigmatic" rather than the more cynical translations of "vanity" or "meaningless." The constant emphasis on this particular definition of *hebel*, however, results in the recycling of similar arguments and material. Similarly, a similar discussion of Greek philosophy occurs twice, twice utilizing an identical quote by Michael Fox. Also, theological reflection occasionally drifts toward an anti-United States bias rather than a more appropriate criticism of the underlying cultural paradigms and systems.

Bartholomew's work will prove useful in both pastoral and academic contexts. Preachers will find a profusion of material for delivering relevancy to the contemporary world. Academics will find the content in the bibliography and the indices particularly useful as a springboard for further study. *Ecclesiastes* is well-written and will prove a valuable addition to both pastoral and academic libraries.

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Tremper LONGMAN III. *Jeremiah, Lamentations.* New International Biblical Commentary. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2008. 412 pp. $16.95.

The volume contains a foreword from the series editors, a preface from the author, a list of abbreviations, commentary on Jeremiah, commentary on Lamentations, a bibliography, a subject index, and a scripture index. The commentary for each book begins with an introduction, after which each is discussed in discrete sections. Longman divides Jeremiah's fifty-two chapters into ninety-seven sections, ranging from three verses to four chapters. He treats each of the five poems of Lamentations separately. Commentary on each section is frequently divided into still smaller sections and, in most cases, additional notes are included at the end. The additional notes offer greater depth, typically elaborating on previous comments and dealing with technical matters.

In this Longman has crafted an accessible commentary. He explains thoroughly, yet concisely, the content and the context of the biblical text. In the books of Jeremiah and Lamentations—which are quite foreign to most laypersons—this is crucial. Furthermore, while the reader would benefit most from reading each of the commentaries as a whole, each section can stand alone, which makes the book particularly valuable for the preacher. This results in some repetition (Indeed, the book of Jeremiah is itself not without repetition.), but never an undue amount, and the author provides helpful references to fuller discussions elsewhere within the commentary.

Longman most often reads the text fairly, even when the conclusions may not prove palatable for the intended audience. For instance, Longman rightly acknowledges that the text indicates "God is not above relenting." (This may be objectionable to some because this word is at times rendered "repent.") Elsewhere he observes, "God at least allows deception and violence to take place in order to further his plans." This honesty with the text is perhaps most evident when Longman attempts to capture Jeremiah's sentiment in 20:14-15 by claiming that the man who announced Jeremiah's birth should have instead "performed an abortion"! (Indeed, Longman must have anticipated resistance to this statement, for he suggests in an additional note that Jeremiah was refraining from "stronger alternatives.") While such readings might challenge traditional formulations of belief, if we fail to accede to difficult readings in Scripture, why do we bother reading them at all?

Despite these and other instances of transparency with regard to the text and the commendable goal stated in the foreword—the series editors claim their aim is "believing criticism"—Longman demonstrates some reluctance for critical reading, which is unfortunate. For example, Longman baldly claims that Isa 43:8-13 and 44:6-23 were pronounced before the prophecies of Jeremiah, an assertion which is out of step with mainstream scholarship. He also claims, "Genesis 1:2 says that God created the *tohu wabohu*, that is, formless and empty matter." In this Longman appears as an exegete committed to creation *ex nihilo* reading a text that is not. Similarly, he seems unwilling to concede the possibility that Jeremiah might have acknowledged the existence of "false" gods, unless they were mere demons. Apparently henotheism is unfathomable in ancient Israel. Moreover, Longman condones the translators of the NIV adding the word "just" to Jer 7:22, without any textual basis; while this avoids an obvious difficulty, it does so at the cost of completely changing the meaning of the text! In these cases and others, Longman betrays greater commitment to maintaining presuppositions about what he deems appropriate for the Bible than actually reading the texts for what they say.

A couple of additional shortcomings are worth note. First, although Longman demonstrates the serious nature of the offenses of Jeremiah's enemies and the enemies of Judah and Jerusalem, he expresses little concern with regard to the imprecations of both the prophet and the author of the laments. For a people who are commanded to love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us, greater sensitivity in response to these texts is warranted.

Secondly, any commentary of reasonable length, particularly one encompassing the books of Jeremiah—shorter only than the Psalms—and Lamentations, must omit some useful commentary. Given what Longman includes, however, there were a few surprising omissions. For example, when discussing the circumcision of the heart (Jer 4:4), Longman neglects Paul's use of the same image in Romans 2. Such omissions are, however, notable exceptions and not the norm.

Longman's commentary would serve as a valuable tool for a minister or personal or group Bible study. The author provides the necessary context and helpful insights which are not available from even the most careful study of the English texts alone. As discussed above, although he implicitly discourages honest wrestling with the most difficult texts, Longman does acknowledge some difficult texts. For

many readers, this gentle push toward critical reading may be a step in the right direction. For those who are fully committed to reading these books critically, however, consultation of other commentaries would prove necessary.

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Philip CARY. *Jonah*. Brazos Theological Commentary on the Bible. Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2008. 187 pp. $29.99.

The Brazos commentary series attempts to view individual books of the Bible as part of a unified whole, as part of a mosaic (7-8), with the conviction that "dogma clarifies rather than obscures" (9), and that the Nicene Tradition gives adequate guidance to the commentators in the series (14). Although many of those of the Stone-Campbell Restoration Movement would have a problem with *any* use of *any* creed for understanding the Bible, it should be noted that the editors of this series allow for a great deal of interpretive breathing room in these volumes.

Philip Cary's commentary on Jonah is not a verse-by-verse exegesis, although it does proceed verse-by-verse. Insights from and connections with other Scriptures abound. Cary seeks to interpret the book of Jonah in an overtly christological manner, which, for him, necessitates our identifying with the Jewish people. Jonah's story—indeed the entire OT—is to be read by Christians as *our* story. We are not, in any sense, morally superior to Jonah or to the Jews. If we do not see this fact, we have *mis*read the story.

Cary highlights two features in his commentary which are unusual. First, Cary persuasively argues that the variation in the use of the names for God in Jonah is very important if one is to understand what the book is saying about God (20-21).

The second unusual feature is Cary's interpretation of the importance and significance of the gourd in Jonah 4 (21, 138-161). Cary thinks that the gourd represents the royal Davidic line. Whether or not one agrees with Cary, this is an interesting and provocative move, and bathes the book of Jonah in a different light, from more "conventional" interpretations.

I had to look hard at the book in order to discern (or imagine?) any weaknesses. It *may* be that, in his effort to read the book of Jonah closely, Cary has overread the book at times. The difference between seeing and manufacturing significance or meaning may be occasionally transgressed. However, in view of the overall value of the book, this is a quibble.

Perhaps the best way of reviewing the book is to simply give you a quote which will pique your interest. Here is an example of the kinds of comments which abound in this fine book.

> The book of Jonah ends with an extraordinary question—as if God were asking Jonah's permission: 'Is it OK if I have pity? Do you mind if I am who I am, the gracious and merciful God, abounding in loving-kindness and truth, who repents of the evil?' Of course, it's a rhetorical question, suggesting rather pointedly the conclusion of a line of reasoning: 'You pitied . . . should not I

pity . . . ?' But it's still a *question*, addressed to Jonah and expecting an answer." (158)

This book may be read, understood, *and* enjoyed by seminary students and professors, by pastors, by thoughtful lay people, and even by people who are not believers. Yet its insights are profound enough to make the volume worthy of shelf space.

If the purpose of theology is to provoke us to seek God, I can heartily recommend this commentary. After reading it, I felt refreshed, chastened about my own heart's "Jonah places," and more determined to seek the God who is the Ultimate Protagonist in the story of Jonah, and indeed, of the whole Bible.

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Michael H. BURER and Jeffrey E. MILLER. *A New Reader's Lexicon of the Greek New Testament.* Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2008. 505 pp. $34.99.

Burer is an Assistant Professor of NT Studies at Dallas Theological Seminary while Miller is a senior pastor at Trinity Bible Church. Burer and Miller intend for this volume to replace Sakae Kubo's *A Reader's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Andrews University Monographs: 4, Zondervan, 1975). They seek to update the glosses in the older work to that of the third edition of BDAG. Likewise they seek to correct word-counts, word omissions and incorrect glosses. They seek to increase the usefulness of such a work by adding the frequency in which a particular author uses each word. Kubo included the frequency of the word in the NT and its frequency in the specific NT book. This gives the words for some NT books in the current volume a three-number system. The first number indicates the word's frequency in the current NT book, the second number indicates the word's frequency by the author, and the third number (where applicable) indicates the word's frequency in the whole NT. This is an improvement over Kubo's work. Also, the authors included a cross-reference for words that occur elsewhere three times or less inside the current book, outside the current book yet by the same author, and then outside the current author. The reader should be aware that the statistics created do contain word occurrences in the Shorter Ending of Mark, the Longer Ending of Mark and the *Pericopae Adulterae* in John. Only contextual definitions are used in this volume. This work has a foreword by Daniel B. Wallace, a preface by the authors, and then the lexicon in canonical order.

