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BOOK REVIEWS

Book Reviews

Biblical Studies

Old Testament

***A Reader's Hebrew Bible.* Edited by A. Philip Brown II and Bryan W. Smith. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008. 1652 + xxiii pages. Leather, \$49.99.**

A Reader's Hebrew Bible is the Old Testament companion volume to *A Reader's Greek Bible*. These volumes are not intended as critical scholarly editions of the Greek New Testament or the Hebrew Bible. As a result, *A Reader's Hebrew Bible* is virtually a reproduction of Codex Leningradensis (in digital format, the Westminster Leningrad Codex 4.4), the manuscript that serves as the basis for the widely-used critical edition *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*. Since it is not a critical edition, there is no textual apparatus. The only textual variants noted are those preserved in the *kethib* and *qere* readings of Leningradensis. However, the lack of a textual apparatus does not detract from the purpose of the volume. The volume's intended use is not exegesis or translation, but reading (xvii–xviii).

With the purpose of reading in mind, the key features of this volume are twofold: the presentation of glosses for less common Hebrew and Aramaic vocabulary and the screening of proper nouns for quick recognition. Although this number of features may seem limited, their accomplishment is no small task. Furthermore, their impact on facilitating a reader's speed through the Hebrew Bible is drastic.

According to the editors they used a database to put together the glosses for the Bible (xxi). Although it is apparent that they checked each gloss (xx) in context, the procedure is still mechanical. In other words, reading *A Reader's Hebrew Bible* does not simulate the experience of sitting down with a master teacher who provides helpful hints as the reader works through the text. Such a master teacher could quickly explain rare forms, unusual constructions, and uncommon spellings. Instead, the experience is still one of a reader sitting alone to work through the text; however, it has been made more convenient because there is no need to flip through the lexica to gloss any particular word. This observation serves as neither an endorsement nor a criticism. I offer it only to make the reader aware of the type of experience one should expect.

Given the vast number of glosses that are needed for the entire Hebrew Bible, the volume is quite accurate. There are a small number of noticeable mistakes that I expect will be corrected in future printings (incorrect numbering of words with glosses, some errors in screening proper nouns, etc.), but these mistakes are usually easily identified and will not create confusion for the vast majority of readers.

I would expect that a volume such as this one would be aimed at students who have a good grasp of the grammar of Biblical Hebrew. In many ways, *A Reader's Hebrew Bible* is ideal for such students. It provides a way for them to apply their instruction without being overly burdened by their lack of vocabulary mastery. In this way, it helps facilitate their learning of the other aspects of Hebrew, especially syntax. On the other hand, the volume provides virtually no grammatical help, only the listing of the verbal stem for verbs that are glossed at the bottom. Rare grammatical forms and uncommon spelling abnormalities are not addressed at all. This lack of grammatical information will leave many intended readers confused and possibly frustrated. Those who have let their Hebrew sit dormant for some time will likely need to refresh their grammar before using this volume with success; however, this volume will help many who have had some training in Hebrew pick it back up or retain it.

The editors of *A Reader's Hebrew Bible* have provided an accessible, helpful resource for regular reading of the Hebrew Bible. Furthermore, *A Reader's Hebrew Bible* is nicely bound in Italian Duo-Tone, making it an attractive option for taking to public worship services. Although this volume will not replace critical editions of the Hebrew Bible nor constitute a primary source for exegetical study, it will facilitate better and faster reading. For this achievement, I for one am thankful.

Joshua E. Williams

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***Judges.* By Susan Niditch. The Old Testament Library. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008. 290 Pages. Hardcover. \$44.95.**

Part of the intrigue and richness of God's Word is found in its narratives. The authors of Scripture deftly relate events from the lives of God's people that speak of God's love and faithfulness as well as mankind's struggles and victories. Susan Niditch in her new commentary on Judges has focused much of her attention on the stories of the text and attempts to convey their lessons as well as lasting significance. Part of her focus was to highlight the roles of women in the text from a unique perspective. That may be her strongest accomplishment.

On the inside flap, the editors of the Old Testament Library series have commented on their "well-earned reputation for judicious commentaries that explain in a highly readable format the most significant, literary, and theological features of the biblical text." Overall, this commentary appears to satisfy only part of that prescribed standard. Regrettably, though the work is readable, the exegetical section scratches many surfaces of the biblical text, but explores few in depth.

The bibliography for the commentary is dated and appears selective. The citations in the text are well-documented, yet excessively refer to the author's own works. The textual notes following the translation in the body are interesting, but rely overwhelmingly, as the author stipulates (25), on the Old Latin version and the Vaticanus manuscript of the Septuagint. The organization of the work is, at times, awkward. In the introduction, the headings do not flow logically and occasionally

seem to confuse headings with sub-headings. In the body of the commentary, headings are only used to mark new chapters.

The major part of the book is based around two separate translations of Judges. One translation is included in the body and another is listed in the appendix. Niditch suggests that the first translation follows an English word order, while the one in the appendix, which is described as “a literal translation of Judges” (213), follows Hebrew. The quality of her translation is good and shows evidence of the decade of labor she invested in it (ix). However, when comparing the two translations, one wonders the rationale behind listing them both as they are virtually identical. The two translations, which together comprise over sixty percent of the volume of the commentary, are so similar that the infrequent word order changes fail to justify the space allotted to a separate translation.

Moreover, although the second translation is described as “literal,” often in her textual notes, she lists what she describes is a “literal” translation of a word or phrase which does not ever seem to be reflected in her “literal” translation. In a random selection of ten such occurrences of “literal” translations from the textual notes, not one of them was translated that way in her “literal” translation, causing confusion as to the purpose of the “literal” translation.

Ultimately, the work seems unclear on its intended audience. The style is formal as though written for an academic context, with the exception of numerous colloquial word choices that appear to be used to appeal to a less formal audience. She accepts that variant and even contradictory narratives are included and “embraced” (22) in the text and insists that her translation is intended to help distinguish between the various traditions (25). Nevertheless, she comments that she does not believe one can “recover an original version [of the text of the book of Judges], if there is such a thing” (23).

Ironically, Niditch may have accomplished her stated goal in this work, which was to “capture both the meaning and the message of the Hebrew” (26). For this purpose, that goal perhaps should have been more rigid. Some settings may benefit from her translation and comments; however, as a whole, the commentary will likely leave serious students under-fed.

Deron J. Biles

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***The First Book of Samuel.* By David Toshio Tsumura. *The New International Commentary on the Old Testament.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007. 720 pages. Hardcover, \$50.00.**

Japan Bible Seminary’s David Toshio Tsumura has given us a fine new commentary on 1 Samuel. He overviews the history of the modern discussion of the text of 1 Samuel, which, he notes is “allegedly ‘in extremely poor condition’” (3). Against the tendency to emend the Masoretic Text in light of the Septuagint and the other versions, Tsumura insists that “The primary task of exegetes of ancient texts . . . is to interpret data in its original context, not to alter the data so that they can explain it easily” (8). Tsumura suggests that some difficulties are due not to a

corrupt text but to phonetic spellings, misunderstood Hebrew grammatical structures, or idiomatic expressions. He suggests, “A narrative like 1–2 Samuel could have been written, at least partly, as if it was heard or spoken,” thus “the majority of proposed emendations are needless” (10).

Tsumura argues that the “final editing of 1–2 Samuel, with minor adjustments, was probably made no later than the late 10th century B.C.” (11). The Philistines are identified as being from the “Sea Peoples, who migrated from the Aegean” (34). They were uncircumcised but neither unsophisticated nor uncultivated (37). Tsumura provides a fascinating discussion of the historical and religious background of 1–2 Samuel, and his discussion of grammar and syntax is informed by both modern linguistics and more traditional grammatical categories.

The traditional threefold division of 1 Samuel is broadly followed: Samuel (1–7), Saul (9–15), and David (16–31). Tsumura sees the purpose of 1 Samuel being to highlight the establishment of the monarchy and the preparation of David (73). He argues that the references to daughter/sons of Belial (e.g., 1:16; 2:12) should be rendered to reflect a person’s connection to the divine name *Beliyaal* rather than as a “worthless” man or woman (124). He does not explore what this might imply about the way that people in the OT are reckoned in terms of “corporate personality” as belonging either to the “seed of the woman” or to the “seed of the serpent.”

This commentary is very strong on matters textual, grammatical, and historical, and Tsumura allows the rest of the OT to inform his interpretation. But readers should be aware that the commentary gives almost no attention to canonical biblical theology—the flow of redemptive history, typological patterns between, or the ways this flow of redemptive historical patterns might influence and be fulfilled in the New Testament. For another commentary on 1–2 Samuel that reverses these emphases (little attention to text criticism, grammar, and history, while focusing on canonical biblical theology), see Peter Leithart’s *A Son to Me: An Exposition of 1 & 2 Samuel*.

David Toshio Tsumura has advanced the discussion of 1 Samuel, and his bold position on the text of 1–2 Samuel is a refreshing, if controversial, perspective on the reliability of the Masoretic Text. No researcher will be able to ignore this volume, and no preacher will want to be without it.

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***Psalms*. By John Goldingay. Edited by Tremper Longman III. Baker Commentary on the Old Testament Wisdom and Psalms, vol. 2. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007. 752 pages. Hardcover. \$44.99.**

The timeless nature and engaging candor of the Psalms makes the book popular and appealing; compelling and intriguing. The real-world issues they address as well as the enduring theology they express allow readers of all ages and generations to find needed comfort and direction for their lives.

This present volume by John Goldingay is the second on the book of Psalms and the fourth volume in the brief series on Wisdom and the Psalms. Highlighted in this series are the practical and literary warehouses of Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Songs.

The Introduction to the Commentary on Psalms is included in the first volume of the series only and addresses the historical and literary background issues of the book. Goldingay acknowledges that the divisions of the three volumes of the commentary on Psalms are somewhat arbitrary, though this present volume addresses books two and three of the Psalms.

The Introduction also accentuates the integral role the book of Psalms has with the history and worship of the people of God. Goldingay argues that the Bible “assumes that we do not know instinctively how to talk with God but rather need some help with knowing how to do so” (22).

Using his own translation of each Psalm, Goldingay deftly explores each chapter with careful attention and frequent expository notes. Each chapter also includes sections on interpretation and theological implications. As such, the structure of the work is clear and easy to follow. In addition, the work includes a glossary at the end examining many of the terms with which the commentary interacts throughout. Finally, the commentary is well-documented and contains a thorough bibliography and helpful indexes.

Goldingay’s interaction with the Hebrew text is careful, but not cumbersome. He also emphasizes the creativity of the psalmists and analyzes the literary devices they employ. In addition, he also examines each chapter within the broader context of Scripture and indicates both its use in the New Testament as well as its contemporary application.

Significant psalms highlighted in this volume include Psalms 42, 43, and 53, which deal with questions of the absence of God; Psalm 44 which speaks to those coping with defeat; Psalms 49 and 73, which address those dealing with death; Psalm 51 with its heartfelt depiction of the pain of sin and by the joy of forgiveness; Psalm 59, which speaks to those dealing with fear; Psalm 69 for those dealing with persecution; and, Psalm 75, emphasizing the importance of waiting on God’s time.

Though the expressed target audience of this work is primarily current and future ministers, anyone interested in the study of God’s Word through the richness and beauty of the Psalms will find this volume invaluable. This series will be a mainstay for theological excavation of this great book of the Bible for years to come.

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***Psalms.* By Geoffrey W. Grogan. *The Two Horizons Old Testament Commentary.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008. 490 pages. Softcover, \$25.00.**

This work is a volume in the commentary series intended to combine both theological exegesis and theological reflection. The stated aim of the series is to

assist students and pastors “in theological interpretation of Scripture” (ii). Grogan’s work has aptly met that challenge. His work is theologically conservative, well-documented, exegetically acute, and pragmatic. The strength of the work is Grogan’s demonstration of the interconnectedness among the individual Psalms, as well as between the book of Psalms and the rest of Scripture (See especially 142, 147–48, 176, 211, 222). Grogan reveals the order apparent in the arrangement of the Psalms (cf. 46, 48, 60, 232, et al), and also the significance of the original contexts of them (72). He affirms that both the complete book as well as each individual psalm is the Word of God and, as such, authoritative.

The format of the book is simple. The first part of the book is an exegesis of the Psalms within the five books, followed by theological horizons in the second main section. In the exegetical section, each psalm is given a brief overview which addresses some of the critical issues and background concerns, followed by a discussion of the verses within the psalm. Grogan does a good job of delineating important issues of each psalm as well as their use of language. However, the space constraints do not allow the work to delve in detail into the theological issues as much as some students might prefer.

Grogan attempts to accomplish a great deal in this one volume, especially with a book as comprehensive and complex as Psalms. As such, the work runs the risk of leaving both teachers and preachers frustrated. On the other hand, a number of features make this volume attractive. First, the format is generally easy to follow. Next, there are a number of helpful discussions and excuses: including those on superscriptions (8–10), the genre of the text (10–18), the meaning of the phrase, “of David” (34), suggestions on the use of Psalms today (33), the Davidic Psalms (34), grammatico-historical interpretation (41–42), retribution theology (91), theodicy (98, 335), Messianic prophecy (184–85, 348, 352–59), authentic worship (342–48), open-theism, in which he flatly denies open theism, while affirming the impact of prayer (370–73), the impact of Christ and His work (387–95), the role of the Holy Spirit in the believer’s life (396–403), and the authority of Scripture (424–30). In addition, the appendix includes a useful discussion on preparing a sermon on the Psalms, giving strong emphasis to exegesis and application.

The section on the themes is thorough and practical. The author outlines the key themes of the book as well as the overall contribution of Psalms to biblical theology today. Moreover, he provides useful suggestions for further study and practical tips for the instruction of the Psalms.

Grogan successfully navigates the perceived tenuous waters between scholarship and practical application, bridging the two with the skill of a scholar and the heart of a pastor. Pastors and students will find this volume a helpful addition to their library.

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***Encountering the Book of Isaiah: A Historical and Theological Survey.* By Bryan E. Beyer. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007. 304 pages. Hardcover, \$26.99.**

Bryan E. Beyer's *Encountering the Book of Isaiah: A Historical and Theological Survey* represents a recent addition to Baker Academic's Encountering Biblical Studies series. Beyer, who teaches Old Testament at Columbia International University Seminary and School of Missions, has contributed two other volumes in the same series, *Encountering the Old Testament: A Christian Survey*, which he co-authored with Bill T. Arnold, and *Readings from the Ancient Near East: Primary Sources for Old Testament Study*, which he co-edited with Arnold. Beyer is also the Old Testament Book Review Editor for the *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*.

Beyer intends for his book to serve as a primer on Isaiah for advanced students in biblical studies (17). He initiates this task by providing a biographical discussion of Isaiah, which includes a description of his role as a prophet and the setting in which he conducted his ministry, and devotes the majority of his work to surveying the content of the book of Isaiah. Within his survey, Beyer introduces his readers to historical, critical (such as the issue of Isaianic authorship and date), and theological matters relevant for understanding the book's message. He concludes his book with chapters devoted to Isaiah's relationship to the Old and New Testaments, and the relevance of Isaiah's message to the Great Commission.

A praiseworthy feature of the book is its user-friendly format. Each chapter begins with an outline of its content, which usually amounts to an outline of the portion of Isaiah's text that the particular chapter covers, as well as study objectives for Beyer's readers. Throughout the book are several sidebars which summarize information closely related to the discussion at hand, and which give students a base from which to launch further exegetical study. Each chapter concludes with study questions which help Beyer's readers review the highlights of the most recent subject matter.

The content of *Encountering the Book of Isaiah* is commendable in a number of places. Beyer's discussion of the major interpretations of the Immanuel prophecy in Isaiah 7 is succinct, yet not too brief to be unhelpful. He not only outlines the interpretations themselves, but explains with clarity the different exegetical decisions driving the interpretations, encouraging readers to come to their own conclusions on the matter. Beyer's treatment of the connection between the oracles against the nations in Isaiah 13–23 and what precedes in chapters 1–12 is cogent. Here, he argues that the nations represent opposition to God's redemptive plan which he has begun to work out through Israel. In his chapter on Isaiah's relationship to the rest of the Old Testament, Beyer suggests that many Isaianic themes (holiness, sacrifice, etc.) reflect Isaiah's theological dependence on the Torah. Within the same chapter, Beyer introduces his readers to a variety of passages within the Psalms and prophets that make use of theological emphases (such as the Holy One of Israel) also found within Isaiah.

Beyer's chapter on the relationship between Isaiah and the Great Commission helps readers see Isaiah's relevance for the church's present missiological task. However, Beyer's sharp distinction between the material, temporal nature of

the creation mandate (Gen 1:26–28) and the spiritual, eternal nature of the Great Commission (Matt 28:18–20) perhaps unnecessarily dichotomizes these two biblical focuses (264–66). Isaiah’s teachings about the nations should shape how the church views the weight of the Great Commission, but Isaiah himself seems to embrace an eschatological vision of a redeemed physical earth, rather than merely clinging to immaterial, spiritual hopes (Isa 11:6–9).

Another criticism of Beyer’s thoughtful work should perhaps be mentioned. His interaction with Isaiah scholarship is at times less than what one would expect, even for an introductory volume. Beyer desires for his book to be a work introducing advanced Bible students to Isaiah; however, a book which has this audience in mind should direct its readers to additional works by both critical and conservative scholars so as to give them direction for further study. Beyer’s discussion of the authorship of Isaiah 40–66 would have been even stronger if he would have directly interacted with significant figures (Duhm; Blenkinsopp) in the opposing camp (153–161). Similarly, interaction with significant commentators would enrich his already beneficial discussion of the various interpretations of the Immanuel prophecy of Isaiah 7.

Beyer’s volume, nonetheless, would be quite useful for studying the book of Isaiah in a number of contexts. Beyer tackles the exegetical issues of Isaiah while maintaining an interest in the relevance of the book for the lives of Christians. I recommend the book not only to professors and seminary students, but to pastors and experienced teachers in the local church who wish to lead congregations through a study of this important prophet.

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***A Commentary on Micah.* By Bruce K. Waltke. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007. 480 pages. Hardcover, \$32.00.**

With meticulous precision, Bruce Waltke has produced an excellent resource for advanced students on the text of Micah. The outline and format of the commentary is as straightforward as the title. The three chapters are based on the three cycles of oracles delivered by the prophet. Each chapter is subdivided along the specific oracles. The format guiding the discussion of each oracle is simply exegesis and exposition. The exegesis section analyzes the textual issues of the pericope; in the exposition, Waltke outlines and explains the text. He clearly shows how the oracles are demarcated and also how adjacent oracles are linked.

Waltke advocates a traditional and conservative view of the authorship and date of the book. Throughout the discussions, he examines how the specific historical context within which Micah wrote impacted his message. Moreover, he explains how particular passages find ultimate fulfillment in the New Testament through the person and work of Christ.

There are a few weaknesses to the work, one of which is allowed by the author. In the preface, Waltke explains that the commentary was originally produced for another publisher in the 1980s and that this present work is merely

an expanded version. As such, he admits that the research is dated, a fact that is reflected in the selected bibliography, which includes nothing since 2001.

Some other weaknesses of the work include the following: 1) only a limited amount of application is demonstrated throughout the work and usually only briefly appended at the end of a section; 2) his advocacy of the multiple authorship of Isaiah seems to be a cop-out on the question, accepting without discussion what he describes as the “scholarly consensus” (215); 3) at one point in the text, Waltke relies almost entirely on the work of a single author (Renaud) throughout an extended section; 4) the author cites his own work on syntax an inordinate number of times in the exegesis sections; and 5) the work contains no conclusion. Instead, the commentary simply stops somewhat abruptly at the end of the discussion of Micah 7.

However, the strengths of the work overshadow any weaknesses. Throughout, the work is characterized by a depth of research and careful analysis of the text. Waltke demonstrates an impressive command of the biblical languages. He employs a detailed analysis of the Hebrew text, including parsing, and provides clear justification where he advocates alternative translations. He addresses complex syntactical issues with clarity and deftly handles the difficult textual questions. In addition, Waltke’s rules for interpreting complex passages and those for interpreting oracles concerning Israel’s future would be worth the cost of the book for aspiring students.

The greatest asset of this commentary is his handling of several key passages in Micah. Waltke offers a side-by-side comparison of the synoptic passages of Micah 4:1–3 and Isaiah 2:2–4. He also includes a thorough and compelling discussion of Micah 6:1–8. Overall, the outline is easy to follow, interesting to read, thoroughly documented, and well-written. It is an asset to any serious Bible student’s library. I enthusiastically recommend it.

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***Israel: Ancient Kingdom or Late Invention?* Edited by Daniel I. Block.
Nashville: B&H Academic, 2008. 368 pages. Softcover, \$27.99.**

The cover of this book with the name Israel and the Star of David leads a reader to assume this is a book about modern Israel or a theological treatise on the role of Israel in eschatology. It is only the subtitle in smaller font that provides the content. The book is a collection of various papers presented at a conference at Southern Baptist Seminary held in 2004. Most of the papers and participants were present at an earlier conference held at Trinity University in 2001 (proceedings published in *The Future of Biblical Archaeology: Reassessing Methodologies and Assumptions* edited by J. Hoffmeier and A. Millard, Eerdmans 2004).

While Block states that the goal of the book was to address minimalist trends in Bible history and archaeology, none of the papers directly addresses these trends. Nevertheless, there is a conscious undercurrent among the authors concerning these trends within the academy. The uniqueness of this collection is the

focus on placing the biblical text within its historical and cultural context using data from ancient texts and the archaeological record.

The editor united the essays into a coherent whole. Each essay deals with a major period in Old Testament history (e.g. Patriarchs, Settlement, Monarchy, etc.). There is an introductory essay addressing the issues of the debate, "Israel—Ancient Kingdom or Late Invention?" This is followed by three essays that deal with methodological issues: "The Value and Limitations of the Bible and Archaeology for Understanding the History of Israel—Some Examples" by Alan Millard, "Contextual Criticism as a Framework for Biblical Interpretation" by John Monson, and "North-West Semitic Inscriptions and Biblical Interpretation: Issues of Provenance" by Joel Drinkard.

The next ten essays deal with specific case studies using data from ancient texts to shed light on the historicity of the biblical text. The essays are: "From Joseph to David: Mari and Israelite Pastoral Traditions" by Daniel Fleming, "Major Geographical Issues in the Accounts of the Exodus: The Pitfalls and Promises of Site Identification in Egypt" by James Hoffmeier, "Slavery and Slave Laws in Ancient Hatti and Israel" by Harry Hoffner, Jr., "Were the Israelites Really Canaanites?" by Alan Millard, "Syria and the Bible: The Luwian Connection" by Richard Hess, "David and Solomon's Jerusalem: Do the Bible and Archaeology Disagree?" by Alan Millard, "Who Were Israel's Transjordanian Neighbors and How Did They Differ?" by Gerald Mattingly, "Shalmaneser III and Israel" by K. Lawson Younger, "Did the Israelites Really Learn Their Monotheism in Babylon?" by Simon Sherwin, and "Did Persian Zoroastrianism Influence Judaism?" by Edwin Yamauchi. The last essay, "Interpreting the Bible as an Ancient Near Eastern Document" by John Walton, synthesizes the preceding.

Most of the contributors are primarily textual scholars focusing their research on biblical and ancient Near Eastern texts and history. Only two of the authors are part of current archaeological field projects. Each essay has an introductory abstract and a short bio of the author. The essays are well footnoted and the book contains three indices: names (of scholars), subject, and Scripture references. Maps from the *Holman Bible Atlas* are distributed throughout the essays where appropriate.

The value of this book is that it brings the work of current evangelical scholars to a wider audience. Each of the essays demonstrates a command of the scholarship as well as a high view of the historicity of Scripture. More importantly, it demonstrates the value of a contextual approach to biblical interpretation. The essays are accessible to non-specialists in the field—hence this is a great resource for seminary students, professors, and laity. It is an excellent overview of scholarly trends, methodological approaches, and research among current evangelical scholars.

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New Testament

***The UBS Greek New Testament: A Reader's Edition.* Compiled by Barclay M. Newman. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2007. 732 pages. Hardcover, \$69.95.**

In an age where computer software can call up a biblical passage in seconds, define every word, parse every verb, and cross reference any relevant passage, what role does a new edition of the Greek New Testament play? In this context, a student of the biblical text can quickly become reliant on these “tools” and lose the ability to read the Greek of the New Testament naturally and fluently. The editors of *The UBS Greek New Testament: A Reader's Edition* seek to remedy this tendency by providing a volume designed to help a reader become competent in the Greek of the New Testament. The editors are convinced that the primary way to equip the next generation of New Testament scholars is to ensure that “there will be those who can actually read the text without undue dependence upon ‘tools’” (7). They argue that to master this skill, “there is simply no substitute for linear and sustained reading” (8). The primary features of this volume are intended to encourage this practice.

One immediately noticeable aspect of this edition is its size. At 732 pages, the book is admittedly large. Compared to the sleek softcover of Zondervan's *A Reader's Greek New Testament*, the hardcover of this volume seems somewhat bulky. This exterior also makes it clearly recognizable as a Greek text. If you take this Greek Bible to church with you, it will be readily apparent that you have done so. As this edition is intended for reading and devotional use, these features are somewhat unfortunate.

Despite these initial concerns, this volume may prove the adage, “You cannot judge a book by its cover.” The content of this edition outweighs any aesthetic deficiencies. Users of the *UBS Greek New Testament* will recognize the similar layout and format. The font selection and size are easy to read, the margins are spacious, and English headings are included at major sectional breaks. The pages are also thick and smooth resulting in easy page-turning and minimal bleed-through from the adjoining page. Also helpful is the format of the footnotes at the bottom of each page. The notes are broken up into two columns and are centered within the width of the text. The spacing between the columns makes finding a particular note or word a simple task. These features enhance the text's overall readability, an improvement over *A Reader's Greek New Testament's* thin pages, thin font, and vocabulary footnotes in paragraph format.

Concerning content, the Greek text used is from the most reliable and regularly cited *UBS Greek New Testament*, the standard in New Testament studies. The features that make this volume a “reader's edition” are the centerpiece of the book. In addition to defining the word, the footnotes provide the lexical form as well. They also give the parsing of difficult verb forms, the declension of most nouns, and even the rendering of uncommon idiomatic expressions. This enables the reader to develop proficiency in both grammar and vocabulary. The concise lexicon at the back of the book includes the definitions of words that occur more

than thirty times, which are excluded from the footnotes. With this added help, the reader can account for every word in the New Testament canon. In contrast to these definitions, the ones given in the footnotes are contextual, meaning the editors choose the most probable sense of a word rather than list the full range of semantic possibilities. This particular feature enables rapid reading, but also involves interpretive decisions on the part of the editors. In the large majority of cases, the rendering fits the context and does not affect the meaning of a passage. Though, in some instances, the linguistic decision is significant. To give one example, the editors render *hilasmos* in 1 John 2:2 and 4:10 (cf. Rom 3:25) neutrally as the “means by which sins are forgiven,” avoiding the choice of either “propitiation” or “expiation” along with their respective connotations. This concern could be considered minor in light of the edition’s purpose of aiding fluent reading rather than nuanced interpretation.

As its subtitle suggests, the goal of this volume is simply to help people “read it.” The editors accomplish their task by providing a resource that functions as a useful transition to the independent reading of the Greek New Testament. If revelation is located in the very words of the Scriptures themselves, then accessing them in their original language is indispensable. This volume will greatly aid the reader pursuing this task in the portion of special revelation written in Greek.

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***The Gospel of Matthew.* By R. T. France. *The New International Commentary on the New Testament.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007. 1,233 pages. Hardcover, \$60.00.**

Finally! In 1946 the New International Commentary on the New Testament (NICNT) was announced as a seventeen-year project, with the first volumes appearing in the early 1950s. This excellent series has now been around so long that totally new volumes by new scholars are replacing old volumes, such as Green’s commentary on Luke replacing Geldenhuy’s and Fee’s commentary on 1 Corinthians replacing Grosheide’s. Yet, until 2007 there was no commentary on Matthew in the NICNT, due to two other scholars attempting but not completing this project (xvi).

Some volumes in NICNT are truly outstanding, and that group will now include R.T. France’s commentary on Matthew. No newcomer to Gospel studies, France wrote the NIGTC volume on Mark, yet Matthew is his area of expertise. France wrote the Tyndale New Testament Commentary volume on Matthew in 1985. He wrote *Matthew: Evangelist and Teacher* in 1990 to cover the background issues that a commentary on Matthew usually covers, which explains the short introductory material in this present volume (1–22) as well as some brief introductions of major discourse material such as the Sermon on the Mount (“The Discourse on Discipleship,” 153–56) and the Olivet Discourse (“The End of the Old Order,” 889–93). Therefore, one ought to own and use the 1990 volume as a helpful companion volume to the present commentary.

This commentary is thorough, thoughtful, and insightful. It is purposefully an exegetical commentary on the text of Matthew and “not a commentary on other commentaries (xix),” thus writing in the tradition of truly significant commentaries. Yet, he does interact with the latest scholarly findings when necessary. France furnishes fresh information, such as helpful insight in contrasting modern misunderstanding of the text versus the original meaning. The translation of *basileia* as “kingdom” rather than “reign” can be misleading because of the wrong connotations of “kingdom” (102, footnote 24, 151, 190). Thus, “God ruling” is better than “the kingdom of God” since the subject and focus is more properly on God rather than kingdom (102). In interpreting what Jesus said about divorce in 5:31–32 and 19:3–12, it helps to know that in the traditional Jewish view of marriage that the act of *porneia* destroyed the marriage—not allowing it to continue, and in the case of a divorce a Jew assumed a remarriage is allowed (211–12).

Thankfully, France is sometimes open to the harmonistic solution of two actual occurrences of a sermon or event to explain both similarities and differences in Synoptic accounts of them (rather than the Evangelists altering a single event) (242, 309). Certainly Jesus could have taught similar materials on more than one occasion, giving them some variation each time, although most scholars do not opt for this solution (242).

France employs his own translation of the Greek in this commentary, which is refreshing. Yet, since France was on the committee that edited the TNIV translation, it is not surprising that he employs a gender-neutral translation in this commentary. Unfortunately, using gender-neutral language can make a less specific translation, such as changing the singular “he must deny himself” to the plural “they must deny themselves” (16:24) or “he” to “they” in 18:15–17. Or, it can involve a grammatically-awkward singular and plural mixed sentence, as in “if anyone . . . they must” (16:24) (635). In 4:1 France uses the generic “a person” rather than “man” (125). He does discuss that his “to fish for people (4:19)” does not link well with “fishermen” in v. 18, but neither does adding “women” and “children” to “men” seem a satisfactory alternative (145). The ten wise or prudent versus foolish virgins becomes the ten silly versus sensible girls—good alliteration but strange translation (Matt 25:1–13) (932–33)!

Some readers may not care for France’s many references to such pseudepigraphical writings as the *Gospel of Thomas* (e.g., 159, 640, 814) or the *Gospel of Peter* (e.g., 1056, 1064–66), but such references are to be expected in modern Gospel studies, and France uses many more references to more helpful ancient sources, such as the writings of Josephus (e.g., 862–63, 887–88, 1048). France’s commentary benefits the pastor, student, teacher, and scholar, and this excellent volume will be a standard resource for years to come.

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***Matthew 1–7: A Commentary.* By Ulrich Luz. Translated by James E. Crouch. Hermeneia. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007. 432 + xxxviii pages. Hardcover, \$75.00.**

Ulrich Luz, Protestant Professor Emeritus of New Testament at the University of Bern in Switzerland, is the author or coauthor of a number of books on the Gospel of Matthew including *Matthew in History: Interpretation, Influence, and Effects* (1994), *The Theology of the Gospel of Matthew* (1995), and *Studies in Matthew* (2005). However, he is best known for his multi-volume commentary on Matthew originally published in the German, ecumenical *Evangelisch-Katholischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament* series. The book under review is a translation of the fifth German edition of the first volume. Luz revised the volume thoroughly for this edition. Although the basic substance and approach remain unchanged, about one third of its text is completely new, bringing the commentary to more than 2000 pages—probably the most extensive European commentary ever written on Matthew.

The layout and the features of the commentary make it a handy tool to use. The text is neatly arranged in double columns, paragraphs on details are in a smaller font, and a number of subheadings helpfully structure the discussion of each passage. For each passage, Luz provides a helpful and up-to-date bibliography of the important publications listing German and English literature as well as French, Italian, and Spanish works. In addition, the footnotes are packed with helpful statistics, background information, and hints for further reading.

The most distinct quality of the commentary, however, is Luz's methodological approach and hermeneutical convictions. The author explicitly defines his exegetical approach as a modified historical-critical method. He criticizes classical historic-critical exegesis because it tends to isolate the biblical texts in their own time, making them meaningless for the present. Luz hopes to overcome this weakness by taking into account the texts' history of interpretation as well as the texts' history of influence (63). He is convinced that any interpretation and reception throughout history demonstrates the texts' power; consequently, it is relevant for understanding the texts today. "[B]iblical texts do not simply have a fixed, closed meaning; they are full of possibilities" (64).

The practical consequences of these fundamental convictions are far-reaching and observable throughout the commentary. Although Luz begins the analysis of each passage by discussing its structure and presenting its major interpretative questions, his focus is neither on textual issues nor on grammatical, semantic, or syntactic aspects. Instead, he is primarily concerned to reconstruct traditions and redactions, to identify parallels and motives, and to direct attention to each passage's interpretations (*Auslegungsgeschichte*) and influences (*Wirkungsgeschichte*) throughout history. He includes a wide range of parallel material and interpretations—from different expositors and churches (ancient fathers, Eastern Churches, Scholastics, Reformers, Anabaptists, Methodists) to different religions and philosophies (Buddhism, Taoism, Platonism, Stoicism) to different artists and historical figures (Tolstoy, Gandhi, Heine, von Weizsäcker). To be sure, this data is not just presented extensively in order to offer historical facts; rather, Luz takes

it as crucial for current exegesis. Because of the “openness of the text(s)” (190, 314; cf. 115, 248, 269), they were rewritten in new situations and therefore gained new sense, which is of equal importance as its original.

The results of this approach are not unproblematic. Although Luz frequently admits the hypothetical character of reconstructions (e.g. 91, 204, 250, 310, 330–31, 340), he regularly determines both the texts’ redactions and the redactors’ motives with astonishing precision (see e.g. 148, 255–59). One wonders how he knows all these details. Moreover, Luz’s gathering of such an impressive range and amount of material has its downside. Mirroring contemporary (European) exegesis, Luz tends to tolerate almost any interpretation, often without deciding in favor of one of them. Correspondingly, the reader should not expect to find applications in the commentary. Luz is convinced that biblical texts need to be newly actualized for every new situation, for “[t]o ask about a ‘true’ interpretation of biblical texts today is to ask about our present situation. Truth is always *situational*” (269; italics original).

Luz’s commentary represents the best of current liberal exegesis offering extensive source and redaction criticism, but relatively little detailed, philological analysis. Of particular importance is the work’s value as a unique resource concerning the texts’ history of interpretation and history of influence. The commentary is and will be a standard in Matthean studies—although less likely in pulpits—for the years to come.

Alexander Neudorf
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***Christ and Caesar: The Gospel and the Roman Empire in the Writings of Paul and Luke.* By Seyoon Kim. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008. 228 pages. Paperback, \$24.00.**

“Give back to Caesar the things that are of Caesar, and to God the things that are of God.” These were the weighty words that divided Christ’s kingdom from that of Rome, which at the time was under Tiberius’ rule. In recent years, there has been a surge of scholarly interests regarding the tension between the imperial rule and the kingdom established under the reign of Jesus Christ, the Messiah. With *Christ and Caesar*, Seyoon Kim, professor New Testament at Fuller Seminary, provides an analysis and assessment of recent trends that juxtaposes Christ and the Roman Empire in the canonical writings of Paul and Luke.