It may disappoint some users that the authors chose to eliminate the special vocabulary section at the front of each NT book. The authors of the current volume place this data wherever it shows up in the canonical order of the text. While Kubo perhaps unhelpfully placed this data only in the special vocabulary section and thus omitted it from the chapter sections, the current authors entirely removing this section eliminate its benefit. One suggestion is to place the data within the chapters where it occurs, but still retain a special vocabulary section. Also, Burer and Miller eliminated the appendices found in Kubo. Since the current volume (and

Kubo) includes all the words occurring less than fifty times it is helpful to have the words occurring fifty times or more in a list in an appendix somewhere.

Two chapters were assessed concerning the improvements on counting a word's frequency: Matthew 2 and Romans 1. In Matthew 2, fifteen words have a frequency number slightly different from Kubo. However, two major differences should be noted. Kubo has κατωτέρω (*katōterō*, "under) of Matt 2:16 listed as (3, 9), while Burer and Miller have it listed as (1,1) making it a NT *hapax legomena*. This is correct since its adverbial form only occurs once. Secondly, Burer and Miller include the word ou| (*hou*, "where") in Matt 2:9 as (3,25) where Kubo has no entry for this word in any of its three sections. In Romans 1, fifteen words required a slight change in their count, with no major changes being noted. In this regard, Burer and Miller have definitely improved the Kubo work.

This work is useful as a supplementary text to a thorough Greek grammar and critical commentaries in a course on Greek text exegesis. This work is also useful for reading the Greek NT for the student who has memorized their NT Greek vocabulary of words occurring fifty times or more. If the student has not yet done this, a list of those words will be a necessary supplement, since the current volume does not include it. However, once a student has memorized their Greek vocabulary including words occurring thirty times or more, then a resource such as Richard J. Goodrich and Albert L. Lukaszewski, *A Reader's Greek New Testament* (2nd edition, Zondervan, 2007) will serve their needs better than this volume toward retaining a reading-level competence in the Greek text. While software may eventually replace this volume as far as statistical data is concerned, this volume provides a wealth of statistical data to the reader in a user-friendly way.

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Everett FERGUSON. *Baptism in the Early Church: History, Theology and Liturgy in the First Five Centuries.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009. 953 pp. $60.00.

Ferguson in his latest work more than exceeds the high expectations he has created over a lifetime of scholarship in service to the academic world and the church. The breadth and depth of research and analysis in this work will make it a valuable resource for scholars, students, and libraries. Moreover, the wealth of material canvassed in this study has been arranged to make it accessible to Christian leaders and church members whose interests are more devotional and practical.

Ferguson organizes his work so that readers can focus on those "periods, persons, writings or topics" that correspond to their interests or needs. In addition to the survey of secondary literature, the work offers treatments of art, architecture, inscriptions, liturgical materials, and texts arranged under the following headings: Antecedents to Christian Baptism, Baptism in the NT, Each century from the second to the fifth centuries, and Baptisteries. Chapters within each unit focus on individual authors collected in regional clusters that allow the reader to trace regional

developments across the centuries or to target authors of particular interest. More than ninety pages of indices help the reader pursue interests more efficiently.

Highlights of this study include the following: 1. the detailed word study on vocabulary associated with Baptism (38-59); 2. the identification of key biblical passages such as the great commandment (Matt 28:18-20; which appears nearly 50 times due to the frequency of early Christian allusion), Jesus' baptism (Matt 3:13-17 and parallels; which appear nearly 30 times), and Jesus' statement to Nicodemus (John 3:5; which appears nearly 60 times); 3. the identification of reoccurring themes for baptism such as those provided by Clement of Alexandria in the second century: Baptism is a bath, salvation, enlightenment, regeneration, God's gracious gift, perfection or completion, and the seal of divine ownership and protection (309-313); 4. the detailed treatment of key or intriguing figures: Clement of Alexandria (309-320), Tertullian (336-350), Cyprian (351-361), Cyril of Jerusalem (473-486), Ephraem of Syria (499-518), John Chrysostom (533-563), and Augustine (776-818). The literary evidence concerning the practices and understanding of the significance of baptism has been supplemented by a discussion of art (123-131), inscriptions (372-376), the baptistery of Dura Europus (440-442), and baptisteries across the Roman Empire (819-852). While each of these components of the book has great intrinsic value their greatest value is their contribution to the development of a comprehensive understanding of baptism in the early church.

Everett presents a compelling argument that adult baptism by immersion for salvation best reflects the whole range of evidence available for the first through the fifth century. Infant baptism drew comment initially near the end of the second century as a questionable practice, but quickly was accepted (along with deathbed baptisms by sprinkling) as a pastoral expedient to ensure the salvation of the dying. The use of burial inscriptions linking the baptismal and death dates of children was especially convincing (372-376). This accommodation would have long-term consequences. Augustine's argument for Original Sin was predicated in part on the occasional practice of infant baptism and subsequently led to the application of universal infant baptism in the West (but not in the East; 803-816).

Ironically, as I read this massive work, I found myself wanting more. I wanted summary statements at the end of each chapter that reiterated the key elements. Some chapters had them, others did not. Some summaries that did exist were almost cryptic, referring to a previous chapter rather than recapitulating immediate and previous findings. Fortunately, the final summation was very clear. I also wanted more evidence to justify the interpretation of the artistic depictions of baptism. Using nonbaptismal art to validate conclusions reached in interpreting baptismal art would have greatly enhanced the effectiveness of this analysis. Such small quibbles should not detract from the overall accomplishment of this book. It is, after all, not a bad thing for an author to leave readers hungry for more.

Ferguson has quite properly limited his focus to a presentation of the evidence for the practices and beliefs of early Christians. He has furthermore presented an account of that evidence which confirms one of the central tenets of the Stone-Campbell tradition, namely adult, believers' baptism by immersion for salvation from sins. He has spoken my language as a fellow church historian. However, history is not the language of faith for most of our companions in the community of faith. Working in a highly ecumenical context, I regularly teach students who find that the seminal moments and beliefs of their own institutional heritage are markedly different from their personal beliefs. Rather, than be transformed by the revelation or moved to seek out a different community of faith, the vast majority choose either to ignore the contradictions or to create artificial reconciliations of their contradictory beliefs. Can the impressive amount of research and reflection represented by this book hope to provoke deeper appreciation of baptism and its role in salvation without raising contemporary theological questions?

Restorationist churches face a number of questions raised by this research. Granted that adult baptism has the only clear biblical warrant, how are believers baptized as infants to be received? What are the implications of this study for a more ecumenical church? As new churches proliferate across the Southern hemisphere independent of the missionary efforts of the Stone-Campbell Restoration Movement, how are we to address their varied understandings of baptism? While some of these issues have been addressed in other venues, this work has left us with the unspoken challenge to reexamine our own understanding of baptism.

Ferguson has also left us with a historical sermon as yet unpreached. In his assertion that practice often precedes theological reflection churches of the twenty-first century are confronted with an unsettling truth. As we incorporate even the most innocent of pastoral innovations to make our worship and ministry more effective, we run the very real risk of establishing unhealthy theological precedents. The acceptance of infant baptism as a pastoral response to the fears of Christian parents later provided a justification for the wholesale theological revolution of Augustine's doctrine of Original Sin. Just so, today's creative innovations may lead to fundamental theological shifts. Given the quickened pace of societal transformation, we should not expect such changes to take 200 years, but rather 20 to 50 years. The history of baptism in the first five centuries offers a warning.

Ferguson has made to the church a great gift of his time, insight, and scholarship in this current volume. His efforts have paved the way for more fruitful research and reflection on understandings of baptism in antiquity and in the present.

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F. LeRon SHULTS and Andrea HOLLINGSWORTH. *The Holy Spirit.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008. 156 pp. $16.00.

This book is a recent contribution to the Eerdman's Guides to Theology series. In approaching a study of the Holy Spirit, Shults and Hollingsworth assert that focusing on only the academic side would be especially shortsighted. Their strategy is to link theological interpretation with the real-life transformation it influenced throughout the survey.

Part one, making up the bulk of the book, is a survey of theologies of the Holy Spirit throughout the church's history. Discussing the early church, time is spent

on the Cappadocian fathers as well as the filioque controversy that ultimately divided east from west. Moving into the medieval period they focus nearly exclusively on the western church. This remains true through the Reformation and early modern eras. They cover views as diverse as Pentecostalism, Ecumenism, Feminist, Liberation, and other 20th-century theologies. Part one ends with a brief summary and ideas for ways to go forward. Shifts in the understanding of the relation of spirit and matter, of the definition of a person, and the understanding of force that have taken place must be taken into consideration for future understandings of the Holy Spirit. Part two consists of fifty pages of annotated bibliography, covering the works of authors mentioned in part one along with others.