The book is divided into two main sections—one for Paul and another for Luke. Rightly framing both of these sections is Paul’s clash with Caesar in Acts 17:6–7, where Paul and Silas are accused of “acting against the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, Jesus.” The tension is thus assumed to exist. Kim gives an account of the developments of research. As early as 1971, E. Judge described Paul’s possible subversion of Roman edicts, by proclaiming a future *parousia*, which hailed Jesus as ruler. Since the eighties, scholars concluded by examining the Thessalonian letters that the inhabitants of the city had deep commitments to the imperial cult, especially toward honoring the Roman

benefactors (Donnfried, et al). Currently, scholars are pointing to a parallelism of cultic ideology: for instance, the *parousia* of Christ in 1 Thessalonians 4:17 resembles a majestic ceremony, strikingly similar to descriptions of imperial visits. These similarities suggest that the coming of Christ will conquer the earthly realm as well as Rome. There are also implicit counter-imperial tendencies in Thessalonians with the offering of a different eschatology (Harrison), or with a criticism of Roman aristocracy (A. Smith). Wright identifies Philippians 3:20–21 to contain a proclamation that Jesus is Lord, and Caesar is not. Kim notes these developments in historical studies.

Kim's response to many of these efforts is summed up with "parrallelomania," an expression originally coined by S. Sandmel. While the historical studies attempt to find parallels and connections with the data in New Testament writings, Kim suggests that recent studies have been overreaching with their conclusions. In addition, Kim also notices faulty reasoning: deductions from assumptions, proof-texting, and uses of so-called anti-imperial codes in Paul's messages. Kim concludes that an anti-imperial interpretation is difficult because there is no reference or critique of the Roman Empire, and Romans 13:1–7 is an appeal to Christians to be subject to Roman rule. Paul complies with the Roman authorities and makes appropriate defenses of his conduct. His preaching of the gospel simply awaits the coming of Christ.

As for Luke-Acts, Jesus' ministry is defined in terms of his work of redemption toward his people, which includes, among others, no overthrowing of the Roman Empire, no literal restoration of the kingdom of David, and the exclusive saving of a redefined Israel, the eschatological people of God. The focus of Luke-Acts is not a political resurgence of divine power on earth, but a deliverance from the kingdom of Satan. While the gospel details Jesus' life and ministry, Acts consists of a history of the church in the "continuous work of salvation in the power of his Spirit and through his apostolic church" (Acts 1:1–2). Towards the end of this section, Kim underscores the lack of any real tension between Christ and Rome with his emphasis on the *pax Romana*, which Kim sees to be playing a key role for an overall conducive setting for apostolic missions.

Jesus' famous words teaching the disciples about paying taxes are not intended to wage war or displace the political regime. Christ does not compete with Rome, but distinguishes himself from it. The importance of *kyrios* in connection to divinity plays a crucial role in the identification of Christ and Caesar. Kim has provided a good starting point to engage the realm of ancient religions. However, the book may be lacking only in that it is limited to only Christ and Caesar; it misses the aspect of the plurality of ancient religions in the Roman Empire. Christianity did not compete with only Rome, but more so with the local patron deities, mystery cults, and Jewish synagogues. Since all of these religions coexist in the Roman peace, some additional thought and interaction with these religions may help Kim's cause in defining the historical place of the gospel within its cultural context.

Donald Kim
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***The Early Christians in Ephesus from Paul to Ignatius.* By Paul Trebilco. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007. 826 pages. Paperback, \$85.00.**

Paul Trebilco's work represents a substantial endeavor in describing the ancient urban life of Ephesus in light of its early Christian believers. The purpose is twofold: first, to look at the life and activity of the early Christians, and, second, to argue that there was not a single body of believers in Ephesus, but a number of believing groups or communities. Trebilco's erudition of ancient Ephesus is undeniable from the introduction, which explains how recent interests in Ephesus have sparked in the form of historical undertakings in cultural studies, sociological dimensions, cultic presence, and new archaeological findings. The scope of Trebilco's research is not in any way a wholesale assimilation into any one of these historical approaches. The difference in Trebilco's voluminous work is his careful examination of the biblical texts connected to Ephesus. Trebilco takes these canonical sources seriously enough to allow them to tell the history of ancient Ephesus.

The book is divided into four parts, but chapter one stands alone apart from the divisions of the book with an offering of the city's brief history and significance as a religious center for the cult of Artemis and later, the imperial cult. This first chapter is only a brief treatment of the vibrant spectrum of religious life in the city. The bulk of Trebilco's book falls into the four parts, which assess the early Christians primarily from the canonical sources and an early letter from Ignatius.

The first part deals directly with the biblical sources, beginning with the Pauline correspondences, and comparing Paul's descriptions of his stay in Ephesus with Luke's account in Acts. Noticing the slight nuanced discrepancies, Trebilco here identifies Luke's tendencies to underscore Paul's success in Ephesus, glossing over much of the difficulties Paul faced and reiterating the positive effects of the gospel message throughout all of Asia.

Part two looks at what the Pastorals, Revelation, and Johannine letters say about the Christians in Ephesus. Because of the ongoing discussions on the authorship of these letters, Trebilco noticeably sidesteps the issues of authorship, by presenting the varying positions and evidences, while also attributing the specific positions with their respective scholars (e.g. Papias' views as presented by Richard Bauckham). However, the primary objective is dealing with the content of these others letters with their situations and teaching to make connections with the Christians in Ephesus.

Part three is a rather novel approach that is born out of the narrative critical method. Trebilco looks at the readers of the Pastorals, Revelation, and Johannine letters. The readership includes issues with material possessions, authority, leadership, and women. Trebilco demonstrates how these issues find common grounds with those in Ephesus. Although Trebilco begins to speak of different groups in part two, part three is where he begins to argue for a plurality of readership, which suggests a plurality of communities.

Part four compiles the various aspects of Ephesian life and culture from Ignatius' letter from Antioch. Some points, which Trebilco observes, include the notable elevated stature of the Ephesian addressees, the Ephesian community's strong ties with Paul, and the community's spiritual maturity.

The extensive nature of Trebilco's work encompasses numerous contributions in the field of study, incorporating not only the research on Ephesus, but also with research in other New Testament writings. With the large number of secondary sources used in completing this work, it is no surprise that Trebilco uses the sources sparsely in what may appear to be uncritically receiving the findings and conclusion. But in no way is Trebilco blindly accepting entire works; his selectivity is his primary mode of critique and the controversial theories are generally left aside.

Moving beyond the categorical boundaries of expositions or commentaries, Trebilco's work is a multifaceted description of the life and history of the early Christians in Ephesus—a remarkable achievement worthy of a serious look.

Donald Kim
Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

***2 Peter and Jude. The Two Horizons New Testament Commentary.* By Ruth Anne Reese. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007. 220 + x pages. Paperback, \$20.00.**

Ruth Anne Reese, associate professor of New Testament at Asbury Seminary, provides a unique commentary on 2 Peter and Jude that aims to bring together exegesis and theology in a partnership in order to illuminate the text (1). The Two Horizons New Testament Commentary series is written for students, pastors, and Christian leaders who want to interpret Scripture theologically and not only exegetically or historically. Building on the metaphor of an interpretive dance, Reese describes the goal of the commentary “to build a dance pavilion . . . where exegesis, theology, and the community of believers can gather and join the dance” (2).

Reese treats both Jude and 2 Peter with three chapters: an introductory chapter, an exegetical chapter (working paragraph-by-paragraph instead of verse-by-verse), and a chapter exploring theological horizons. The theological horizons chapter is further divided into three sections: theological themes, theology within the context of the canon, and theology in contemporary contexts (the chapter on 2 Peter combines the latter two sections).

While acknowledging the value of historical research (9), Reese notes that most of the introductory historical questions (authorship, date, provenance, destination) address “very little in terms of the issues that the epistle at hand is concerned with” (8). Because of this conviction, little space is devoted to introductory questions (18; the six page defense of Petrine authorship of 2 Peter is a notable exception; 115–121). Reese implies that Jude preceded 2 Peter (118), but devotes little space to their relationship because “a close reading of the contexts into which the material is set reveals two distinct purposes and situations” (14). Reese also discusses the language of Jude and 1 Peter (11–13; particularly allusion and metaphor), cultural values and relationships in the first century (20–23; honor/shame, purity/impurity, individual/community, patrons/clients), and the role that

narrative theology plays in helping interpret these books within the context of the canon (25–26).

Reese addresses the following theological themes in Jude: denying God and the bid for false freedom, judgment, keeping and being kept (with discussion of the broader Arminian/Calvinist debate), us and them, remembering, and the call to faithful living. The canonical section primarily explores the Old Testament background for Jude's examples, and the discussion of Jude's theology within our contemporary contexts focuses on the relationship between "the Beloved" and "the Others." The following are theological themes addressed in 2 Peter: God and Jesus Christ, ethics, and eschatology.

Reese ably accomplishes the goals for the commentary. The theological and canonical focus surpasses that which is provided by other commentaries in the field. The scarcity and unobtrusiveness of technical footnotes will make the volume accessible to its target audience. Reese does discuss the Greek throughout, but in a manner accessible to the non-specialist. The discussion of contemporary theological contexts is particularly insightful. Reese's particular synthesis of the relationship between Jesus, ethics, and eschatology (201–220) deserves careful attention, especially in light of the question, "What sort of people ought we to be" (2 Pet 3:11). Jesus provides believers with all that is needed for life and godliness while they wait for and hasten the final eschatological day of salvation and judgment.

Two particular theological issues, however, are not adequately addressed. First, Reese does not discuss the theological difficulties involved with Jude's use of extra-biblical sources as authoritative, seemingly on the same level as the Old Testament. How does this usage impact theological discussions of canon, inspiration, and inerrancy (especially Jude's attribution of the quotation from 1 Enoch to Enoch, the seventh from Adam)? Second, Reese writes "The ethical life is the way of securing the gift of entry into the eternal kingdom (1:11)" (191). Although Reese rightly points out that "[r]ighteous living is the response of believers to the redemptive work that God performs" (191), there is no extended discussion of the soteriological relationship between faith and works. Reese rightly emphasizes the necessity of ethical living in the lives of believers, as Jude and 2 Peter make clear, but this is not sufficiently discussed in relationship to the canon. In what way does one's ethical life secure the gift? These are theological questions crying out to be addressed.

Despite these concerns, Reese has provided a unique contribution to the study of 2 Peter and Jude. Because of this commentary's emphasis on theology and relative lack of interest in traditional historical concerns it will not function as a replacement for standard technical commentaries (i.e. Richard Bauckham, Jerome Neyrey), but within its particular focus (theological and canonical interpretation) it surpasses that which is offered by others and will function well as a supplemental commentary, possibly even the primary commentary of busy pastors and lay teachers.

Alexander Stewart
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***Charts on the Book of Revelation: Literary, Historical, and Theological Perspectives.* By Mark Wilson. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2007. 134 pages. Softcover, \$21.99.**

Is it possible that a book of charts can aid in the understanding of Scripture? From beginning to end John's vision recorded in the book of Revelation offers numerous interpretive challenges. With his addition to the Kregel Charts of the Bible and Theology series, Mark Wilson seeks to help with these challenges. *Charts on the Book of Revelation* includes seventy-nine useful tools. Most of the tools are in fact charts, but he does include several timelines and maps as well. At the end of the work, Wilson includes two sections that give insight to the formation of the charts in the book (119–34). The first is a section citing what resources and tools that Wilson accessed in creating each chart. These resources range from articles that he himself published in the past to historical surveys and monographs to existing charts upon which Wilson builds his work. The second section that Wilson includes is a comprehensive bibliography, which, in essence, includes those sources mentioned in the first section.

There are several notable strengths deserving mention. The subtitle of the book may at first seem a bit strange when considering that the primary content of the book is in the format of charts. How can a book of charts shed light on literary, historical, and theological perspectives of the book of Revelation? Instead of centering on apocalyptic end time debates, which is probably the first thing that comes to mind when encountering a book entitled *Charts on the Book of Revelation*, Wilson focuses on the literary features of the book of Revelation. In combination with the fact that many of the charts involve the relationship between texts within Revelation and those in other parts of Scripture, this places the book in its proper historical and theological setting. In addition to the normal topics of hermeneutical inquiry into any book of the Bible such as authorship (13), dating (14), setting (15–17), and structure (31), and the expected eschatological topics such as the rapture (70), Armageddon (98), and the millennium (100), Wilson's work includes charts covering the words which occur only in the book of Revelation (22–24), the symbolism of colors (49), epithets of Jesus with Old and New Testament background (61), the four living creatures (72), and the portrait of the beast (88–89). The most intriguing charts, and perhaps the most beneficial, include allusions and verbal parallels in the Old Testament and extra-biblical literature (25–30; the longest chart in the work), the use of numbers and the symbolism of colors and numbers (47–49), and the thematic parallels between Genesis 1–3 and Revelation (108). Another strength of the book is the level of interaction that the writer has with other well-known works. The result is a useful reference work based upon the best available, highest quality research that has been done on the book of Revelation. A final strength is that the work is designed so that all charts are reproducible for classroom use. While many of the charts are longer than one page, each chart begins on its own page, making it easy to photocopy each chart without having to cut out parts of the previous chart or the chart that follows.

Two weaknesses, while somewhat trivial in degree, should be mentioned. First, there is no way to navigate to a certain chart that contains the desired information other than looking at the seventy-nine individual chart titles in the table

of contents. It would be beneficial to the reader if the charts were categorized in some way as to limit this search as much as possible. Second, it would be helpful if the publisher allowed a small paragraph to introduce each chart, summarizing its contents. In some of the charts some readers may wonder exactly what the vertical and horizontal headings are referencing. A short introduction would enable those who are novices in studying Revelation to benefit more from the work. In spite of these weaknesses, *Charts on the Book of Revelation* would be a worthwhile and useful tool both for the pastor and for the teacher. Alongside solid commentaries and exegetical studies on the book of Revelation, Wilson's work will help all Bible readers better understand and interpret what is seen by many as one of the most difficult books of the Bible.

Steven L. James
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***The Messiah in the Old and New Testaments.* Edited by Stanley E. Porter. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007. 268 +ix pages. Paperback, \$29.00.**

These essays were presented at McMaster Divinity College in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada in 2004. The collection is preceded by an introduction written by Stanley Porter and concluded with a response, in which each paper is briefly considered, written by Craig Evans. The book is presented in two parts: Part 1: Old Testament and Related Perspective, containing essays that deal with the Old Testament, the Qumran documents, and the literature of early Judaism; and Part 2: New Testament Perspective, containing essays that deal with most of the New Testament (Revelation seems to receive no treatment).

The first essay after Porter's introduction comes from Tremper Longman, who explores the Law and the Writings of the Old Testament. Unlike others, such as John Sailhamer and T. Desmond Alexander, who argue that the Pentateuch creates definite messianic expectations, Longman holds that "it is impossible to establish that any passage in its original literary and historical context must or even should be understood as portending a future messianic figure" (13). Then with respect to the Writings, Longman argues against the likes of Gerald Wilson, who interpret the structure and order of the Psalms as deliberately fostering messianic expectation. Longman seems to suggest that if we restrict our interpretation to the intentions of the human authors, we do not find much at all about a Messiah in the Old Testament, but, he argues, "there is another Author whose intentions come to perfect fulfillment" (33). It seems that Longman wants to deny messianism with his left hand and affirm it with his right, but there are ways to understand the intentions of the human authors such that they do portend what Longman attributes to the Divine Author.

Mark Boda's essay takes up the third part of the Old Testament in a consideration of the Messiah in the Old Testament Prophets. Boda introduces his study by discussing definitions of the Messiah offered by Collins, Charlesworth, and Rose. He suggests, "It appears that the intention of the editors who drew the Psalter together was to signal a future messianic hope" (40), and he also asserts, against

a fading consensus, that “to study the ‘messiah’ or the ‘messianic’ cannot be reduced to an investigation of these lexemes and their attendant texts” (44). Boda limits his investigation of the Messiah in the Old Testament Prophets to the Messiah in Haggai–Malachi. Al Wolters’ essay on “The Messiah in the Qumran Documents” surveys and responds to two books on the messianism of the Dead Sea Scrolls: John Collins’s *The Scepter and the Star*, and Michael O. Wise’s *The First Messiah*. Loren Stuckenbruck’s essay on “Messianic Ideas in the Apocalyptic and Related Literature of Early Judaism” focuses on the Psalms of Solomon, the Similitudes of 1 Enoch, 4 Ezra, and 2 Baruch.

Part 2 of the volume opens with I. Howard Marshall’s customary care in examining “Jesus as Messiah in Mark and Matthew.” Stanley E. Porter addresses “The Messiah in Luke and Acts: Forgiveness for the Captives,” arguing that Luke’s presentation of Jesus is centered on his depiction of Jesus as the anointed prophet. Tom Thatcher’s contribution is entitled “Remembering Jesus: John’s Negative Christology.” Remarkably, Thatcher thinks that John’s Christology is unhinged from historical reality and set free to imaginative generation of new ideas: “Johannine Christology is not so much a set of beliefs as an ongoing potential to create memories of Jesus that meet the challenges that would threaten to undermine orthodox faith” (188–89). On the contrary, one does not “create memories”—that process is better described as make-believe story-telling, and orthodox faith is not dependent upon make-believe but upon historical reality.

S.A. Cummins’ essay on the Messiah in Paul, and Cynthia Long Westfall’s treatment of the Messiah in Hebrews and the General Epistles complete the course of presentations. Cummins deals with incorporation into Christ, and Westfall discusses the “messianic scenarios” of enthronement, victory, and temple. Both authors take up the question of whether “Christ” is to be understood as a title or a name. Craig Evans makes several helpful observations in his responses to these essays. Among the salient points were the insightful note that the diversity of messianic expectation springs from a core of material (233). He goes on to point out that Isaiah 11, Daniel 7, Genesis 49:10, and Numbers 24:17 are frequently quoted in later writings and probably form part of this messianic core (239).

This volume is by no means the last word on these issues, but it is a recent survey of a vast amount of material. Those seeking to build a whole Bible understanding of the Messiah will not want to overlook these discussions, and those working on particular pieces of the puzzle will find dialogue partners herein. Researchers interested in other recent coverage of much of the same territory will also be helped by the thorough discussions in Andrew Chester’s *Messiah and Exaltation*.

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***New Testament Theology: Magnifying God in Christ.* By Thomas R. Schreiner. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2008. 990 pages. Hardback, \$44.99.**

In what seems like a saturated market of New Testament theologies, Thomas Schreiner's own contribution to the description of a New Testament theology is refreshing, and just simply, ground-breaking in its own right. Schreiner has taken the widely-known thematic approach (cf. Gerhard Hasel's *New Testament Theology: Basic Issues in the Current Debate* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978], 73–132) with this primary thesis as the center: "that New Testament theology is God-focused, Christ-centered, and Spirit-saturated, but the work of the Father, Son, and Spirit must be understood along a salvation-historical timeline; that is, God's promises are already fulfilled but not yet consummated in Christ Jesus" (23). Working out of this unifying center, the canonical books of the New Testament are then each examined according to the overarching thematic elements that hinge on the centrality of God.

The work is divided into four parts, which all have some dealings with "promise": 1) "The Fulfillment of God's Saving Promise," 2) "The God of the Promise," 3) "Experiencing the Promise," and 4) "The People of the Promise and the Future of the Promise." Only at an initial glance do these section titles seem slightly nuanced, but any serious reader would find himself richly immersed in a well-controlled discussion moving between narratives and doctrinal discussions, as well as scholarly contributions and contemporary debates that continue to this day.

The first section deals with the kingdom of God promised in the Old Testament and through the New Testament gospel narratives. Echoes of the "day of the Lord" and judgment from the Old Testament lead up to the opening scene in New Testament. Schreiner's lively writing style and vivid imagery keep the readers engaged with what becomes ultimately the fulfillment of God's promise of salvation through Christ unto the inaugurated *eschaton*, which the church experiences and awaits for its final consummation.

The second section is the largest of all the sections, and it consists of the bulk of Schreiner's endeavor in the theological description of God. This is done through the Trinitarian framework as set up in the original thesis stated at the beginning. The centrality of God in the New Testament is worked through the synoptic gospels, the gospel of John, Acts, Pauline literature, James, Petrine and Johannine letters, Jude, and Revelation. How is God the center? Repeatedly is this question asked, to which Schreiner answers in multifaceted fashion: sovereignty, glory, father, Christ, name, love, wisdom, and revelation, amongst many others. Both Christology and pneumatology are part of the theological discourse concerning New Testament books. One may initially be underwhelmed by a cursory reading of the work, especially at the sight of the apparent repetition and overlap of material (e.g. "Jesus as Lord," "Lordship and Divinity," and "Centrality of Christ."), but the command of Schreiner's erudition subtly emerges in his handling of numerous scholarly discussions. Schreiner is not easily dismissive of novel, even new-fangled ideas and proposals, but he is very much willing to weigh

the various sides of the dialogue, and arrive at a well-reasoned position, if at all possible.

Part of Schreiner's novel approach is his engaging of extrabiblical sources for the purpose of providing some connections to contemporary writings. For instance, in one discussion of the Messiah and "Son of Man," Schreiner briefly discusses the Gospels' themes with second temple, postbiblical Judaic literature: Psalms of Solomon, Josephus, Dead Sea Scrolls, *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, *Testament of Judah*, and 4 Ezra. Schreiner gives ample reasons to dismiss any strong link or parallels to the Gospel materials, but his awareness of outside material demonstrates his erudition.

The third section focuses on the experience of the church through a God-centered understanding of the New Testament, especially regarding the problems of sin and suffering, the question of faith and obedience (kinds of faith, whose faith), and salvation. The fourth and final section deals with the communal aspects of the church, and some discourse on the socio-scientific dimensions of the early church. These last two sections of the book do not really compare in size from the rest of the book because they deal with matters that stir the curiosity in the practical realm. Questions often arise as to the aftermath of the coming of Christ and the experience that results from various paradigmatic shifts in worldview.

Though the thematic elements may seem familiar, Schreiner's work unapologetically treads on new grounds with his framing of God-centeredness, along with an engagement of the New Testament books, and academic discussions that have emerged in the past century. This contribution to the field of New Testament theology will be read and appreciated for many years to come.

Donald Kim

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***Paul: Missionary of Jesus.* By Paul Barnett. *After Jesus*, vol. 2. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008. 240 + xvi pages. Softcover, \$14.26.**

Books on Paul abound these days. Sadly, some scholars paint a pessimistic portrait of this man that they claim hijacked and recast Christianity (11–14). Because many of them reject the historicity of Acts as well as Pauline authorship of over half of his thirteen NT epistles, they concoct a skewed picture of Paul.

Refreshingly, Paul Barnett, lecturer at Moore Theological College, Sydney, as well as teaching fellow at Regent College, gives an accurate and thought-provoking picture of Paul in *Paul: Missionary of Jesus*, the second volume in his *After Jesus* trilogy. Trusting the historicity and veracity of Acts as well as all thirteen of Paul's NT epistles (3, 208–10), Barnett examines Paul's life, delves some into his theology, and reveals helpful insights into this major missionary and colorful convert to Christianity.

At the heart of the book is the answer to the question at the forefront of Pauline studies: Did Paul accurately represent or falsely distort Jesus and his teachings (2, 99)? Was Paul's mission to Gentiles acceptable or aberrant? After a careful comparison of Paul's writings along with the canonical Gospels, Barnett

shows that Paul followed Jesus' Israel-to-nations approach of gospel proclamation (111, 116).

Barnett practices careful scholarship, using ancient sources as well as the most recent Pauline studies, and he shows a positive respect for the biblical text. He deftly deals with opponents' views in a scholarly and respectful way (e.g., Terrence Donaldson's theory of a pre-conversion Pauline disposition to Jewish proselytism, 123–26; E.P. Sander's theory of covenantal nomism, 130–32). Barnett is honest about questions concerning Paul that must remain unanswered (2).

Several helpful contributions of this book include addressing and giving insight into areas most scholars or students tend to ignore: (1) focusing on the impact of Paul's formative years spent in Jerusalem, A.D. 17–34 (30), thus showing the theological closeness of the background of both Jesus and Paul (Palestinian rather than Hellenistic Judaism) (16–17), (2) postulating why Paul abandoned or rejected Gamaliel's laissez-faire attitude toward the church (49, 51–53), (3) noting the chronological closeness of Paul's conversion to Jesus' resurrection (15–16), (4) comparing Paul's Levantine years with the more well-known Gentile mission years (76–98), and (5) explaining several reasons why Paul took the Gospel to the Gentiles (137–40). Even Barnett's most speculative ideas are intriguing: (1) that Saul took or was given the name "Paul" from Sergius Paulos on Cyprus and then went to the proconsul's relatives who lived in Pisidian Antioch (206), and (2) the minority view that the location of Paul's imprisonment, from which he wrote the Prison Epistles, was Ephesus rather than the traditional site of Rome or even Caesarea Maritima (215–17).

The book has few shortcomings. With the body of the book running just over two hundred pages, one wishes for more information at times, such as in the answer to covenantal nomism and the New Perspective on Paul (130–32) and the closing chapter which covered Paul's achievements (198–204). "Jews becoming proselytes" should be "Gentiles becoming proselytes" (38n43).

This excellent volume will benefit both student and scholar. Barnett gives an accurate picture of Paul based on the biblical texts and presents plausible speculation on Paul based on historical background information.

James R. Wicker
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***Three Views on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament.* Edited by Kenneth Berding and Jonathan Lunde. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008. 256 pages. Softcover, \$16.99.**

"Out of Egypt I called my son." With these words from Hosea, Matthew seeks to demonstrate that Jesus' escape from death into Egypt was in some way a "fulfillment" of Scripture. Understanding what Matthew is doing by quoting this Old Testament text entails a host of questions about the hermeneutical practices of the New Testament writers. Editors Kenneth Berding and Jonathan Lunde provide readers with a snapshot of the wide interpretive spectrum of answers given to these questions. As part of Zondervan's Counterpoints Series, this volume

features three views defended by Walter Kaiser, Darrell Bock, and Peter Enns. Each scholar makes a case for his position and briefly responds to the other two presentations.

Recognizing the complexity of the New Testament's use of the Old Testament, Berding and Lunde have the "modest" goal of exposing their readers to "a range of approaches to some of the questions posed by this issue" (10). They focus the discussion on "the relationship between the meanings intended by the OT authors in their texts and those derived from those texts by the NT authors" (10). For the editors, this question possesses the "requisite density to lie at the center of the gravity in this discussion" (10). In analyzing the idea of intended meaning, the contributors also address the related issues of *sensus plenior*, typology, the Old Testament context, Jewish exegetical methods, and whether or not contemporary interpreters should replicate the approach of New Testament authors.

The essays themselves are brief but substantive engagements of the topic. Kaiser argues that between the Old Testament and New Testament text there is a single meaning with unified referents. He denies that New Testament authors employed *sensus plenior* or any other Jewish exegetical methods and affirms that the typologies they find are warranted from the Old Testament context. Bock argues for a single meaning but with multiple contexts and referents, which allows for a moderate use of *sensus plenior*, typology, and similar Jewish interpretive techniques. He still seeks to maintain a "stable meaning" that relates in some way to the Old Testament context. Enns argues that there actually is a fuller meaning in the New Testament text, thus affirming that New Testament authors freely employ *sensus plenior* with minimal relation to the original Old Testament meaning. For him, the two authors share a single goal (Christ) but not a single textual strategy.

One strength of this volume is its overall structural focus. Berding and Lunde concentrate the dialogue around the central question of authorial intent. Lunde's introduction frames the discussion and introduces the important terms and concepts, and Berding's conclusion summarizes and systematizes the answers given in the essays. This format allows for an orientation to the debate and enables the reader to interact critically with the positions. Though the presentations cover common ground, each author does have his own particular emphasis. For instance, Kaiser couches most of his essay as a strong polemic against the use of *sensus plenior*, and Enns spends the bulk of his essay defending the legitimacy of viewing Second Temple Judaism as the key to the whole debate. This unevenness in the presentations seems somewhat disconnected from the clear structure that Lunde sets forth in the introduction. Though the editorial bookends provide clarity and a balance of emphasis, the essays do not always share this trait.

Another strength is the amount of example texts used by the contributors. In the course of the book, quite a few of the important texts in this debate are exegeted or analyzed. However, because each author chooses to elaborate and focus on different texts in his essay and the responses are necessarily brief, it is sometimes unclear how each of the views would respond to a given text. Having each contributor deal with the same major case studies (e.g., Matthew's use of Hosea 11), would have embedded the responses in the flow of the book, thus demonstrating what is at stake in exegesis more clearly. Despite this concern, in

the overall interchange, there are numerous examples that enable the reader to see quickly the differing interpretations of the authors. To give one example, in Acts 4:25–26, Peter’s sermon includes Israel in the “nations” that rage against God’s anointed in Psalm 2. For Kaiser, Peter’s interpretation is “not too surprising” (154), while for Bock, it “only takes one reading to see the surprise here” (129). For Enns, Peter’s sermon exemplifies “the *radical* nature of the early church’s use of the Psalm 2” (163). Seeing this type of interpretive spectrum is helpful in analyzing the differing approaches and is common throughout the book.

Though the “panel discussion” format allows for a quick comparison of three views, it also inevitably omits several from the discussion. With this issue in particular, there are many nuanced positions worth considering (e.g., John Sailhamer’s emphasis on compositional strategy or Richard Hays’ interest in intertextuality). A further example of an unaddressed issue is the Old Testament’s use of the Old Testament itself. The Old Testament authors developed and employed patterns and techniques as they utilized texts and themes from the Pentateuch and other foundational passages. Some of these authors were even from the period of Second Temple Judaism (e.g., the Chronicler and the editor of the Psalter). The contributors do not typically consider the possibility that the writers of the New Testament may have adopted these previously established textual strategies.

There are limitations to this work, but the editors have anticipated most of them. They accomplish their modest aim of providing a basic framework and encouraging believers “to think more intentionally about broad connections between the OT and NT” (243), making this volume a helpful introduction to this key issue in biblical theology.

Ched Spellman
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Backgrounds

***The Archaeology of the Bible.* By James K. Hoffmeier. Oxford: Lion Hudson, 2008. 192 pages. Hardcover, \$29.95.**

James K. Hoffmeier has moved beyond his scholarly books to write a popular book on archaeology and the Bible. While his scholarly writing has always been accessible, this book is for an audience that has only a basic knowledge of the Bible and archaeology. It is clear that decades of teaching in the classroom have prepared him to present the results of current archaeological research to undergraduate students. This intimacy with the data and ability to articulate a depth of knowledge into a synthetic discussion is now utilized in a pedestrian genre—the “coffee table” book.

As with most books at a popular, introductory level, it is well illustrated with pictures, charts, and artwork. The book is divided into three parts: Part 1, “Introduction to Archaeology and its Application to the Old Testament;” Part 2, “The Land and the Kings of Israel;” and Part 3, “New Testament Times.” Each part has four to five chapters. The discussion is very brief; each chapter is only ten to fifteen

pages on average, including the illustrations and sidebars. The brevity prevents this book from being used in the classroom.

It is common for this genre of books to be outdated—especially since publishers usually retain text of an older book and update the illustrations, fonts, and pictures to give the impression of a new product on the market. This is not the case with this book. In spite of the brevity, Hoffmeier does not give a superficial presentation of the data. He discusses current finds and contemporary issues and debates. Hoffmeier introduces critical views on the historicity of the United Monarchy and recent controversies such as the Tomb of Jesus and the Joash inscription.

The format is typical for books that discuss archaeology and the Bible. The framework is the biblical text highlighted by archaeological finds that illustrate certain points. There is no critical discussion of how archaeology has informed our understanding of particular biblical texts or provides for a wider picture of the ancient world than what we have in the Bible. One possible exception is the chapter on the New Testament—but even then this chapter is missing major archaeological discoveries of the Maccabean period and Herod the Great's building projects. Plus, the section on the Gospels does not explicitly address the tension between Jewish villages and Greek *poliae* (cities). Another example of how archaeology has informed our understanding of the Biblical text is the transition between the Late Bronze Age and Iron Age I. This archaeological period sheds light on the history and biblical accounts found in the books of Joshua and Judges. These examples are not weaknesses of the book, considering that this reviewer cannot determine how these issues could be discussed in an introductory book.

With the above issues aside, Hoffmeier does an excellent job presenting an introductory overview of archaeology and the Bible. The text is peppered with personal accounts of his travels in Bible lands and anecdotes from his excavations. One of the strengths of the book is the introductory section where Hoffmeier discusses theoretical issues on archaeology and biblical studies. This is one of the best introductions the reviewer has read on the nature of archaeology, apologetics, and abuses of the archaeological data in the interpretation of the Bible. The first two chapters, "The Birth of Biblical Archaeology" and "The Bible, Archaeology, and Interpretation," are a valuable read for all students in introductory Bible courses.

The book is not appropriate for the classroom due to its brevity and lack of footnotes or references (there is a short bibliography at the end). Nevertheless, it will be a valuable book in a pastor's library. Dr. Hoffmeier writes with authority, offering an excellent introduction to archaeology and the Bible.

Steven Ortiz
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***Paul and His World: Interpreting the New Testament in Its Context.* By Helmut Koester. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007. 301 + xv pages. Hardcover, \$39.00.**

Fifty years of published scholarly writings is an impressive and inspiring achievement. This volume is a collection of twenty-five articles by Helmut Koester, penned from 1955–2004 in the field of New Testament studies. Along with a yet-

to-be-published subsequent volume of similar essays, this book represents half a century of research “to understand the New Testament and early Christianity in their historical development and contemporary environment” (279). Koester is the John H. Morrison Research Professor of Divinity and Winn Research Professor of Ecclesiastical History at Harvard Divinity School.

Section one primarily deals with 1–2 Thessalonians as representative of Paul’s letters. Koester plans to publish a commentary on these books soon, and this is his area of expertise (xv). Much of section two is an analysis of archeological discoveries in western Anatolia (Asia Minor in Paul’s day; Turkey today). These articles present a good paradigm of carefully examining archeological evidence and then making cautionary hypotheses about ancient life that fits the evidence. Koester primarily documents the wide geographic spread of Egyptian deities, which, interestingly, spread in the same geographic area that Christianity did (159). Section three is an eclectic group of articles on early Christianity.

Even if one does not agree with Koester’s liberal views, he deserves an audience. He presents some thought-provoking analyses, such as the observation that Thomas Jefferson, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and the Gnostic *Gospel of Thomas* all have an affinity for personal piety in the words of Jesus but miss: (1) the fuller salvific message and (2) the inclusive commandment of love (196, 198, 204–05). Yet, Koester’s call to “liberate Paul from the traditional interpretation” is a troubling appeal for universalism (206).

Since Koester is a trained Bultmannian form critic steeped in the history-of-religions school of thought, focusing on the alleged syncretism of both Judaism and Christianity (275), his non-traditional views should come as no surprise. Unfortunately, he reflects a low view of the New Testament canon, claiming other non-canonical writings, such as the *Shepherd of Hermas* and *Apocalypse of Peter*, are just as inspired as the rest of the New Testament (216). He claims the canonical Gospels are not inspired and that they are in the New Testament for church polity and catechetical purposes (218–19). Other problematic views include the following: 1) Jesus’ resurrection was only a new spiritual understanding by his followers rather than a literal resurrection (100–01—contrary to the literal, bodily resurrection affirmed in all four Gospels); 2) *none* of the Twelve authored a New Testament book (205—against the traditional views that Matthew wrote a Gospel, Peter wrote two epistles, and John wrote a Gospel, three epistles, and Revelation); 3) the *Gospel of Thomas* makes more claims to legitimate apostolic authority than do the four canonical Gospels (229—even though that writing is late, Gnostic, and not a Gospel); 4) Paul did not write 2 Thessalonians, Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon, and the Pastoral Epistles (253—contrary to Scripture testimony); and 5) Acts contains erroneous historical information regarding details of Paul’s journeys (256–57, 265—contrary to the historical veracity of the Old Testament & New Testament writings). Clearly, Koester approaches the biblical text with an anti-supernatural bias, as is evident in his firm belief that biblical “prophecy” must be written *ex eventu* (105).