Shults and Hollingsworth manage to pack a huge amount of information into 150 pages. Surprising depth is reached in their discussion of the Cappadocian fathers, the filioque controversy, and medieval theologians. By focusing not just on interpretation by academic theologians, but also examining the work of monks such as Bernard of Clairvaux and mystics such as John of the Cross they manage to produce a very balanced, even inspiring book. Especially enlightening was their investigation of Feminist, Liberation, and 20th-century theologians showing how theology of the Holy Spirit continues to draw on ancient sources but also to go in fresh, new directions.

The biggest problem with the book is its brevity. It provides an excellent summary but leaves readers wanting more. Many persons in history are left unmentioned. This is especially noticeable as they discuss the Protestant Reformation and afterward, times when there are simply too many persons to fit into a book this size. The rise of Pentecostalism in the 20th century gets attention, but what about precursors to it such as the Cane Ridge Revival? No mention of Barton W. Stone or anyone else in the Stone-Campbell Restoration movement occurs in the volume. Readers from other Christian expressions will likely find their key leaders missing from this volume too.

At times the authors fail to achieve their stated goal of showing how the theologies led to transformation. They do not adequately show how the differing views between east and west play out in the practical worship of the community. They write of the transformation that occurred among the monks and mystics; questions about how these various theologies affected the lives of the laity are unanswered.

Overall, this book provides a window on how the biblical witness has been interpreted in developing theologies of the Holy Spirit through the ages. It is a great place to begin study on the Holy Spirit, and the bibliography in part two will help interested readers move on in that study.

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Marcus J. BORG and John Dominic CROSSAN. *The First Paul: Reclaiming the Radical Visionary behind the Church's Conservative Icon*. New York: Harper One, 2009. 230 pp. $24.99.

In his now classic work *Paul and the Salvation of Mankind*, noted Danish scholar Johannes Munck warned against a kind of secularizing of Paul that would divorce the apostle from his roots in Jewish apocalyptic thought. "Purely secular ideas have been used to describe the apostle and his call," he wrote, "and those secular ideas have been imposed on the apostle himself as if they were his own thoughts and motives" (65). Now, some fifty years later, appears another attempt at a secularized version of Paul in a book coauthored by two of the most well-known NT scholars writing for the public today, Marcus Borg and John Dominic Crossan.

Up till now, Borg and Crossan have made their mark primarily in Jesus studies, both being original fellows of the controversial *Jesus Seminar*. In this volume they cast their critical glance towards Paul, who, in the authors' opinion, was "remarkably faithful to the message and vision of Jesus himself" (11). But, it must be asked, which Paul? Answer: the *radical* Paul of the genuine letters (Romans, 1-2 Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, 1 Thessalonians, Philemon), a Jewish Christ mystic who challenged the dominant societal values of his day, especially slavery and patriarchy. This first Paul stands in contrast to the *conservative* Paul of the disputed letters (Ephesians, Colossians, 2 Thessalonians) that compromised this radical vision and the *reactionary* Paul or "anti-Paul" of the Pastoral letters (1,2 Timothy, Titus) that effectively negated it. The authors add a fourth "Paul" to the plethora of Pauls in the NT: the Paul of Acts, which the authors regard as an important secondary source, albeit used critically.

To hear the voice of the radical Paul, Borg and Crossan point the reader to a commendable and worthwhile goal: to wrest Paul away from his sixteenth-century Reformation context and place him back into his first-century Roman one, "to see him properly as contrasting not Christianity to Judaism or Protestantism to Catholicism, but Jewish covenantal traditions to Roman imperial theology" (7). By "Roman imperial theology," they mean Rome's embodiment of "the wisdom of the world" that achieves peace and justice through military conquest and imperial order, in stark contrast to Paul's vision of a society of equals committed to justice and nonviolence based on the radical "family values" of God as Father of all, the benevolent Householder of the entire world.

Borg and Crossan's previous work on Jesus is not unrelated to their work on Paul. "The radical Paul, we are convinced, was a faithful follower of the radical Jesus" (19). Both Jesus and Paul offered an alternative vision of how life on earth should be lived. Both opposed empire. Both were executed by empire. And both, one should note, were decidedly *non-apocalyptic*. While the authors admit that Paul expected the end-time to come soon, this expectation does not affect their reading of Pauline ethics in any meaningful way. In a stunning commentary on 1 Corinthians 7, Borg and Crossan state: "Since Paul was wrong about the timing of that consummation, we emphasize that only his vision of celibacy—*never his vision of general Christian life*—was derived from that incorrect presumption" (49, italics mine). In sharp contrast to Beker, who sees apocalyptic as the coherent center of

Paul's thought, Borg and Crossan never even mention the word and only rarely (and much too late in the discussion to be of much significance) mention "eschatology" or "Eschaton." This benign neglect makes for almost a purely secularized version of Paul, one suspiciously amenable to Western democratic idealism.

Instead of a thoroughgoing eschatology, Borg and Crossan offer a thoroughgoing anti-Roman imperialism as the interpretive lens through which to see Paul. Sin and death are not hostile cosmic powers stemming from Paul's apocalyptic worldview but humanity's involvement in systems of violence and injustice; the crucifixion of Jesus is not the apocalyptic defeat of those powers but the result of "the violent injustice he had opposed justly and nonviolently" (166); the resurrection of Jesus is not an apocalyptic event that convinces Paul as a former Pharisee that he is living at the dawn of the new age but an affirmation that God's great cleanup of the world is already underway; righteousness is not a forensic-eschatological concept in Paul ala Käsemann but God's distributive (not retributive) justice by which God's Spirit is equally available to all; the gift of the Spirit is not an installment or guarantee of better things to come but "the Spirit of nonviolent distributive justice . . . offered freely and gratuitously to all people" (183).

While this political reading of Paul may be appealing on a theological level, it fails to justify on an exegetical one. Borg and Crossan's interpretation of such key eschatological texts as Romans 8; 9–11, and 1 Corinthians 15 is strained at best, distorted at worst. Even the all-important baptismal formula of Gal 3:27-28 rests on an apocalyptic foundation ("no longer male and female") that the authors fail to recognize or else admit. Moreover, the authors' political reading of Paul runs into significant obstacles with a text like Romans 13, which encourages submission to a seemingly benevolent empire, not to mention certain features of Luke–Acts, which cast Rome in a positive or at least neutral light. (Can it be lost on our authors that Luke proudly proclaims his hero Paul on more than one occasion a *Roman* citizen?) Borg and Crossan are on stronger exegetical ground with their analysis of Paul's letter to Philemon, though one wonders whether Paul's appeal for manumission yields the wider social application Borg and Crossan wish to give it. Despite their proclivity for tendentious exegesis, the authors frequently appeal to what Paul really "meant" or how Paul has been tragically "misunderstood."

The first Paul was indeed the radical Paul. Unfortunately for these authors, he was also the apocalyptic Paul. Paul's social vision was inextricably tied to his apocalyptic vision that gave it birth. Any attempt to separate the two runs the risk, as Munck reminded us, of seriously misunderstanding Paul. In this light it is unfortunate indeed that much of liberal Christianity today desires the ethics of Jesus and Paul without the eschatology while much of conservative Christianity desires the eschatology of Jesus and Paul without the ethics. What God has joined together, let no one separate.

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J.R. Daniel KIRK. *Unlocking Romans: Resurrection and the Justification of God*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008. 259 pp. $32.00.

God is often described in absolutes when theology or Scripture is being discussed. Even those who do not subscribe to every tenet of classical theism are still often comfortable speaking of God in abstracts, in a vacuum almost. Kirk argues that this would not have harmonized neatly with Paul's view. Time and again in the OT, as well as in Paul's writings, one can see how God's identity is inseparable from his dealings with his people, Israel.

Generalities and principles do not do God justice, especially when approaching Romans. Paul is defending his apostolate and wrestling with the thorny issue of God's dealing with his people and their apparent unbelief. It is in this context that Paul grapples with who God is and helps clarify his identity and why he is justified in his actions. With this in mind, Kirk contends that the resurrection event exerts "hermeneutical leverage over the Scriptures and stories of Israel" as central to the heart of the book. He sees this as superior to traditional approaches that use such lenses as justification by faith or union in Christ.

Paul reflects on various passages throughout Romans in a whole new light because of the resurrection. His angle of approach shares a lot in common with the Jewish thought of the day, but he goes beyond this since he sees resurrection not as restricted only to the eschaton but already accomplishing its purposes through the victory over death Jesus experienced. Time and again, the resurrection is the key to Paul's handling of various objections. This overcoming of death by the Messiah is seen as what the Law ultimately points to. Resurrection is why believers can overcome sin. Israel's disbelief is even explained in light of this theme.

Kirk raises some intriguing points that warrant consideration. He challenges some perhaps overly simplistic approaches to Romans, offering a well-reasoned replacement. Even if some were to disagree with his overall argument, he nonetheless makes an excellent case for a reevaluation of the role of the resurrection in the book, pointing out not a few places where Paul uses it to drive his explanations. His exegesis is thorough and sound, seeking to be true to the context rather than a particular theological agenda. Decisions about how to interpret any given clause or word are made fairly with an acknowledgment of similar occurrences elsewhere. In the uncommon instances where a less common translation is adopted, it is not without support.