Chapter twenty-five, “Insights from a Career of Interpretation,” was somewhat interesting but ultimately disappointing. Koester studied under an impressive array of theological luminaries: Fuchs, Bultmann, Bornkam, and Pannenberg

(281). He notes how his emphasis shifted from Bultmann's demythologizing of the New Testament "to a stage in my life where bringing archeologists and students of early Christianity together would occupy much of my time and seemed to me the most worthwhile thing I could contribute" (289). Yet, one wishes Koester offered more insights and examples of his theological pilgrimage than what he put into this chapter. As with the rest of the book, there is an abundance of knowledge but a lack of truly understanding the New Testament.

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Theological Studies

***The Blue Parakeet: Rethinking How You Read the Bible.* By Scot McKnight. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008. 236 pages. Hardcover. \$19.99.**

Scot McKnight's *The Blue Parakeet* engages several interconnected discussions among contemporary Christians. McKnight addresses issues related to biblical interpretation (hermeneutics) as well as contemporary ethics. The pressing topic of the book is that today's Christians need to have clear means of applying the Bible to contemporary life. McKnight deserves praise for his identification of several of the more difficult issues ("blue parakeets") facing Christians who are trying to apply the Bible to everyday life.

McKnight indicates that there are cultural and historical gaps between biblical times and today. Therefore, those who are attempting to live according to the Bible must "adopt and adapt" (or "pick and choose"). McKnight attempts to present a means of adopting and adapting that is biblically warranted and timely. In order to engage the Bible and the contemporary context, McKnight argues that one must catch three essentials: story, listening and discerning.

In describing the story of the Bible, McKnight points to the over-arching story presented in five plot developments, each with their own theme. The themes of oneness (communion or mutuality—good) or otherness (individualism or subordination—bad) are central to McKnight's presentation. The individual parts of the Story (Bible) are to be read in light of this oneness-otherness-oneness scheme. This big picture will help with the discerning task to come later.

Listening involves what McKnight calls a "relational" approach to the Bible (as opposed to an "authoritative" approach where the reader is primarily to submit to the Bible). The Bible serves as a personal communication to "us" from God. Noting the distinction between the Bible and God leads McKnight not to "ask what the Bible says" but instead "what God says to us in that Bible. The difference is a difference between paper and person" (91).

Discerning allows the reader, or perhaps better the listener, to find the proper way to live out the Christian life. McKnight says that discernment should be communal rather individual, will reflect diversity, and should be applied to "issues that are obviously unclear in the Bible." McKnight says that no discernment is needed (because the Bible is clear) on murder, spousal abuse, selling children, or

premarital sexual intercourse. However, discernment is needed (because the Bible is not clear) on women preachers and how gays and lesbians “will participate” (in the church) (131). Later, McKnight provides an extended discernment or case study on women in church ministries today, which argues an egalitarian position of expanding opportunities of church leadership for women due to the cultural norms of contemporary Western society.

Overall, *The Blue Parakeet* is an engaging read. McKnight has an uncanny ability to write in a manner that is both accessible and challenging. Throughout the book, McKnight intends to be provocative in language and through the questions he raises. For example, he begins chapter ten by stating, “Our all-too-glib but rather frequently heard Christian claim to practice whatever the Bible says annoys me.” He later asks, “Why do I not do what this passage in the Bible teaches?” (129). Unfortunately, in attempt to engage a more popular (“blog-savvy”) audience, McKnight’s assertions can occasionally be overstated, perhaps for rhetorical effect. In chapter three, as he critiques other “types” of approaches to interpretation and appropriation, McKnight states that “Roman Catholics, Eastern Orthodox, Lutherans, Reformed, Congregationalists, Baptists, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, nondenominational, and so on” all put the pieces of the Bible together as a puzzle. McKnight then contends, “Each of these groups *ignores* parts of the puzzle that don’t quite fit their system” (51, emphasis mine). McKnight does not want to grant that the other “parts” might be subsumed in the overall presentation because of some biblical warrant noted by these groups. Also, it might be that a more informed or detailed presentation of these groups’ positions might note the exceptions as being problematic but not incorrigible (and therefore not *ignored*).

One final comment about biblical interpretation or hermeneutics is in order. If the reader is looking for a book on hermeneutics, then this book should not be the first choice. McKnight either dismisses or “ignores” the distinction between meaning and significance made by E.D. Hirsch’s classic work, *Validity in Interpretation*. Though not everyone accepts Hirsch’s distinction, in McKnight’s case, it might be helpful if he were to distinguish between the effort in discerning the meaning of the biblical text and discerning useful means of appropriation for the text’s meaning. If the appropriation of meaning (“How do we live this text?”) and the quest for meaning itself (“What does this text say/mean?”) are coalesced, then the contemporary context of the reader might be given an undue place in the establishment of meaning. A destabilized textual meaning can hinder the “discerning” process that McKnight so encourages.

Jason K. Lee

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***A Brief History of the Doctrine of the Trinity.* By Franz Dünzl. Translated by John Bowden. New York: T&T Clark, 2007. 148 + xi pages. Paperback, \$26.95.**

The title of this book describes only one aspect; it is indeed brief. Despite the work’s brevity, however, it is very complete. The author, Professor of Early Church History at the University of Würzburg, Germany, takes his readers from

the time of the New Testament through the major crises surrounding formulations of Trinitarian belief to the Council of Constantinople in 381; he then proceeds with a brief discussion of the period immediately following that council. Throughout, Dünzl explores the theological, scriptural, and political currents that form the background for the ancient church's struggle to understand the relationship of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit within a monotheistic framework.

This brief but surprisingly complete text is extremely helpful in guiding the reader through the complex path of discussions and controversies in the ancient church surrounding the Trinity. Moreover, Dünzl is clear without oversimplification. At times, his probing the issue brings to the surface details that are more of a concern to the specialist, such as questions of authenticity concerning correspondence between Dionysius of Alexandria and Dionysius of Rome in the third century (39). A reader approaching the study of the Trinity for the first time might find this detail superfluous or confusing, but in this way Dünzl forewarns his readers that the background of the ancient discussions is murky at times. Another area among many where the author avoids oversimplification is his discussion of the adjectives *homoousios* ("of the same substance") and *homoiousios* ("of similar substance"); the former is usually associated with Athanasius, the latter with those who wished to emphasize the distinction of Father and Son with an implied subordination of the Son. Of interest here is Dünzl's clarification that such Germanic peoples as the Visigoths turned to *homoiousios* in their understanding of the relationship of the Son to the Father. While identified as Arians (i.e., the Son is a creature), ancient Germanic peoples may have affirmed the Son's Deity, although in subordination to the Father (130–31). Finally, the author sees the development of doctrine as a result of the discussions in "the *living* tradition of the church in a three-hundred-year-long history" (ix), and his brief history vividly reflects more clearly the struggles in which the creedal statements of 325 and 381, and the Chalcedonian definition of 451, were formed.

At the very beginning, one major concern evidenced by Dünzl is the issue of monotheism and the relation of Christianity to the other monotheistic religions, Judaism and Islam. This concern, which the author shares with Charles Kannengiesser (as expressed by Kannengiesser at the most recent meeting of the North American Patristics Society in Oxford in August 2007), forms the subject matter of the first chapter. Typical of Dünzl's brevity and depth, the chapter both sets forth features shared by the three religions and puts in relief the issue of the Trinity, which complicates Christian monotheism. The author thus explores the ways in which the Christian community struggled to maintain monotheism within the understanding of Christ as God's Son, and later of the Holy Spirit. Implicit here is an appreciation both of the theological framework shared by Christianity, Judaism, and Islam, and of the way in which the confession of God as One and Three marks Christianity as unique.

In his last chapter, Dünzl asks whether the formulation of the Trinity by the Neo-Nicenes (those involved in the Council of Constantinople) is still relevant today. The author admits that Platonic philosophy and imperial intervention were factors in the development of the doctrine of the Trinity. Nevertheless, he sees those factors as instructive in the way God and human beings work together in

exploring what is, in the final analysis, a mystery: One God in Three Persons. For Dünzl, the statements by the ancient Church concerning this mystery can still guide the contemporary Church.

This brief work is of tremendous value and help for students of the development of doctrine in the patristic era; it reveals the complexity of the debates, the basic issues involved in those debates, and the continuing impact that ancient doctrine can have at the present time. As with any work, this text has features of which a reader needs to be aware. Dünzl's study is foundational but brief; it is not final. Other works need to be studied for a detailed look, and Dünzl himself points his readers to other sources for further information. Furthermore some readers may have difficulty with the author's higher-critical view of Scripture; whatever one's approach to Scripture, however, Dünzl's views on that subject do not detract from the main thrust of this book. John Bowden, the translator, has rendered a great service by making this brief but complete text available in English.

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***Caminando entre el Pueblo: Ministerio Latino en los Estados Unidos.* By Juan Francisco Martínez. Nashville: Abigdon Press, 2008. Paperback, \$18.00**

El libro es una introducción principalmente al trabajo eclesial entre los latinos en los Estados Unidos. Ha sido escrito por un teólogo latino con experiencia misionera en Guatemala y que ahora funciona como decano asistente del Departamento de Estudios de la Iglesia Hispana del Seminario Teológico de Fuller en California.

Escrito en un estilo sencillo y accesible, el libro se esfuerza por cubrir la extensa y compleja variedad de este ministerio. Comienza describiendo la multitud de retos que la iglesia latina enfrenta (históricos, culturales, lingüísticos, etc.). A continuación nos recuerda las maneras acostumbradas—y muchas veces inadecuadas—en las que la iglesia estadounidense de la cultura dominante ha lidiado con ellos. Por ejemplo, el autor analiza el modelo de “deficiencia” con el que a veces se define el ministerio latino. Fijar los ojos en las finanzas como factor principal para la realización del ministerio Cristiano no sólo resulta insuficiente, sino que corre contra de la revelación de Dios en las Escrituras y en Jesucristo. Una manera más completa y cristiana de hacer el ministerio sería revalorar todos los “recursos” que las iglesias latinas traen a esa tarea. Entre estos, el autor menciona la función de las familias extendidas fuertes, un mestizaje que nos flexibiliza culturalmente, etc.

En los capítulos cuatro y cinco el lector encontrará una descripción de las maneras en que las iglesias latinas están poniendo en función aquellas fortalezas y recursos. Aunque el trabajo es ya bastante variado, todavía existen áreas en que estos ministerios pueden flexibilizarse y multiculturalizarse aun más. El futuro presenta retos importantes en algunas de esas áreas. Martínez habla especialmente del trabajo juvenil, del desarrollo de líderes, y del trabajo misional hacia afuera de la comunidad latina. Sin embargo, al final nuestro autor se muestra optimista sobre

ese futuro y nos invita a soñar con “esos destellos de Dios que representamos los latinos en los estados unidos” (15).

El lector encontrará un libro cálido, con reconocimientos personales y pastorales. Debemos agradecer al autor su esfuerzo por sintetizar una panorámica extremadamente complicada. Quizá a eso se deba que la mayor parte del contenido sea más bien descriptiva y menos prescriptiva. Por supuesto, en términos de esta materia habrá muy pocas cosas que puedan ofrecerse como receta culinaria o médica. De todas maneras, no deja de sentirse a momentos en el libro la necesidad de tener sugerencias más concretas.

El libro es una muy buena herramienta de análisis de la realidad hispana en los Estados Unidos. Todo líder y pastor hispano sacará genuino provecho al leerla, aun en los casos en que se pudiera diferir con el autor. Ya que la obra está escrita también en inglés, muchos otros líderes no hispanos podrían obtener una visión más realista y cristiana del ministerio hispano con el cual tarde o temprano se encontrarán—si es que todavía no lo han hecho.

La lectura de esta obra se ve favorecida por dos características más. El libro está salpicado, en cajas a lo largo del texto, con opiniones y comentarios de varios líderes hispanos de este país. Finalmente, en una especie de apéndice, el autor ha recogido una concisa lista de recursos para el ministerio latino que incluye literatura y lugares en la Internet.

Gerardo A. Alfaro.

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***Cornelius Van Til: Reformed Apologist and Churchman.* By John R. Muether. Phillipsburg, New Jersey: P&R Publishing, 2008. 288 pages. Hardcover. \$24.99.**

Cornelius Van Til: Reformed Apologist and Churchman helps to clarify the life of Van Til, if not his obtuse transcendental methodology. Author John R. Muether has written a refreshingly straightforward and sympathetic biography. Each chapter unfolds chronologically. Muether avoids detailed analysis of his thought and idle speculation into his life and relationships. He provides an accurate and intimate window into the institutions, relationships, and controversies that define Van Til's life.

As the title suggests, Van Til was a man thoroughly committed to Reformed theology. This commitment is evident through his involvement at Calvin College, Princeton, and Westminster Theological Seminary as well as in the Christian Reformed Church and the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. Reformed theology led Van Til to tirelessly promote Christian education and catechism training. It led him to oppose evangelicalism, ecumenism, and the Billy Graham style of evangelism that he thought softened the message of the cross. Muether quotes Van Til regarding his Reformed faith, “It is not the five-points [of Calvinism]. It is rather the measure of consistency with which it applies all the doctrines of Christianity.” (234) Van Til spent his life pursuing an apologetic and theological approach that

was methodologically consistent with his reformed faith, and most of his controversies were over the degradation of reformed thought.

Muether shows Van Til surrounded by heroes including J. Gresham Machen, Geerhardus Voss, Herman Bavinck, B.B. Warfield, and Abraham Kuyper. Machen brought him to Westminster, kept him there (at times by persuasion), and was an unwavering ally until his untimely death. During his time at Westminster, Van Til was engaged in almost constant and substantive theological disputes with such men as Henry Dooyeweerd, William Henry Jellema, and most notably, Karl Barth. The book masterfully explores his tenuous relationships with former students (like E.J. Carnell) and evangelical leaders, such as Francis Schaeffer, whom he considered to be in the Aquinas-Butler tradition despite all his talk of presuppositions.

Among his many debates, the book focuses on Van Til's opposition to Barth. At a time when most theologians were imbibing neo-orthodoxy, Van Til argued that it was modernism repackaged, resting upon Kantian presuppositions. He decried Barthian influence on the Christian Reformed Church and sought to expose Barth as an anti-reformed universalist. Van Til avoided cultural commentary, but spoke out against Barth's support for evolution as undermining the doctrine of creation, which is foundational to Reformed thought. Muether provides fascinating insight into Van Til's attempts to meet Barth and their brief personal meeting in which Barth is claimed to have said to Van Til, "You said some bad things about me, but I forgive you. I forgive you." Muether's Van Til is both ready to battle and ready to make peace, as he would later say that he hoped to talk and laugh (with Barth) in heaven (191). The irony of Van Til's costly opposition to Barth is that he was often accused of being Barthian.

Perhaps one important contribution this book makes to a Southern Baptist reader is to show a man and a movement promoting denominational heritage that, in ways, parallels the current Baptist Identity movement. Van Til models a balanced commitment to his local church, his denomination, and the universal church. His uneasy relationship with evangelicalism, commitment to the Bible, wariness of ecumenicalism, and overwhelming desire to pursue a biblically consistent theology will be familiar and appreciated.

For all its strengths, this book assumes too much familiarity with Van Til's writing. It does little but mention the titles of his books and hardly attempts to trace any development in his thought. The first chapter tires the reader with descriptions of *Afscheiding* and *Doleante*, which could have been clearer. Moreover, there is only passing reference to Van Til's legacy. Overall, this is a book well worth reading.

Adam Groza
Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

***The Courage to be Protestant: Truth-lovers, Marketers, and Emergents in the Postmodern World.* By David Wells. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008. 248 pages. Hardcover, \$26.00.**

David Wells is Distinguished Senior Research Professor at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary and a theological conservative. *The Courage to Be Protestant* is part of Well's on-going strategy to sound the alarm that in an effort to be more appealing to culture, evangelical churches in America have left their moorings of truth, lost their identity and effectiveness, and, ironically, are adrift at the mercy of the very culture to whom they are trying to appeal. This book is the fifth installment in a series that has spanned 15 years and over 1,300 pages. While his earlier works tended to be laborious reads involving much minutiae, in this fifth book Wells instead captures the essence of his previous four books and writes in a much more concise manner. Readers may remember his previous works in this series: *Whatever Happened to Evangelical Theology* (1993); *God in the Wasteland* (1994); *Losing Our Virtue* (1998); *Above All Earthly Powers* (2005).

A common notion among critics of Wells' previous works is that while he admirably demonstrated the troubled times of modern evangelicalism, he stopped far short of providing any solutions. In this book Wells remedies that shortcoming in that while he began with a three chapter summary of his previous arguments regarding the poor health of today's churches, he devotes the rest of the chapters to systematically providing theological solutions along the five major themes of his previous works: truth, God, self, Christ, and the church.

Chapter one, (especially pages 4–18), provides the clearest explanation of America's evangelical landscape that this reader has come across. Wells divides today's churches into three categories and defines them as marketers, or more commonly, seeker sensitive, emerging, and historically evangelical. For those looking for a clear and concise explanation of the differences between these three types of churches, this chapter alone is worth the price of the book.

Throughout his discussions of the aforementioned five major themes of the book, Wells presents and evaluates the positions of the marketer, emerging, and historically evangelical churches as they relate to each theme. Wells makes no attempt to hide his strong loyalty to the position of the historically evangelical churches and his deep-seated concerns about the marketer and emerging trends. Yet, despite his obvious bias, he still manages to come across as the wise old elder toward the end of his time staring into the camp fire at times gone by and sharing with the younger warriors what he has seen; namely, that though dangerous to the historically evangelical church position, the marketer and emerging movements are not a new threat, but merely new forms of the same threats seen many times before.

Wells also makes a compelling case that the threats to the historically evangelical churches, like today's marketer and emerging movements, have traditionally tended to be spiritualized forms of contemporary, secular cultural trends. He argues that the now all but defunct marketer movement, that recast faith around the individual and was considered cutting edge for its day, was neither creative nor cutting edge as it simply reflected the secular culture's efforts to recast itself

around the individual. In the same fashion, Wells argues the emerging movement's attempt to recast faith around community is not creative, but a spiritualized form of the current trend in the secular culture.

One issue that has the potential to mute Wells' voice among residents of the marketer and emerging camps is his regrettable and fairly extensive use of sarcasm toward positions that differ to his own. Regrettable because without the noticeable sarcasm, this book would be a more balanced and compelling voice of reason to the emerging movement regarding the multiple danger points and fallacies of the emerging church culture. As it stands, this otherwise very well written book may be limited to equipping and further entrenching those that already hold to the historically evangelical church position.

Those who have read Wells' previous works in this series will find this book reads more like a survey of various arguments and positions rather than another lengthy tome; however, his work is still denser than the self help books one finds at their local Christian bookstore. Purchasers of this book should be ones who tend to be more disciplined readers and can synthesize information as they read.

This reader wholeheartedly recommends this work to pastors, church leaders and especially church planters. Wells clearly has the depth of knowledge with regard to doctrine and the breadth of understanding with regard to culture to produce a fascinating and convincing analysis of modern day church trends. Regardless of which camp one identifies with in today's modern church movements, one can only benefit from considering the tough questions Wells asks of each camp as he evaluates each in light of their theological substance and accuracy. This book could be the most helpful this reader has found with regard to formulating a philosophy and methodology for local church ministry.

Nathan Lino
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***Covenant and Salvation: Union with Christ.* By Michael S. Horton. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2007. 324 pages. Softcover, \$34.95.**

While Horton claims that his "primary goal . . . is not to exonerate the tradition, but to interact with the New Perspective on Paul (NPP) from within it" (12), his two-part work still reads as a defense of the traditional doctrine of grace-based forensic justification by imputation against both the recent proposals of the NPP and Radical Orthodoxy (RO). He characterizes the NPP as having a works-based justification and the RO, similar to Osiander, as stressing infusion (transformative ontic participation) through mystical union with Christ (130). Horton's work is the third volume of a planned four-part series.

In the first part, Horton claims that one's view of justification is dependent upon how one views the relationship between the covenants. He argues that because the NPP (James D.G. Dunn, E.P. Sanders, and N.T. Wright) views the new covenant (Lk 22:20) as "the *renewal* of the Sinai covenant" (84), its failure to maintain the distinction between the suzerainty (law-Sinai) and royal grant (promise-Zion) covenants (29) leads to the view of "covenantal nomism." He

interprets Sanders' "covenantal nomism" to mean that covenant refers to "grace" and nomism refers to "law" resulting in a monocovenantal "pattern of religion" characterized by "gracious law" (39) in "which one gets in by grace, but remains in by obedience" (37). Horton's distinction between the covenants is maintained when their relationship is conceived of as the law of the old covenant (2 Cor 3:14) being *fulfilled* in the new covenant (24) so that law no longer functions as "the principle or basis for punishment and reward . . . [but] as a normative guide that is no longer able to condemn" (87). According to Horton, this distinction and relationship between the covenants leads to the basis of justification being grace alone (21) while in the NPP it leads to "faithfulness—our own covenantal obedience" (107).

In the second part, Horton claims that one's view of union with Christ and its relation to justification is dependent on metaphysical presuppositions. He argues for forensic justification by imputation as the basis for a transformative union of incorporation through Christ's federal headship (168) and corporate solidarity (Rom 5:12–21) (186) as opposed to the neoplatonic views of participation or mystical union by infusion of divine essence advocated by RO (John Milbank) and the New Finnish-Helsinki School (Tuomo Mannermaa and Robert Jenson) (159). He states that RO's metaphysical view of *metathexis*—ontological participation of the natural in the supernatural (157)—creates a matter-spirit dualism (207) in which matter is dependent on spirit (God's essence). He asserts that this *metathexis* is inconsistent with the biblical view of a creature-creator dualism, in which, using Gregory Palamas' language, the creature is dependent on the creator's energies not essence (164). As he "follows the *ordo* in Romans 8:30 . . . as a general rubric" (267), he argues that as later Reformed theology defended against synergism, it differentiated between regeneration and effectual calling. This differentiation involved "an infusion of a new *habitus* (disposition) prior to effectual calling" which resulted in a mixed biblical and neoplatonic metaphysics in the *ordo* (216). He eliminates the neoplatonic-infused *habitus* from the *ordo* by using Vanhoozer's speech act theory instead of an Aristotelian causality as a descriptive scheme to identify effectual calling with regeneration (240). Once grace is no longer a substance infused (168), "transforming the natural into the supernatural" (254), but rather "God's favor on account of Christ" (168), "restoring rather than transcending created nature" (189), then justification is seen as the source rather than the result of sanctification and glorification (244).

Horton's summaries of both the NPP and RO serve as a good introduction for readers who are not familiar with these views and a good review for those who are familiar. Because Horton clearly indicates that he is writing from a Reformed perspective, readers who are of a different tradition or theological perspective may be uncomfortable with the covenantal theological emphasis in his arguments: spiritualization of Israel (47), tripartite division of the law (66–67), function of the law (87), use of the *pactum salutis* (131), and view of the relationship of theology and philosophy (182). Despite potential discomfort, any reader will benefit from Horton's insightful criticism of the NPP and RO as well as his helpful corrective proposals. While Horton is likely correct that the NPP's position, both logically and theologically, rests largely on its view of the relationship of the covenants, it

would be an overstatement if he were suggesting that its view rests on this covenant factor alone. Other factors certainly contribute to and sustain the formation and foundation of the NPP's view. Readers suspicious of speech act theory will certainly be wary of Horton's use of it in reordering the *ordo*.

Ronald M Rothenberg
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***The Devil's Dictionary of the Christian Faith.* By Donald T. Williams. St. Louis, MO: Chalice, 2008. Softcover, \$16.99.**

Theology is serious business. Spending eternity in hell is not funny, and the incredible cost to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit to bring about personal redemption is humbling and not a laughing matter. That said, Christians as the followers of Jesus Christ are hilarious. Sometimes they are irritating, but I find more times than not that we, with our stumbling, bumbling attempts to follow our Lord, create a host of reasons to be heartbroken before God and to experience the joys of repentance. Beyond that, we need to recover a sense of humor and learn to laugh at ourselves and, yes, at one another.

Perhaps this is why Donald T. Williams' *The Devil's Dictionary of the Christian Faith* was such a delight to my soul. Williams is Professor of English at Toccoa Falls College in Georgia, but he shows quite a grasp of theology, philosophy, and the life of the church in this superb dictionary. Doubtless inspired in part by C. S. Lewis's *Screwtape Letters*, *The Devil's Dictionary of the Christian Faith* is what the theologian and the pastor need to read just before they go to bed at night. What makes a dictionary full of misdefinitions so delightful is that each definition, like the devil himself, tends to have just enough of the truth to make it painful in a delightful sort of way. For example, *heaven* is defined as "The eternal abode of those like us; where we will live in everlasting bliss and harmony with those about whom we gossiped on the earth" (44). Or, for example, *dispensationalism* is defined as "The doctrine that God dispensed with continuity in constructing His plan for the ages" (30).

The book delightfully spares no one, whether a famous and revered figure from the past or a contemporary leader in the church. In fact, as a good satirist ought, Williams does not even spare himself and those who worked with him. Protestants and Catholics, Baptists and Charismatics, scholars and congregations all take it on the chin but in a cogent and respectful manner even if sometimes one winces just a bit. For example, *divorce* is defined as "A social expedient that Christians condemn more than anybody else and practice just a much. Once committed, it becomes the Unpardonable Sin, unless one is a Media Personality. Then a period of mandatory penance, *Counseling*, (q.v.) and rehabilitation is imposed: five minutes for popular recording artists, ten for media preachers. Preachers not blessed by the *Media* (q.v.) get no reprieve" (30).

One of the most remarkable achievements of the book is that while the book is side splitting, it is as clean as the proverbial hound's-tooth. About the closest thing to being "edgy" (the modern word for "pulpit vulgarity") is the definition

of *Papal Bull*, which is defined as “An official proclamation by the *Pope* (q.v.) which adds to the Deposit of Faith; so named from its resemblance to deposits left by certain large bovine mammals” (13). Just to have a book of clean humor that one can place in the hands of people who are much too serious about themselves is a fabulous blessing from God.

An additional blessing of the book is that many of the definitions have limericks associated with them—some of which are really quite good. In defining *Mission Trip*, Williams gives us the following:

*A good definition of pain
Is the agony, suffering, and strain
You inflict on your knee
When you force it to be
Between two coach seats on a plane* (58).

Or again, regarding *Blaise Pascal*, he writes:

*There is a Pascal, name of Blaise,
Who has a great game that he plays.
“I’ll make you a Wager:
Now, which would be sager?”
God is; He is not. Which one pays?* (64)

On almost every entry, I smiled. Some were so hysterical that they brought a guffaw. On this one I laughed until I hurt. Defining *Health and Wealth*, Williams wrote: “That which flows from the gullible to the Televangelist. The temporal reward that naturally comes to those with the spiritual gifts of direct-mail fundraising, a charismatic personality, and a plentiful lack of conscience. That which they promise to their followers, who are obviously too spiritual to join the long line of humble, persecuted, suffering martyrs who constituted the membership of the Church in a more benighted age” (43). Preachers, Church Music, Pianos, Organs, and just about everything else about church, theology, and seminary are brought under Williams’ microscope and subjected to loving harassment. The four appendices in the back are equally delightful.

To read through the entire book will take less than two hours even if you read as slowly as this reviewer. But whatever you do, do not miss *The Devil’s Dictionary of the Christian Faith*. In what may be unintended (but I suspect is quite intentional), you will actually get a look at some of what the devil really does want to inflict on the church of God. This slender volume is fun, perceptive, and something of the defense for the believer against the devil who, in his traditional appearance, is pictured at the top of every other page in the book.

Paige Patterson
Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

***The Doctrine of the Christian Life.* By John Frame. Phillipsburg: P&R, 2008. 1069 pages. Hardcover, \$45.99.**

For those seeking a relatively comprehensive ethics text from an evangelical perspective, John Frame delivers just such a book. *The Doctrine of the Christian Life* is the third of four books in Frame's "A Theology of Lordship" series. In this volume he addresses the subject of Christian ethics. Frame defines ethics as, "theology, viewed as a means of determining which persons, acts, and attitudes receive God's blessing and which do not" (10). The book is divided into six parts, but is dominated, as are many other evangelical ethics texts, by his exposition of the Decalogue. Because Frame views the revelation of God as the basis of ethical judgment, he affirms the Decalogue as a primary source from which one can make ethical judgments. His method of exposition is to take several chapters for each of the commandments. The first chapter of a section usually provides the Westminster Larger Catechism's comments upon the particular commandment. Frame then applies what he terms a "triperspectival" hermeneutic to the passage.

In traditional Reformed fashion, Frame examines both the positive and the negative aspects that are implicitly contained in a specific commandment. Doing so provides an almost infinite number of ethical topics that Frame could examine under a given commandment. He does an excellent job of covering material that is explicit to the commandment while also breaking some new ground.

Frame's triadic perspective upon ethics is divided into the normative perspective, the situational perspective, and the existential perspective. Ethicists at various times have placed emphasis upon each of these perspectives. Frame views the three perspectives as forming a vital balance, or triangle (35), by which one may properly do ethics. These three perspectives form a unified whole by which one may examine an ethical situation. When Frame examines an ethical situation, he attempts to do so by applying these three perspectives to the situation.

In terms of critique, Frame is coming from a Presbyterian background, and a Baptist may be wary of at least three different instances in which Frame defends pedobaptism (259, 288–89, 558). His main argument is that pedobaptism was simply assumed by the New Testament believers. This leaves open the question of what else is assumed but not explicit in cruxes of the faith. In fairness to Frame, pedobaptism is not made into a major issue in this book. Another minor area of critique would be concerning Frame's exposition of the tenth commandment. Whereas an average of 49 pages are given to commandments 1–9, the tenth commandment receives a mere seven pages. Perhaps it is unfair to critique Frame on length concerning the overall length of the book, but nonetheless this particular section could have been expanded somewhat further.

The Doctrine of the Christian Life is a valuable contribution to the study of Christian ethics for a number of reasons. The sheer breadth of material covered in this book will be helpful to a novice or a scholar in the field of ethics. Although Frame's exposition of the Decalogue dominates this book, he does engage other areas of ethics that are helpful. Frame's evaluation of non-Christian ethics in part two, and of Christian ethics in part three are beneficial resources for understanding the various systems of ethics. Part five concerns the relationship of Christ and

culture and is helpful in establishing how the believer should relate with the culture. Although this is a massive volume, it is well organized and easily accessible to the reader. Frame is thoroughly evangelical in his outlook, and this book will surely become a favorite text among evangelical ethicists.

Timothy Shaun Price
Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary

***Heresies and How to Avoid Them: Why It Matters What Christians Believe.* Edited by Ben Quash and Michael Ward. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2007. 148 pages. Softcover, \$16.95.**

In *Heresies and How to Avoid Them: Why It Matters What Christians Believe*, Ben Quash and Michael Ward have edited a volume that will serve well as a textbook for college or seminary courses in church history (especially those covering the patristic era), Christology, theological foundations, and biblical interpretation. Eight Anglicans, two Roman Catholics, a Quaker, and an Eastern Orthodox scholar wrote this collection of twelve essays. Ten of the writers earned research doctorates in the fields of theology, philosophy of religion, or archaeology. All of them have published in their field.

In the prologue, Quash explains that most of the chapters were originally written as sermons which were delivered at Peterhouse Chapel in Cambridge. The benefit of this for the reader is that complex theological debates are presented in an understandable manner. The downside is that the chapters are not supported by critical notes pointing readers to either primary or secondary sources. Although this is acknowledged by Quash (8), the situation could have been remedied prior to publication and this good book would have been made even better. Readers do benefit, though, from the inclusion of the English texts of the *Apostles' Creed*, *Nicene Creed*, and the *Chalcedonian Definition* (10–12).

The first four chapters consider heresies surrounding the nature of Christ by exploring Arianism, Docetism, Nestorianism, and Eutychianism. The next two chapters explore the nature of the Son within intra-Trinitarian relationships by considering Adoptionism and Theopaschitism. Chapters seven through eleven provide the bulk of the material for the second section of the book, which considers other heresies within the church: Marcionism, Donatism, Pelagianism, Gnosticism, and Free Spirit. In chapter twelve, entitled “Biblical Trinitarianism,” Janet Martin Soskice does not provide a positive statement of this doctrine but an historical example of how *not* to defend orthodox doctrine. In this case, she documents the use of the spurious “Johannine Comma” in 1 John 5:7.

Each chapter is well structured. First, the writer provides a brief summary of the historical circumstances surrounding the theological error. Second, the key biblical texts are provided. Third, the writer explains why the heresy matters and offers suggestions for how to avoid the error. Although the particulars of each heresy differ, many of the suggestions for how to guard against them are raised repeatedly throughout the book. This happens for good reason. Whether one considers modern versions of Arianism or Marcionism, the counsel for guarding

against them applies in every situation. Although Scripture is the Christian's authority for establishing his doctrine and practice, it is important to consider that heretical teachers also use the Bible.

Michael Thompson points out the disturbing fact that Arius led Bible studies twice every week. Rather than attempting to guard against heresy by focusing only on the attentive study of the biblical texts, Thompson suggests that readers need "a real, personal encounter with the living Christ" and that they need to be active in a local group of believers (23). In his chapter on Nestorianism, A.N. Williams cites the need to focus not on how to avoid each heresy but how to "worship rightly" (35). The chapters on Arianism and Marcionism were especially well-written explanations of the historical circumstances surrounding the heresies. Quash's chapter on Donatism provided a riveting narrative of this controversy, but he admits that this is a schism rather than a heretical movement (83). For that reason, one wonders if this chapter should have been included in the book. One correction that should be considered for any subsequent editions of this excellent historical-theological work is that John Sweet cites Jesus' self-referent "Son of Man" as evidence for his humanity (28), but this phrase is widely regarded in biblical studies to be a Messianic title thus pointing to His divinity.

Although it might seem strange to give attention to heresies, this volume vividly illustrates the notion that responding to theological errors has served the church by prompting orthodoxy as the church has clarified its doctrine.

Adam Harwood
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***The Hermeneutics of Doctrine.* By Anthony Thiselton. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007. 671 pages. Hardcover. \$46.00.**

Anthony Thiselton's *The Hermeneutics of Doctrine* makes a significant contribution to the perennial discussions on theological methodology. Thiselton's previous works on philosophy, hermeneutics and biblical exegesis all serve as reservoirs from which he draws for his wide-ranging comments on the purpose, content and value of doctrinal methodology. His insights reflect both the density and articulation that the reader anticipates from Thiselton.

Thiselton divides the work into three uneven parts. Part one sets the framework or presuppositions from which the third part will be developed. Thiselton finds a "dispositional" quality to early Christian confessional statements including the ones found in the New Testament. He argues that the hermeneutics of doctrine extends this dispositional quality because of its twin values of coherence and particularity. Thiselton argues that "communal belief-utterances are no less *closely embedded in life-situations and actions* (italics his) than are the expressions of individual belief." (43) He also notes that dispositional utterances are often relayed in a narrative framework and have an ultimate goal of formation and perhaps transformation.

Part two, the briefest of the three, provides Thiselton's response to anticipated objections to his methodology or presuppositions. He downplays the contrast

between coherence and contingency in hermeneutics and doctrine. He cites that scholars on both sides of the biblical studies and theological studies divide have overdrawn the tension between the universality of doctrinal truth and knowledge (e.g. epistemology) and particularity in doctrine expression (e.g. the confessions of a particular community). Drawing on the dialogic nature of truth as expressed in language (Bahktin), the “scientific” aspects of theology from Torrance and formative/transformativ aspects of understanding (Lonergan), Thiselton proposes that hermeneutics in doctrine best accounts for the communal and personal qualities of theology.