After going through the text, Kirk spends a chapter considering some further implications. He gives attention to similarities between Paul's work and apocalyptic works. Beyond this, he also explores some inferences for the church today, looking at such topics as theodicy, eschatology, and unity. These comments are insightful, and although some of the reproofs are particularly barbed, like the one reproving ethnic and theological divisions in the church, they are appropriate.

Kirk's volume certainly gives cause for reexamining one's approach to Romans. In a tradition that values an unbiased assessment of the biblical accounts, it is worthwhile to be able to weigh ideas that challenge the status quo. Anyone who

intends to teach or study Romans would do well to give Kirk's presentation due consideration.

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Richard A. HORSLEY. *Jesus in Context: Power, People, and Performance.* Minneapolis: Fortress, 2008. 274 pp. $26.00.

Readers familiar with Horsley's earlier work will recognize a familiar pattern structuring the current volume: he begins by briefly sketching the history of "Christian theological" reading of the NT and then chronicles a handful of fundamental problems with that reading. Issues at which Horsley tilts include (i) monolithic constructions of "Judaism" and Jesus' opposition to it; (ii) cultural assumptions about reading, writing, and the stability of [printed] texts; (iii); weak understandings of memory, especially memory as transmission; and (iv) the disjunction of religion, politics, and economics in biblical scholarship. These are Horsley's traditional favorites.

The first chapter addresses "people's history" and its relation to Gospels scholarship. Horsley reads the NT as the stories of individuals and communities that "understood themselves as renewal movements or an [*sic*] extensions of the people of Israel" rather than the beginning of the stories of "bishops, theologians, and church councils" (21). Within the broader scope of the Roman empire the Gospels are "history from below" (30–31). The second chapter reads the history of "the first movements focused on Yeshua bar Yosef" (35) against "the broader historical conditions of life under the Roman Empire," conditions marked by "many other Judean, Samaritan, and Galilean movements." Of course, in Horsley's research these are movements of "popular resistance and [Israelite] renewal" (36).

The third chapter begins the discussion of oral performance. Horsley briefly surveys John Miles Foley's theoretical work on oral traditional texts. He then reads the Q discourses within the context of Israelite tradition, which he argues provides the crucial context for understanding Q's figures and images. For Horsley, of course, precisely the *little* Israelite tradition provides this crucial context. In the fourth chapter, Horsley focuses on Mark's Gospel in the context of oral performance. Again he takes his lead from evidence suggesting the scarcity of skill sets known as "literacy" and from a theoretical perspective that highlights the political function of those skill sets to contextualize Mark within the popular tradition.

Horsley turns to social memory research in the fifth chapter, rightly noting that "social memory should not be reified as something in itself" (109). Horsley emphasizes the Gospels' function as communication rather than their status as artifacts (112). In chapter six Horsley traces the way that modern critical research (especially coming out of the Jesus Seminar) has produced a "Jesus [who] had little or no memory" (126) and attempts to correct that problem. He insists that the realization "that memory is social is simple but profound in its implications for academic endeavors such as studies of Jesus and the Gospels" (135). For Horsley, these implications relate primarily to the struggle of marginal cultural groups against the hegemony of cultural elites. The seventh chapter analyzes Mark's Gospel in terms

of "social-cultural memory," especially "the way in which memory works in the composition and performance of the Gospel in its historical social context" (146–147). Horsley's reading of Mark stresses the influence of and coherence with Israelite traditional patterns and themes and locates Mark's story of Jesus as an "anti-hegemonic memory" flourishing "underneath the officially propagated cultural memory . . . that enable[d] subordinated groups to maintain a degree of social identity not completely controlled by the dominant culture" (156).

The eighth chapter begins the final section, "Moral Economy and the Arts of Resistance." Horsley surveys the anthropological theory and research of James C. Scott, which has consistently informed Horsley's work for over twenty years. In chapter nine Horsley proposes an approach to the historical Jesus that is more thoroughly informed by Scott's work on moral economy, emphasizing (a) the literary context of all our information about Jesus, and (b) the political dimension of that information. In this reading Jesus ceases to be a figure of (merely) religious significance and becomes a person embedded in larger sociocultural patterns and engaged in various forms of social interaction (including religious interactions). Horsley, in chapter ten, turns to Q and issues of moral economy. See also his appendix on the Q speeches ("Moral Economy and Renewal Movement in Q"; 229-245) that sets parts of the Q text in "measured verse" in an effort to begin "to represent an *orally* performed text in the *visual* medium of print" (230; original italics; see also *Whoever Hears You Hears Me*, 1999), with Jonathan Draper). Horsley finishes with a brief concluding chapter (224-228) that recaps the central arguments of the book.

Horsley's current volume reproduces much of the theoretical discussion and textual analysis of Horsley's previous works, especially of the last ten years. This book does not, however, offer very much advance on these earlier, sometimes groundbreaking, studies. This raises the question, Why should this book have been published in the first place? For those of us who are very familiar with Horsley's previous works, this book is, perhaps, unnecessary. But for undergraduate, graduate, or seminary students just becoming acquainted with the development and current status of NT scholarship, this book brings together the primary foci and interests of a leading practitioner. In this sense, the volume can be read as Horsley's manifesto, his prescription for the future of NT research.

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Dale C. ALLISON, Jr. *The Historical Christ and the Theological Jesus.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009. 128 pp. $16.00.

Allison's current volume, though brief, is one of the more interesting and important books on Jesus in the last twenty or thirty years. The book does not fall clearly into a particular genre, as repeated themes are as broad as his identity as a confessing Christian, his reiterations that the historical Jesus was an apocalyptic prophet, and his openness to numinous religious experiences. At the risk of over-

simplification, this book is Allison's theological memoir of his career thus far in the quest of the historical Jesus, and his taking stock of the status of the discipline.

Particularly attractive is that Allison sheds the cloak of objectivity and discusses the explicit role of personal subjectivity in his research and even dares to opine on this role for others' research as well. This stance is refreshingly honest and supports his larger thesis that historical Jesus research at present has no "assured critical results" (10-11), only a variety of opinions tied inevitably to a variety of opinion-givers.

Given the personal nature of this book, another strength is that Allison sometimes comments on places where he has changed his mind from previous publications. As one example, he notes that he once bought into Schweitzer's view of "thorough-going eschatology" but does so no longer (95).

Another example of a mind-change for Allison, and one of the most prominent themes in the book, is that he no longer believes it possible to separate authentic strands of historical Jesus tradition from later church accretions, at least not with surety. Allison is thus skeptical of criteria of authenticity—"My question is not Which criteria are good and which bad? or How should we employ the good ones? but rather Should we be using criteria at all? My answer is No" (55). He informs readers that he is convinced of this after years of his own scholarly attempts to do so (38), and that creating a Jesus apart from the earliest sources of him is impossible—"We cannot lay them aside and tell a better story" (66). Instead, Allison advocates an approach to the Gospels of "making inferences from patterns that characterize the sources as a whole" (92). This approach is wholeheartedly welcomed from this reviewer, especially as Allison bases it on the impact of memory on the Jesus tradition (61–78).

For all the insightful discussion, several matters arise with which one could disagree or at least wish for qualification, and I here cite just one. Although Allison claims his method contains "a canonical bias" (66), he really means a Synoptic bias. Indeed, he follows the last quotation by claiming, "Our reconstructed Jesus will inevitably be Synoptic-like" and that "nothing else . . . can carry conviction." One notes an omission of John's Gospel here, which he considers "a less than literal interpretation of apocalyptic eschatology" (99). In light of recent work that reopens discussion on the historical nature of the fourth Gospel, such as that of Richard Bauckham or some presenters in the John, Jesus, and History session at the Society of Biblical Literature, many will undoubtedly question Allison's muting of the canonical voice of the Johannine Jesus.

Despite this minor criticism, no one should ignore the significance of one of the most important living Jesus scholars arguing that the rules of the game must change for both historical and theological reasons. Indeed, Allison's book is critical for any scholar involved in Jesus research and it will not be a surprise if future generations see this work as the line of demarcation between an "early Allison" and "later Allison." Since its discussion is dependent upon knowledge of the results of critical

scholarship, as well as Allison's own work, it will be most beneficial to readers familiar with such work.

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Margaret Elizabeth KÖSTENBERGER. *Jesus and the Feminists: Who Do They Say That He Is?* Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008. 256 pp. $19.99.

Likening her book to Albert Schweitzer's *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*, Köstenberger desires to survey the *feminist* quest for the historical Jesus. Not surprisingly, she finds a variety of reconstructions of Jesus by feminist scholars, just as Schweitzer uncovered a diverse range of images of the historical Jesus.

Part 1, Foundations, offers a brief sketch of the rise and development of feminism in the United States and points out a number of hermeneutical issues in the "feminist debate": She believes biblical history can lead to absolute truth and should not be subject to the relative perspectives and values of the researcher. She eschews reader-response criticism of the biblical text as subverting authorial intention. She prefers interpreting earlier texts in light of "later revelation" rather than seeking for a "central message of Scripture" and interpreting other texts in light of this center. She believes the Bible is not really patriarchal (as feminists say), but just *patricentric*; that is, male headship is based, not on the ontological supremacy of males, but "in the mysterious, sovereign divine will subsumed under the supreme lordship and authority of the Lord Jesus Christ" (34). Köstenberger bases her hermeneutics on the "inerrancy, inspiration, and final authority" (224) of Scripture.

The heart of the book is a discussion in three parts of the major feminist views of Jesus in relation to women. In general, readers learn that all feminist approaches to Scripture are bad, but some are less bad than others; conversely, "the long-held conservative interpretation of Scripture" (18) is good. Part 2 covers "radical feminism." The three scholars profiled, Mary Daly, Virginia Ramey Mollenkott, and Daphne Hampson, typify feminists who have generally moved well outside the bounds of historically recognizable Christian faith. It is doubtful that many *SCJ* readers will find much common ground with the radical feminists. Köstenberger notes that Mollenkott and Daly both began in the church, and became steadily more radical "illustrating the slippery slope of feminism that tends toward increasing radicalization" (48). Hampson and Daly have constructed post-Christian systems that have little or no interest in Jesus, and Mollenkott has subsumed Christianity into her vision of a new "omnigendered" and "trans-religious" system.

Part 3, the largest section of the book, is devoted to "reformist feminism," whose advocates have not abandoned the Bible, but have instead sought to "liberate" Scripture from sexist or patriarchal interpretations and to recreate a "useable history" of early Christianity. Of the five major scholars profiled (Letty Russell, Rosemary Radford Ruether, Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, Kathleen Corley, and Amy-Jill Levine), Schüssler Fiorenza rightly draws the most attention, as "the matriarch of North American feminism" (87). Her best-known work, *In Memory of*

Her, offers a new hermeneutic for reconstructing early Christian origins as a liberating story for women, based on Jesus' intention to create a "discipleship community of equals." Köstenberger's summary and evaluation of Schüssler Fiorenza's work is admirably detailed and is the strongest part of the book. The "myth of Christian origins" (99) constructed by Schüssler Fiorenza has been influential in feminist scholarship and liberationist hermeneutics for nearly two decades. But, as Köstenberger shows, this model has begun to disintegrate under the more carefully nuanced research of other scholars, including several feminists. She highlights among these Kathleen Corley and Amy-Jill Levine, both of whom have challenged the notion that Jesus worked to dismember the systemic patriarchy of his world and sought to create a "discipleship of equals." Köstenberger cites approvingly also the work of John Elliott and Esther Yue L. Ng, who argue on sociological grounds that nothing like the modern concept of egalitarianism was to be found in the ancient world, including among early Christian groups.

Köstenberger includes within reformist feminism what she calls "the *new* face of feminism," which is less interested in reconstructing the world of Jesus and early Christians than in promoting new reading strategies focusing on countercultural representations of women and seeking to identify the hidden potential of texts to do more than their original writers intended. Most of the "new feminists" operate within the framework of historic Christianity, using a variety of literary-critical reading strategies to maximize the potential liberationist possibilities of the texts they treat. Köstenberger judges that these approaches ignore authorial intention in favor of the ideological commitments of feminist scholars.

Part 4 is devoted to evangelical feminism, whose proponents are said to work within an inerrantist framework. Of the eighteen scholars mentioned, including such household names as Ben Witherington, Mary Evans, Paul Jewett, and Aida Besançon Spencer, eleven are men, probably indicating the relative paucity of evangelical women scholars working on feminist issues. Köstenberger finds much to commend in the industry and creativity of evangelical feminists, but she faults them for strained exegesis and "unlikely interpretations driven more by egalitarian presuppositions than by an inductive study of the text" (177).

Part 5 is Köstenberger's "constructive alternative," namely "an evangelical and non-feminist reading" of the Gospels. Not surprisingly, she concludes that Jesus was not a feminist and "*did not envision a community where men and women would be equal in positions of leadership*" (212, emphasis original). Here she touches on the subtext of the whole book, which is largely an apologetic for what used to be called "hierarchicalism," but has been more recently softened into "complementarianism." In her many references to 1 Tim 2:12-13, it is clear that this is a core text to support her contention that the permanent subjection of women to men and the unfitness of women for public leadership (speaking) ministries in the church are grounded in the creative purposes of God. Her reading of Scripture is not, in fact, "traditional." The "traditional" line, from Tertullian through Aquinas and Calvin right up to the nineteenth century, is that women are ontologically inferior to men, are more susceptible to deceit, and are rightfully punished for Eve's sin. Fortunately, "complementarians" have moved beyond these "traditional" readings.

One consequence of this development is that such a bright and committed woman as Köstenberger is free to earn a Th.D. (University of South Africa) and to serve as an adjunct professor (Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary). Unfortunately, however, she could not stand in the pulpit and proclaim the Christ she so strongly commends, nor serve as an elder in her local church. *SCJ* readers unacquainted with the primary literature in the feminist debate might find this a handy guide to the major players, but should be warned that the author's point of reference is strictly an evangelical inerrantist reading of Scripture as a sure guide to absolute truth.

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Raquel A. ST. CLAIR. *Call and Consequences: A Womanist Reading of Mark.* Minneapolis: Fortress, 2008. 212 pp. $23.00.

As an African American woman, St. Clair feels there is a deficiency in the typical understanding of the significance of the life and death of Jesus in the African American female community. In her book, she attempts to remedy this deficit by examining womanist theology in light of Mark's Gospel.

St. Clair begins her work by skillfully articulating the need for womanist biblical scholarship, arguing that both white and African American Christians must improve their understanding of this field of study. A better understanding of womanist theology will lead to an improvement in ministry to African Americans and will help African American women overcome certain types of faulty theology to which St. Clair finds them particularly susceptible.

Of the faults in theology among African American women, St. Clair highlights the special identification African American women feel with the suffering of Jesus. She notes that while this might lead to a deeper faith, often it leads to problems, particularly if identification is based on poor biblical exegesis or no biblical exegesis at all. Such problems emerge when the commandment to "take up your cross" and follow Jesus leads African American women to unduly embrace sexism and racism directed against them. Instead of becoming empowered by their faith to remove themselves from oppressive forces, these women allow themselves to be victimized as a means of following Jesus' footsteps, and explain obstacles such as domestic violence as God-ordained trials.

After firmly establishing her own interpretation of the main points of womanist theology, St. Clair focuses on her chosen agenda by reviewing several biblical scholars and closely examining the Greek language in Mark's Gospel. Through this process St. Clair rejects those interpreters who conclude that Jesus' agony is the will of God, an interpretation that often leads African American women to conclude that their suffering is also the will of God.

St. Clair asserts that a better interpretation of Mark would support three mainstays of womanist theology. It would promote wholeness of African American women without negating the wholeness of others, while also carrying real meaning

in the lives of African American women. Finally, it would ground the significance of Jesus not in his agony, but rather in the vibrancy of his life and ministry.

Throughout her work, St. Clair brings an excellent interpretation of womanist theology to light, offering a description easily accessible to both skeptics of womanist theology and those with little or no background in the field of study that prepares the reader to better minister to the unique perspective of the African American woman. However, while recognizing the benefits of womanist theology, St. Clair also identifies some of the major weaknesses of the movement.

While her work may at times cumbersomely combine elements of elementary introduction to womanist theology and the interpretation of Mark with more advanced study of Greek nuances, in a manner either confusing to the beginning student or repetitive to the advanced student, her text does succeed in providing the detailed exegesis she feels is missing from this arena of scholarship. St. Clair concludes by fully supporting her contention that a true understanding of Jesus' suffering and pain would lead African American women to reject the unhealthy experiences of their history and reach for the wholeness that can come only through Christ

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Paul BARNETT. *Paul: Missionary of Jesus.* After Jesus, Volume 2. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008. 240 pp. $18.00.

The current volume is the second installment of Paul Barnett's "After Jesus" series, and it focuses upon the life and ministry of the Apostle Paul. After introductory chapters on the figure of Paul and prior discussions of the relationship between Paul and Jesus, respectively, Barnett traces Paul's life chronologically. The volume finishes with five short appendices on ancillary issues, ranging from the phenomenon of having both epistolary and narrative accounts of a historical figure (appendix B) to the Pauline authenticity of Philemon, Colossians, and Ephesians (appendix D).

Barnett argues that Paul was both converted and called at the Damascus Christophany, and that this experience, along with his time with Ananias, was the source of his gospel proclamation. He thus agrees with Seyoon Kim on the origin of Paul's gospel, *contra* some New Perspective arguments. Barnett also argues that Paul's ministry was initially synagogue-based in his Levantine years, and that his primary opponent after he broke from synagogue ministry and moved westward was a Jerusalem-based countermission. This countermission was fueled by a revivalist Jewish nationalism in the context of the coming war with Rome, which affected Jewish Christians along with the rest of the Jewish nation. His overall argument, however, is that Paul was "a true missionary of Jesus" (204), not the founder of a religion Jesus knew not.