Part three, the longest part by far (over 400 pages), discusses the issues related to attempting to frame doctrine along the lines that Thiselton has established. He provides some general direction for developing and expressing doctrine in his hermeneutical terms without attempting to provide a new, comprehensive systematic theology. In this part, Thiselton continues his style of a critical discussion of scholarship on the central areas of doctrine. For example, on the church and ministry, Thiselton uses Avery Dulles’ models of the church and the “one, holy, catholic and apostolic” of the Nicene Creed to frame his ecclesiological discussion. The resulting discussion tries to present a picture that blends Dulles’ models in attempt to fulfill the pattern the Creed provides for the church. The church must have a definitive shape and purpose (its theological aspect) without allowing its structure (its institutional aspect) to become self-serving emanating triumphalism.

The most intriguing aspect of part three is perhaps that Thiselton uses humanity as the foundational theological tenant from which to develop the other aspects of theology instead of the doctrine of God or Scripture as some might anticipate. By starting with humanity, Thiselton is able to stress the quality of relationality as central to being human. Relationality initiates the language possibilities for the communication of theological truths, it allows for the God-human relationship to be explored as an expression of divine love and it provides the communal context for the expression of Christian belief.

Some readers may criticize Thiselton for his dense writing style or for his unwillingness to develop a comprehensive expression of doctrine using his hermeneutical framework. However, other recent works that have attempted to integrate philosophy of language, hermeneutics, biblical exegesis, and theological formulation to the level that Thiselton has have also shown the tension between lucidity and erudition (e.g. Vanhoozer’s *Drama of Doctrine*). Developing a new form of expressing doctrinal commitments is no small achievement though it may require others to complete the task of applying this form of expression to all the doctrinal categories.

On a personal note, in the “Acknowledgements”, Thiselton’s wife, Rosemary notes that he had suffered a major stroke in the final days of preparing the manuscript. Earlier this year, Scot McKnight reported in his review of this book in *Christianity Today* that Thiselton had experienced a remarkable recovery.

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***Introducing Theological Interpretation of Scripture: Recovering a Christian Practice.* By Daniel J. Treier. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008. 221 pages. Softcover, \$17.99.**

Daniel Trier, Associate Professor of Theology at Wheaton College, stands in the company of scholars including Vanhoozer, Webster, Fowl, and A.K.M. Adam currently leading the charge for theological interpretation. In this band he seeks to offer insight into how believers can better engage Scripture, the church and the world as more diverse interpreters of Scripture. While Treier writes in the context of his aforementioned associates, he maintains his unique voice through analysis and at points critique of others championing theological interpretation. Theological interpretation as a discipline draws upon the fields of historical theology, systematic theology, linguistic philosophy and biblical studies. In his volume, Treier navigates these tributaries in hopes of providing definition, cogency and a way forward for the stream of theological interpretation.

As the subtitle of the book indicates, Trier views the practice of theological interpretation as a historical practice in need of recovery from neglect at the hands of critical theory and the consequent narrowly defined historical-grammatical method. Given this perspective, Treier naturally begins with a brief survey of the manner in which theological interpretation declined and how it has come to resurgence. Following this introduction the book is divided into two parts. In part one, Treier dedicates three chapters to defining theological interpretation in a way consistent with the practice of the ancient church. In these chapters he extols the virtues of “pre-critical” interpretation, promotes reading according to the Rule of Faith, and prescribes interpreting Scripture as a “community of the Spirit.” Here lie the common ideas for advocates of theological interpretation. These chapters serve as the most fruitful in that they demonstrate the bankruptcy of purely critical interpretation as well as the value of theological presupposition. Treier recognizes that Western Christianity’s obsession—critical objectivity—is ultimately impossible and even worse produces unhealthy interpretation.

In part two, Treier dedicates three chapters to navigating issues which lack consensus in the movement. These chapters contain an analysis on the relationship between Biblical Theology and hermeneutics, an appraisal of general hermeneutics for interpreting Scripture, and an assessment of theology and interpretation in the “global church.” These chapters provide valuable summary of the competing voices from within the movement concerning these issues. Perhaps the most intriguing distinction within the movement concerns the use of biblical theology in interpretation. Treier gives three approaches theological interpreters offer for utilizing biblical theology in such a way that avoid its primary pitfall—the fracturing of biblical unity. The options are to view perceived conflicts in the canon as complementary angles on common truths, to interpret the Bible in a primarily literary manner to avoid historical questions, or to redefine biblical theology in a way similar to theological interpretation.

Among other strengths to the book, Treier provides a legitimate answer to the question raised by postmodern interpretation of how personal and communal presuppositions influence interpretation. He demonstrates throughout that one

must be conscious of their context and tradition by using theology to interpret Scripture according to guides such as the Rule of Faith. In the process, purely critical interpretation is exposed as void of scriptural authority and lacking Christian character. Perhaps the greatest strength is his concern that theology is necessary to the spiritual health of the Christian community. Treier seeks a recovery of theology in the life of every church member when he writes, "Theology is the practice of all Christian people growing in their knowledge of God amidst their various life activities and church practices" (188).

Treier's concern for the church provides context for mentioning two weaknesses. First, the reader would expect writing readily accessible to those outside the academy from an introductory work that has as its aim the reclamation of theological interpretation in the church. However, several elements of the book indicate that it will best find an audience in academic circles. It is illustrative that a concise definition of theological interpretation does not appear until page 200 rather than at the beginning of the work. A second weakness is Treier's ambiguous idea of the Christian community. Two chapters are specifically devoted to the role of church tradition and context in interpretation. The titles for the church used in these two chapters, "the Community of the Spirit" and "the Global Church," illustrate the ambiguity of which church traditions are authoritative in interpretation. There is little offered to guide the theological interpreter in situations of competing influences from differing ecclesial traditions. Overall this book is highly valuable for restoring the nexus of theology, interpretation, and spiritual health in the church.

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***Israel, God's Servant: God's Key to the Redemption of the World.* By David W. Torrance and George Taylor. Edinburgh: Paternoster, 2008. 224 pages. Softcover, \$19.99.**

Torrance and Taylor have formulated an argument that reexamines the role that Israel plays in the history of God's salvation. As a foundation, the authors give the historical context of the modern State of Israel and argue that the present conflict that has existed in the Middle East since the establishment of Israel in 1948 is primarily the result of religious convictions and not solely the result of politics. Moving from this foundation they proceed to argue that anti-Semitism and anti-Semitic tendencies that exist today and have existed at various points throughout the history of the church are the result of a failure to understand that Israel continues to be a witness to God despite her unbelief and that God continues to work through Israel in order to challenge the nations.

There are many valid points that Torrance and Taylor make. They correctly emphasize that the only solution to the problems in the Middle East is that God would intervene. Political initiatives, while important, are limited in their effectiveness for the peace between Israel and other nations. The authors' arguments against Replacement Theology are well backed by a proper understanding of the

idea of God's everlasting covenant with Israel (130ff), and a proper evaluation of the coming of Christ and the creation of the church as the initial fulfillment of the covenant with Abraham and not the cancellation of it. In addition, the authors rightly point out the fallacy of trivializing the land of Israel and a spiritualized understanding of the fulfillment of the Old Testament promises regarding the land. Another point of agreement for this reviewer is that the New Testament teaching is not anti-Semitic (77–88). Undergirding all of the authors' arguments lies a biblical theology that understands the role of Israel as being hardened so that the Gentiles might be grafted in, but that Israel is still fulfilling God's plan as a chosen people, and in the future there will be a time when the Israelites will be gathered back to Israel when the fullness of the Gentiles have come in.

The mistake that the authors make throughout the work is the implication that the restoration of Israel that is promised in the Old Testament has been fulfilled in the creation of the State in 1948. In fact, what the Old Testament looks forward to is a time of peace when a large number of Jews come to faith in Messiah, a time which can only be fulfilled when Jesus Himself returns to earth as King. To understand the current establishment of Israel in Palestine as the ultimate fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies implies that Christ could not have returned prior to this time and puts the authors in a difficult position if there was to be a breakup of the current state of Israel. While the establishment of the State of Israel over the last century may in fact be a foreshadowing of the coming regathering, the kingdom of glory to come can only occur when Christ returns.

Explanations of the current turmoil in the Middle East, chapter two, and appendices one and two seem misplaced within a work dealing with a major theological question. As such, they may not be appreciated by many students and professors. Outside of these, the authors have produced a thought-provoking assessment of the role of Israel within God's plan of redemption. Readers who have a bias toward dispensational thought may be uncomfortable with the suggestions that Jewish believers do not need to give up their Jewishness and the suggestions that God is not through with Israel. However, the authors' arguments are not strictly dispensational and the reader should weigh the evidence of Scripture in validating their claims. There are other works which deal at a greater depth with a biblical understanding God's covenant with Israel and what the New Testament says regarding the fulfillment of that covenant. Nonetheless, Torrance and Taylor's work has value in that it strongly raises the issues that the church must deal with in working out the question of the future of Israel and the role that Israel continues to play in the redemptive plan of God. For this reason, and because it is brief and easy to read, the book would have value for students and laypersons alike.

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***Jesus in Trinitarian Perspective: An Introductory Christology.* Edited by Fred Sanders & Klaus Issler. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2007. 244 pages. Softcover, \$24.99.**

Evangelical scholars Fred Sanders and Klaus Issler have edited a collection of essays aimed at providing an interdisciplinary introduction to Christology. The collection includes essays written from the perspectives of church history and philosophy as well as the various theological disciplines—systematic, practical, and biblical. Together they seek to explore truths about Jesus that can only be understood in trinitarian perspective.

The collection provides practical helps before and after each chapter to assist the reader towards a better understanding of the content of each chapter. These include chapter summaries, axioms for understanding Christology, key terms for study, reflective questions, and a short bibliography for further reading. The study questions are relatively simple although broad enough to serve as conversation starters in a classroom setting.

Fred Sanders introduces the collection with an essay entitled, “Chalcedonian Categories for the Gospel Narrative.” Sanders provides a basic introduction to the early Christological controversies and to the overall context of the first five ecumenical councils. For the reader unfamiliar with the terms and history, this chapter will provide enough grounding for a basic understanding of the following chapters. The chapter ends with Sanders describing how the various contributions fit within the framework of early Christological discussion.

J. Scott Horrel seeks to tighten our understanding of the relations between the immanent and economic Trinity with his essay, “The Eternal Son of God in the Social Trinity.” Horrell argues convincingly that all speculations concerning the immanent Trinity must be filtered through the Scriptures. As such, he ends his essay with a discussion of the clear biblical evidence supporting an eternal ordering of the persons of the Godhead.

Donald Fairbairn’s contribution, “The One Person Who Is Jesus Christ,” makes a persuasive argument against the common notion that Chalcedon resulted as a compromise between the Alexandrian and Antiochene schools of thought. Through a brief analysis of writers within the so-called Antiochene school, such as John Chrysostom and John of Antioch, Fairbairn shows that their writing was more in line with Cyril of Alexandria than with Theodore and Nestorius. Thus, Antioch did not have a school of thought, and the council was “an expression of . . . outrage that most of the church felt toward the unacceptable Christology of a tiny minority of people” (80). Fairbairn argues for framing the debates soteriologically instead of terminologically, and ends his essay showing the continuing influence of Cyril of Alexandria’s thought.

In his essay, “One Person, Two Natures,” Garrett J. DeWeese argues for an understanding of the Chalcedonian language, *person* and *nature*, within a contemporary model. The essay interacts with contemporary analytic philosophy and requires a basic understanding of philosophy to fully understand his arguments. DeWeese critiques traditional understandings of *person* and *nature*, showing how Platonists, Aristotelians, Thomists and nominalists have all interpreted that

language differently. This frames the discussion in historical perspective and provides a path for DeWeese to argue that a contemporary model is both faithful to the terminology of Chalcedon and also provides new avenues for Scriptural insight and study.

Bruce Ware's contribution, "Christ's Atonement," shows the necessity of understanding Christ's atoning work within trinitarian perspective. Ware excels at showing how Scripture should influence all thinking and speculation on the Trinity. Ware also makes a case for eternal order within the Trinity, and, together with Horrell's essay, forms a coherent and thoroughly scriptural argument. Ware argues from Scripture to illustrate that without the work of the Father and the Spirit, Christ could not have effectively atoned for humanity. Thus, the atonement must be understood in trinitarian perspective.

The concluding chapter, "Jesus' Example," by Klaus Issler, gives an interdisciplinary argument for understanding Jesus' reliance on the Spirit and Father as the perfect example for the church. Drawing from the works of biblical, practical, and systematic theologians, as well as philosophers and historians, Issler shows conclusively that Jesus, in his human nature, was predominantly dependent on the Father and Spirit. Issler then argues that Jesus' growth in wisdom and stature as a child provides an example for believers to grow in our trust and dependence upon the Godhead.

In conclusion, this collection of essays would serve as a good Christological introduction for a college or graduate level course in theology. As a whole, the collection provides the reader with a good introduction to the various fields that interact with Christology and also challenges the reader to pursue the questions discussed with greater depth.

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***The Oxford Handbook of Systematic Theology.* Edited by John Webster, Kathryn Tanner, and Iain Torrance. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007. 708 + xii pages. Hardcover, \$155.00.**

From one of the world's preeminent university presses comes a volume that scholars will find indispensable, but one which some casual readers might find largely inaccessible—and this not merely due to its price. The title of this volume, *The Oxford Handbook of Systematic Theology*, may initially give the impression that this *Handbook* is intended to be an introductory aid to a neophyte theology student. In reality it is an introduction to the *academic discipline* of systematic theology, or more accurately, the academic study of systematic theology in a university setting. As the very brief foreword describes the purpose of this volume, it "is intended as an overall account of the field of systematic theology as it is undertaken by contemporary practitioners" (xii). The intended audience is clearly identified as those doing research or teaching in the field of systematic theology. The list of contributors includes some of the most highly regarded scholars in the English-speaking world.

Reflecting the stated purpose of this work, each contributor was asked to follow a basic three-fold plan: "(1) to offer an analysis of the state of the question in their assigned topic; (2) to indicate important issues of contention, whether formal or material, and how they are variously resolved; (3) to make judgements [sic] about the ways in which inquiry into a particular topic might more fruitfully be pursued" (xii). Since the contributors generally follow this plan—at least in broad outline—the reader receives a thoughtful analysis of the current state of research in each of the various topics addressed as well as prospects for future research in the area. The rather extensive bibliographies appended to each article provide a good place to begin that research.

The *Handbook* is divided into four major parts. Following an introductory essay by John Webster, Part I, entitled "Doctrines," offers seventeen essays on the major theological loci. These are not systematic presentations of the various doctrines but, following the stated purpose of the work, they are discussions of the issues and debates of the past and present along with prospects for what the future may hold in regard to research in the various theological loci. Part II, "Sources," deals with the expected subjects of revelation, Scripture, and tradition, but it adds discussions on the possibilities of contribution from worship, reason, and experience. Part III, "Conversations," addresses issues related to the relationship between systematic theology and other disciplines such as biblical studies, ethics, and the natural sciences, to name just a few. A common theme in these articles is the atomization, following the Enlightenment, of theological enquiry into more discreet specializations such as biblical studies or Christian ethics. Previous to the Enlightenment all of these areas would have been proper topics of discussion for the "theologian." Even though all the articles in this volume are forward looking insofar as each contributor seeks to deal with possible future directions in research in the various topics presented, the fourth and final division, entitled "Prospects," discusses the future prospects for various approaches to theology, including Post-modern, Liberation, and Feminist theologies.

Although the articles in this volume are directed towards those in the academy, readers are unlikely to meet with the kind of cold skepticism characteristic of Neo-Protestantism, which was common during the first half of the last century. In fact, doctrines such as the Trinity are presented as being central to Christian theology, reflecting the shift in the middle of the last century away from the generic, often Deistic God of Modernism and a return to the distinctively Christian God of Scripture. Indeed, the doctrine of the Trinity appears in several articles as a central conceptual or organizing principle for theology.

While even the non-specialist may find the content of this work helpful, potential purchasers should remember that the intended audience of this *Handbook* is the scholar doing research and teaching in the field of systematic theology. This is not to say that the content is beyond the grasp of the typical seminary student or the pastor of a local church. Rather, this caveat is offered as a reminder that *The Oxford Handbook of Systematic Theology* is written primarily for an academic audience. Despite the somewhat limited audience, the breadth of topics covered and the depth of analysis of the issues discussed combine to make this work a significant contribution to the field.

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***Pauline Christology: An Exegetical-Theological Study.* By Gordon Fee. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2007. 707 pages. Hardback. \$39.95.**

Fee has produced once again another invaluable tool for the study of the New Testament, this time in the area of Christology. Consisting of more than seven hundred pages, the book is a real jewel of Christological orthodoxy and solid scholarship.

According to Fee, the history of recent Christological studies shows a complete lack of any solid book on the Christology of Paul. Of course, there have been Christological chapters and short articles, but not complete studies on the topic. He then identifies the probable methodological reasons for this shortage. First, there appears the complexity of the terminology, for Christology and Soteriology as separated categories are not known to the apostle Paul. Second, there is only one passage in the New Testament that could be considered *intentionally* Christological (Col 1:15–17). Third, and probably the most important, there is the difficulty of trying to “ferret out a Christology from the scores of contingent moments in Paul’s letters where his ‘theology’ emerges by way of presupposition and affirmation but no by explication” (2). One wonders, however, if this is a problem that applies to Pauline Christology only or to all New Testament theology. The last problem has to do with what we may call “the ideological distortion of the data,” the problem of making sure that what it is being affirmed comes directly from the Pauline text not from the ideological or theological convictions of the exegete.

In order to overcome these and other methodological obstacles, Fee begins by making clear methodological choices. First, he defines what he means by Pauline Christology. He defines it as: “Paul’s understanding of the person of Christ, as it emerges in his letters both in explicit statements about Christ and in other statements full of shared assumptions between him and his readers” (5). He wants to concentrate on what Paul believed whether or not the modern interpreter accepts it or believes it. The idea here is diligently to concentrate on those kinds of statements that are repeated throughout the Pauline corpus in a variety of ways. He also chooses to deal with the *canonical Paul*, and explains what the consequences of his decision are. The Pauline letters are approached in a precise chronological order, but interestingly this does not produce—as has been common with many recent New Testament studies—a theory of Christological development: “There seemed to be nothing that could be legitimately so categorized” (6). In a sense, the whole book will try to prove how the idea of a development from low to high Christology is completely mistaken, at least in the case of Paul.

Fee uses his introduction also to locate his work in the history of recent New Testament Christology. First, Bousset and Bultmann were powerful representatives of those scholars who believed the New Testament Christology was the result of Hellenistic influences. Second, Cullman’s conviction about the priority of functional over “essence” categories set the agenda for those who reduced their

studies to *title* Christologies. It was Martin Hengel who mainly helped dissolved the dichotomy between Hellenistic and Jewish Christologies. The idea of a pristine Jewish Christology that developed into a more Hellenistic one has no real support in history. James Dunn is a contemporary scholar who wants to revert to the developmental scheme and ends up proposing a variety of Adoptionism. Finally, Fee identifies Richard Bauckham and Larry Hurtado as two influential scholars whose works are closely related to his own. In both cases, the conclusions are similar: High Christology was not the result of a long period of development, but a conception already present from the very beginning, even if expressed in categories different from those of the later Christian Councils (e.g., devotion, worship, historical identity, etc).

Fee's book amasses an encyclopedic amount of material on the Pauline corpus. In the first part of the book, the Pauline letters are analyzed following their major Christological emphasis. The second part is devoted to present a thematic synthesis of the material. The book is an excellent resource for those studying not just New Testament Christology, but also the relationship between the two Testaments. Probably the major contribution of the book is the numerous ways in which the New Testament Christological data is compared, side by side, to the Old Testament, thus making brightly clear the background of the divine identity that the New Testament assigns to Jesus.

In his final synthesis, Fee devotes six chapters to tell us that according to Paul, Jesus can be properly identified as the divine Savior whose major goal in salvation is the re-creation of humankind into the divine image (Chapter 11). Incarnation is also a valid category for describing Christ according to Pauline thought structures. In fact, this category is a central one (Chapter 12). As the second Adam, according to Fee, Paul's emphasis is to present a truly human divine Savior whose earthly life and teachings are basic elements in the history of redemption (Contra Bultmann?) (Chapter 13). Jesus as the messianic "Son of God" is a terminology that Paul expresses according to the Davidic covenantal Jewish tradition. The sources for the transition from this terminology to the one that identifies Jesus as the *eternal Son* are unknown and should not be derived from the Jewish Wisdom tradition (Contra Dunn). More probable is the idea that a form of an already Son of God Christology circulated in the Aramaic Christian community that preceded Paul (Chapter 14). Using the name-turned-title "The Lord," Paul included Christ in the divine identity by means of *texts* and *phrases* that in the Septuagint were reserved to God alone (Chapter 15). In Chapter 16 Fee briefly discusses the relationship between Paul's understanding of Christ and the Spirit. His exegesis leads him to believe that the apostle clearly qualifies as a proto-Trinitarian theologian. While Paul always maintains his Jewish conviction about the absolute unity of God, he also teaches that this is experienced as a triune reality, which includes the Son and the Spirit. This is the basis upon which "the later church maintained its biblical integrity" and expressed all this in explicitly Trinitarian language (593). This is an outstanding book! Great achievement!

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***Renewing Minds: Serving the Church and Society through Christian Higher Education.* By David S. Dockery. Nashville: B&H Academic: Nashville, 2007. 264 pages. Paperback, \$19.99.**

Dockery's book is a short introduction to the difficult but critical task of the integration of learning and Christian faith. There are nine chapters and a bibliographical addendum devoted to explore and present the author's convictions about what profile a Christian higher education institution should have. The whole book is written in an accessible style, meeting the goal of being a resource not just for scholars, but also for pastors, parents and college students. At the end of every section there is a short but substantive bibliography on the particular discussion. The book's last section is a larger bibliography divided into various sections corresponding to the integration of faith and learning.

The basic outline of the book includes a discussion on the need for developing an awareness of the qualitative differences between Christian higher education and other options (ch. 1). At the basis of these differences, of course, lies a particular understanding of how the universe works and how we relate to it (chs. 2 and 3). To appropriate this type of Christian worldview we would need to pay close attention to our Christian tradition that emphasizes intellectual as well as moral and character formation (ch. 4). In chapter five, the Apostle Paul's experience in Acts 17 is taken as a model for integrating faith and learning. According to Dockery, the apostle's example leads us to affirm that "the challenge of integrating the Christian faith and all learning involves perception, appreciation, engagement, and then when necessary, confrontation—in that order" (113).

That superlative task, however, is not to be done in the "lone ranger style" so common in modern American academia. It has to be accomplished within a Christian scholarly environment that prioritizes community (ch. 6). Authentic community must be built with 12 "blocks" identified in Romans 12:9–21. Among these are Christ-like love, discernment, devotion to one another, enthusiasm, generosity, and humility—in other words, grace.

In chapter seven, Dockery elaborates on the characteristics that a grace-filled academic community should have. Reflecting on Romans 15, he identifies four distinctive marks that pertain to that type of community: a call to unity, a call to worship, a call to service, and a call to a shared life. Since "grace is the power with which men and women in academic contexts perform their gifted task . . . we need an apologetic confessional Christianity to be at the foundation of such a purposeful academic community" (159).

The last two content chapters (chs. 8 and 9) invite the reader to develop a theology of Christian higher education, and to gain awareness of the globalized world to which we have been called to serve. These are two chapters of interesting and substantially relevant insights, which any theologian and Christian educator would certainly appreciate. It is true that "our natural tendency is to build walls around ourselves and protect our world from outsiders" (194). It is also true that the Christians of the Global South are becoming "the majority players" (195), and that it is to this "browning of Christianity," "this changing world that Christian Higher Education has been called to serve" (194). We should do that by assuming

“a humble posture of listening to and learning from one another” (202). He concludes the book with a prayer for God to bless the future work of Christian higher education in this country and around the world (203).

Dockery’s book is enjoyable and instructive. It betrays the commitment and passion of the author for the theological and pedagogical endeavors. I found myself nodding affirmatively at many of its proposals and expectations. The last two chapters especially leave a good impression on my heart and mind for different reasons. I think Christian higher education needs to develop a more serious theology than the ones commonly available. I also think Christian higher education institutions in the United States need to develop an awareness of serving more than just English-speaking people. Instead of just educating other people into English, Christian educators also need to educate themselves into the “majority’s language” as well as others. The globalized world, which we serve, should not be identified only or mainly with problems or challenges we face (e.g., poverty, terrorism, war, revolution, despair, destruction and environmental challenges), but also with opportunities to learn from others. This is theologically sound and pedagogically needed. Christian higher education in the U.S. should stop seeing the world only in terms of a mission field. As Dockery points out, there is need to see it as a place from where we can learn, especially about the integration of faith and learning. For this very reason, Dockery’s book should not have been content with only providing English bibliographical support. It should have mentioned at least some of the major dialogue partners that Christian educators in the United States have in other contexts (e.g. Pablo Freire!). This would have helped the book to finish with a very vivid and realistic picture of what it means to work for a globalized world.

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***Scripture as Communication: Introducing Biblical Hermeneutics.* Jeannine K. Brown. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007. 315 pages. Softcover, \$24.99.**

Believers often speak of the Bible as God’s Word to His people. In *Scripture as Communication*, Jeannine Brown offers a reflection on the implications of this affirmation and argues that the nature of the biblical text should determine the method used in its interpretation. Her choice of hermeneutical model follows directly from the conviction that “engaging in and interpreting communication is at the heart of what we are doing when we read the Bible” (13). Thus, Brown believes a communicative model of biblical interpretation best accounts for the “implicitly relational idea of the biblical text as communication” and “does justice to the dialogical nature of interpretation and contextualization” (15). According to Brown, this model enables “a holistic approach” to discerning textual meaning that attends to the diverse ways in which God speaks through Scripture (16).

A clear strength of this volume is the way Brown structures the content of her book and develops the various elements of her interpretive method. In part one, Brown devotes the first two chapters to delineating a communication model

of hermeneutics and defining the terms involved in this discussion. The rest of this major section elaborates and develops what she outlines in the first two chapters. In part two, Brown's move from theory to practice does not stray from the theoretical framework developed in part one. In her survey of theoretical models and interpretive strategies, she selects and highlights elements of these that contribute to a model of meaning rooted in communication. The issues of genre, language, social and literary context, and ultimately contextualization are each discussed in relation to the notion that the purpose of Scripture is to communicate. In this sense, each section in the book is intricately related to the broad thesis Brown develops.

Another notable strength is the keen attention given to illustrations. Indeed, her text is rife with brief case studies, pithy anecdotes, and extended illustrations, both in examples of biblical interpretation and in explanation of theoretical concepts. Valuing the "gift of definitional clarity" (19–20), Brown defines the terms that would be unfamiliar to a beginning hermeneutics student as they are introduced. While seeking to explain introductory hermeneutical issues, Brown also integrates and evaluates a wide range of scholarship including established works in the field (e.g., Gadamer, Ricoeur, Thisleton, Vanhoozer), though she seems to favor contemporary authors sympathetic to her approach. This combination of illustration and interaction broadens this volume's readership and renders it valuable to the novice as well as veteran in the hermeneutical conversation.

Brown is also careful to highlight the benefit of adopting a communication model of meaning. This model avoids overemphasizing either the role of the author, text, or reader in the interpretive task but seeks a healthy tension between the three in the process of communication. Following the tradition of E.D. Hirsch and others, though not without critical evaluation, Brown maintains focus on the author's intended meaning as evidenced in the text. A communication model also emphasizes the way an author's textual meaning actively engages the reader. Rather than being a static object of study, the text is addressed to the reader and thus demands a fitting response. The model Brown advocates also furthers the discussion regarding the propositional versus personal character of Scripture. According to Brown, the multifaceted nature of the utterance meaning found in Scripture's communicative action necessitates that interpreters affirm both of these elements.

Those who are wary of various features of the philosophy of language will remain suspicious of Brown's assimilation and engagement with the contours of speech-act theory and relevance theory of language. Much of Brown's conceptual framework depends on current discussions about the nature of communication and language. However, the contribution of Brown's work involves the justification and defense of these elements as useful tools within a model of meaning and within the pursuit of a deeper understanding of the nature of the biblical text. Additionally, those who hold that the contextual information provided in Scripture itself is sufficient for interpretation will perhaps find Brown's emphasis on the historical reconstruction of the social world of the biblical writers less than helpful. Forming a large part of the reason for this emphasis is relevance theory's concern for discerning "contextual assumptions shared between the author and

the original recipients" (190). One might wonder, though, whether the biblical writers, as competent authors, recognized and kept this communicative issue in mind as they wrote their texts for a broad audience. Further, it could be argued that the prevailing textual context for the New Testament authors was the narrative world of the Old Testament.

Though she includes an extensive bibliography and a subject and Scripture index, the appendices are surprisingly underdeveloped. The guidelines she provides in appendix A are helpful, but she is admittedly painting in "broad strokes" (275). Further, the appendixes on historical criticism (B), parallelism in Hebrew poetry (C), following an author's flow of thought in an epistle (D), and how to go about topical studies (E) give only a cursory treatment of these topics. Those who accept her model for interpretation would have benefited from further developed excursus in these appendixes.

In the end, this volume will not disappoint those seeking a readily accessible introduction to basic hermeneutical issues. The concerns noted here aside, Brown achieves her task of equipping the willing student to begin thinking of and responding to "Scripture as communication."

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***Theological Hermeneutics.* By Alexander S. Jensen. London: SCM Press, 2007. 237 pages. Paperback, \$22.79.**

Alexander S. Jensen's book gives an extensive historical overview of the shape and role of hermeneutics, beginning with Graeco-Roman antiquity and extending to the postcolonial perspectives of the twenty-first century. Writing for a burgeoning, neophyte academic audience, Jensen introduces his readers to the role that hermeneutics has played within theological circles while expressing the importance of critical self-reflection when engaging in constructive theological discourse—although even ripened theologians would be wise to heed his advice. He writes, "If readers do not reflect critically on their strategies, then they are in great danger of being beholden to some defunct 'academic scribbler of a few years back'. They are likely to be unwitting adherents of some discredited hermeneutical theory" (3). He adds, "Unreflected hermeneutics will easily fall prey to unacknowledged prejudices, and there is no such thing as a natural or God-given way of understanding . . . Certain basic theological attitudes will always inform, if not determine, one's hermeneutic. This needs to be brought to the fore and made explicit" (207). For Jensen it is imperative that theology be done responsibly, and this can only be accomplished if one is aware of the theological and hermeneutical assumptions to which they ascribe (189).

A key theme of Jensen's book is the notion that all theological eras have been confronted with the challenge of "removing obstacles to understanding." Various means have been sought to prevail over these impediments, and Jensen desires to reveal the strategies that have been employed by assorted theological, philosophical, and linguistic schools of thought. While the author does not

prescribe one particular hermeneutical approach over another, Jensen consistently and reasonably points out what he perceives to be weaknesses in the strategies that he summarizes; therefore, he models for his readers the critical reflection that is advocated.

Jensen's opening chapter appropriately introduces his readers to the hermeneutical spiral—the reciprocal exchange between theology and hermeneutics. The author maintains that every aspect of life is a process of interpretation; therefore, “all theology must first and foremost be hermeneutical theology” (4). Analogously, his closing chapter returns to this dialectical dynamic, although the author's conclusion gives more credence to the influence of theological presuppositions on the hermeneutical process. He maintains the spiral but gives precedence to theology, which governs hermeneutics, which in turn influences one's methodology. Using the historical precedent established in the preceding chapters, Jensen concretely illustrates his point, once again, that theology and hermeneutics are inseparably bound up within one another.

Theological Hermeneutics attempts to cover a massive amount of historical, philosophical, and theological ground; therefore, a minor downfall is the unbalanced attention that is given to some hermeneutical approaches. Space constraints seem to limit the author, and certain schools of thought are given a more cursory glance, like critical theory, feminism, and postcolonialism. For the same reason readers may find it more challenging to grasp the essence of the hermeneutical principles of structuralism, poststructuralism, deconstruction, and postmodern theology. Ultimately, *Theological Hermeneutics* would be a valuable resource, particularly, for graduate students and seminarians engaged in constructive theological discourse.

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***Theological Interpretation of the New Testament: A Book-by-Book Survey.* Edited by Kevin J. Vanhoozer, et al. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008. 270 pages. Softcover, \$13.59.**

In 2005 Baker Academic published *Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible (DTIB)*, a hefty one-volume work (896 pages) comprised of more than two hundred and eighty articles related to biblical interpretation and theology edited by Kevin J. Vanhoozer, Craig G. Bartholomew, Daniel J. Treier, and N.T. Wright. The intent of the book is to assess current interpretative approaches to Scripture with the aim of employing them in a theologically responsible manner for the benefit of the church. Contributors come from different Christian denominations and perspectives. However, the majority of entries fit comfortably within a broadly defined evangelicalism. Articles in *DTIB* may be placed into four basic categories: texts (e.g., survey of Bible books), hermeneutics, interpreters and interpretive communities, and doctrines and themes.

From *DTIB* came two works, *Theological Interpretation of the New Testament (TINT)* and *Theological Interpretation of the Old Testament (TIOT)*, both published

in 2008. In these later much shorter volumes one finds articles originally presented in *DTIB* that pertain primarily to the Old and New Testament writings. This review examines *TINT*.

TINT contains an introductory essay by Vanhoozer that sets the stage for the book-by-book survey of the New Testament writings. Vanhoozer addresses the question, "What is theological interpretation of the Bible?" In his view, approaches that impose a particular theological system or theory of interpretation on the text, or that limit interpretation to a specific critical model (e.g., literary criticism), fail to provide a true theological interpretation of the Scriptures. Instead, Vanhoozer affirms the following principles: 1) theological interpretation is a joint enterprise of multiple disciplines, not just biblical scholarship; 2) theological interpretation should be marked by an overarching concern to understand the character and work of God; and finally, 3) theological interpretation must allow for differing approaches. Vanhoozer openly acknowledges that at the present time scholars are still in the initial stages of finding a satisfactory theological interpretation of Scripture.

Vanhoozer's essay is helpful in that it reminds interpreters of the need to explore Scripture on its own terms rather than simply imposing one's theological tradition on the text. Also, he rightly stresses the importance of studying the Bible with the goal of gaining a better understanding of knowing and loving God. Vanhoozer provides an insightful essay that merits thoughtful reflection.

In the essays that follow, scholars from institutions primarily in the United States and Great Britain survey the New Testament writings. Contributors were asked to give special attention to a biblical work's history of interpretation, theological message, relation to the larger canon, and unique contribution to the church. Those who carry out their assignment especially well include: Steve Walton, David Garland, N.T. Wright, Charles Wanamaker, I. Howard Marshall, and Daniel Streett. Walton's discussion of the message of Acts is enlightening in that he rightly draws attention to Luke's portrayal of God as one who intervenes on behalf of his people at crucial points. Garland, who has written a fine commentary on 1 Corinthians for the BECNT series, provides a concise yet theologically rich summary of the letter's contents. Wright's survey of Philippians draws attention to a key theme of the letter: how believers are to live within their surrounding pagan society. Along with discussing this motif, the author identifies additional relevant themes. From a literary standpoint his essay stands as a model of succinctness. Wanamaker's summary of the theological themes found in 1 and 2 Thessalonians is useful, as is his brief survey of the history of interpretation of the letters. Marshall's discussion of the Pastorals is worth consulting due to the fact that he astutely identifies the most relevant issues related to interpretation. Finally, Streett should be commended for admonishing the reader to examine Philemon in its first-century historical context, rather than (as is often the case) from a post-Enlightenment perspective.

TINT is a helpful resource for anyone seeking a better understanding of the New Testament writings. Along with supplying a concise summary of the dominant theological themes, *TINT* provides beneficial overviews of the history of interpretation that assist in identifying the most crucial interpretive issues related

to each book. Nevertheless, it would appear wiser to purchase the larger volume (*DTIB*) rather than *TINT* or *TIOT*, as the original writing contains additional articles that inform the interpreter in his study of Scripture.