One particular strength, especially with regard to possible classroom usage, is Barnett's chronological (rather than thematic or theological) approach to introducing Paul. Alongside this strength, his efforts at correlating aspects of his min-

istry in his letters to Luke's account in Acts are notable. This approach allows readers a broader perspective of the Pauline mission, in terms of both his geographical and ideological progression. Also enlightening is Barnett's observation that Paul had been living in Jerusalem for several years prior to Jesus' activities and was thus likely aware of his ministry prior to the Damascus event (30-32).

Ultimately, however, Barnett's study is a disappointment. Although marketed as an introduction to Paul (see publisher's comments and endorsements on the back cover), Barnett's discussion is often unfriendly to nonspecialist readers because it employs specialist jargon such as "Eretz Israel" (35, 79, 80, 103, 110), "Special Matthew" (105, 106, cf. 104, 108 n.26), and "*hapax*" (120 n.3) without offering an explanation of these terms. Alternatively, however, other factors may leave specialist readers dissatisfied. For example, Barnett's claims that Paul was a scribe (66, 80) and synagogue instructor (43) are purely speculative. Nowhere is Paul identified as a *grammateus*, whether by himself or others, and for the latter claim Barnett appeals to unspecific "techniques and rhetoric in Paul's letters," citing Hengel (43). In addition, his persistent references to Paul's compositional ability in Greek—"Paul's ease of writing koine" (26); "this ex-Pharisee writes Greek so fluently" (42)—overlook the fact that most of the Pauline corpus did not come "from his own pen" (126) but rather from that of his amanuenses. Furthermore, some readers will undoubtedly think that a rejection of Sanders's covenantal nomism requires more than three pages (130-132). A more minor complaint is that Barnett often practices secondary citation (quoting a primary source as cited in a secondary source rather than taking the extra time to check the primary source), a practice that is growing but nonetheless improper for a scholar of Barnett's repute (13 n.5, 13 n.8, 14 n.13, 20 n.29, 188 n.11).

For these reasons, Barnett's work falls uncomfortably between an introductory study of Paul for students and a critical study of Paul for scholars. Its attractive chronological approach to Paul's ministry may make it helpful supplemental reading, but it is unlikely to replace other introductions to Paul.

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Magnus ZETTERHOLM. *Approaches to Paul: A Student's Guide to Recent Scholarship.* Minneapolis: Fortress, 2009. 288 pp. $20.00.

Zetterholm, Associate Professor of NT Studies at Lund University in Sweden, brings to the table his fourth offering on the study of early Christian beginnings. His previous works include *The Formation of Christianity in Antioch* (Routledge 2003), which received mixed reviews according to an Internet search; *The Messiah in Early Judaism* (ed., Fortress Press, 2007); and *The Ancient Synagogue from Its Origins until 200 C.E.* (Fortress, 2003).

In his latest monograph, Zetterholm does not attempt to develop a detailed history of Paul, nor does he seem to focus exclusively on "recent" scholarship, as his title suggests. A better subtitle might be "Historical Developments in

Nonconservative (Lutheran?) Theological Circles Leading up to Recent Scholarship."

Zetterholm does not seem to offer much on the criteria he used for selecting scholars to represent various viewpoints, although he does seem to provide a good mix of American, British, and European scholars. Giants of conservative scholarship on the subject, however, such as F.F. Bruce (*Paul: Apostle of the Heart Set Free*) and Ben Witherington (*The Paul Quest*) receive no mention in this survey. Even feminist scholar Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza only gets a passing mention in the bibliography.

Chapter 1 opens with a brief history of the life of the apostle Paul, with a special focus on Paul's view of law and grace, and how that will come to influence the views presented later in the book. The treatment is fairly typical, no real surprises, except to set the reader up for what has become one of the biggest debates in Pauline theology of late: Did Paul consider himself fully Jewish as he proclaimed Christ, or had he made a substantial, if not total break with Judaism?

Zetterholm begins to lay the foundation for recent scholarship in chapter 2, beginning with Hegel and the Tübingen School in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. He focuses here initially on the work of Ferdinand Christian Baur, and specifically on the degree and nature of anti-Semitism in the early church and in the nineteenth century. He goes on to discuss the Lutheran view along with Ferdinand Weber's work. He discusses the apparent German biases of these viewpoints that laid the foundation for the events and attitudes of the twentieth century, specifically the German hatred of Jews and the Holocaust.

In chapter 3, "The Formation of the Standard View of Paul," the author moves the reader into the twentieth century, focusing on Rudolf Bultmann and two of his disciples, Ernst Käsemann and Günther Bornkamm. Why these three authors are the only ones worthy of the "standard view" is not made clear, save for the author's own apparent Lutheran perspective. Although providing a good summary of these scholars' views, Zetterholm seems to have an ulterior motive to place the blame for the Holocaust squarely on the type of Christianity these men propounded in that day.

Chapters 4 and 5, "Toward a New Perspective on Paul" and "Beyond the New Perspective" respectively, form the heart of the author's discussion on "recent" scholarship (i.e., post-WWII), at least in the main. He begins with the "exegetical reorientation" of Krister Stendahl and moves to a discussion of E.P. Sanders' "Covenantal Nomism." Other scholars in these chapters include Heikki Räisänen (who is cited frequently throughout the book), James D.G. Dunn, N.T. Wright, Lloyd Gaston, Peter J. Tomson, Stanley Sowers, and Mark Nanos.

"In Defense of Protestantism" is the topic of chapter 6, featuring Frank Thielman and Simon Gathercole, among others. Chapter 7 discusses the nontraditional, nontheological approaches to Paul, with Kathy Ehrensperger of the University of Wales his leading figure on the feminist view of Paul. A section on Caroline Johnson Hodge's view of Paul's view of ethnicity from chapter 5 probably would have fit better in chapter 7.

For more conservative-minded NT departments, this book would serve as representative of Lutheran scholarship at least, and more broadly liberal scholarship on

Paul. The first chapter as an overview of Paul would be good supplemental reading in a Pauline epistles course, while other chapters would be suitable as supplemental readings for century-specific or paradigm-specific theology classes.

Zetterholm's writing is, over all, clear and concise, and I believe he has given a fair presentation of the views of his chosen scholars, although I would have liked to see more representation of conservative scholarship. He gives adequate space to comparing and contrasting the scholars as well, and as such, the book would have some value in a supplementary capacity for any course in Pauline studies.

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Gerald L. BRAY, ed. *Commentaries on Romans and 1-2 Corinthians: Ambrosiaster*. Ancient Christian Texts. ed. Thomas C. Oden. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2009. 300 pp. $60.00.

Bray, director for the Latimer Trust (London) and research professor at Samford University, is a recognized scholar of church history and historical theology and has published widely in both disciplines. He served as editor for the Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture series. Bray marshaled the expertise of many Patristic scholars in order to consolidate theological insight from multiple Church Fathers speaking on a particular text. The current volume serves as an installment for a new series labeled Ancient Christian Texts. This series brings to life elucidating perspectives of specific church fathers on individual books of the Bible—perspectives that were once unavailable to nonspecialists. This review considers the format established by Bray and briefly examines the arguments provided by Ambrosiaster in the commentaries.

In terms of Bray's contributions as translator, the commentaries follow a simplistic structure. While small groups of verses are combined occasionally, the normal pattern has each verse from each chapter of all three books receiving individual treatment by Ambrosiaster. This differs from the modern approach of examining a passage according to rhetorical limits; however, this does not mean Ambrosiaster was unaware of the logical progression of the argument. Also, where scriptural quotations or allusions appear in Ambrosiaster's comments, Bray has emphasized them in the body of the text and footnoted the specific reference for the citation. Furthermore, Bray supplies corrective readings to Ambrosiaster's comments as well as brief explanations of variant readings in the text. However, in view of Bray's desire "to allow the text speak for itself" (xi-xii), these features are overly selective.

With regard to the commentaries, some essential features are to be noted. Ambrosiaster seems to portray Romans as a theological narrative and thinks it should be read as such (1-118). In this way, the story of fallen humanity and its restored relationship to God is best understood through a theological interpretation of that two-part story. It becomes quite clear that this interpretation proceeds with significant concepts in mind: a Trinitarian view of God, a high Christology, the work of Christ as the mystery of God, inherited guilt (sin), a predestinarian view of salvation, and the notion of justification by faith. A potentially troublesome fea-

ture of this commentary is Ambrosiater's view of Judaism in light of the work of Christ—i.e., he sees the latter as a spiritually enhanced form of and as doing away with the former, which is temporal and physical (see comments on Romans 5–8). His analysis on the nature of the Christian life as found in the latter portion of Romans bears out this perception (see comments on Romans 12–15).