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***The Unchanging God of Love: Thomas Aquinas & Contemporary Theology on Divine Immutability*, 2nd ed. By Michael J. Dodds, O.P. Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2008. 275 pages. Softcover, \$34.95.**

The doctrine of divine immutability has seen numerous challenges in recent years and continues to generate theological conundrums for those seeking to affirm the changelessness of God while acknowledging that he actively demonstrates his love in tangible ways throughout history. In *The Unchanging God of Love: Thomas Aquinas & Contemporary Theology*, Michael J. Dodds attempts to defend the teaching of Thomas Aquinas on divine immutability from the “bad press” his teaching on the topic has received over the last few decades (2). Dodds serves as professor of philosophy and theology at the Dominican School of Philosophy and Theology in Berkeley, California.

Rather than being a new defense of divine immutability, Dodds’ work is actually more of a summary of the teaching of Aquinas on the topic. Dodds claims that contemporary theologians are challenging “whether an immutable God is truly a God of love” and that Aquinas is the “theologian they most often single out in their critique of divine immutability” (2). In defense of Aquinas, Dodds declares, “In affirming divine immutability, Aquinas reflects the constant teaching of the Church, which from its earliest pronouncements always maintained that the God of love is unchanging” (1).

The structure of the volume provides an interesting approach to the topic of immutability. Instead of starting with the theological and philosophical teaching of divine immutability from Aquinas as might be expected, Dodds begins with a summary of teaching on the immutability of creatures. According to the author, Aquinas uses approximately thirty different terms to describe the immutability of creatures (5). Of course the immutability under consideration for creatures is not the same as that ascribed to God, but Dodds is building a case for a broader understanding of immutability so as to make a case for specific applications to God.

In the second chapter, he moves forward to consider the immutability of God by working systematically through the writings of Aquinas and noting almost every text where he mentions this doctrine. Dodds then discusses the sources of Aquinas’ teaching and evaluates the level of authority he assigns to each. He then argues that one must consider the ways of causality, negation, and eminence to understand divine immutability. Dodds acknowledges that human language is inadequate to express the full meaning of God’s immutability, but he does believe that Aquinas teaches something that can be known about this doctrine. He writes, “Far from implying, therefore, that God is somehow static or inert, immutability directly signifies that God, as subsistent *esse*, is pure dynamic actuality” (159).

Chapter three discusses the idea of attributing motion to the motionless God without subverting the doctrine of immutability. In this chapter, he recounts Aquinas' teaching on the Trinity, creation, providence, and the incarnation. In each of these areas, Dodds discusses how Aquinas can affirm some kind of motion or action without denying immutability. For example, in the area of providence, he deals with the problem of immutability and prayer. Dodds writes, "To solve such dilemmas, we must deny that prayer is intended to change the divine will and see it rather as a secondary cause ordained by God's unchanging will. As the ultimate cause of all actuality, God freely chooses to act through secondary causes in accomplishing his will" (188–89).

The final chapter of the book brings the purpose of the book full circle by attributing to God the characteristic of love after fully affirming his immutability. Dodds makes the argument that the "dynamic stillness" (207) of God's love is perfectly compatible with divine immutability when they are both understood properly. Dodds concludes the work with the following observation of Aquinas' teaching on divine immutability:

All of Thomas's major arguments for divine immutability spring from the premises of God's absolute simplicity, ultimate perfection, pure actuality, and primary transcendent causality. Since those premises are themselves founded in his understanding of God as *ipsum esse subsistens*, divine immutability in Thomas's theology indicates not simply the stability and constancy of God's being, but his dynamic perfection as *ipsum esse subsistens*—pure "is," unlimited by any potency. (242)

This understanding of divine immutability allows Dodds to conclude that Aquinas has consistently portrayed an unchanging God of love in his writings.

As a summary of the work of Aquinas on divine immutability, Dodds has provided his readers with an invaluable resource. He has brought together all of Thomas' major work on the subject and provided a comprehensive index of texts where Aquinas addresses divine motion and immutability. He also provides the theological and philosophical underpinnings for this discussion by bringing other works by Aquinas to bear on this subject.

In contrast, the subtitle of the book portrays the idea that Dodds will deal with both the work of Aquinas and contemporary theologians. Unfortunately, the discussion of contemporary works on divine immutability almost seems to be an afterthought in most chapters. Several references are made to authors who critique the work of Aquinas or who disagree entirely with his approach, but they are limited to brief statements and little interaction.

Despite the weakness noted above, this volume serves as an excellent resource for those interested in the doctrine of divine immutability. It enables the reader to grasp a historical perspective of the teaching from Aquinas and then prepares the reader himself to make application to the contemporary debate on immutability.

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Historical Studies

***The Biblical Canon: Its Origin, Transmission, and Authority*, 3rd ed. By Lee Martin McDonald. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2007. 546 pages. Paperback, \$29.95.**

McDonald's *The Biblical Canon* is in its expanded third edition, which has been renamed from an earlier work published in 1995, *The Formation of the Christian Biblical Canon*. This work aims to be an introduction to the study of the canon, and it certainly accomplishes that and much more, with more issue-specific details and questions than a theology student would typically encounter. Canon studies, particularly in the New Testament, often come to a standstill when scholars are pitted against certain false assumptions:

- 1) if authors cited a New Testament writing, they must have considered it Scripture; 2) if one author called a text "Scripture," then everyone in that writer's time and provenance did the same; and 3) the compilation of all of the citations, quotations, or allusions to biblical literature by an ancient author constitute that writer's biblical canon (6).

Aware of these pitfalls, McDonald explores the dimensions of inspired authority of "Scripture" in both Jewish and early Christian settings.

The work is divided into three major parts: Scripture and canon, Old Testament canon, and New Testament canon. The first section, "Scripture and Canon," deals with the notion of the validation of Scripture and the various ways the early church identified itself with the collection and authority of Scripture. The underlying premise for McDonald, along with many others in the discipline, is that the canonization process for both the Old Testament and the New Testament was gradual and unconscious (18). Problems arise in exacting the closing of the Old Testament canon, because of the widely accepted view on the "mythic" nature of the Council at Jamnia at around AD 90. In the time of Jesus and his contemporaries, canonization of books was not a notion that was widespread. For the early church, the earliest use of the word *kanōn* dates to a much later time with Clement of Alexandria (ca. 170–80) and then Eusebius (ca. 320–30). These are some of the issues that McDonald presents when dealing with the sacred writings of the early church and the handling of the "rule" to determine authentic writings.

The section on the Old Testament canon has the most amount of new material in the third edition. In it, McDonald examines various angles to approaching this particular canon: those that did not make the cut (pseudepigraphic and apocryphal writings), the various communities espousing the Old Testament material as sacred (Essene, Samaritan, Rabbinic, early Christian), certain key figures, who have influenced the shaping of the canon (Josephus, Jesus), and finally the place and impact of the Greek Septuagint. These various ways of arriving at the

Old Testament canon hardly result in a uniform, unanimously accepted collection of books, since the number of books ranges anywhere from 22 to 39. McDonald extensively explains the various complexities.

To explore the dimensions of the New Testament canon, McDonald traces throughout its history the impact of its own key figures and their influences—from Justin Martyr to Eusebius and finally to Irenaeus, along with their responses to heresy. Initially, the church emphasized the importance of the canon insofar as to mean “rule” in the *regula fidei*, the “rule of faith.” McDonald takes the position that a complete list of canonical books did not fully emerge until AD 367 in Athanasius’ 39th Festal Letter, which suggests reading works that were noncanonical, yet still edifying—works like the *Didache* and *Shepherd of Hermas*.

Eventually, the church came to a set of criteria for determining canonical works—apostolicity, orthodoxy, antiquity, use, adaptability, and inspiration. However, McDonald is far from a clear position on the canonical process itself, which he concludes, “the historical circumstances that led to the canonization of the New Testament literature are not completely clear today, since no surviving literature identifies the canonical process” (421).

Many hoping to get situated merely with the introductory issues in canon studies may find the book frustrating and overwhelming with no clear-cut answers for many of the questions posed by the author. The conclusions that McDonald reaches may shake preconceived notions regarding the early formation of the canon. For example, McDonald supports a later dating of the Muratorian Fragments, which is sometimes argued to be earlier. The conclusions of McDonald are generally well worked through; the author lays out a wide range of approaches and positions, even those at odds with those of his own. Nevertheless, any conclusion concerning the canon must be carefully evaluated by the reader, but if, and only if, the reader is prepared to work through those issues.

The Biblical Canon overall is an excellent work, but only when the reader is readily adept in working through the weighty issues in canon studies. It is a must read for any serious student looking for an in-depth introduction to the study of the scriptural canon for early Jewish and Christian communities.

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***Exploring the Origins of the Bible: Canon Formation in Historical, Literary and Theological Perspective.* Edited By Craig A. Evans and Emanuel Tov. Acadia Studies in Bible and Theology. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008. 272 pages. \$15.00.**

With growing interest in all things canon-related in biblical studies, Craig A. Evans and Emanuel Tov have edited a volume devoted to some fundamental issues related to the Bible’s development and content. Evans, Distinguished Professor of New Testament at Acadia Divinity College, has added another meaningful work to his already impressive resume of over thirty publications. Tov, Professor of Bible at Hebrew University in Jerusalem, and an icon of Old Testament

textual criticism, likewise continues to make significant contributions to biblical studies discussions.

Exploring the Origins of the Bible consists of essays by eight authors who presented their contributions at the Spring 2006 Hayward Lectures at Acadia Divinity College. In addition to essays by Evans and Tov, respectively dealing with the portrait of Jesus in non-canonical Gospels and the importance of the Septuagint for interpretation, the book includes essays devoted to investigating the perception of extra-biblical literature during the time of Jesus (James Charlesworth), how the Hebrew Bible developed into its three-part structure (Stephen Dempster), the factor of the Septuagint in the shaping of canon traditions (R. Glenn Wooden), the development and canonization of the biblical Pauline corpus (Stanley Porter), the heterogeneous nature of early Christian perspectives on the New Testament canon (Lee Martin MacDonald), and a concluding essay on the theological implications of canon study (Jonathan Wilson).

Among the strengths of the book is the diversity of perspectives that the authors bring. For example, Charlesworth argues that there was no concept of a canon of Scripture during the time of Jesus, arguing, instead, that many works now considered to be extra-biblical were believed to be equally sacred to books which—according to him—were later incorporated into a canon. Dempster, on the other hand—not specifically responding to Charlesworth—argues that Torah, Prophecy, and Wisdom were viewed as uniquely authoritative in early Judaism. This difference in perspective, within the volume itself, exposes the different approaches to canon formation, and provides a glimpse of the nature of the canon debate along with the presuppositions at play therein.

Another strength of the book is the attention it gives to the importance of the Septuagint (LXX). The essay by Wooden demonstrates the complexity that the New Testament's appeal to the LXX as authoritative Scripture introduces into discussions regarding biblical inspiration. He appeals to the New Testament's use of the LXX as evidence that the church has not historically—at least in practice—equated inspiration with the original text of Scripture, but with “the text received and used in the church at various times and in various languages” (144). Even if one disagrees with Wooden's conclusions regarding the often-assumed priority of the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek texts of the Bible over their translations, he must carefully consider his argument in light of the New Testament's use of the LXX.

Tov, in concert with Wooden's appraisal of the importance of the LXX, demonstrates why the LXX cannot be ignored when interpreting the Old Testament. His essay focuses on instances in the Hebrew Bible where variations between the LXX and the Masoretic text (MT) significantly alter one's reading of biblical books. Tov argues, furthermore, that many of the discrepancies between the MT and the LXX arise from the existence of a separate, early text type that served as a *Vorlage* to the LXX. Tov's essay shows that one cannot simply dismiss Septuagintal text variants as late corruptions of the text represented by the MT. Study of the Hebrew Bible should, therefore, give consideration to both the LXX and the MT.

One significant omission from the book's contents is a chapter that focuses on the role of the Jewish community and the church in canon formation. Without

suggesting that these communities imposed sacred, authoritative significance on biblical texts, one cannot ignore the role of the believing community in the development and finalization of the biblical canon. The faith community's role in canon formation does come up at times within various essays in the book, but only secondarily, as it pertains to the topic at hand. Certainly, however, an entire chapter could be devoted to this issue alone, even if it was included as a supplement to the papers delivered at the Hayward Lectures. It is hard to explore biblical origins adequately without giving any attention to this matter.

Exploring the Origins of the Bible, nonetheless, provides helpful insight into discussions revolving around the biblical canon. It introduces fresh information, challenges assumptions, and defends the importance of its subject matter, having implications for history, hermeneutics, textual criticism, and theology. The book, however, is not an introductory work; it assumes previous exposure to the issues it discusses. It is nonetheless a must read for those doing serious biblical or theological study within the academy.

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***The Fathers of the Church: A Comprehensive Introduction.* By Hubertus R. Drobner. Translated by Siegfried S. Schatzmann. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2007. 632 + lvi pages. Hardcover, \$44.95.**

The title of this work is extremely appropriate; it is indeed “a comprehensive introduction.” Hubertus R. Drobner, Professor for Church History and Patrology of the Theological Faculty at the University of Paderborn, Germany, takes his reader from the formation of the canon to John of Damascus (ca. 650–750). Not only does Drobner span seven centuries of Christian history, but he also concludes his work with a survey of Syriac, Coptic, Ethiopic, Armenian, Georgian, Arabic, and Paleoslavlic literature; additionally, that conclusion encompasses literature from the ninth and tenth centuries. Along with a wealth of material, the author provides a nearly all-inclusive bibliography, including general reference works, electronic databases, and translations of patristic works into English, French, German, Italian, and Spanish. Furthermore, this volume includes expansions and updating both in the text and bibliographies. Drobner's work, therefore, represents a desire for comprehensiveness both in the material covered and in providing the most recent material available.

In this work, the author leaves no stone unturned. For example, he does not leave any doubt as to what he means by the term “church father.” In “Patrology as a Subject,” Drobner explores the meaning of the term “father,” tracing its use in pagan and biblical contexts, as well as in rabbinic understanding. He then provides the traditional definition of what constitutes a writer as a “church father,” along with a discussion of how the era of “church fathers” came to be determined. The section concludes with a discussion of patrology and patristics in general. Encompassing pages 3 through 6, “Patrology as a Subject” serves as an excellent example of the author's depth, brevity, and clarity when discussing a particular topic.

In his study, Drobner reveals how closely patristic studies are (and need to be) allied with studies of the New Testament. He begins his discussion of biblical apocrypha by exploring the formation of the biblical canon (13–19). That topic helps provide a background for understanding genres of apocryphal literature that followed canonical literary types and arose during the apostolic and postapostolic eras. In this presentation, the author again demonstrates his ability to present a topic with both breadth and depth.

Drobner's basic format for presenting a particular topic varies according to the nature of the material under consideration. Often, he will have a general discussion commencing a topic. For example, he begins chapter four, "Beginnings of Latin Literature," with a discussion of Christian Latin (149–51); such an introduction concludes with a listing of works on that particular subject. He then turns to particular fathers, briefly pointing out salient features of their lives, thought, and works, and concludes the presentation for each one with a listing of both primary and secondary works. At other times, he will turn immediately to a church father; in chapter five, "First Phase of Arianism," the reader immediately encounters Eusebius of Caesarea (223). Whatever approach the author takes, the reader finds a comprehensive list of works for each topic or father, including comprehensive bibliographies, translations, secondary sources, and reference works.

Any reader interested in the patristic era (approximately 100–750) will find Drobner's patrology an essential text. In its comprehensiveness in all areas it is a complete guide on a myriad of topics. Furthermore, the author's concise presentation keeps one from becoming bogged down. In approaching this work, however, a reader will do well to go to the index if he or she wishes to explore the complete thought of a particular father. For example, Augustine of Hippo receives a wide-ranging discussion in chapter nine (386–453), including biographical and theological aspects of the North African bishop's career. Because of Drobner's arrangement of subject matters, however, a reader interested in Augustine's writings on monasticism will find those materials present in chapter eight, "Monastic and Hagiographic Literature," on pages 361 to 365. While Drobner's discussion may scatter an ancient writer's thoughts into several different locations, his arrangement by eras and topics helps provide clarity to the major themes and developments in the ancient church's doctrine. Thanks are due to Siegfried Schatzmann for his success in making Drobner's patrology available in English.

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***The Oxford Handbook of Early Christian Studies.* Edited by Susan Ashbrook Harvey and David G. Hunter. New York: Oxford University Press, 2008, 1020+xxvii pages. Hardcover, \$130.73.**

This work is a product of interdisciplinary efforts to represent the formation of early Christianity. Unlike *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity* (1997), edited by Everett Ferguson, this handbook does not arrange its articles according to the alphabetical order of their titles. Rather, it has eight thematic sections—

“Prolegomena,” “Evidence: Material and Textual,” “Identities,” “Regions,” “Structures and Authorities,” “Expressions of Christian Culture,” “Ritual, Piety, and Practice,” and “Theological Themes.” Each thematic section contains several articles pertaining to that specific theme. Therefore, the editors advise their readers to use the indexes to find information on a certain figure or specific term. Each essay has an annotated list of suggested readings and an exhaustive bibliography for further study. In comparison to *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity*, the *Oxford Handbook* provides the findings of very recent scholarship on a given subject. In particular, the last chapter of this volume, called “*Instrumenta Studiorum*: Tools of the Trade,” supplies valuable bibliographical information on critical editions of each major theologian’s works, reliable translations, study societies, and more—the sort of information that is critical to a successful research project. Furthermore, *Instrumenta Studiorum* presents professional web-sites on early Christianity that one can utilize in his or her well-researched article.

Although the *Oxford Handbook* offers some theological articles, its primary concern, unlike other patristic handbooks or dictionaries, is not to present the historical development of patristic orthodoxy, which, according to the editors, is mainly the story of male church leaders. Instead, the editors and contributors attempt to present the spiritual, social, and cultural frameworks in which early Christians lived. As Elizabeth A. Clark addresses in her introductory essay, the study of early Christianity “leapt from a theological to a social-historical orientation in the 1970s and 1980s” and has adopted many social science tools such as post-colonial reading and ideology criticism. In this setting, a traditional approach to patristics, which has focused mainly on the theological formulation of early Christianity, is no longer valid to the study of early Christianity.

Therefore, the *Oxford Handbook* might not be the first choice for that researcher who expects to deepen his understanding of an orthodox father’s theology. There is no section on Athanasius or Augustine although it has fine sections on their counter-theologians, Arius and Pelagius. For a brief survey of a certain doctrine or doctrinal development, J.N.D. Kelly’s *Early Christian Doctrine* would be the best source. If one needs a more detailed analysis of theological movements in early Christianity, Volume 1 of Justo L. González’s *A History of Christian Thought* would provide substantial information. For a biographical study of a patristic figure with some theological exegesis of that father’s works, Ferguson’s *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity* is still the most appropriate source.

Nonetheless, with this recent handbook, Oxford University Press has made another great contribution to the study of early Christianity. This work also provides excellent research materials on the issues with which other patristic or early Christian dictionaries generally do not deal—epigraphy, poetry and hymnography, and homiletics in early Christianity. As a matter of fact, Christianity is not merely about doctrines. The study of early Christianity must embrace its doctrines, cultural contexts, and practices. In addition, this Oxford production will be a great benefit to those who are concerned about a sound methodology in the study of early Christianity that could explain a religious phenomenon from diverse but interrelated perspectives.

Another beauty of this communal work is the editors' fairness in allowing minor Christian sects or bodies to voice their own identities distinctive from the mainline Latin or Greek Churches. This one volume work might not be useful as a textbook for a graduate-level survey class on early Christianity but would be an indispensable reference source for serious students and scholars.

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***Reading the Old Testament with the Ancient Church: Exploring the Formation of Early Christian Thought.* By Ronald E. Heine. Evangelical Ressourcement. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007. 204 pages. Paperback, \$18.99.**

Ronald Heine, professor of Bible and Christian ministry at Northwest Christian College in Oregon, draws upon a wealth of knowledge of the Church Fathers to write this rich yet readable book. His overarching goal is to present the Church Fathers as an underappreciated model for us in our approach to the Old Testament as Christian Scripture. He has some supporting goals as well. Two of these deserve special mention. One basic goal is to show that the Fathers provide a model for us in terms of their attentiveness to teaching and preaching from the Old Testament as Christian Scripture. Heine compares their attentiveness to our neglect of the Old Testament. The second goal is to demonstrate how helpful the Fathers can be to our study of the Old Testament as Christian Scripture. Heine makes it look easy to find insightful, helpful treatments of Old Testament passages in the works of the Fathers. This is not as easy as he makes it look. As a result, Heine's book is a great resource for the Christian who wants to understand some of the rich history of Christian interpretation of the Old Testament.

To accomplish his goals, Heine presents several topics that the Church Fathers address in their teaching on the Old Testament. He devotes a chapter to each main topic. Chapter two looks at their struggle to interpret the Law of Moses as Christian Scripture. Chapter three provides several examples of the importance of the Exodus events as predictive and symbolic in the Bible. In chapter four, Heine presents numerous instances where the Fathers turn to the Old Testament to find prophecies related to various aspects of the work of Christ. Chapter five is a real gem that one should not miss. Its focus is the approaches to the Psalms in the Fathers. The Fathers are shown to provide rich engagement with the Psalms for prayer and worship. They also struggled to interpret the Psalms as prophecies of Christ. As they looked for prophecies of Christ in the Psalms, they thought it was important to find those places where Christ is speaking prophetically through the inspired words of David (on this, see also 131–32 in chapter 4). Finally, in chapter six, Heine reminds us that the Fathers did more than just study the Old Testament; they sought to live it as well.

Reading the Old Testament with the Ancient Church is surely a helpful guide for finding good examples of the Fathers' teaching from the Old Testament. A significant, perhaps intentional oversight will trouble some readers, especially those who have taken hermeneutics in seminary or college. In my reading, Heine never

mentions that the Fathers, especially Origen whom he presents quite positively, are often presented as providing a wealth of bad examples in terms of their interpretations of the Old Testament. Heine does not address or counter this common presentation. All of his examples of the Fathers' teaching from the Old Testament are positive. Like other teachers great and small, the Fathers are not always excellent guides for interpreting the Old Testament.

Similarly, Heine does not clarify important hermeneutical categories. He uses terms like "symbolism," "types," and "allegory," but does not orient the reader as to the meaning or significance of these terms. As a result, his book does not help informed readers to relate his presentation to what they have heard about the interpretive approaches of the Fathers. Even so, Heine is to be commended for guiding us to many instructive examples of the Church Fathers' teaching on and from the Old Testament.

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***The Sermon on the Mount through the Centuries: From the Church Fathers to John Paul II.* Edited by Jeffrey P. Greenman, Timothy Larsen, and Stephen R. Spencer. Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2007. 288 pages. Paperback, \$24.99.**

This volume is the second in a series, designed to explore the history of Christian thought in conversation with a given biblical text. The earlier effort was reflected on the book of Romans in the writings of outstanding leaders and theologians through the centuries. This book is a collection of essays on the concepts and teachings of the Sermon on the Mount in the writings of historical Christian leaders. This effort is unique because it utilizes a cross discipline approach, drawing from biblical studies, church history, historical theology, constructive theology, pastoral theology, spiritual and moral formation, and ethics.

The writers of these essays display a variety of styles. Some, like Margaret Mitchell who wrote on John Chrysostom, utilized a more technical analysis of the original language of that church father, while others, like Robert Wilken on Augustine, reflected a more devotional approach. One common factor in every personage studied is that their writing on the Sermon on the Mount was reflective of their life and times, as well as their unique theological perspective. For example, Hugh of St. Victor used a system of virtues called the "Five Sevens" by which he interpreted the Beatitudes. Martin Luther's interpretation of the Sermon on the Mount was a polemical call for battle against all enemies, particularly Satan. John Wesley's focus on inner godliness and experiential holiness colored his management of these teachings of Jesus.

There are two unique chapters contrasting two theologians and their unique interpretations on the Sermon on the Mount. One compares Dietrich Bonhoeffer and John Howard Yoder concerning their positions on pacifism, while another contrasts the liberationist position of Leonard Boff with the natural law interpretation of Pope John Paul II. There certainly are elements of commonality in most of those writers, both ancient and modern, but their differences are even more

evident. One particularly helpful contribution of this volume is the overview it provides for many students, pastors, and lay leaders of historical theology. One has not only a fascinating variety of interpretations of the Sermon, but also a wealth of insights on the Christian faith as it was lived out across the centuries in a myriad of contexts.

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***Tertullian the African: An Anthropological Reading of Tertullian's Context and Identities.* By David E. Wilhite. New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2007, 232 pages. Hardcover, \$123.00.**

This monograph is the revision of Wilhite's doctoral dissertation at the University of St. Andrews. He is currently assistant professor of theology at George W. Truett Seminary. This work is not strictly theological. Rather, it offers a socio-anthropological analysis of the identity of Tertullian as a Christian writer living in early third century Romanized North Africa. Wilhite introduces postcolonialism as a new methodology in patristic scholarship and argues that since he was an indigenous African who had to live as a citizen of a Romanized colony one should read Tertullian not from the culture of the colonizers but from that of the colonized. The thesis of this book is that one has to understand Tertullian as an African who refused Romanization in both North African society and his church. Tertullian's writings were not merely meant to promote Christianity to his non-Christian neighbors or to implore a pagan Roman government for fair treatment of the Christians in North African. Nor was Tertullian the representative of Latin Christianity in defending the apostolic faith against heresies. Tertullian's unique contribution was not his commitment to the foundation of a European theology but in challenging his audience to see the superiority of Africanness over Romanness in cultural and ecclesiastical life. Readers should not read their European cultural and ecclesiastical presuppositions into Tertullian but rather treat him as a patristic writer whose works reflect his strong African identity.

In order to prove Tertullian's Africanness, Wilhite presents a reconstructed biographical report which rejects the traditional view of Tertullian's life based on Eusebius and Jerome. Tertullian is introduced as a Christian rhetorician adept at using juristic images and pagan philosophy for his argument rather than being presented as a Roman jurist or Stoic philosopher (or at least a student of Stoicism). In addition, Tertullian is portrayed not as a presbyter but as a layman. Wilhite applies postcolonial perspectives to Tertullian's social, kinship, class, and ethnic identity. In particular, Wilhite identifies three social classes in the day of Tertullian: Roman colonizers, indigenous Africans, and new elites—Africans who assimilated themselves to Roman culture. Wilhite contends that Tertullian belonged to the indigenous African class.

Interestingly, Wilhite does not deny that Tertullian greatly influenced the development of Latin theology. Nor does he support some contemporary African theologians' anachronistic presentation of Tertullian as a modern Tunisian thinker.

Nor does he fail to recognize that Tertullian's colonized North Africa was part of the Graeco-Roman world. However, Wilhite's conclusion is worth noting: A contemporary reader could easily take "the notion of a 'Graeco-Roman culture'" as "a pseudonym for early 'Western civilization'" and ignore Tertullian's colonized African context (191).

The value of this work is not that Wilhite points out Tertullian's antagonism against the Romanized ecclesiastical and spiritual life, which others, including the Reformers, already noticed, but that he captured Tertullian's social and cultural antagonism against the Romanization process of North Africa from the patristic writer's own words. Wilhite successfully demonstrates from primary sources that Tertullian actually rejected the Romanization of his North African life as a whole. Just as Luther was aware of his national and cultural distinctiveness from Rome during the Reformation, it is not surprising that Tertullian developed a keen awareness of his ethnic and cultural identity distinct from the identity of the Roman colonizers—or that of the new elite classes—all the while he carried out the deconstruction of Romanized church life. Nonetheless, one has to ask Wilhite which agenda – theological or cultural independence—must be the understood as Tertullian's primary concern in his "criticism of Romanism" (27). The next question might be how one can reinterpret Tertullian's theology in light of this social anthropological re-reading of his life and writings.

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***The Good Works Reader.* By Thomas C. Oden. Classic Christian Readers. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007. 360 pages. Softcover, \$25.00.**

We must shamefully admit that our evangelical churches are woefully ignorant regarding the pre-Reformation church. Thomas Oden, Professor Emeritus of Theology at Drew University seeks to educate such churches through his Classic Christian Reader series, and evangelicals should be thankful for accessible works in this regard. The *Good Works Reader* builds on Oden's *Justification Reader* by providing insights into the earliest Christian teachings concerning works, outreach and posture toward one's neighbor.

Oden proposes that his book serve the laity, promising to "make not new contribution to theology—nothing creative or imaginative, only classic Christianity" (3). As we well know, many churches gladly embrace the latest theological fads simply to offer their members something different and new. Oden, who claims to have formerly fallen prey to the traps of trendy theology, contends we instead must return to the writings of the earliest church leaders for insight and direction. The book reads devotionally, aiming for the "changed behavior" of its readers (1). Oden guides the reader from quotation to quotation only commenting occasionally between the quotations for cohesion, including a longer commentary on each topic toward the end of every section.

The first section forms the paradigm for the rest. Focusing on "the poor," it guides the reader toward thinking biblically about poverty alongside those early

Christians who thought about the topic in depth. Aimed at increasing the reader's personal charity, Oden's comments are usually directed specifically at the reader. For instance, take this example concerning how believers should respond to beggars, "when you hear the voice of a beggar, remember that before God you are yourself a beggar . . . as you treat your beggar, so will God treat his" (27). The book constantly presses the reader toward a more devoted life of Christian action.

The next sections deal with the topics of food and hospitality and ministering to outcasts, the imprisoned, the persecuted, and the least of these; a section follows them on philanthropic pursuits. The section on the least of these was especially convicting, urging the reader to stand for those who are unable to defend themselves with the reminder that the "incarnate Lord himself came into the world as 'the least of these,' as a defenseless infant, born in poverty, hunted, persecuted, displaced, homeless" (250). Our posture toward the least of these should mirror our posture toward Jesus Himself.

The final section attempts to bring the previous sections together in a coherent theology of good works. Oden refers the reader to his previous book on justification for the early church's arguments against works-righteousness, instead intending that this book argue against "cheap grace, faith without works of love" (357). Unfortunately, this section rhetorically takes the argument too far, and could easily confuse his intended lay audience as to how good works factor into our salvation. Previously in the book, Oden surprisingly stated that "we will not know our eternal destiny until judgment day, and then we are quite likely to be surprised . . . it will hinge mightily upon our treatment of 'the least'" (79). Is this statement not suggestive of the works-righteousness that his *Justification Reader* argued against? Those of us in the Protestant tradition will clearly think Oden goes too far to make his point.

I am torn in recommending this book to the lay audience that it intends to educate. The final section could confuse the reader regarding the doctrine of *sola fide*. Conversely, as a book intending to provide a glimpse into the early church fathers' charity and to inspire the reader to mimic their works, it clearly succeeds. As our churches desperately need to be taught concerning their pre-Reformation theological heritage, I will suggest this book with the one caveat.

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***Medieval Images of Saint Bernard of Clairvaux.* By James France. Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian, 2007. 435 pages. Softcover, \$32.97**

James France's work is a unique contribution to the Bernardian iconography study in three ways. First, this book advances a provocative thesis requiring a reevaluation of the traditional argument that Bernard was "indifferent" and "at worst inimical to the visual arts" (ix) and that no true image of Bernard was produced in his own day. Second, the book also provides a valuable CD that contains 964 medieval images of Bernard that might not be available elsewhere. Third, France attests that the Bernardian iconography is essential to the understanding

of medieval spirituality in Europe between the twelfth and sixteenth centuries. France does not exaggerate the importance of the Bernardian iconography, for few of Bernard's contemporaries have been depicted, and none of them impacted the spiritual life of common people as Bernard did. *Medieval Images* shows that an iconographical study of an ancient religious figure does not focus on his or her theological and ecclesiastical contributions. Rather, such study reveals how his or her later followers understood that person as a guide in their spiritual journey. The medieval images of Bernard display the way the medieval European Christians appropriated the spiritual legacy of Bernard as a spiritual assistant, teacher, and preacher.

The image of Mary offering her breast milk to Bernard suggests that people saw him as a qualified preacher and teacher whom Mary endorsed. This image has two theological implications. One is that the medieval Christians in the twelfth century already held to a high Mariology, describing Mary as the mediatrix of salvation. The images of Bernard's paying special devotion to Mary depict her as the source of faith since they portrayed her as a secondary mediator. To be associated with or supported by Mary is to be commissioned by Christ who is in his mother's bosom. Bernard himself did not advocate this close relationship between Bernard and Mary although he did promote a high Mariology. And yet, this is what medieval Christianity appropriated most from Bernard. The other implication is that both Mary—on whom Bernard heavily meditated—and the Cistercian abbot himself became subjects of folk piety. The last chapter of *La Divina Commedia* introduces Bernard as Dante's guide on his pilgrimage to Paradise. Bernard could intercede with Mary to give Dante special grace, which allowed the Italian poet to enter Paradise.

Interestingly, the iconography of Bernard explains how later medieval people could use him in order to justify a new religious practice that he opposed. In spite of his strong devotion to Mary, Bernard objected to the ecclesiastical observance of the immaculate conception of Mary because that practice was completely new in the church tradition “of which the Church knows nothing, of which reason cannot approve, and for which there is no authority in tradition” (271). However, Roman Catholics in the sixteenth century began to appeal to Bernard in order to defend the legitimacy of the doctrine and the Feast of the Immaculate Conception of Mary. In fact, one of the Franciscan images portrays Bernard, along with Augustine and Thomas Aquinas, as an ecclesiastical supporter of the immaculate conception of Mary. As a result, some began to interpret Bernard's reference in the sermon on the Song of Songs regarding the spotlessness (*immacula*) of the soul as a reference to sinless Mary. Therefore, a contemporary reader can read Bernard's own objection to the doctrine of the immaculate conception of Mary from his writings but view Bernardian images that promote his support of the same doctrine.

An image of Bernard chaining a demon (or the Devil) also shows the influence of the legacy of Bernard on medieval lay pietism. Neither Bernard nor the order of Cistercians is the source of this image. In the later Middle Ages Bernard appears in prayers as a powerful intercessor who controlled the Devil. It is not surprising that both Erasmus and Luther condemned the Verses of Bernard, a

prayer that calls for Bernard's help to overcome the temptations of the Devil and that promises indulgences in Bernard's name.

Frank's work might not be a good theological source from which a Protestant reader might deepen his or her Protestant faith, but if that person wants to know medieval folk pietism in the Roman Catholic Church Frank must be a primary source.

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***On Love and Charity: Readings from the "Commentary on the Sentences of Peter Lombard."* By Thomas Aquinas. Translated by Peter A. Kwasniewski, Thomas Bolin, and Joseph Bolin. Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2008. 404 + xxxii pages. Softcover, \$39.95.**

It is hard to imagine that anything "new" from Thomas Aquinas would appear considering over 730 years have passed since the death of the Angelic Doctor of the Catholic Church. However, Aquinas scholars will certainly be pleased with a significant new work translated into English by Peter A. Kwasniewski, Thomas Bolin, and Joseph Bolin. While English editions of Aquinas' *Summa Theologica* are readily available in full versions and selected writings, similar English editions of his *Scriptum super libros Sententiarum Petri Lombardi* [*Commentary on the Sentences of Peter Lombard*] are not available. With this volume, Kwasniewski, Bolin, and Bolin have made available the first substantial portion of Aquinas' *Scriptum* in English.

While many people will be familiar with Aquinas' work on law, virtue, and proving the existence of God, fewer are probably aware of his significant work on love and charity. As the crown of the theological virtues, the theme of charity provides rich discussion within the writings of Aquinas. As with any collection of selected writings, it is difficult to focus adequately on a singular subject without the context of the rest of the work; yet, the translators offer a significant portion of Aquinas' discussion of love and charity without losing too much of the greater context.

The first major contribution of this volume is obviously the English translation of a lesser-known, but certainly significant, work from Thomas Aquinas. While much of the material covered in this volume is paralleled in the *Summa*, English readers will have the opportunity to see how Aquinas developed some of his views on love and charity in an earlier stage of his career. The translation was made from the Mandonnet-Moos edition and compared to an unreleased provisional critical edition being prepared by the Leonine Commission (xiii). In addition, this volume includes a selection from Aquinas' second attempt at a *Scriptum*, the *Lectura romana*, prior to the release of the critical edition of that commentary. In all, this work brings together a significant piece of Thomistic scholarship that was previously inaccessible in English.

The next major contribution of this work is the first appendix that draws a comparison to the writings of the *Scriptum* and the *Summa*. While the two works

have a similar structure (questions, objections, responses, and replies to objections), the content of the two does not flow uniformly. The mature thought of the *Summa* seems to flow according to a logical development of the themes of love and charity. In contrast, the development of these themes in the *Scriptum* does not flow in a consistent pattern. As an aid to the reader, the translators provide a comparison chart of major questions in the discussion of love and charity with locations in both the *Scriptum* and the *Summa* to assist in further study.

The final key contribution of this volume also represents its most glaring weakness. In an attempt to keep the book within a manageable span of just over 400 pages, the translators were forced to omit most of their content footnotes and alternate translations in the printed volume. As a result, one has a clean text with a small number of footnotes that reference the Latin text or provide some cross-references to other texts. In order to supplement this deficiency in the printed volume, the publisher has provided a *Supplement to On Love and Charity* on their website (<http://cuapress.cua.edu>). The supplement includes a 28-page full introduction that shines more light on the translation project and an overview of the complete work of the *Scriptum*. In addition, the supplement includes 518 footnotes that are marked by Arabic numerals in the printed volume but the text of which are not included. Finally, the supplement offers an extensive bibliography of primary and secondary sources related to Thomistic studies on love and charity. While the supplement is most certainly a wonderful tool for the serious scholar, the fact that it is only available online and exists as a 120-page PDF document makes it a little unwieldy. Also, there is no information regarding the length of time that the supplement will continue to be available online. This reviewer would have preferred that the extra pages be included at the conclusion of the printed volume.

This volume is certainly a marvelous contribution to Aquinas studies in the English language. The scholarship exhibited in the translation, sources cited, notes, and bibliography is of the highest caliber. All serious students of Aquinas' work will want to make this volume a part of their libraries.

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***The Division of Christendom: Christianity in the Sixteenth Century.* By Hans J. Hillerbrand. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007. 504 + xi pages. Softcover, \$49.95.**

In *The Division of Christendom*, Hans J. Hillerbrand expands his previous effort (*Christendom Divided*) at submitting a history of the Reformation (ix). The result of Hillerbrand's lifelong work, however, should not be viewed simply as a textbook, and approaching it merely as a systematic treatment of the major people, places, theologies, and events of the Reformation will betray both the nature and intent of Hillerbrand's effort. From the outset, Hillerbrand designates that his desire is to set the Reformation within "the context of the broader story of Christianity at that time (ix)." Later, he adds that ultimately his book "is about

the sixteenth century, and its most significant aspect, the Reformation (25).” His treatment, therefore, avoids the pitfalls of on the one hand, diminishing the importance of the sixteenth century for Christianity as simply the timeframe within which the “Reformation” occurred, and on the other hand, viewing the Reformation as nothing more than a product of socio-political factors from the sixteenth century.

Establishing the framework of the sixteenth century as the time of the historic dissolution of western Christendom, Hillerbrand carries the reader through the multiple levels in which it proceeded to be divided. As the socio-religious movement coalesced, the Reformation itself “became a house divided,” failing to solidify into an organized, unified front in the struggle to reform the Roman Catholic Church. Instead, it produced multiple new denominations and theologies (72). At this point, Hillerbrand traces the offshoots of this effort at ecclesial reformation and theological identity to other movements such as Huldrych Zwingli in Zurich, Switzerland, the emergence of the Zwickau Prophets in Wittenberg, and John Calvin in Geneva, as well as the Anabaptists and Anti-Trinitarians who took it upon themselves to labor for “a reformation of the Reformation” (108). The Protestant Reformation, however, was not alone in its multiple degrees of disintegration. Hillerbrand continues to support his thesis by exposing the most fundamental split in the sixteenth century, namely, the separation of church and state (e.g. Henry VIII and his “divorce” not only from Catherine of Aragon, but also from Rome). Last, Hillerbrand extends his portrayal of the continual effects of Christendom’s division across the broader European landscape in locations such as France, Poland, Scandinavia, and the Low Countries. Without a doubt, Hillerbrand succeeds in portraying the grand scope of the divisive impact the Reformation had on the world.

Regarding theological matters, Hillerbrand successfully leaves his account confessionally unbiased, while interspersing notable observations. Beginning with Luther and his attack on the Roman Catholic Church’s abuses, Hillerbrand states that the focus of reform was always set on “a new understanding of the gospel” (54). Notwithstanding its many other features, the Reformation was a movement in which the overriding concern was the resurrection of “a Christian life of faith and trust, not of externals and ritual” (86). He terms this a recovery of “the simple gospel” (86). Along with this basic analysis of the fundamental concern of the Reformation, Hillerbrand views this recovery as the product of the function of *sola scriptura* as “the formal principle of the Reformation” (384). Represented in this formula, Hillerbrand notes, was the issue of spiritual authority, which became a major factor in the division of Christendom (86). The Reformer’s “scripture principle” called for the rejection of papal authority and church tradition which had attempted to place itself onto an equal or higher plane than the Word of God. Therefore, Hillerbrand argues that, at its core, the Reformation was a movement fundamentally concerned with the reclamation of “true spirituality” (87), and was driven by the realignment of Scripture as “the sole source of the Christian faith” rather than “ecclesiastical traditions” (86).

The Division of Christendom has much to offer regarding both accessibility and resourcefulness. Seemingly cognizant of his volume’s length and breadth,

Hillerbrand provides chapter summaries in the table of contents, giving basic introductions of the material to be covered in each section. This unique feature allows the reader to grow familiar with the work's contents quickly while traversing its terrain. Another beneficial element can be found at the book's end where Hillerbrand advances a detailed analysis of past attempts at Reformation history in the chapter entitled "Historiography." Closing out the book is Hillerbrand's "bibliography of my indebtedness" (467). In this section, he proffers a concise, but dense categorical survey of primarily English sources on both the sixteenth century and the Reformation. His expert overview of the major and minor works relating to the multi-faceted field of study within the topics of Christianity in the sixteenth century and the Reformation is an invaluable resource.

The strengths of Hillerbrand's revised and updated volume are as many as its pages; nonetheless, its greatest contributions are its comprehensiveness and its historical integrity. One can sense Hillerbrand's mature scholarship at work throughout as he resists the tendency to explain away or to generalize the reform of Christianity in the sixteenth century. He draws conclusions and states observations only when they are evident; inferences that cannot be substantiated, in Hillerbrand's opinion, are not the work of a historian. In essence, he desires for the Reformation to speak for itself; all other implicit judgments are not in the purview of his thesis.

The fruit of Hillerbrand's lifelong career has resulted in a monumental addition to the canon of Reformation history. In this work, any level of interested reader will find seamless prose coupled with meticulous and exhaustive scholarship. Hillerbrand unfolds the complex world of Christianity in the sixteenth century with relative ease while mixing in his own simple observations that demonstrate the desire he has for the Reformation itself to be free from scholarly abuse.

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***Martin Luther's Theology: A Contemporary Interpretation.* By Oswald Bayer. Translated by Thomas H. Trapp. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008. 374 + xxiii pages. Softcover, \$32.00.**

Martin Luther's Theology: A Contemporary Interpretation first appeared in German in 2003 published by Mohr Siebeck but now it has been made available in English thanks to translator Thomas H. Trapp. In the "Preface," Oswald Bayer reveals that his book is the product of "forty years of investigative work about and with Luther" (xx). The culmination of Bayer's engagement with Luther's theology has produced an indispensable resource for the study of this Reformer.

Few scholars are more capable of the task of submitting "a contemporary interpretation" of Luther's theology than Bayer, who is a recognized Luther expert and German theologian at the University of Tübingen. Bayer sees Luther as a theologian whose work was intended to correspond to one's "specific setting in life" (xvi). He further establishes this point by proffering one of Luther's earliest writings, *Pro veritate inquirenda et timoratis conscientiiis consolandis* [*For the Inquiry*

into *Truth and for the Comfort of Troubled Consciences*] (1518), as a paradigm for assessing the basic purpose behind the corpus of his writings (xvi). This early work in particular demonstrates that Luther began his career as a reformer presupposing the immediate connection between true Christian theology and true Christian spirituality.

In his "Introduction," Bayer provides a proper framework for interpreting Luther and his theology. If, however, one desires to fully grasp the systematic treatment of Bayer's Luther (chaps. 5–16), he or she must become well-acquainted with Luther's theological method explicated in the "Prolegomena" (chaps. 1–4). Bayer posits two main essential features for coming to terms with Luther's methodology. First, Luther understands the subject of theology as "the sinning human and the justifying God" (37). This principle unifies every other major doctrine of Christian theology from creation to Christology to the consummation of the world. Thus, one must interpret all aspects of Luther's theology in light of the doctrine of justification (37–38).

Second, although Bayer warns of reducing Luther's theology to a single motif (xvi), he sets forth the concept of *promissio* (promise) as the defining element that makes Luther's work distinctly evangelical (50). The circumstance of "the sinning human and the justifying God" finds resolution in God's direct address to the sinner in the gospel as the performative Word that reconciles this broken and warring relationship and brings with it the assurance of salvation in Jesus Christ (50–52). The *promissio* is the effectual Word of God that both frees and forgives enemies of the cross. For this reason Bayer allows the *promissio* to take the predominant role as the leading concept of Luther's theology.

After establishing Luther's theological method and hermeneutic, Bayer endeavors to systematize the German Reformer's theology with these specific doctrines: creation, the order of the world, anthropology, sin and the bound will, the wrath of God and theodicy, the love and mercy of God, the Holy Spirit, the church, faith and good works, the two realms (also referred to as "the two kingdoms"), the last things, the Trinity, and prayer. His attempt is indeed systematic, but one would be mistaken to suspect that Bayer is trying to make Luther a systematic theologian. Bayer is clear that Luther had no intention of producing a work equivalent to Thomas Aquinas' *Summa Theologica* or Melancthon's *Loci* (xv). Instead, Bayer desires to use this assortment of doctrines to show the inner coherence of Luther's theology from multiple angles. The end result is a multi-faceted, systematic presentation of Luther's theology, richly integrated into the Christian's personal piety, church life, and existence in the world.

A few comments should be made regarding Bayer's promotion of his work on Luther as "a contemporary interpretation." First, Bayer views Luther's concept of *promissio* as the forerunner to the speech-act theory developed and popularized by J. L. Austin, which has become a mainstay within contemporary discussions of hermeneutics and theological interpretation. Therefore, he unfolds Luther's doctrine of Scripture in relation to how it serves as the source of God's divine speech-act, namely, "as the Word that does what it says" (52). Second, Bayer desires to "re-present" Luther's theology for a modern audience. His "contemporary interpretation" intends to be a channel through which Luther may speak into

the twenty-first century, thereby causing him to join the modern audience in “the struggle for truth that reaches across the ages” (xix).

Bayer succeeds in presenting Luther’s theology in a systematic framework without violating the polemical and organic nature of his writings. At various points throughout, this becomes a cumbersome task; however, Bayer remains faithful to explaining how each doctrine relates to Luther’s prime subject of theology, and its resolution in the *promissio* of the gospel of Jesus Christ. He does not force Luther into an a priori philosophical framework, but rather determines these select doctrines based upon the dominating themes that arise out of Luther’s diverse sources. In essence, it is Luther himself who decides what to include and what to exclude in terms of systematic categories. By the volume’s end, one would have hoped to have seen Bayer devote more space to Luther’s Trinitarian theology. However, his discussion on the reasoning behind its placement at the end of the book within an eschatological framework compensates for this disappointment (334–36). In addition, Bayer’s work benefits from a rich and informative “Preface” and “Introduction,” but ends abruptly without a formal “Conclusion.” His final chapter entitled, “Promise and Prayer,” serves the work in this manner, but does not sufficiently assess Bayer’s effort at systematizing Luther’s theology, nor does it adequately evaluate its contemporary relevance.

In conclusion, Bayer’s *Martin Luther’s Theology* will assuredly soon be recognized as one of the preeminent authoritative sources in the field of Luther studies. Trapp’s English translation carries a lively tone and is accessible to those interested in Luther’s theology from the novice to the scholar. Bayer’s work is a masterpiece of precision and integrity where Luther’s voice is not muffled, but instead is heard loud and clear on every page.

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***This Is My Body: The Presence of Christ in Reformation Thought.* By Thomas J. Davis. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008. 203 pages. Softcover, \$26.00.**

In *This is My Body* Thomas J. Davis sketches the Eucharistic features of the Reformation through an investigation of Calvin, Luther, and, to a lesser extent, Zwingli. The book is a collection of historical-theological presentations, essays, and articles written by the author over a span of sixteen years (1992–2008). Davis seeks to outline Calvin and Luther’s answer to several questions, namely, “How do we know Christ? How does God save through Christ? How is God present in Christ?” (14–15). The author states that the book “explores and analyzes ways in which Luther and Calvin understood the issue of Christ’s presence (and all that entails and implies)” (15).

This Is My Body contains ten chapters. Broadly speaking, the first two examine the centrality of God’s Word and Luther’s Pre-Marburg preaching on the Supper (1521–1528), respectively. Chapters 3 through 8 focus on Calvin’s theology of Christ’s presence. Here Davis elucidates important features of Calvin’s theology of Word and sacrament (ch. 3), the role of “body” in Calvin’s soteriology (ch. 4),

the way preaching overcomes human weakness to make Christ present (chs. 5–6), the implications of the ascension (ch. 7), and the role of biblical interpretation in Calvin's theological method (ch. 8). The final two chapters look at issues of language. Chapter 9 compares and contrasts Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin's takes on the call to "discern the body" in 1 Corinthians 11. Chapter 10 explores how a cultural shift to diminish the distance between the sign and the signified (i.e., within Renaissance art) may serve to explain the move toward literal/singular interpretive tendencies of the reformers.

The work has much to commend it. First, Davis admirably handles one of the difficulties of a compilation work, namely, maintaining a sense of cohesion and flow of thought throughout. All but three of the chapters (chs. 6–8) have appeared previously in journals of essay collections and, thus, each has a stand-alone quality about it. Nonetheless, the sequencing of the chapters is logical and Davis ably highlights and coordinates points of contact between various parts via the use of notes. Second, the author offers helpful methodological comments to guide scholars researching Calvin. For example, Davis repeatedly warns the reader not to allow his or her research to generalize Calvin's thought from a mere examination of the *Institutes* (even in its progressing editions) but rather to cross-examine him via his commentaries and sermons to ensure that finer points are consistently interpreted and nuanced. Davis models this approach throughout, but chapters 5, 7, and 9 offer the clearest examples of this methodological principle. Finally, Davis ably uses his footnotes to add deeper scholarly insight while maintaining his thought flow in the main body (e.g., 86n3).

Readers may find some aspects of the book less helpful. While containing an index, the work lacks a comprehensive bibliography. Further, though subtitled "The Presence of Christ in *Reformation Thought*" (emphasis mine), the scope of the work is limited almost exclusively to Luther and Calvin with a decided emphasis upon the latter. Indeed, 7 out of 10 chapters are focused on Calvin. Davis' cursory attention to Zwingli (and consequently the Anabaptist eucharistic tradition) is also striking. Davis' background in Calvin studies and his conclusion that Calvin rested closer to Luther than to Zwingli on the issue of the Eucharist may explain the imbalanced emphases. These last observations may also explain why Davis omits an extended discussion of the definitive debate between Luther and Zwingli at Marburg. However, given his stated intention to examine "*Luther and Calvin's*" thought, the absence of a discussion on the Finnish interpretation of Luther (a burgeoning scholarly discussion on Luther's understanding of Christ's presence) is less explicable. Consequently, the book's principal contribution is made in the arena of Calvin studies.

The noted limitations of the work fail to undermine its overall value. Davis succeeds in offering a nuanced look at important aspects of Calvin's answers to how one knows, is saved by, and is united with Christ and relates these observations at key points to the thought of Luther and Zwingli. On the one hand, less seasoned readers in the area of Reformation studies will find that *This Is My Body* bears an accessible quality often absent in historical-theological works of its caliber. On the other hand, the copious footnoting of sources, interaction with original language works, and substantive content notes will aid scholars in delving more deeply into

both primary and secondary literature. For the classroom setting, it is believed that this text, though accessible on other levels, would best serve graduate level or upper level undergraduate classes intersecting Reformation theology, especially that of Calvin.

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***Readings in Baptist History.* Edited by Joseph Early Jr. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2008. 281 + vi pages. Paperback, \$19.99.**

Books like Joseph Early's *Readings in Baptist History* lend themselves easily to review. The task of critiquing a work of "selected documents" is much like the virtual ease of the armchair quarterback who shouts and writhes with every play-call, scramble, and pass completion—all from the comforts of his own home media enclave. It is pontifical fun without the work or responsibility.

Much, therefore, is the same for one who attempts to review the work of an edited volume like *Readings in Baptist History*. Joseph Early has, in reality, done the hard work of selecting, transcribing, editing a very helpful book that contains some of the essential readings for anyone interested in the rich field of Baptist history. For one to differ or deliberate over his selections or his omissions is easy. For one to do so with great melodrama or astonished gasps (such as, "Because he failed to include the original transcription of Stinton Number 4, Early's work should not be read or recommended by anyone!") is nothing more than a lazy lob from an armchair quarterback.

In the preface, Early notes that "[w]hile many new histories have been written, no major Baptist primary sourcebook has been compiled since [H. Leon] McBeth's *A Sourcebook for Baptist Heritage* (1990)" (v). Indeed, Early highlights a need for students and pastors alike to have access to the primary sources of their Baptist heritage, and the assembly of such in single volume works has been something regularly done throughout the years. In 1958, Sydnor L. Stealey edited *A Baptist Treasury*. Stealey's work provides helpful introductions to each selection and still contains many works previously or since unpublished. Robert A. Baker's *A Baptist Source Book* (1966) served many as the standard work from which to begin any inquiry into the Baptist past. Baker's work was surpassed by McBeth's exhaustive *Sourcebook*, and, while not noted by Early, Curtis W. Freeman's *Baptist Roots* (1999) also serves as a work of unique contribution both through its introductory summaries and also its inclusion of Anabaptist related materials.

Readings in Baptist History contains only a short preface to provide any introduction to the selections that follow in the volume. Early states that he employed his decided brevity "to eliminate my personal bias and consider what documents give the broadest and most understandable basis for our rich heritage" (vi). While the reader can appreciate the intent, not having any sort of contextual introduction or further explanation as to why a document was chosen does leave one looking for and wanting more. The only other structural critique one could make resides in the absence of any compiled bibliography. Concluding the volume with

a two page listing of all the entries would give the student a helpful checklist from which to begin the building of his own library or the searching for the complete document from other libraries.

Nevertheless, with the burgeoning existence of many Baptist history sources available electronically from many web sites (such as BaptistTheology.org), spending time debating the whys or wherefores of what documents Early should have included is moot. *Readings in Baptist History* could not possibly contain even all that Early desired to include. Indeed, the abundance of options speaks to the richness and worthiness of study of the field. However, this is not to say that the online presence of many sources negates the value of Early's work. On the contrary, *Readings in Baptist History* functions as the physical door through which many students and pastors can enter and find the rich treasures of Baptist history collected and stored in many places. Early's work operates, as intended, as a fine introduction.

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***The Great Awakening: The Roots of Evangelical Christianity in Colonial America.* Thomas S. Kidd. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007. 392 + xix pages. Hardback, \$35.00.**

This book is a welcome addition to studies in American Christianity. A scholarly, one-volume monograph specifically dedicated to canvassing the phenomenon known as the Great Awakening has not appeared since Edwin Gaustad's *The Great Awakening in New England* in 1957. Because it is written by an accomplished and promising young scholar of excellent credentials, it is a first-rate scholarly work, one that is conversant with the primary and recent secondary literature on the subject. Because its goal is to present the big picture of the numerous religious awakenings that dotted the terrain of American Protestantism in the mid eighteenth-century, it avoids the narrowness of many specialized studies and thus is eminently accessible to general readers, church goers and pastors.

As the book's subtitle indicates Kidd's aim is to shape the narrative of the Great Awakening in order to reveal "the roots of evangelical Christianity in colonial America." While acknowledging David Bebbington's famous "quadrilateral" definition of evangelicalism, Kidd wishes to underscore in this volume what Bebbington's definition leaves out, namely the extraordinary attention that participants in the awakenings gave to the person and work of the Holy Spirit (xiv). It is this tremendous pneumatological emphasis evidenced in both corporate revivals and private experiences that characterized the Great Awakening and continues to characterize American evangelicalism today. Thus, a prominent feature of the book is the great attention Kidd gives to the extraordinary experiences people underwent in the midst of the revivals, experiences ranging from the more tame yet intense emotional conversions, to the more radical experiences of dreams, visions, and impulses. Kidd ably demonstrates how extensive these more radical manifestations of revival were in the mid-eighteenth century, a fact which

calls into question the conventional notion that the First Great Awakening was a tame, controlled, and theologically-led revival while the Second Great Awakening featured the enthusiastic bedlam of the camp meeting. In truth, from its very beginnings, American evangelical awakenings have been characterized by a deep division between moderate revivalists and radical ones, between those who envisioned revival as a tame controlled affair of the heart, and those who were open to more radical expressions (323).

In the contents of the book we find both old and new. Familiar are the narratives of the pre-awakening setting, the Connecticut River Valley awakening of the mid 1730s, the itinerant ministry of George Whitefield, and the debates between the Old and New Lights. New are the parts of the history of the Great Awakening which are not well-known, parts which reflect the fruit of scholarship on the subject in the last generation. First, Kidd attempts to reset the temporal boundaries of the Great Awakening, which generally have been associated with the remarkable years of 1740–42. Kidd argues, correctly in my view, that we should envision the First Great Awakening much like we understand the Second, a period of multiple regional revivals that spanned many decades. His narrative thus begins in the 1730s and takes us past the American Revolution in the early 1780s. It also features revivals which are not as well known such as those of the 1760s and early 1780s. Second, Kidd addresses the broad geographic range of the First Great Awakening revivals. Not only is the New England scene treated, but Kidd includes chapters on the Great Awakening in the Middle Colonies, Virginia, and the Carolinas where Baptists particularly took root in the Sandy Creek area. Third, Kidd also examines revivals among the non-white communities, devoting chapters to Native American and African American communities touched by the Holy Spirit.

Lastly, Kidd treats the complicated relationship between the Great Awakening and the American Revolution, where he argues that we really cannot establish a direct link between the two. While he acknowledges that the revivals birthed an egalitarian spirit which informed the hearts and minds of countless colonial Americans, and while evangelical rhetoric and ideology did indeed shape some of America's founding fathers, one cannot conclude from these that a direct one-to-one relationship between the Awakening and the Revolution exists. His main evidence is the great diversity of evangelical responses to the Revolution. Not all evangelicals supported the break with Great Britain. Indeed, Kidd demonstrates that many of the radical, marginalized evangelicals (including many Separatists and Baptists) leaned toward either neutrality or Loyalism. The picture of a unified Patriotic evangelical front in the decades leading up to the Revolution does not hold up on further scrutiny, and thus we must be content merely to affirm a more loose connection between the Great Awakening and the American Revolution.

The Great Awakening is well-written and chock full of mini-stories about churches, pastors, and conversion narratives that will delight many Baptists and evangelicals who yearn for revival to return to their lives and churches. It should prove to be the standard work on the subject for many years to come.

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***Encyclopedia of Religious Revivals in America.* Edited by Michael McClymond. Westport, CT.: Greenwood Press, 2007. 2 vols, 514 + xxxi pages, 663 + xx pages. Hardcover, \$225.00.**

“Religious revivals are as American as baseball, blues music, and the stars and stripes.” So writes Michael McClymond, editor of this fine two-volume encyclopedia (vol. 1, xvii), a work that is the first academic reference publication devoted entirely to phenomena of religious revivals in North America. Revivals are indeed an integral part of the American religious landscape. Only in the last generation have scholars turned away from writing them off as products of ignorant enthusiastic religiosity and begun to give them serious scholarly attention. This encyclopedia will serve as a wonderful resource for church libraries and pastors and other Christians who are eager to learn about the great diversity present in American revivalism.

The encyclopedia is divided into two sizable volumes, the first containing 227 short articles on persons, events, themes, denominations, and practices that were all part of the American revival tradition. Written by 118 scholars most of whom have published before in the areas associated with their entries, the work attempts to achieve the objectivity characteristic of the academy and attempts to avoid the potential biases of the denominational and pro-revival participant. Having said this, however, it should be noted that many of the contributors, while trained as academic historians, have strong ties with one of the many evangelical revival traditions found in North America and thus they approach their individual entries with a healthy mix of criticism and appreciation. Contained in its pages are entries on people (Jonathan Edwards, D.L. Moody, J. Wilbur Chapman, Billy Graham, and many lesser known figures), revival practices (the Altar Call, Bodily Manifestations in Revivals, Prayer and Revivals, Preaching and Revivals, Serpent and Fire-Handling Believers), movements associated with revivals (the Holiness Movement of the Nineteenth Century, the Temperance Movement and Revivals, and Hymns, Hymnody and Christian Music in Revivals), as well as well-known instances of revival in American history (the First and Second Great Awakenings, the Revival of 1857–1858, the Azusa Street Revival, and more recently the Pensacola Revival and the Toronto Blessing).

The second volume contains a collection of 106 primary source documents written by pastors, laymen, and observers of revivals, many of which present us with eye-witness accounts of revivals stretching as far back as the early colonial period. This volume is a gold mine of testimonies of salvation and sanctification (both personal and corporate), some warm-hearted tales of personal salvation, and other accounts relaying fantastic experiences that border on heterodoxy. Sections of well-known works line its pages, such as selections from Whitefield’s *Journal*, Edwards’s *Faithful Narrative*, and Finney’s *Lectures on Revivals of Religion*. Most of this volume, however, is filled with writings that have not achieved “classic” status: letters, memoirs, journals, biographies, and newspaper articles concerned

with revivals or revivalists. Thus we find eye-witness accounts of Methodist Camp Meetings, Baptist revivals, Pentecostal revivals, and college revivals (such as the well-known Asbury College revival of 1970); sections from the writings of lesser-known revivalists (i.e. Francisco Olazabal, Charles H. Mason, and Aimee Semple McPherson); and even writings critical of revival (such as a critique by a nineteenth-century Unitarian, an argument against altar calls by a “high church” Reformed theologian, and a newspaper article detailing the “Weird Babel of Tongues” taking place during the Azusa Street Revival of 1906). The selections are wide ranging, demonstrating the great diversity of North America’s revivalistic traditions. For the researcher, this volume ends with a gigantic bibliography (more than 200 pages, and 5600 entries!) on revivals and revivalism in North America and beyond.

The greatest strength of the work lies in the diversity of revivalist traditions represented. One can learn much about the traditions, practices, and leaders of other evangelical revivalist traditions by dipping into this work at one point, and reading all the cross-referenced articles associated with that entry. For instance, a Baptist, who may know much of her own tradition yet know very little of the evangelical world beyond, will find a wealth of information about the Methodist, Presbyterian, Holiness, African-American, and Pentecostal revival traditions simply by beginning with an entry, say, on “Methodist Revivals” and working through its associated entries. The work thus attempts to move beyond the denominational mindset and treat revivals from a “merely evangelical” perspective, not from a Pentecostal, Methodist, Presbyterian, or Baptist one.

This strength may also be its greatest weakness from the perspective of some who may find the denominational plurality represented too inclusive. A cessationist Christian or a Reformed Christian may not consider many of the Pentecostal and/or Arminian revivals represented as legitimate revivals. In light of this, one must keep in mind that this is an academic work written for the academy where the theological particularities of various denominations do not factor prominently. If one understands this about the *Encyclopedia*, then I could see that this set would indeed be a fine addition to a church library and benefit the church at large. I fully expect the *Encyclopedia of Religious Revivals in America* to be a fundamental starting point for the study of revivals in *both* the church and academy for years to come.

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***A Short Life of Jonathan Edwards.* By George M. Marsden. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008. 145 pages. Softcover, \$12.95.**

A Short Life of Jonathan Edwards is arguably the first authoritative, yet largely accessible, biographical volume on Edwards. By no means an abridgement from his definitive biography, *Jonathan Edwards: A Life* (Yale, 2003), Marsden’s *A Short Life* offers specific attention to Edwards that had previously only received brief mention in the larger volume (x). Its pages are filled with an elegant and clear

prose, giving life and color to an otherwise and all too common misrepresentation of Edwards as dreary and morose. *A Short life* reads like a good narrative should: recounting the magnificence of Edwards' life while regarding every detail as principal to an accurate retelling.

Chapter one, "Edwards, Franklin and Their Times," is a brief comparative survey of Edwards and Benjamin Franklin and their reflection of American culture as "eighteenth-century British modernity and New England's earlier puritan heritage" collided (2). In chapter two, "Wrestling with God," Marsden introduces what is arguably the most critical section to a proper understanding of Edwards' life and theology, namely the seminal influences of his family, his conversion to Christianity during his Yale tenure, and his bitter-sweet ministerial enterprise to New York City. In chapter three, "Transitions and Challenges," Marsden sadly races through a second and similarly important period of Edwards' life, arriving too quickly at the precipice of the first "Awakening" in chapter four and the story of its impact on the colonies in "An American Revolution" in chapter five. Despite what appears entirely reasonable—namely that Marsden devotes two whole chapters to Edwards' involvement in such a pivotal time in American history as the Great Awakening—it is rather Edwards' assumption of the role of assistant pastor to his grandfather, the great Solomon Stoddard in Northampton, Massachusetts, and his subsequent marriage to the stately and elegant Sarah Pierpont that greatly influences Edwards' important role in the awakening. Although small, this is an oversight, even for a volume this brief.

Chapter six, "Drama on the Home Front," clearly marks a slowing in the Edwards narrative, as Marsden sets into relief the dramatic shift in the course of Edwards' life. After this respite, the pace picks up again in chapters seven and eight. Marsden develops, with relative quickness, a whirring series of events in the life of Edwards: his moves to the war-ravaged city of Stockbridge on the western Massachusetts frontier and then shortly after to Princeton to be installed as President of what was then the College of New Jersey, and his tragic and untimely death. Marsden's conclusion, "What Should We Learn from Edwards?" is the most important chapter of the work and might best be read first as it offers glimpses into both Marsden's interpretive choices for the composition of the present work and displays the constant and invariable theocentric impulse that steered Edwards' work.

Marsden's goal for a work that is, "balanced, entertaining, informative and short" has been not merely met but surpassed. A fresh perspective for the Edwards' scholar and a warm, welcome read for all; there is none to match the brevity and authority of Marsden's latest biographical contribution to the growing body of Edwards literature. I happily recommend *A Short Life of Jonathan Edwards*.

S. Mark Hamilton
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***John A. Broadus: A Living Legacy.* Edited by David S. Dockery and Roger D. Duke. *Studies in Baptist Life and Thought.* Nashville: B&H Academic, 2008. 260 + xii pages. Softcover, \$19.99.**

Anyone who has studied the history of the Southern Baptist Convention would have come across the name of John Broadus. Not only was he one of the greatest American Baptist preachers in nineteenth century America, he also was a founder and second president of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Given his prominence in Baptist life, it is puzzling that few works have been written about him; however, this first volume in "Studies in Baptist Life and Thought" attempts to fill this void with *John A. Broadus: A Living Legacy*, edited by David S. Dockery and Roger D. Duke.

Dockery and Duke have collected a number of essays written on a variety of aspects of Broadus' career and ministry. As helpful as some of these articles are, Timothy George is correct in seeing that "The time is long overdue for a modern critical biography" (6). With that expectation set aside, fresh perspectives on the life of Broadus are presented.

David Dockery's essay provides an overview of the life of Broadus, a help for those who have not engaged Broadus before. However, if one has read Dockery's sketch previously there is nothing new here (cf. 44n50). Following this overview, A. James Fuller's essay looks into the early life of Broadus and his preaching up until he moved to take the position at Southern Seminary. In sketching out an historical period of Broadus' life it is accompanied by Craig C. Christina's article (chapter 6) on Broadus' involvement in the establishment and operating of Southern Seminary.

The remaining essays are concerned with specific features of Broadus' life. Roger Duke's article looks at the background of Broadus' education in classical rhetoric. He shows how this training was implemented in his preaching and writing. Richard Melick's interesting title, "New Wine in Broadus Wineskins," raises the interesting question of Broadus' relevancy for today. Here Melick discusses Broadus' work in biblical studies as utilizing methods that are still appropriate today. At times, however one wonders if he is overstating Broadus' impact. Thomas Nettles' article looks at the impact *A Treatise on the Preparation of Sermons* had from the day it was published until now. In what seems to be an exhaustive effort, he cites from the reviews of the *Treatise* and shows its almost instantaneous success. The final article in the volume looks to Broadus' lasting legacy. James Patterson shows the "core" of Broadus' legacy under the headings of: Biblical Orthodoxy, Denominational Servant and Statesman, and a Theological Educator. He says that Broadus came "to symbolize the Baptists of his time" (257) and leaves a legacy for those in the twenty-first century.

Two essays in this work need to be especially highlighted for their work on the legacy of Broadus. The first is Mark M. Overstreet's work on the "Lost Yale Lectures." In researching Broadus at Southern Seminary's library, Overstreet came across notes from the Lyman Beecher lectures Broadus delivered in 1889. Since Broadus delivered them extemporaneously he left no written record of them and they were subsequently deemed "lost." The finding of these notes is greatly

important for research on Broadus, which is why Overstreet's overview of these notes is one of the most important essays in this collection. Not only does the essay give a glimpse at the lectures, but it also shows the matured Broadus' emphases after a life of preaching.

Finally, Beecher L. Johnson has done a superb job in presenting Broadus' views on sensationalism in preaching. Seeing the problem of sensationalism in our churches, Johnson looks to wisdom from Broadus on how to appropriate correctly sensation in preaching. He demonstrates that Broadus sees positives of sensation in preaching, but cautions against its use in that it can cause harm to the listener as well as the preacher.

The essays from Overstreet and Johnson make the work well worth having for anyone interested in the life of Broadus, but especially for the historian or the preacher. Overall the work is a decent look at the life of Broadus and provides an introduction to major elements of his life. However, if this volume has done anything it has firmly established the need for a modern critical biography. This work raises important areas in Broadus' life, but lacks a unified exhaustive treatment a critical biography would provide. When that work is completed hopefully it will objectively place Broadus in his time as both the preacher and the teacher. Then also it should present his lasting impact on Southern Baptists and perhaps include a transcription of the notes from the Lyman Beecher lectures.

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***The Bonhoeffer Legacy: Post-Holocaust Perspectives.* By Stephen R. Haynes. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2006. 197 pages. Softcover, \$22.00.**

Hindsight is allegedly 20/20. However, that statement is ultimately suspect, especially when someone is proclaiming accolades or throwing aspersions on decisions made, proclamations uttered, and letters written sixty years after the event(s) in question. Stephen R. Haynes, however, appears to feel no compunction in looking backwards through the lenses of history and proclaiming that Dietrich Bonhoeffer failed, not only as a "Righteous Gentile" but also a Christian theologian.

In at least one aspect of Haynes' argument, the evangelical reader can find common agreement—Bonhoeffer has been made a paragon Christian martyrdom even though it often requires suspending judgment regarding his more neo-orthodox doctrinal tenets. However, that is not Haynes' argument; his argument is that Bonhoeffer failed by not holding the dual covenantal approach to "Jewish salvation" of such theologians as Clark Williamson, Sidney G. Hall, and Franklin Littell (44–45, 110, 148). Therefore, according to Haynes, Bonhoeffer fails as a Christian theologian because he upholds the necessity of Jewish people coming to faith in Messiah Jesus (*The Bethel Confession*).