Ambrosiaster, in his commentary in 1 Corinthians, delineates a multitude of issues plaguing the young church in Corinth—all of which need Paul's immediate attention (119-206). Ambrosiaster apparently defines the root cause in two parts: youthfulness of the church itself, and a continuous hold on that which is worldly. Thus, a key theme running throughout this commentary is the new life in Christ, which, for Ambrosiaster, stands in opposition to the former ungodly way of life. Once again, in addressing this concern, the Trinitarian view of God and the high Christology found in Romans can be traced throughout Ambrosiaster's argument. Issues that perplex modern commentators receive due attention—e.g., Christian liberties, women's roles in church gatherings, and the nature and role of spiritual gifts. However, while Ambrosiaster's conclusions in these areas might not find a wide assent today, they deserve to be read as one attempting to be sympathetic to Paul's theology and logic (see comments on 1 Corinthians 8–9, 11–14).

Finally, Ambrosiaster's treatment of 2 Corinthians proceeds in a way that seeks to maintain the theological and logical continuity between this letter and 1 Corinthians (207-265). For Ambrosiaster, the tenor of the letter is more cordial; any points of disagreement are localized to particular individuals and not necessarily overarching theological problems. As before, the Trinitarian view of God and the high Christology permeate Ambrosiaster's treatment of 2 Corinthians; although, his views on predestination and justification by faith appear with some regularity as well. Also, as in Romans, his views on the distinction between the age of Judaism and the age of Christ (and the Spirit) can be readily found (see comments on 2 Corinthians 2–7). Scholars advocating partition theories for 2 Corinthians (1–7, 8–9, and 10–13) might be disappointed by the way in which Ambrosiaster seeks to maintain the flow of Paul's argument.

In terms of contributive value, this particular work and the promise of the series as a whole provides wonderful insight into the minds of early theologians wrestling with biblical texts. Its clarity of presentation and accessibility of content provides opportunities for a wide readership. Some readers might be surprised to find that many interpretative struggles with key passages are not modern dilemmas; many Church Fathers struggled to make sense of the same passages and often for similar reasons (Ambrosiaster's comments on Romans 9–11). This shared experience of wrestling with the text might serve as a means for narrowing the historical distance between the modern world and the world of postapostolic Christianity. If such a narrowing takes place as a result of this new series, then it will have provided a desirable and much needed service.

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Darian LOCKETT. *Purity and Worldview in the Epistle of James.* Library of New Testament Studies. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2008. 221 pp. $130.00.

Lockett, Assistant Professor of New Testament, Talbot School of Theology, has provided those who do work in the Epistle of James an invaluable resource toward deepened understanding of this provocative epistle in the publication of his 2007 Ph.D. thesis from the University of St. Andrews. The volume builds upon key work of his supervisor, Richard Bauckham, widely appreciated for his 1999 publication of *James: Wisdom of James, Disciple of Jesus the Sage* (Routledge). However, Lockett expertly advances his own case for the significance of purity in James and finely tunes its role as a major concern of its perfection theme. Purity, Lockett shows, is a boundary marker between James's original audience and the Greco-Roman culture in which they attempt to live out their lives in Christian community.

Lockett takes as a starting point the observation of Bauckham that "purity in James is connected to the theme of perfection or wholeness" (11) and builds upon his evidence that purity language does not require detailed discussion of purity law in order to be relevant to the group being addressed. This becomes a vital point of explication for Lockett over against those who minimize the purity language of James as nothing more than metaphor that has no social context. In an orderly fashion, Lockett proceeds in chapter two to unfold current research regarding the language of purity, drawing from this the key observation that impurity is the result of behavior but is not sin (29), and surveying the efforts of others to identify the thread that encompasses OT impurity laws. He finds footing in Mary Douglas's (*Purity and Danger*, Routledge, 1991) focus on the human body as a model that can represent any social or cultic boundaries that are threatened (34-35). For James, both external and internal boundaries of the community are in danger. He finds Jonathan Klawans (*Impurity and Sin in Ancient Israel*, Oxford University Press, 2000) to be helpful to show that, while both are "real impurity," ritual impurity, which is temporary and part of the natural conduct of life, should be distinguished from moral impurity, which is voluntary and lasting (43-56). Indeed, ritual impurity is used in the OT to illustrate moral impurity (58).

After efficiently dealing with issues of genre, author, addressees, and structure in chapter three, in chapter four Lockett gets to his examination of the purity passages in James, which he identifies as: 1:19-21,26-27; 3:6,11-12,17; 4:8. What he aptly points out is that purity and perfection, etymologically similar in Greek, are routinely linked but separate in their functions for James. Purity language pinpoints the audience's relationship with their surrounding culture and within their own community over against the "world"; perfection language supports the readers' unfettered devotion to God over against being "double-minded." Lockett's most revealing exegesis involves the prologue (1:2-26), which, as he observes, is book-ended with perfection (1:4) at the beginning and purity at the end (1:27), his advocacy for a social, corporate relevance for 3:6, and his application of the OT ritual impurity of "mixed kinds" to 3:12. Weakest is Lockett's exegesis of 1:21 in which he too cursorily dismisses the value of understanding *emphutos* as "innate," or genetically natural. His point that 1:22-25 involves choice (111) does not undermine the point that these choices should be "natural" to the believer rather than out of character.

In Lockett's concluding chapter, he brings his exegesis of chapter four to bear on what he calls the "cultural stance" of James, meaning, where are the author and the audience situated in relationship to a social culture? He determines that while James's language bonds the author to its readers ("brothers," for instance), their dalliance with impurity puts them in danger of breaching the boundary of their distinct Christian community. While James's rhetoric shows a degree of accommodation to Greco-Roman culture that his audience likely shares, yet they are getting too close to assimilation by the way they show deference to the rich and mistreatment of the poor and by the way they are misusing their tongues to defile the corporate body of believers. Probably Lockett's most important point here is his identifying the "opposition" of the Epistle of James as Graeco-Roman society, but it will not convince everyone, since as he notes, this is not ever mentioned directly in the text. Yet his arguments deserve due consideration, especially given the dearth of other convincing options.

As to be expected in a Ph.D. thesis, this volume is carefully researched and footnoted, moves logically toward its conclusions, and is for the most part convincing. It covers an aspect of James that deserves treatment and provides meaningful research for others to ponder, both in its broad strokes and in its fine points. For those interested in the Epistle of James it should be required reading. For any student interested in how to construct a sound thesis, it is a model worth emulating.

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T. Scott DANIELS. ***Seven Deadly Spirits: The Message of Revelation's Letters for Today's Church.*** **Grand Rapids: Baker, 2009. 157 pp. $16.99.**

Every letter in Revelation 2–3 is addressed to "the angel of the church." Daniels presents each of the "angels" of the churches as a community spirit, ethos, philosophy, or corporate personality that is embodied within the church. After an introductory chapter developing his thesis, Daniels then takes the reader through each of the seven letters, describing the historical background of the city, naming the spirit of the church, and making connections between each church and similar tendencies in modern Christianity. The final chapter attempts to give practical advice on how to identify the spirit of a modern church, preach and teach in such a way as to harness its power, and correct its wayward and destructive tendencies.

Drawing upon historical and exegetical research, Daniels presents the background of each city, places the letter squarely within its ancient context, and then tries to ascertain the spirit underlying the church there. Once that spirit has been identified, Daniels can then point out the benefits and pitfalls of modern churches demonstrating that same spirit. For example, because of its emphasis upon casting out false teachers (Rev 2:2), the church of Ephesus had lost its primary love for fellow believers (Rev 2:4). Daniels identifies this as the spirit of "boundary-keeping" which, on the positive side leads to protection against false doctrine, but when taken too far leads the church into an unloving, accusatory pattern. Many churches suffer from the same spirit today, and Daniels is quite happy to help his readers understand exactly how.

One wonders, however, whether Daniels is justified in interpreting the "angel" in this manner. He draws heavily upon the work of W. Wink and H. Berkhof for the initial idea (15-18), and then jumps to the philosophy of personhood (25-27) for further development. The reader expects to find a detailed discussion of whether or not the term *angelos* was ever used in this communal sense in antiquity, but is disappointed. At the end of the day, the book's major weakness is the question of whether or not the presupposition to interpret the "angel" as a collective consciousness withstands linguistic scrutiny.

Nevertheless, the book is not without merit. In order to correctly name the powers that be, Daniels must first exegete the letters and place them in their proper historical contexts. Seldom have I seen descriptions of the ancient cities of Asia Minor simultaneously so succinct and accurate. The author never belabors the point, but presents the pertinent information in profound and accurate ways. The historical picture painted is not without proper documentation either, making this book succinct, readable, and credible. Students of Revelation will find Daniels' blend of historical exegesis and modern application exciting and uplifting.

Because of its readability, the current volume is a text suited best for the undergraduate course on Revelation, a Sunday School class, or small group study. Small group leaders frustrated with studies that lean more toward application than credible exegesis will find this book (and the corresponding study questions) extremely helpful. I have already included this book as required reading in my upcoming course on Revelation. Its accurate presentation of city life in these Asian cities, coupled with its ease of readability, fills a textbook niche I have longed to fill for several years.