Haynes affirms the decision of Yad Vashem to deny Bonhoeffer the status of Righteous Gentile because the German Jewish individuals he helped to escape were converts to Christianity (15–18). It should be noted that the status of Righteous Gentile does not add to or detract from the reality of Bonhoeffer's

actions during the Third Reich. However, Haynes' affirmation of this denial again illustrates his predisposition to negate Bonhoeffer's efforts during the period because they do not match the religiously neutral, dialogue-driven approach of the twenty-first century Christianity. Haynes' bias extends to his advocacy of certain resources and authors as definitive on the issue—including the always controversial Daniel Jonah Goldhagen of *Hitler's Willing Executioners* (53, 59).

Haynes' bias and skepticism ultimately cause this work to fail. A critical look *should* be taken at Bonhoeffer's inter-relationship with the Jewish people during this period. He did not always hold to the highest of standards in his approach towards the Jewish people, especially in his fear of attending the funeral of his Jewish brother-in-law's father in 1933 (113). He struggled in his terminology referring to the decision of the Jewish people (as a collective) to reject the Messiahship of Jesus (62–74). He was not as extreme as Martin Niemöller in his internal spiritual conflict (53, 63) but neither should he be tarred with the same brush, as Haynes attempts to do, as “Hitler's theologian,” Gerhard Kittel (53, 63, 66).

An examination of *The Bethel Confession* that Bonhoeffer and other dissenters wrote in 1933 (74–80) in response to the rise of Adolf Hitler as Chancellor and ultimately Führer included a section on the Jewish question with the most profound of missional statements—“The confession affirms that the church is charged to call the Jews to repentance and to baptize the believers in the name of Christ for the forgiveness of sins. The refusal to evangelize the Jews ‘for cultural or political reasons’ is disobedience.” This is the Bonhoeffer that Haynes laments; however, it is this Bonhoeffer that evangelical Christians should praise.

Most Christians are introduced to Bonhoeffer through *The Cost of Discipleship* or via *His Letters and Papers from Prison*. These indeed are works of invaluable insight and theological depth. However, it is *The Bethel Confession* that should be placed on the bookshelf of every evangelical scholar.

Amy Karen Downey
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Philosophy and Ethics

***Buried Hope or Risen Savior? The Search for the Jesus Tomb.* Edited by Charles L. Quarles. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2008. 243 pages. Paperback, \$24.99.**

One wishes that this book had been available in early 2007. It could then counter the claims of two documentaries that archaeologists had uncovered the bones of Jesus Christ and his family members—deposited in bone boxes (ossuaries) in an East Talpiot tomb. Controversy-driven books often lack quality investigations and interpretations. Not so with *Buried Hope or Risen Savior*. The time taken to produce this work in no way minimizes the timeliness of this book because this story, or a similar one, will appear again in the future. When it does, an answer will be ready for those who ask if the bones that once occupied this box disprove the historicity of the Gospel accounts of an empty tomb. More significantly, this book serves as a warning to test all documentaries, movies, and books, exposes

pseudo-scholarship, and presents sound guidance for correctly understanding the role of biblical archaeology, history, hermeneutics, and theology. Although written as a scholarly treatise for the general public, readers should find this book to be inspirational as well as informative as it affirms the historical credibility of the resurrection accounts of Jesus Christ.

Charles Quarles (a vice president and Professor of Religion at Louisiana College) determined the areas that required discussion. He enlisted scholars known for their skill and expertise in various areas of research, and their ability to communicate both to the scholarly community and to the general public. In the introduction, Quarles presents the background of the claims made by James Cameron and Simcha Jacobovici, the producers of the documentary *The Lost Tomb of Jesus*, and by Simcha Jacobovici and Charles Pellegrino in the book *The Jesus Family Tomb: The Discovery, the Investigation, and the Evidence That Could Change History*. Quarles then reviews the immediate debate and response of scholars, in particular that of archaeologists.

Each author wrote a chapter based upon one of these issues. Steven Ortiz (Associate Professor of Archaeology and Biblical Backgrounds at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary) provides a guide for correctly applying the discipline of Biblical Archaeology. He exposes misleading practices of pseudo-archaeology and explains the time tested procedures of educated and experienced archaeologists. As he does this, he applies those guidelines specifically to the hypothesis of the Talpiot Tomb revealing its flaws.

Craig A. Evans (New Testament Professor at Acadia Divinity College) explains Jewish burial practices contemporary to the time of Jesus Christ. In particular, he deals with the Jewish burial practice of *ossilegium* (the gathering and reburial of the bones of the deceased). He then refutes three claims of the Talpiot Tomb hypothesis, thereby supporting the historicity of the Scriptures.

Richard Bauckham (New Testament Professor at St. Mary's College, University of St. Andrews) employs his knowledge of *onomastics* (the study of names) of first-century Jewish Palestine to examine the claims of the Talpiot hypothesis. The major point under consideration was the frequency of the names found on the ossuaries. He "buries" the claim that the statistical frequency of the combination of names inscribed on the ossuaries demonstrates they had to belong to Jesus Christ and his family members.

What Bauckham does from a literary, linguistic, and historical approach to expose the statistical fallacies of the Talpiot hypothesis, William A. Dembski (Research Professor in Philosophy at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary) and Robert J. Marks II (Distinguished Professor of Electrical and Computer Engineering at Baylor University) do mathematically. In their chapter they "crunch the numbers" and the hypothesis comes up short.

Gary Habermas (Distinguished Research Professor and Chairman of the Department of Philosophy and Theology at Liberty University) analyzes the opinion of James Tabor, one of the few scholars who advocate that this tomb is the burial chamber of Jesus Christ. Tabor has constructed a scenario that explains the whereabouts of the body of Jesus. Habermas reveals the weaknesses in Tabor's position by first showing his selective acceptance and rejection of resurrection

reports of the Gospels and Epistles in order to advance his arguments. Habermas establishes sound reasons for believing that Paul and other resurrection witnesses held firmly to a resurrection tradition, and demonstrates why Tabor and the Talpiot Hypothesis stand opposed by sound historical evidence and modern biblical scholarship.

Michael Licona (Director of Apologetics and Interfaith Evangelism at the North American Mission Board) addresses the opinion of some that the resurrection body of Jesus was not material (flesh and bones), but immaterial (spiritual only). Licona examines Paul's primary treatment of the resurrection of Christ found in 1 Corinthians 15:42–54 and verifies that Paul held to a physical (material) resurrection. The position of an immaterial resurrection contradicts the biblical testimony. This chapter emphasizes the perilous assertions of the Talpiot Hypothesis and underscores the need for this very book.

Darrell L. Bock (Research Professor of New Testament Studies at Dallas Theological Seminary) summarizes each chapter. This summary seems unnecessary as each author clearly presented his position, but to have the “stamp of approval” of someone with the reputation and credentials of Darrell Bock should ensure all readers of the first rate scholarly research contained in this work, and above all, will answer the question contained in the title—We have a Risen Savior!

This work contains no pictures or diagrams, but the words produce the mental images needed for understanding (while keeping printing costs down). There is no bibliography, but each writer provided the necessary bibliographical information in the footnotes, and in so doing, gives the reader not only the sources of their research, but excellent sources to consult for the points under discussion. Some chapters will take longer to read and more time to digest than others. This is the case for the chapter by Dembski and Marks, but considering the claims made for the statistical probability that this is the ossuary of Jesus of Nazareth, one dare not skip this hypothesis-shattering chapter.

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***An Introduction to Kierkegaard.* By Peter Vardy. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2008. 109 + xv pages. Softcover, \$14.95.**

Peter Vardy's *An Introduction to Kierkegaard* is an astonishing feat; he has managed in relatively few words to summarize and share the essence of this Danish philosopher. Beginning with Kierkegaard's troubled childhood and particularly focusing on his relationship with his father, Vardy forms a compelling reading of his life and his thoughts for any student of philosophy or those simply seeking to reach an adequate understanding of the philosopher.

Vardy's unique position on Kierkegaard is also interesting, to say the least; for instance, he states that it is not entirely accurate to label Kierkegaard as “the father of existentialism” (xii). While no one would disagree that Kierkegaard was concerned with the individual, he did not accept that truth was reliant upon the

individual. Moreover, Vardy alleges that Kierkegaard was a “philosophical realist maintaining a correspondence theory of truth” (xii).

This is somewhat controversial on two scores: first, since he is widely held to have given birth to existentialism and second, because it is also commonly held that Kierkegaard attempted to shift the focus of the church towards being more experiential. Vardy claims that the most important demand Kierkegaard imposes on his readers is that they “should have an interest in his or her own life and how it is lived, [which] is the starting point of good philosophy” (xiii).

What Vardy further goes on to say in the “Introduction” to his book bears some resemblance to the call for evangelical Christians to expose people for what they truly are, to reach the unreached. Perhaps Kierkegaard did not directly intend to do this but these words should convict and instruct all Christians alike: “[Kierkegaard] wants these people to slow down, to be still, to look at themselves in a different way; and then perhaps, they may come to recognize the façade they have constructed and the despair in which they actually live” (xv).

Vardy sets the stage for his introduction of the philosopher with background information on his life and, in particular, his struggles. Vardy then identifies that one of Kierkegaard’s main purposes was to “examine the relationship between religious faith . . . and reason” (8). Relying on passages like James 2:19, Kierkegaard dismisses reason as the most important thing in coming to faith in Jesus Christ (24); instead, according to him, “faith requires individuals to stake their lives on a claim (the incarnation) that may or may not be true. Faith, therefore, is an existential act” (25).

Vardy astutely points out that many would gather from notions such as the above that Kierkegaard discarded objective truth. Vardy, instead, attempts to shift the paradigm by arguing that the Danish philosopher had clearly recognized that subjectivity and faith, per se, were insufficient to ensure the veracity of anything (29). While Kierkegaard did believe in the objective truth of Christ’s incarnation, he states that unless, as Christians, we “relate ourselves to [this objective truth] subjectively, we cannot ‘know’ it” (30).

After a discussion of Kierkegaard’s evaluation of the three stages of life (35–64), Vardy illuminates Kierkegaard’s views on ethics. Kierkegaard disputed a common idea that humanity’s duty to God is no different than an ethical duty (67). In pointing to the faith of Abraham in acceding to God’s command to sacrifice Isaac, Kierkegaard argues that Abraham’s obedience cannot by any stretch of the imagination be regarded as being akin to the actions of an ethical individual (71). Abraham did not adhere to any ethical principle in obeying God by agreeing to kill his own son—his faith, in fact, “went beyond what could be justified by reason” (71).

In addition, for Kierkegaard, although it was not possible by any external indication, to determine whether one is in a bona fide relationship with God (79), it is nevertheless possible for an individual to decide whether such a relationship existed. The test was this: “[W]hether she or he will, with passion and total inner conviction, stake everything on the desire to belong to Christ, to live in relationship with God and to place God at the centre of the whole of life” (80).

While Vardy's evaluation of Kierkegaard has much that would edify a Christian and encourage a reading of the latter's works, a strong word of caution is appropriate. Vardy highlights Kierkegaard's universalist tendencies, in that, while Kierkegaard seemed to have said some important things about the Christian life, he is also very accommodating to the unbeliever who bows down to an idol but prays with the "entire passion of the infinite" (94). It would seem that his subjectivity has taken him a step too far from evangelical faith.

Suresh Vythylingam
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***Retrieving the Natural Law: A Return to Moral First Things.* By J. Daryl Charles. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008. 346 + x pages. Softcover, \$34.00.**

In a culture that all too often renounces ethical practices consistent with a Christian worldview, the church needs to voice a moral consciousness that challenges the ebb and flow of postmodern ethics. In order to provide such a moral voice, Christians must be able to bridge the gap between Christian doctrine and public action. God has given us such a means to bridge this gap in the natural law. Indeed, without the natural law—the law written on the heart—Christians may not be able engage the surrounding culture. In the words of J. Daryl Charles, "In the end, apart from the natural law, we appear to lose any basis upon which to build a moral apologetic and to preserve civil society" (152).

In this volume, Charles addresses the notion of natural law and relates it to bioethical issues. His primary goals in *Retrieving the Natural Law* are threefold: (1) to offer an explanation of the nature and history of natural law thinking, (2) to expose the inadequacies of natural law emphases in the Protestant tradition, and (3) to apply the "moral first things" of the natural law to contemporary bioethical debates.

First, Charles stresses natural-law thinking as essential to human flourishing, necessary to moral order, and integral to Christian witness. As Charles explains, this type of natural law thinking has been present in the church throughout her history—from the apostle Paul to Augustine, from Aquinas to Calvin, from C.S. Lewis to John Paul II. At the heart of Charles' argument is that natural law is not contrary to (or even peripheral to) Christian doctrine, but rather it is understood through general revelation, supported by special revelation, and necessary for the flourishing of human civilization. According to Charles, those who would deny natural law are unable "to help cultivate any sort of public consensus about what is good, what is acceptable, what is just; they can only talk among themselves" (60). So Charles insightfully recognizes that natural law simultaneously undergirds both ethics and evangelism.

Second, Charles exposes a modern Protestant aversion to natural law. While Catholic theologians have often faithfully carried on the natural law tradition (particularly in the writings of Aquinas and John Paul II), unfortunately, Protestantism has not done the same. Charles argues that this aversion to natural law by modern Protestants produces disastrous results. He states, "By removing ethical

intuition from universal knowledge and reason or denying that ethical norms are rooted in the order of creation, Protestants have eliminated the theological basis for natural law. And in so doing, they have lost any basis for a common moral grammar with which to enter moral discourse with non-Christians in a pluralistic social context” (21). He focuses on this Protestant rejection of natural law primarily in the writings of Karl Barth, Jacques Ellul, John Howard Yoder, Stanley Hauerwas, and H. Richard Niebuhr. Charles suggests that in order for Protestants to join Catholics in voicing a unified, robust social ethic, the natural law tradition must be revived and reapplied to modern ethical issues (and bioethical issues in particular).

Third, Charles applies natural law thought to contemporary issues within medical ethics. He approaches bioethical debates in two ways. On the one hand, he addresses bioethical issues that face the current culture on “three principal fronts: beginning-of-life issues, life-enhancement issues, and end-of-life issues” (208). In particular, he analyzes euthanasia as a test case through the lens of German academic thought from 1890 to 1933. On the other hand, he also approaches contemporary bioethics by endorsing virtues consistent with the natural law and necessary for rightly responding to bioethical issues and promoting a culture of life. For example, he emphasizes the need for “redemptive suffering” when considering euthanasia and abortion; he encourages telling the truth in love when engaging a culture of death; and he stresses tolerance and compassion, but only insofar as these virtues are guided by a view toward the public good. Charles demonstrates that medical ethics (like ethics more broadly) is about fulfilling our *telos* by developing the appropriate virtues consistent with natural law.

I highly recommend this work. It is at once theoretically robust and readily pragmatic. In line with Lewis’ *The Abolition of Man*, Charles offers a glimpse of what we might be without God’s common grace—and the prospects are not good. We rely on the law written on the heart for the very order of human life and activity. In looking at how we might rely on natural law in bioethics, Charles presents an important volume for medical professionals who want to think deeply about the faith in practice and for theologians who want to take the essentials of the Christian faith into the public square.

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***The Divided States of America? What Liberals and Conservatives Are Missing in the God-and-Country Shouting Match!* By Richard Land. Foreword by Sen. Joseph Lieberman. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2007. 243 pages. Hardcover, \$22.99.**

Every American should read this book. While not every American will agree with all of Richard Land’s assessments and solutions, including probably some of his closest friends and allies, Dr. Land sets out for all Americans a wider view and clarity of understanding church-state issues and the roadblocks to a broader consensus on these thorny questions.

Richard Land has served as president of the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention for more than twenty years. A native of Houston, Texas, Dr. Land received his Bachelor of Arts from Princeton, his Master of Theology from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, and his Doctor of Philosophy degree from Oxford. He has authored numerous books and articles and served from 1999–2000 on the committee to revise the *Baptist Faith and Message*, Southern Baptists' statement of faith. Land was appointed three times to serve on the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom and was named in 2005 as one of "The Twenty-five Most Influential Evangelicals in America" by *Time* Magazine. The father of three, Land has been married for over 35 years to his wife, Rebekah.

Land begins the book with the question that is the title of the first chapter, "What's God Got to Do with America?" followed by chapters entitled, "What Liberals Are Missing" and "What Conservatives Are Missing." In these chapters, Land lays out the essence and the causes of the polarization that characterizes American debate on the relationship of church and state. Land asserts, among other things, that liberals do not understand that

Adopting such a posture is not assuming that God is on your side or that you are God's personal emissary. However, it does assume that God has a side. God is not neutral about abortion. God is not neutral about marriage. God is not neutral about pornography. Conservatives believe that God has a side, that everything is not relative, that good and evil are real and it is possible to distinguish between them just as we distinguish noonday and midnight. Moral issues cannot be neatly filed away under shades of gray. That is the big difference between liberals and conservatives (27).

And Land's fellow conservatives are not immune to criticism.

The conservative liability is to conflate nationalism with God's cause. The liberal liability is such weak belief in God that it slides into relativism. The answer is the Christocentric theology that Barth espoused and that Evangelical Christians are supposed to espouse—but many of them, perhaps without being aware of it, have shifted from a Christocentric to an America-centric theology. This is what conservatives too often miss in the God-and-country shouting match (52).

Land's answer to the church-state debate is what he terms "accommodation" as opposed to either "avoidance" or "acknowledgement." "What we need is 'accommodation' (of individuals' right to public religious expression)—a middle way between 'avoidance' (strict separation) and 'acknowledgment' (government affirmation)" (55). In Appendix F, he sets out a chart comparing the three positions by definition, as applied to religious expression, as applied to public prayer at public school events, and as applied to public displays of religious monuments or symbols (298).

In the book's last chapter, Land asks the question, "What Does It Mean to Say, 'God Bless America?'" After an illuminating discussion, Land concludes

So when we say, "God bless America," we are not just saying, God bless this nation of people who inhabit this geographical territory. We are saying, God bless and spread the idea of America, so that all people—Arab, Jew, Japanese, Chinese, Russian, African—can live in the equality and human dignity and freedom to which the laws of nature and nature's God entitle them. We are reciting, together, a prayer, a hope, a dream, a vision—that all men and women yearning to breathe freely may live in the liberty and equality that are their God-given birthrights—not just here, but everywhere.

Indeed—God bless America, and God bless everyone!

While liberals will not hold all of Land's conclusions, they will be challenged to consider and will better understand the church-state issue and the conservative Christian response to it. At the same time, conservatives will be challenged to rethink the matter from an historical and more complete perspective.

Land's approach is bound to draw criticism, both earnest and capricious. With the inauguration of a new president, the book is in need of updating, but this work, even in its present form, is important for all Americans. The appendices alone, which include, among other useful items, important "Presidential Addresses," "Bibles and Scripture Passages Used by Presidents in Taking the Oath of Office," and Land's chart comparing and contrasting the three views of church-state relations are worth the price of the book.

Yet perhaps the most significant contribution of the book is the chapter, "Soul Freedom—a Divine Mandate?" Demonstrating the breadth of his knowledge and understanding of this doctrine and its concomitant universal "right" of religious freedom, Land carefully leads the reader on a journey through history, demonstrating that "America's legacy of freedom *is* rooted in religiously informed convictions. The freedom we have been given is the same freedom to which all human beings—not just Americans—are entitled."

Agree or disagree, every American should read this book.

Waylan Owens
Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

***Imitating Jesus: An Inclusive Approach to New Testament Ethics*, by Richard A. Burridge. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007. 490 + xxi pages. Hardback, \$35.00.**

Richard Burridge is the dean of King's College London, where he is also Director of New Testament Studies. His level of expertise in his specialty is revealed in this volume in that he explores a broad range of the differing schools of interpretation of the ethics based on the life and teaching of Jesus Christ. The variety of schools of interpretation, and his appeal to being "inclusive" in his approach to Christian ethics, include scholarship from Great Britain, Germany,

Roman Catholicism, Evangelicalism, with a special interest in that of South Africa. The latter reflects his interest in the application of New Testament ethics to the context of that African nation and his admiration of Archbishop Desmond Tutu. A major element in the focus of the author, to a fault, is that of his returning often to the concerns of the “Jesus Seminar,” with its multiple qualifiers of that which was the genuine teaching of Jesus. This book could serve as a summary of the ethical debates of the latter part of the twentieth century in liberal Christianity as they relate to New Testament ethics.

The author’s bias on the ethics of Jesus is readily apparent: he almost exclusively focuses on the elements of “imitation” in the ethical teaching and style of Jesus. The moral example of Jesus is surely valid as a major emphasis in New Testament ethics, but not to the exclusion of the ethical impact of the indwelling Christ, especially as it was presented repeatedly in the writings of the Apostle Paul. Even in his extensive presentation on the epistles of Paul, Burridge hardly mentions the “in Christ” dynamic in his ethical construct.

A second distracting quality of this text is that the conclusions of much textual criticism on the New Testament, in which a fair number of the books are assumed not to be authentically written by their named authors. For example, for Burridge, those texts that are “genuinely Pauline,” as particularly identified through their ethical content, are those of Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, 1 Thessalonians and Philemon (90). Nevertheless, all four of the gospels are explored for their emphasis on the “imitation” of Jesus, complete with applications to the ethical issues particular to each of those writers. The conclusion of the text is a special chapter given to an interpretation of apartheid in South Africa and the application of the meaning of the imitation of Jesus as moral guidance for those living in that kind of circumstance.

William E. Goff
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***A Matter of Conviction: A History of Southern Baptist Engagement with the Culture.* By Jerry Sutton. Nashville: B&H Publishing, 2008. 502 + xiv pages. Hardcover, \$24.99.**

In 1907, the Southern Baptist Convention made its first formal attempt to impact public policy on moral issues. In honor of one hundred years of Southern Baptist engagement with culture, Jerry Sutton, pastor of Two Rivers Baptist Church in Nashville, TN, authored this volume to provide the history of Southern Baptist efforts while keeping in mind the larger historical and theological context of church-state issues.

Rather than beginning with the founding of the Committee on Civic Righteousness in 1907, Sutton offers his readers a broader historical context by providing a brief history of the development of Western civilization and the role of the church in that process. The historical survey then gives way to a theological analysis of church-state relations and public policy issues that form the backdrop for Southern Baptists’ engagement with culture.

Sutton also offers an overview of the role Baptists played in American culture in the nineteenth century, including a discussion of the issues that ultimately led to the schism between Baptists in the North and the South. After the formation of the Southern Baptist Convention in 1845, the newly organized group of Baptists found itself addressing a number of issues by way of resolutions at their annual meetings. These issues included race relations, the Sabbath, sacrificial giving, temperance, gambling, religious liberty, divorce, poverty, and peace. Such resolutions in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries ultimately led to the formation of a new commission tasked with addressing what could be done “for creating a more wholesome public opinion; for making the criminal laws more certain, more prompt, and more effective; so as to take away the reproach resting on civilization and religion by the prevalence of crimes and lynchings; and so as to make the law respected and effective in all parts of our common country” (85). The appointment of this Committee on Civic Righteousness in 1907 led to the establishment of the standing Committee on Temperance the following year. These committees morphed through the years, resulting in changes of name and focus, but finally reaching the current status of the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission.

For the rest of the book, Sutton provides his readers with the history of the Committee on Temperance, Social Service Commission, Christian Life Commission, and Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission. The history is generally divided according to the leading figure of the commission at that time. The book closes with an epilogue challenging Southern Baptists to continue the work of cultural engagement and a series of appendices that accentuate the historical significance of Southern Baptist engagement with culture.

The most meaningful contribution of the book is the broad historical perspective Sutton provides as a background to Southern Baptist work. Not only does he begin with the historical and theological rationale for engaging culture, but he provides his readers with significant national and world events taking place at the same time Southern Baptists are trying to focus on issues. For example, the impetus for creating a commission to address social issues came from the temperance movement at the national level. The historical significance of wars, elections, and social movements could have been lost in a discussion of Southern Baptist work, but Sutton includes those events as the context for what was taking place in the Southern Baptist Convention for the last century.

Sutton also carefully outlines the changes on significant social issues that took place in the SBC. While many are aware of the theological shift that came with the Conservative Resurgence, fewer may be aware of the shift that took place on social issues. For example, in 1971, the Christian Life Commission presented a resolution to the convention on abortion that would be “subsequently used to help encourage the Supreme Court in its landmark *Roe v. Wade* and *Doe v. Bolton* decisions a year and a half later” (195). In effect, the commission presented resolutions that provided support for the pro-choice movement in America. It was not until 1980 that Southern Baptists publicly reversed their stance on the abortion issue. The reversal on the abortion issue demonstrates the major changes that came with the Conservative Resurgence. Sutton attempts to be fair in both

his praise and criticism of the commission, especially on issues with which he fervently disagrees.

For those interested in the role that Southern Baptists have played in American culture, especially as it relates to religious liberty and social issues, this book is a worthy read. Sutton provides the historical context to show that Southern Baptists were often on the cutting edge of social issues and at other times woefully lagging behind. In the end, it provides motivation to stay engaged with culture by proclaiming the life-changing message of the gospel.

Evan Lenow

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***Reviving Evangelical Ethics: The Promises and Pitfalls of Classic Models of Morality.* By Wyndy Corbin Reuschling. Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2008. 188 pages. Softcover. \$22.99**

In *Reviving Evangelical Ethics*, Reuschling proposes to review three of the classical models by which evangelicals do ethics, whether most have any idea of their tendencies to follow any of the three, and to show the deficiencies of these theories for ethical action, especially as it has been characteristically done by evangelicals. A different subtitle for this work could be “A Primer on Ethical Theory for Evangelicals,” but this would probably not end up being popular reading for the average layperson.

The three models of ethical theory which the author reviews are deontology, teleology, and virtue ethics, as represented by Immanuel Kant, John Stuart Mill, and Aristotle. Her aim is to deconstruct those models, and in their place reconstruct ethics and moral formation for evangelicals based on Scripture, the kingdom of God, and Christian community, so as to develop our capacities in moral agency, moral discernment, and the formation of conscience. Her effort is also pointed in helping evangelicals move from their tendencies to do ethics almost exclusively from individualistic and therapeutic stances by heightening their moral vision for social justice and the social nature of the Christian virtues. She claims that her interpretations will reside in theological ethics more than in those of philosophy.

Some of the more engaging elements of this work are those of challenging some common evangelical terms, assumptions, and practices, especially as they reflect (consciously or otherwise) the tendencies to use the three classical models of ethics. There is serious food for thought for any pastor, counselor, or lay leader who recognizes the limited understanding of the ethical practices of much of evangelicalism. The conclusion of the book even has applications of the author’s ethical perspectives to preaching, small groups, and service.

One of the elements that the author articulated in the introduction was that she would also trace the need for evangelicals to be more inclusive in their ethical understanding and practices relating to feminism. Nevertheless, that element was considerably more limited than might have been expected. As a rule, the author is fairly faithful to her larger purpose of challenging evangelical moral thinkers

to rise above the normal classical categories of doing ethics to become more alert to the need and benefits of having a scripturally guided moral conscience, a well founded system of Christian character virtues, and a sensitive social vision.

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***The Scandal of Evangelical Politics*, by Ronald J. Sider. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2008. Paperback \$15.99.**

The publication of Sider's book was extremely timely as the United States faced presidential elections during 2008. Thirteen chapters summarize what the author calls the "scandal" of evangelical politics. In reality, however, only in the introduction does Sider describe what he believes is the tragic failure of evangelicals. What is this failure? According to the author, evangelicals have been naïve and superficial in their analysis of and participation in crucial political issues. This is, however, only the tip of the iceberg because the major problem underneath this lack of responsible political participation is their failure to produce a solid political theology.

The book intends to fill in this huge gap, thus offering a hope "to change the world"(23). In presenting his own proposal of political theology, the author advances the need for a faithful methodology that is acquainted with the history of Christian political thought, and the pluralistic society of the 21st century. He believes that in order to make responsible political decisions, evangelicals should also develop a methodology that includes (1) a normative framework, (2) a broad study of society and the world, and (3) a political philosophy, as well as (4) a detailed social analysis on specific issues.

In order to construct a normative framework for his political theology, Sider affirms that two things are needed: 1) a biblical story of the world and humans that is respectful of the whole canon and of Jesus as its center (41), and 2) comprehensive summaries of biblical teachings concerning political topics (state, justice, human rights, etc.).

About twenty-five pages are devoted to explain the biblical story (49–75). From there, nine chapters are devoted to elucidate the nature of the state, justice, human rights, the sanctity of human life, marriage and family, religious freedom, nonviolence, creation care, and nation-state international affairs.

This is an excellent introductory book to the vast area of theological politics. Sider has done an extremely good job in enlisting some of the major issues we should care about as theological and political beings. Evangelicals should follow the author's invitation to analyze his proposals and perspectives. In doing so, we may discover that some of our most cherished political convictions stand on shaky ground. We may also discover ourselves disagreeing with the author in particular areas and lacking more information and study in others.

At points, the author may give the impression that the biblical and theological task is relatively easy to disentangle. Doubtless that is the case with some fundamentals (canonical comprehensiveness, Jesus' priority, etc.); however,

the theological and hermeneutical task, as contemporary theology testifies, is profusely complicated. Much more than a short discussion on paradigms is needed in order to construct a solid framework for an evangelical political theology.

In other instances, Sider's analysis seems to lack comprehensiveness in the handling of the biblical data. A clear example of this is his study on capital punishment. Jesus' teaching on the subject should not be confined only to a superficial analysis of John 8:3–11 and a paragraph affirming Jesus' overruling of some Old Testament regulations. This topic is critical and sensible enough to deserve a meticulous treatment.

Finally, the same can be said of other chapters such as that on international affairs, especially in what is related to immigration. The question: "Does a rich nation have the moral right to refuse entry to poor immigrants from needy nations seeking economic opportunity?" (225) is crucial and relevant. Sadly, he devotes only three paragraphs to answer it. Even finding myself in general agreement with his answer, I must say that more exact biblical data and precise sociological analysis is demanded.

The Scandal of Evangelical Politics should be read by all evangelicals. Politics does not stop and neither should the evangelical's appraisal and evaluation of it. Unless we want keep on participating in the scandal of ignorance, inconsistency or indifference, we should help develop a more responsible evangelical political theology. We owe it to our identity and mission in the world, but first of all we owe it to our Lord and Savior. Ronald J. Sider is to be commended for providing a valuable resource to accomplish the task.

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***Serve God, Save the Planet: A Christian Call to Action.* By J. Matthew Sleeth, MD. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006. 255 pages. Softcover, \$14.99.**

In *Serve God, Save the Planet: A Christian Call to Action*, former chief of medical staff and Emergency Room physician Matthew Sleeth calls on evangelicals to recognize a spiritual problem with an environmental impact, aiming for change at an individual and family level. The book is not concerned with governmental policy, and so avoids technical economic and public policy debates that tire a casual reader. Sleeth's concern is that in a self-centered society, people are seeking happiness in possessions rather than God, resulting in a lifestyle that is contrary to God's intent (61) and has a negative impact on the environment.

Sleeth establishes his basic premise in chapters 1–5 and then applies it to a wide range of topics: purchasing decisions, work and rest, television, parenting, diet, housing, Christmas, energy consumption, medical care, and population growth. The book ends with a chapter on the unselfish love of God, which motivates Christians to reflect that love in actions towards creation. Throughout, Sleeth maintains a practical focus, including several appendices that provide suggestions for lowering energy use and abandoning a consumerist lifestyle. Even so, the author is humble and avoids legalistic judgments about how much is too much

(82). Sleeth demonstrates an engaging, self-deprecating sense of humor, which he employs to tell stories of his failures as well as his family's successes in living the lifestyle he is advocating.

The book reads like a neighborly—if sometimes passionate—conversation, and is aimed at a lay-audience. This, perhaps, explains the absence of source citations for the important statistical and scientific claims the book makes. Unfortunately, this deficiency leaves the reader unable to easily evaluate some of the author's key claims. Critical areas of disagreement in environmental science, such as humanity's role in global warming, are treated as already-settled issues.

Serve God, Save the Planet's rejection of crass consumerism as spiritually harmful is unquestionably sound. In addition, the doctrine of salvation implied in the book properly presumes that creation will be liberated as the children of God are freed from sin (cf. Rom 8:19–21), reflecting Sleeth's affirmation of the priority of humanity over non-human creation implied by the *imago Dei* (36). However, the book does suffer from serious problems that weaken its impact significantly and distract from the author's core assault on materialism.

The most important area for improvement lies with the book's use of Scripture, as Sleeth is sometimes guilty of proof-texting. For instance, in chapter 3, the author attacks those who think that wealth is a sufficient defense against death. He quotes Proverbs 18:11–12 (“the rich think of their wealth as an impregnable defense” NLT) to attack those who buy SUV's because of their superior performance in crash-safety tests (39–40). Scripture does condemn those who trust wealth *instead of* God as a defense against calamity. It does *not* however, condemn prudential decisions designed to enhance safety or security under the providence of God. Otherwise, the exhortation in Proverbs 27:12 to foresee danger and take precautions would be unintelligible. This is an example of Sleeth's failure to read Scripture in light of other relevant passages. Again, the author takes Psalm 24:1 (“the earth is the Lord's”) to mean that “human ownership is an illusion” (37). Here he fails to consider Psalm 115:16, “The heavens are the heavens of the Lord, but the earth He has given to the sons of men,” and the eighth commandment, “You shall not steal.” Together, these passages suggest that humans can indeed own property, but that their property rights are limited by the superior claim of the Creator.

A second area in which the book could be strengthened would be the correction of flawed argumentation. In chapter 4, Sleeth identifies depression as a symptom of society's spiritual crisis. To convey the extent of the crisis, the author relates an experiment that he has conducted “hundreds of times” over 15 years (57–58), asking people the following question: if you could go “anywhere in time you choose” (57), where would you go? Only three answered “the future” (58). Sleeth reasons that since one symptom of depression is disinterest in the future, and since most people in his survey did not choose the future, then his informal survey “points to a society-wide pessimism about our future” (59). This conclusion is unwarranted. First, it wrongly assumes that the only reason people choose the past is because they are depressed and thus expect the future to be bleak. Secondly, drawing a society-wide conclusion after only a few hundred interviews seems to

violate the author's own preference for large group studies to draw conclusions (88–89).

Another area of flawed argumentation takes place in chapter 14 where the author attacks the Roman Catholic “natural law” argument against birth control. Sleeth seems to think that “natural law” means something like “whatever would occur naturally,” so that the Vatican inconsistently rejects birth control while affirming life-saving medical care (187). Yet, “natural law” refers to the ethical norms that derive from the purpose (*telos*) of a thing or act. If the natural purpose of sex is procreation, then birth control frustrates that goal, and thus violates the ethical norms implied by the act. While this argument only works if the *sole* goal of sex is procreation, a correct understanding of the argument requires a more sophisticated response than Sleeth supplies; he has, in effect, defeated a straw man.

Sleeth's distrust of technological innovation, while not without merit, is too simplistic. The author rejects a blind faith in technology by noting that not all of the results of technology have been beneficial (44). Still, Sleeth seems to see technology more as a cause of human problems than as part of the solution to them. This leads him to long for “the life our grandparents led” (16), and “life a generation ago” (169). While life in the early 1900's may seem less complicated, life expectancy in the US was less than half what it is today and infant mortality rates were many times greater. Much of this progress was the result of technology, which improved the environmental conditions of cities.

The author also rejects modern laborsaving devices in favor of the labor of a monastic life (92–93). Sleeth notes that labor that does not require one's full attention can allow time for meditation and prayer (93). Yet so can devices that free up time from labor altogether! Here, Sleeth simply needs to apply the reasoning he uses about money saved by eliminating unnecessary expenses. Just as such money is better used to minister to others than to feed selfish desires, time freed by labor saving devices can be better used in spiritual pursuits rather than in the pursuit of more stuff.