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List of Books Reviewed in This Issue

Richard J. Cherok, *Debating for God: Alexander Campbell's Challenge to Skepticism in Antebellum America* (Keith B. Huey, Rochester College)

Charles Simpson, *Inside the Churches of Christ: The Reflection of a Former Pharisee on What Every Christian Should Know about the Nondenomenation Denomination* (Wes Harrison, Ohio Valley University)

Lawrence A.Q. Burnley, *The Cost of Unity: African-American Agency and Education in the Christian Church, 1865–1914* (Edward J. Robinson, Abilene Christian University)

Richard S. Newman, *Freedom's Prophet: Bishop Richard Allen, the AME Church, and the Black Founding Fathers* (Edward J. Robinson, Abilene Christian University)

Herman J. Selderhuis, *John Calvin: A Pilgrim's Life* (Bryan Spragg, Lincoln Christian University)

Brian Stanley, *The World Missionary Conference, Edinburgh 1910* (Michael L. Sweeney, Emmanuel School of Religion)

Paul L. Maier, ed., *Eusebius: The Church History, A New Translation with Commentary* (Ronald E. Heine, Northwest Christian University)

S.J. McGrath, *Heidegger: A (Very) Critical Introduction* (Joshua R. Furnal, Durham University)

James R. Peters, *The Logic of the Heart: Augustine, Pascal, and the Rationality of Faith* (Steven D. Cone, Lincoln Christian University)

Bruce A. Ware, Paul Helm, Roger E. Olson, and John Sanders, *Perspectives on the Doctrine of God: 4 Views* (Wm. Curtis Holtzen, Hope International University)

Robert B. Stewart, ed., *The Future of Atheism: Alister McGrath & Daniel Dennett in Dialogue* (Rich Knopp, Lincoln Christian University)

James W. Sire and Carl Peraino, *Deepest Differences: A Christian-Atheist Dialogue* (Joshua R. Furnal, Durham University)

John Milbank, *The Future of Love: Essays in Political Theology* (Jess O. Hale, Jr., Austin Peay State University)

John Howard Yoder, *Christian Attitudes to War, Peace, and Revolution* (Robert P. Maupin, Lincoln Christian University)

Richard T. Hughes, *Christian America and the Kingdom of God* (Kathy J. Pulley, Missouri State University)

Richard T. Hughes, *Christian America and the Kingdom of God* (Ron Highfield, Pepperdine University)

Justo L. González and Catherine Gunsalus González, *Heretics for Armchair Theologians* (David Nydegger, Baylor University)

Rufus Burrow, Jr., *Martin Luther King Jr. for Armchair Theologians* (Nathan Segars, West President Church of Christ)

Harold Shank, *Listening to His Heartbeat: What the Bible Says about the Heart of God* (Brian D. Smith, Florida Christian College)

Anthony N.S. Lane, *A Reader's Guide to Calvin's Institutes* (L. Thomas Smith, Jr., Johnson Bible College)

Andrew R. Wheeler, *Together in Prayer: Coming to God in Community* (Chris Ambrose, Linwood Ave Union Church)

Todd D. Hunter, *Christianity beyond Belief: Following Jesus for the Sake of Others* (Ron Clark, George Fox Evangelical Seminary)

Mark Husbands and Jeffrey P. Greenman, eds., *Ancient Faith for the Church's Future* (C.J. Dull, Central Christian College of the Bible)

Mark Driscoll and Gerry Breshears, *Vintage Church: Timeless Truths and Timely Methods* (Chauncey A. Lattimer, Jr., Lincoln Christian Seminary)

Frank Viola and George Barna, *Pagan Christianity: Exploring the Roots of Our Church Practices* (Kent Sanders, Saint Louis Christian College)

Bonnie Thurston, *For God Alone: A Primer on Prayer* (T. Scott Womble, Saint Louis Christian College)

Calvin Miller, *The Path of Celtic Prayer: An Ancient Way to Everyday Joy* (Karen Lindsay, Northwest Christian University)

Scott T. Gibson, *Should We Use Someone Else's Sermon? Preaching God in a Cut-and-Paste World* (Steve Carr, Echo Church)

Audrey Borschel, *Preaching Prophetically When the News Disturbs: Interpreting the Media* (Thomas R. Cash, West Liberty Church of Christ)

William Sloan Coffin, *The Collected Sermons of William Sloan Coffin* (Billy W. Jones, Saint Louis Christian College)

Kent and Barbara Hughes, *Liberating Ministry from the Success Syndrome* (Ralph K. Hawkins, Kentucky Christian University)

Mark A. Yarhouse and James N. Sells, *Family Therapies: A Comprehensive Christian Appraisal* (Suzanne Stangland, Cincinnati, OH)

Gerd Theissen, *The Bible and Contemporary Culture* (David Lertis Matson, Hope International University)

Brendan Sweetman, *Why Politics Needs Religion: The Place of Religious Arguments in the Public Square* (Herbert Miller, University of Dayton)

Ronald B. Flowers, Melissa Rogers, and Steven K. Green, *Religious Freedom and the Supreme Court* (Andy G. Olree, Faulkner University)

John Drane, *After McDonaldization: Mission, Ministry, and Christian Discipleship in an Age of Uncertainty* (Andrew Ramey, Parkway Christian Church)

James K.A. Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom: Worship, Worldview, and Cultural Formation* (James E. Sedlacek, God's Bible School and College)

Juan Francisco Martinez, *Walk with the People: Latino Ministry in the United States* (Daniel A. Rodriguez, Pepperdine University)

Raouf Ghattas and Carol B. Ghattas, *A Christian Guide to the Qur'an: Building Bridges in Muslim Evangelism* (Wes Harrison, Ohio Valley University)

Daniel Treier, *Introducing Theological Interpretation of Scripture* (Frank E. Dicken, St. Mary's Seminary and University)

John N. Oswalt, *The Bible among the Myths* (Douglas Redford, Cincinnati Christian University)

Daniel I. Block, ed., *Israel: Ancient Kingdom or Late Invention?* (Craig D. Bowman, Rochester College)

Peter C. Bouteneff, *Beginnings: Ancient Christian Readings of the Biblical Creation Narratives* (Gary H. Hall, Lincoln Christian Seminary)

Thomas B. Dozeman and Konrad Schmid, eds., *A Farewell to the Yahwist? The Composition of the Pentateuch in Recent European Interpretation* (Paul J. Kissling, TCMI Institute)

Bill T. Arnold, *Genesis* (Stephen M. Hooks, Atlanta Christian College)

Telford Work, *Deuteronomy* (Daryl Docterman, Cincinnati Christian University)

Gerald H. Wilson, *Job* (Glenn D. Pemberton, Abilene Christian University)

Craig G. Bartholomew, *Ecclesiastes* (Rob Fleenor, Asbury Theological Seminary)

Tremper Longman III, *Jeremiah, Lamentations* (Stephen Paul, Milligan College)

Philip Cary, *Jonah* (Daryl Docterman, Cincinnati Christian University)

Michael H. Burer and Jeffrey E. Miller, *A New Reader's Lexicon of the Greek New Testament* (James E. Sedlacek, God's Bible School and College)

Everett Ferguson, *Baptism in the Early Church: History, Theology and Liturgy in the First Five Centuries* (Mike R. Beggs, Newberry College)

F. LeRon Shults and Andrea Hollingsworth, *The Holy Spirit* (David Hershey, Penn State Berks)

Marcus J. Borg and John Dominic Crossan, *The First Paul: Reclaiming the Radical Visionary behind the Church's Conservative Icon* (David Lertis Matson, Hope International University)

J.R. Daniel Kirk, *Unlocking Romans: Resurrection and the Justification of God* (Stuart Paul, Fairborn, Ohio)

Richard A. Horsley, *Jesus in Context: Power, People, and Performance* (Rafael Rodriguez, Johnson Bible College)

Dale C. Allison, Jr., *The Historical Christ and the Theological Jesus* (Chris Keith, Lincoln Christian University)

Margaret Elizabeth Köstenberger, *Jesus and the Feminists: Who Do They Say That He Is?* (Robert F. Hull, Jr., Emmanuel School of Religion)

Raquel A. St. Clair, *Call and Consequences: A Womanist Reading of Mark* (Jessica R. Harden, Great Lakes Christian College)

Paul Barnett, *Paul: Missionary of Jesus* (Chris Keith, Lincoln Christian University)

Magnus Zetterholm, *Approaches to Paul: A Student's Guide to Recent Scholarship* (Scott Stocking, Lincoln Christian University)

Gerald L. Bray, ed., *Commentaries on Romans and 1-2 Corinthians: Ambrosiaster* (Carl S. Sweatman, University of Gloucestershire)

Darian Lockett, *Purity and Worldview in the Epistle of James* (William R. Baker, Cincinnati Bible Seminary)

T. Scott Daniels, *Seven Deadly Spirits: The Message of Revelation's Letters for Today's Church* (Les Hardin, Florida Christian College)