A deeper appreciation for the value of human life would enrich Sleeth's discussion of fertility rates and population growth in chapter 15. Sleeth is certainly careful to affirm the sanctity of human life and rejects abortion as birth control (186). But rather than simply accepting Paul Ehrlich's neo-Malthusian predictions of disastrous population explosion (185), the chapter would benefit from consideration of the benefits of growing populations to actually create more and greater resources through discovery and innovation, and from awareness that many demographers now expect population to peak around the middle of this century and then begin a long-term decline. The doctrine of the *imago dei* and the responsibility of dominion (Gen 1:28) imply that humans are not merely conservators, but also producers. Adam was not merely to tend the garden; he was to expand its borders. This undercuts Sleeth's non-interventionist perspective on nature (16, 66), and suggests that human responsibility goes beyond preserving pristine nature to enhancing its beauty, productiveness, and benefit to humanity.

Matthew Sleeth has written a book that communicates its message effectively. His focus on practical personal action is helpful and motivational. While addressing the problems noted above would not change the core assertion of the

spiritual bankruptcy of materialistic consumerism, it would strengthen the author's presentation, refine the viewpoints expressed, and open up new horizons for the reader. Instead of being challenged to merely conserve limited resources, readers could be motivated to abandon selfishness for the kind of productive service to God, humanity, and the planet that refines the beauty of creation and expands its resources for the benefit of all humanity.

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Preaching and Pastoral Studies

***40 Questions about Elders and Deacons.* By Merkle, Benjamin L. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2008. 270 pages. Softcover, \$17.99.**

Benjamin L. Merkle, graduate from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in 2000, was a professor of New Testament at Malaysian Baptist Seminary (2002–2008) and is currently teaching New Testament and Greek at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary. His PhD dissertation on the elder-overseer as one church office has been published by Peter Lang (NY, 2003) in the Studies in Biblical Literature series. *40 Questions about Elders and Deacons* bolsters Merkle's growing expertise in ecclesiology.

This book is divided into forty questions under three main sections: offices in general, the office of elder, and the office of deacon. The first section argues that the New Testament supports congregationalism and teaches only two church offices (i.e. elder and deacon). The second section (on eldership) covers the historical and biblical backgrounds of elder-overseer, particularly contending for the one and same office of elder and overseer (Question 9). While aptly analyzing the qualifications of the elder-overseer as given in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1, the author unambiguously holds to the plurality of male eldership as the biblical form of church leadership. Merkle also suggests practical ways to choose, ordain, pay, and even remove elders. The third section covers the office of deacon, specifically about its origins, qualifications, roles, and genders.

Merkle writes with the intention to instruct the churches; therefore, the language he uses is appropriate for all readers having avoided difficult theological jargons. The question-and-answer style of the book suggests the conciseness and readability of the book without diminishing quality of content. This book contains helpful information biblically and practically to help the church to form a New Testament church. For example, after establishing the biblical principle for a plural-male-elders model (Questions 7–20), Merkle gives some practical guidelines to help the churches to think through some advisable (not absolute) ways for initiating, maintaining, and improving a plural eldership (Questions 21–28). It is crucial to note some biblical, as well as practical, ideas on eldership which are much neglected by the churches today: the plural-male eldership is the biblical model of leadership; all elders are pastors, and vice versa, even though some are not "paid" by the church; all elders must be able to teach the Word and doctrine;

the non-staff elders have equal authority and the same roles as the paid (or full time) elders. Apparently, Merkle set out to restore the churches today to plural-elder leadership.

Merkle's presentation is fair and objective. For instance, when he discusses the gender issue in regard to elder leadership (Questions 18–20), Merkle lays out biblical, theological, and practical arguments from various perspectives. This, in fact, helps readers to be educated concerning the major arguments on controversial issues. His intention is simply to enable them to distinguish what and why to support or reject certain positions. Nevertheless, Merkle seems to leave some issues ambiguous. For instance, while the author holds to the theological principle that women are neither to teach the Word in a congregated worship context (144), nor to exercise “any authority in positions of leadership in the church (149),” Merkle gives an impression that women are not to be in any ministry pertaining to teaching or leadership roles in the church. It seems ambiguous, for example, whether spiritually gifted and mature women are to teach the Bible in the church context to young or senior adult males who are non-Christians or who have just become new believers. This book does not seem to distinguish or define practically if women are to be prohibited from all teaching or leadership roles, besides eldership or deaconship. Consequently, Merkle is also equivocal about whether women may be allowed to hold teaching and leadership positions over men outside worship and church contexts, such as in seminaries, Christian colleges, or even Christian homes.

Nonetheless, Merkle commendably puts his bold convictions into workable application for the churches. Specifically, the emphasis on all elders' ability to teach and also on the deacons' responsibility to “provide logistical and material support so that the elders can concentrate their efforts on the Word of God and prayer” (238) is a particularly crucial rubric for modern churches to apply. Today, churches frequently expect the elders/pastors to do other administrative and ministerial works, in addition to teaching and preaching the Word. Subsequently, many pastors experience physical or emotional burnout and in the meantime are not able to lead the people with the Word. Merkle's book has made a major contribution not only to Christian scholarship, but also to Christian churches worldwide.

Peter Lok-Hung Tie
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***He is Not Silent: Preaching in a Postmodern World.* By R. Albert Mohler, Jr. Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2008. 174 pages. Hardcover, \$22.99.**

One would expect that a seminary president and theologian, saddled with the daily wrangling of institutional administration, could hardly be a prolific or regular contributor to fields outside of his discipline. But, R. Albert Mohler, Jr, ninth president of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and Joseph Emerson Brown Professor of Christian Theology, is also an accomplished and sought after preacher. Now, with the publication of *He Is Not Silent: Preaching in a Postmodern World*, Mohler's well-known adeptness and grasp of the preaching

discipline comes forth prominently in this insightful and pastoral examination of preaching.

Mohler's initial critique of the state of preaching is poignant, not biting, as he identifies contemporary problems with preaching: lack of confidence in God's Word, infatuation with technology, embarrassment before the text, an emptying of biblical content, a focus on felt needs, and the absence of the gospel. In response, this volume seeks to encourage pastors simply to "confront the congregation with the Word of God" (21). Mohler does this by moving from a theological foundation to the practice of preaching. Thus, the book serves both as a wakeup call for the church and an apologetic for expository preaching.

Chapter one, "Preaching as Worship," assigns preaching as "essentially an act of worship," and further that "[t]rue worship always proclaims the gospel, the good news of what God has done in Jesus Christ" (24, 35). Ultimately this leads him to conclude that "[t]he heart of Christian worship is the authentic preaching of the Word of God" (37). This, of course, is counter intuitive to the contemporary designation of music alone as Christian worship, to which Mohler responds that "[t]he anemia of evangelical worship—all the music and energy aside—is directly attributable to the absence of genuine expository preaching" (38).

Moving in progression of thought, the second chapter, "The Ground of Preaching," establishes preaching in the grace of God, rooted in a Trinitarian theology. Affirming Martin Luther, Mohler writes that "the Father had willed that the Spirit should work uniquely through the Word and not independent of it" (46). Thus, Christian preaching must be central to worship. Esoteric, emotional, engagement cannot substitute for preaching, since the word of God is God's chosen means of revelation of Himself.

Chapter three, "Preaching is Expository," provides a theological ground for preaching and affirms that "the only form of authentic Christian preaching is expository preaching" (49). This is true in so much as preaching is "reading a text and explaining it—reproving, rebuking, exhorting, and patiently teaching from the text of Scripture" (52). This is perhaps the best chapter of the book. Mohler manipulates his theological prowess on the preacher's task with deft simplicity stating, "In the end, our calling as preachers is really very simple. We study, we stand before our people, we read the text, and we explain it. We reprove, rebuke, exhort, encourage, and teach—and then we do it all again and again and again" (64). One could only want from this chapter more theological engagement; and engagement, that is beyond the bounds of this short prophetic treatment.

However, in Chapter Four, "Expository Preaching," he does offer an explanation of what he understands exposition to be:

Expository preaching is that mode of Christian preaching that takes as its central purpose the presentation and application of the text of the Bible. All other issues and concerns are subordinated to the central task of presenting the biblical text. As the Word of God, the text of Scripture has the right to establish both the substance and the structure of the sermon. Genuine exposition takes place when the preacher sets forth the meaning and the message of the biblical text

and makes clear how the Word of God establishes the identity and world-view of the church as the people of God (65).

This definition stands in relationship to others as focused on the Word; the sermon's reception, and the state of the one declaring it, is not considered in the definition. This approach further buttresses his argument that preaching is simply explaining the text of Scripture. The absence of discussion of other realities in the preaching moment serves as a corrective to the glut of literature focused on audience reception of messages.

Chapter five, "Steward of the Mysteries," examines the authority of the preacher, and chapter six, "Did not our Hearts Burn within Us?" deals with preaching the big story of the Bible. This is a wonderful summation of that to which others, such as Graeme Goldsworthy and Brian Chapell, have been arguing in monographs urging preachers to place texts in their place in salvation history and understand the message of the gospel as the hermeneutical tool by which we handle the text of Scripture. Mohler argues,

We must read and explain accurately to our people what that text means and how it applies to their lives. Yet we have another task as well, for we must take that particular text and place it within the larger story of the Scripture. One of the reasons I encourage pastors to preach through entire books of the Bible is because that practice will force us to preach texts we otherwise would never preach (96).

The remainder of the volume follows with a chapter on the pastor as theologian, preaching to postmodern culture, and two chapters to exhort and encourage the pastor respectively. The book concludes with a brief introduction to Spurgeon as an exemplar of biblical exposition and personal conviction. Any look at Spurgeon leaves the would-be expositor breathless. And, in Surgeon's shadow, we are all "would-bes". However, the chapter is not a discouraging look at what the preacher will never be, rather it is an assessment of what God will do with one whose life is straight rails on which the gospel may run. Mohler writes, "Long before Charles Spurgeon was a great preacher, he was a great believer—a man possessed by deep passion for the Word of God and the gospel of Jesus Christ" (165). Thus, the breadth of his ministry is attributed to the working out of these convictions; convictions that every preacher can imitate.

In terms of critique one could only want more of the same from this book, such as an entire theological treatise on preaching, or more practical insights for the pastor; it is in these discussions that Mohler is at his best. However, limiting the breadth of the book allows it to be an accessible tool to put in the hand of seminary students and pastors. This work should be included in introductory classes as a supplemental text to the many preaching manuals as a much needed answer to the "why" question that should proceed the "how" question. This is especially important since many who do exposition do not clearly execute an argument for why they do it, leaving subsequent generations with a homiletic template, but not a divine mandate. This work serves as a concise corrective to that reality.

Steven W. Smith
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***The Mission of Today's Church: Baptist Leaders Look at Modern Faith Issues.* Edited by R. Stanton Norman. Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2007. 210 pages. Softcover, \$16.99.**

What major challenges do Baptist churches face at this moment in history? A thousand answers come to mind. At least twelve of them receive treatment in *The Mission of Today's Church*, a compilation of proceedings from a 2005 conference with the same title. Although this book, like many conference proceedings, amounts to something of a Duke's mixture, its various constituent parts each are highly relevant in 2008.

The great strength of the book is its authorship. The subtitle understates the case by calling them "Baptist leaders." Upon surveying the slate of grandees in the table of contents, there arises in one a profound desire to have been seated in the gallery in 2005. Their chapters are prime exemplars of their work. By the very nature of such an assignment, some of these essays will be dated within two decades, but the prominence of the contributors will make this volume an important historical resource for those interested in exploring the tensions of Southern Baptist life at the turn of the twenty-first century. In the meantime, the academy is more likely to find uses for one of the particular essays in the book rather than to employ the text as a whole in any fashion—it is simply too diverse to fit neatly in any one niche.

Three of the essays attempt more comprehensive proposals for what ought to be the primary mission of today's church. Daniel Akin provides an excellent didactic outline in his "Ten Mandates for Southern Baptists." This historian appreciated Charles Kelley's narrative approach in his essay, "Between Scylla and Charybdis: Reflections on the Baptist Way." Ed Stetzer offers a boardroom presentation complete with charts and graphs in "The Missional Nature of the Church and the Future of Southern Baptist Convention Churches." A perusal of these three chapters alone would suffice to launch a profitable conversation among any interested and reasonably informed group.

Other essays in the book treat singular issues. David Dockery argues on behalf of a strong role for the Lord's Supper in Baptist worship while imploring Southern Baptists to embrace John Calvin's spiritual presence of Christ in the Supper. Remaining unconvinced by the latter emphasis will not render inconsequential the essay's other contributions. Editor R. Stanton Norman and Jerry Sutton engage in a limited point-counterpoint regarding congregational polity, and Jim Richards and Chad Owen Brand contribute complementary perspectives on Southern Baptist cooperation. Rounding out the collection are an analysis of three vantage points from which the Black community views the church (James Jenkins), a primer on teaching the gospel to children (Charles L. Quarles), an exploration of cultural engagement (Barrett Duke) that nearly qualifies for consideration among the comprehensive proposals, and a soteriological essay on the problem of divine sovereignty and human agency (Kenneth Keathley). Although

several of these items touch upon crises facing today's church, few would argue that they—alone or collectively—comprise the mission of today's church.

Although helpful to broach topics, *The Mission of Today's Church* is too eclectic a compilation to serve as a solitary resource for any topic and occasionally a bit lopsided. The more petals a Southern Baptist has on his tulip, the more he will wonder why no contributor engaged in contrarian dialogue with Keathley. Where multiple authors engage the same or similar topics, they do not engage one another—each essay is discrete. For these reasons, the volume under review is supplemental reading, not a textbook. Fortunately, the ample footnotes lead the reader to a variety of sources, many of which will tackle the relevant controversies more directly and fully.

Even though it is the great strength of the book, one shortcoming of the book is its authorship. Norman introduces the group by assuring the readership that “each of the contributors to this project is a pastor-theologian and a staunch churchman” (1). One doubts not the assertion's veracity, but nevertheless notes that the balance of the book's list of contributors is long on theologian and short on pastor, especially for a volume with this title. Of the twelve, only Jerry Sutton claims the title of pastor to describe himself (195–96), and he felt the need to preface his remarks with the confession, “I am more of a practitioner than a theoretician” (111). The others certainly have pastoral experience and a great passion for pastoral ministry, but their primary daily responsibilities lie outside the local church. Are the pulpits of the Southern Baptist Convention truly so bereft of genuine thinkers who might have something to contribute to a volume such as this? If so, then perhaps a significant mission of today's church might be to correct that problem.

Bart Barber

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***The New Guidebook for Pastors.* By James W. Bryant and Mac Brunson. Nashville: B&H, 2007. 320 pages. Softcover, \$24.99.**

In 1980, W.A. Criswell, then long-time pastor of the First Baptist Church of Dallas, produced *Criswell's Guidebook for Pastors*. Broadman Press published and sold this resource for pastors and ministry students for twenty-eight years. While Bryant and Brunson chose not to revise and update Criswell's enduring work, such a revision was the original intent of the authors. In fact, it was the tenure of Criswell's Guidebook that prompted the authors to start afresh. “So many things have changed in the world since [1980]. The era in which the contemporary pastor serves is now clearly identified as the postmodern era. It is time for *The New Guidebook for Pastors*” (4–5).

Since *The New Guidebook* is a different work, we will not seek to make this review a deep comparison of the two books. However, placing the books' structures side by side is interesting. Both books have twenty-one chapters. Bryant and Brunson move some things to appendices that Criswell places in the body, such as service orders and ceremonies. In each book, the pastor's call, preaching, and

preparation take primacy in the order of chapters, and both books finish with the reward of a pastor. Between, much similarity exists in structure though Bryant and Brunson deal more with such recent issues as the Internet and other technologies. Interestingly, while *The New Guidebook* includes a chapter devoted to “leadership,” leadership is not included in the chapters or division headings for Criswell. This well reflects the rise of “leadership” as a major topic for conferences and books since Criswell’s 1980 publication.

Mac Brunson is a former pastor of the First Baptist Church of Dallas and the current pastor of the First Baptist Church of Jacksonville, Florida. Prior to his time in Texas, he served in North Carolina as pastor and was involved in the leadership of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina. James W. Bryant is Senior Professor of Pastoral Theology of Criswell College. He has served as pastor or on the pastoral staff of churches in Georgia, Texas, New Mexico, and Arkansas. To find two more qualified authors for this work would be difficult indeed.

Every chapter in *The New Guidebook* begins with “The Pastor . . .” Bryant and Brunson develop their advice along twenty-one different divisions of the work and life of the pastor, including the following matters: the pastor’s call, preparation, preaching, prayer life, family, first church, leadership, staff, worship, technology, missions and evangelism, ordinances, weddings and funerals, counseling, finances, ethics, politics and moral issues, changing churches, denomination, retirement, and reward.

The fourteen appendices, include, among other things, the *Baptist Faith and Message 2000*, how to build a personal library, and where a pastor can go for help when he is fired. An encouraging feature of the book is that every chapter includes a brief opening statement written by pastors and other men of God, speaking heart to heart to the reader on the significance of that chapter to his ministry.

So much of the book is helpful, it is difficult to choose what to include in this review. *The New Guidebook* includes the usual chapters on subjects like preaching and weddings and funerals, but the chapter on the pastor’s prayer life is a well-done and welcome addition that is often overlooked in such works. The authors point pastors in the right direction concerning both his personal and professional handling of finances and ethics, two of the most dangerous matters that pastors face. Two other chapters not always found in books of this genre guide the pastor through changing churches and help him with politics and moral issues.

Some criticism of such an enormous undertaking is inevitable, if for no other reason than the brevity of the work in comparison to its scope. For instance, while the authors give advice on weddings and devote some space to divorce and remarriage, no developed theology of marriage emerges. As Jesus demonstrated in Matthew 19:3–6, any answer to the questions related to divorce must begin with a discussion of marriage, beginning “in the beginning.” Given this lack, the authors follow the well-worn pattern of looking at divorce and remarriage through the prism of seeking what the Bible allows regarding divorce rather than building an understanding of divorce on the basis of a sound exegesis of marriage.

Of concern also is the authors’ somewhat confusing message on counseling. In the chapter on worship, the authors write, “You will also be surprised how much counseling you can accomplish through an expositional sermon” (101). How true!

The heart of counseling is preaching in person. Counseling is opening the Bible personally to the real needs of the individual sheep. Yet the authors opine, “The pastor may be a minister by occupation, but he is likely a layman when it comes to counseling” (158). This professionalization and compartmentalization of ministry stands contrary to Baptists who historically have eschewed the division of clergy and lay and have held to the sufficiency of the Scriptures for “teaching, reproof, correction, and training in righteousness.” Since the authors assert that the exposition of the Word from the pulpit is sufficient for counseling, one must wonder why the same Word is not sufficient when well exposed to people individually.

With the caveats above, much is to be commended in this work. Pastors will find it very helpful, and we can recommend it heartily.

Waylan Owens

Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

***The Teaching Ministry of the Church.* 2nd ed. Edited by William R. Yount. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2008. 464 + xvi pages. Hardcover, \$39.99.**

In the forward to the second edition of *The Teaching Ministry of the Church*, Darryl Eldridge, editor of the first edition, affirms the need for an updated version. He cites the “rise of Islamic fundamentalism, the proliferation of religious sects, and the secularization of our culture” (xi) as some of the factors necessitating a renewal and re-visioning of the local church’s calling to make disciples. First published in 1995, *The Teaching Ministry of the Church* set the standard for Christian education texts of the decade. The second edition has remained true to the essential message of the original, but has increased its relevance to the church of the twenty-first century.

Edited by William R. (“Rick”) Yount, the new edition is a collection of essays written by faculty members in the School of Church and Family Ministries at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. Like its predecessor, this compilation reflects the work of “professor-practitioners who live and breathe the content they have written” (xvi). The first edition was written exclusively by faculty members in the Foundations of Education division and reflected a primary emphasis on the teaching-learning process. However, this new edition includes essays from faculty members in each division of the school, which integrates the experiences of leaders in foundations, administration, communications, human growth and development, and Christian counseling.

The primary strength of the book is in its development of a comprehensive discipleship-focused teaching ministry, concentrating on the essential elements: theological, historical, developmental, pedagogical, and organizational. Part One is a theological foundation for both the educational and organizational aspects of the teaching ministry. Part Two builds a strong biblical rationale for educational ministry, including a Trinitarian perspective, an ecclesiastical model, and a home-based process for making disciples. Part Three focuses on the practice of teaching, with an emphasis on methodological and developmental considerations. Part Four approaches Christian learning from an administrative context, featuring essays

pertaining to making curriculum decisions, training and leading volunteers, organizing educational programs, and evaluating the teaching ministry.

The addition of chapters related to administrative concerns is a significant addition to the earlier book. One of the oft-repeated complaints of new pastors on the field is their lack of preparation in organizing Sunday School or small group ministry. Recognizing this reality, Bob Welch, in “A Theology of Organization: Working Together,” reminds readers that “the minister who does not have a proper grasp of the biblical role of leadership is destined for a weak and often unsatisfactory ministry” (16). By including topics such as volunteer ministry and program organization, the book speaks to the practical needs of educational leaders in both small and large churches.

Further improvements in this edition enhance its relevance in a new context, including a stronger focus on the responsibilities of parents as spiritual leaders in the home. In “The Family’s Role in Teaching” (141–60), Scott Floyd not only presents a convincing case for home-based discipleship, but also provides practical suggestions for equipping parents to teach their children. His call for churches to partner with parents is particularly appropriate in a day when there seems to be an “either/or,” rather than a “both/and,” mentality to the role of parents and churches in the spiritual development of children.

There were a few topics missing from the book that might have improved its contemporary appeal. Alternative small group models (other than Sunday School) are not mentioned, even though many churches—in this country and abroad—are using home groups, cell groups, or Bible fellowship groups as their primary educational strategy. Another area worthy of exploration would be Christian education in different cultural contexts. In an increasingly diverse cultural and ethnic environment, educational leaders will need to consider the exigencies of developing a relevant teaching ministry.

The Teaching Ministry of the Church is equally suitable as a text for a seminary or college classroom, as a resource for training lay leaders, or as a guidebook for personal ministry enrichment. Having used this book in a seminary class, I can attest to its appeal to a wide range of students: scholars and practitioners, academics and pragmatists, theorists and realists. Everyone who has a desire to see the church excel in its mission to make disciples can appreciate the principles and practical ideas that are included in the update of this modern classic in Christian education.

Chris Shirley
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***Preaching with Variety: How to Re-create the Dynamics of Biblical Genres.* Jeffrey D. Arthurs. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2007, 238 pages. Softcover, \$15.99.**

Jeffrey Arthurs is an associate professor of Preaching and Communication at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. In this book, Arthurs discusses creative and fresh approaches to biblical sermon forms. Arthurs asserts that sermon forms should incorporate diverse methods and arouse innovative experiences rather than

follow the typical three-point-sermon pattern. He cites three theological and practical reasons to support his claim. First, God is “the Great communicator” who uses different modes and genres to disclose his will to humans (22). Second, no fixed mandate for sermon forms exists. Preachers have the freedom and privilege to choose from various sermon patterns (23). Third, various sermon patterns provide listeners with the opportunity to enjoy the beauty of oral communication (33).

His approach may be categorized as genre sensitive preaching (13). This work is based on his presupposition that “a sermon’s content should explain and apply the Word of God as it is found in a biblical text, and a sermon’s form should unleash the impact of that text. The second part of that declaration is the special province of this book. We should be biblical in how we preach, not just what we preach” (13). From a conservative theological basis he argues that one must preserve a sound biblical message and express it through different styles according to the genres in Scripture, because biblical authors employ particular genres with special purposes.

Arthurs, however, does not assert that preaching forms ought to become slaves to the genres. He respects each preacher’s personality, gifts, and communication styles in designing the sermon. Arthurs desires to utilize genres in Scripture “to replicate the impact of the text, not its exact techniques, although technique is the best place to start” (28). In other words, he attempts to examine “the rhetorical dynamics” found in each genre and to recreate those effects in his sermon delivery (13). In order to reach this goal, Arthurs presents six categories of genres in biblical texts: psalms, narratives, parables, proverbs, epistles, and apocalyptic literature.

Chapters 1 and 2 demonstrate biblical and theological foundations as they apply to various forms in homiletics. In chapters 3 through 9 he expounds upon each genre’s unique nature by incorporating literary and rhetorical analyses and providing practical homiletic suggestions to formulate rhetorical dynamics. In chapter 3 he illustrates the genre of Psalms as “the sound of music” (38). He characterizes the nature of Psalms with succinctness of lyrics, complicated structures such as synonymous, antithetic, and synthetic (42–43), complex images, and the individual’s profound emotional expression. In order to create rhetorical effects in sermon delivery, Arthurs proposes three notions: employing specific language, using metaphors, and planning emotional synopses. Preaching must reflect emotional movement within a rational message by organizing a progression resulting in climax and resolution (53). The explanation of Psalms is the most exquisite lesson in this book.

Chapters 4 and 5 deal with narratives. Arthurs enumerates nine basic components of narratives: plot, character, setting, point of view, the intensity of omniscience, detail description, time, structure, and irony. He suggests four communication devices: colorful description, sincere experience from the text, usage of the propositional teachings, and utilization of personal testimony. Chapter 6 designates parables as “Hidden Land Mines” (102). Arthurs categorizes parables according to three attributes: actuality, folk stories that reflect views of the biblical writer’s era, and analogy. For preaching parables Arthurs suggests communication skills such as freedom from one point or none and the usage of imagination.

In chapter 7 Arthurs describes Proverbs as “short sentences long remembered” (129). He suggests that the interpreter use “similar metaphor, allegory, and figurative language” to clarify the accepted meaning of a proverb (134). The homiletical implication in Proverbs is the utilization of imagination. Chapter 8 defines an epistle as “one side of a conversation” (151). Arthurs emphasizes that an epistle is an occasional writing with a theological message. Sermon techniques adopted from epistles include question-and-answer, rhetorical questions, interview, dialogic structure, and reiteration (169). In chapter 9 Arthurs describes apocalyptic literature as “vision and victory” (178). He lists the characteristics of apocalyptic as dualistic and symbolic. He recommends utilizing imagination, tensions, and the theme of hope and discipleship, as well as incorporating activities throughout to increase dramatic effect.

In 1989 Thomas Long produced an outstanding work about sermon forms, *Preaching and the Literary Forms of the Bible*. Fred Craddock, the father of New Homiletics, in his works such as *Overhearing the Gospel* and *Preaching* has underlined the prominent elements of genres in the Scripture. Now this work by Jeffrey Arthurs contains more practical suggestions from a conservative theological position than those of Long and Craddock. This volume will motivate conservative homileticians to inquire into peculiarities and dynamics of each biblical genre instead of merely producing the stereotypical forms such as verse-by-verse commentary, three point sermon, or storytelling.

Even with these contributions, this book still has several deficiencies with respect to the author’s initial goal of finding rhetorical dynamics in each genre and applying them in sermon delivery (13). For instance, in the section on Proverbs, the author cannot articulate distinguishable characteristics of Proverbs and provide pertinent practical lessons for those who are willing to preach the book according to its genre. He does not provide sufficient explanation about the differences in wisdom literature, such as Ecclesiastes and Job. If this volume would present distinguished sample sermons that reflect each genre’s unique attributes, it would provide a more comprehensive foundation on which to build.

Arthurs maintains that “a sermon’s form should unleash the impact of that text” (13). With a conservative theological base, he upholds the pivotal function of forms in each genre. He, however, abridges the dynamic of each biblical genre with some rhetorical implements such as imagination and rhetorical questions rather than fully exerting the whole vivid movement in biblical genre. Although there are noticeable cultural and chronological gaps between biblical literature and contemporary sermons, evangelical homileticians must revitalize each genre’s essential qualities in sermon form in a more holistic fashion. Even without sufficient explanation about each biblical genre and sermon form, this volume paves a way for further study in the genre sensitive sermon with an evangelical perspective.

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***Preventing Ministry Failure: A Shepherd Guide for Pastors, Ministers, and Other Caregivers.* By Michael Todd Wilson and Brad Hoffman. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2007. 265 pages. Paperback, \$16.00.**

Can common ministry failures such as burnout, ineffectiveness, and moral failure be prevented? Can the factors and patterns that lead to such failures be predicted? Brad Hoffman, senior pastor of Memorial Baptist Church in Baytown, TX, and Michael Todd Wilson, a licensed professional counselor, have spent years working with pastors who have been removed from their areas of service because of such ministry failures. Based on their experiences of working with such pastors, Hoffman and Wilson believe that by becoming aware of some common potential danger areas in ministry and learning to avoid these pitfalls, ministers can become more effective in shepherding those under their supervision (9).

After years of working together with a Florida-based residential program that serves ministers who have been removed from ministry, Wilson and Hoffman discovered seven areas of consistent failures among these former ministers that had led to the ministers' terminations (9):

1. Lack of genuine intimacy in relationships with God, spouse, and others
2. A distorted sense of calling
3. Inadequate stress-management skills
4. Lack of appropriate boundaries
5. Failure to prioritize recreation
6. Insufficient people skills, and
7. Underdeveloped leadership skills

Based on these findings and a desire to develop a more proactive ministry to help those still serving in ministry positions, Wilson and Hoffman formed ShepherdCare to work with ministers to provide resources that would help them be more effective in long-term ministry positions. After extensive meetings with ministers at the CareGivers Forum in 2003, where many of the participants shared their stories of helping to restore ministers who had quit prematurely, become burned out, or experienced moral failure, Wilson and Hoffman were able to compile a "preventative self-care plan" for ministers to promote long-term effectiveness and prevent ministry failure (11).

This new proactive approach transformed the issues behind the seven problem areas into seven "foundation stones" for helping ministers to stay longer and be more effective in ministry (11). These seven foundation stones provide the framework for the chapters and general flow of the book and cover the following areas: intimacy, calling, stress management, boundaries, recreation, people skills, and leadership skills. The material is intended to be covered in a period of six months to one year, and it is organized to allow the reader to participate with a small group and accountability partner(s), or with a chosen mentor, ministry coach, or protégé (12).

Each respective chapter offers a definition of the foundational principle, consequences of not developing in this area, and practical steps to help ministers do their best to develop long-lasting and effective ministry as they develop these principles in their own lives and ministries. Each section ends with a series of diagnostic questions designed to allow the minister to take a critical look at his own life in regard to each specific potential problem area, and each chapter ends with a section entitled “Wrap Up,” which is intended to help the minister work toward his own specific personal self-care plan (63). A short group of appendices are also included, covering areas such as a feelings list, counseling resources, stress inventory, and a personal strength inventory, as well as a few ideas for balanced breathing exercises for relaxation.

Wilson and Hoffman’s purpose and thesis are very clear right from the beginning of the book: great ministers do not just happen; they are developed (9). Ministry failures can be prevented if ministers are willing to learn from the mistakes of those who have fallen before them (9). The workbook structure of *Preventing Ministry Failure* gives immediate credence to the idea that this book contains a process for long-term ministry effectiveness that must be integrated into the minister’s lifestyle if it is to have any lasting effect on the minister or his ministry. However, the overall perspective of *Preventing Ministry Failure* struggles at times to remain positive.

Preventing Ministry Failure is a very practical resource, written by ministers for ministers. Though some ideas and issues seem overly simplified, the overall content of the book is easily readable, practical, and feasible, especially in the areas of time management, intimacy, family involvement, and recreation. The book is very systematic in its approach, and it is fairly comprehensive. The diagnostic questions contained within each section and the “Wrap Up” section allow the minister to reflect and record a proactive plan for avoiding ministry pitfalls that cut short both the effectiveness and longevity of many ministers.

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***The Vanishing Church.* By Bob Pearle. Garland, TX: Hannibal Books, 2008. 148 pages. Softcover, \$14.95.**

In a church market flooded by influential books with pragmatism as their premise and cultural acceptance of the local church as their objective, *The Vanishing Church* has sound doctrine as its premise and a New Testament church as its objective. Many have already begun to observe the inherent danger of modern church strategies. Dr. Bob Pearle, pastor of Birchman Baptist Church in Fort Worth, Texas and the current President of the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention, has plotted a clear, concise, and biblically substantiated course back to the fundamentals of a New Testament church.

Over the course of three sections, twelve chapters and just 131 pages, this book systematically and thoughtfully addresses a variety of issues facing the local church today including: how to stay true to her scriptural roots in the face of

mounting pressure to cater to a secular culture; why church membership still matters; the always damaging intellectualism shrouded in false humility that can be found in the pew of every church; the damage done to a church when individualism overwhelms the church body. These are just some of the issues dealt with in the book, issues every evangelical church in America is facing.

Whether a church is searching for a tool to assess their biblical standing or a Christ-follower desires to learn more about the doctrine of the church, *The Vanishing Church* will not disappoint. As a long tenured pastor of a thriving church as well as a Bible scholar, Pearle is able to track the pulse of the current issues local churches face and deal with them effectively. This is the rare book on the doctrine of the church written with the reader's comprehension in mind rather than to showcase the knowledge of the author.

Nathan Lino
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***Women Leading Women: The Biblical Model for the Church.* By Jaye Martin and Terri Stovall. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2008. 256 pages. Hardcover, \$29.99.**

Whatever happened to those wallflower, Southern Baptist women whose talents and gifts are thwarted by their submission to and suppression by men? At least, that is how women who would agree with the statement in the *Baptist Faith and Message* that “a wife is to submit herself graciously to the servant leadership of her husband even as the church willingly submits to the headship of Christ” have been caricatured by the national media. Martin and Stovall must not have gotten the memo! This long overdue book is written by two highly accomplished and obviously talented women who are demonstrating leadership among women both in the local church and in the Southern Baptist Convention, leadership that is in tune with the clear scriptural teachings on the roles of men and women and the priority of the local church.

Jaye Martin serves as the Director of Women's Programs at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky, where she currently is a candidate for the Doctor of Education. She also holds a masters degree from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas. Jaye served with the North American Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention as the Women's Evangelism Strategist, developing NAMB's *HeartCall*, an evangelism training program specifically targeted to women. She first served in women's ministry at First Baptist Church in Houston, Texas, where she lives with her husband, Dana, who is an attorney, and with whom she has one daughter, Kelli.

Terri Stovall currently serves as the Dean of Women's Programs and Associate Professor of Women's Ministries at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. Before joining the faculty of Southwestern, she served Southern Baptist churches in education and women's ministries, most recently at Fielder Road Baptist Church in Arlington, Texas, where she is still a member. Terri first entered full-time ministry as BSU Campus Evangelism Coordinator in Tyler, Texas before coming to Southwestern where she earned her Master of Arts in Religious

Education and Doctor of Philosophy. She lives in Arlington with her husband, Jay, who is a general contractor.

The authors' stated purpose for the book is "to paint a picture of what women's ministry should look like based upon Scripture" (xiii–xiv). They painted quite a picture. Dividing the picture into four parts, Martin and Stovall articulate first the biblical foundation for women's ministry in the church. In one of the most encouraging chapters of the book, women are viewed through the eyes of God and shown to be precious and significant in His sight. God's plan for women is then revealed, and in a discussion of the biblical paradigm for women's ministry, such ministry is described as being "about reaching, making disciples, and ministering to women and their families. It is a ministry that is best led by women serving under the authority of a local church" (42).

Second, the principles for women leading women are laid out. Godly leadership is defined by the authors as "following Christ so closely that you know how to lead and you do it in such a way that you model Christ by your every word and action while influencing others to do the same" (50). Building upon this understanding, the reader learns important keys to leading as a godly woman and serving with men.

Third, the tasks essential to women leading women (reaching women for Christ, nurturing women in their faith, involving women in kingdom service, engaging the next generation, and supporting the church family) are isolated and described. The authors emphasize important realities and lead women again and again to God's Word. For example, in discussing the application of the biblical teaching of Titus 2, that older, more mature women should be teaching younger women in the church, the authors remind us that "The relationship between the older and the younger is just as much a part of teaching process as is the content" (126). Pointing to a key understanding for all of us members of local churches, both men and women, the authors assert, "Supporting the church means that we don't do *our* ministry; we do the ministry of the church" (158).

Fourth, Stovall and Martin elucidate the how-to of women's ministry, fixing the reader's attention upon strategic planning, enlisting a team, living through change and conflict, and maintaining excellence in women's ministry. Foundational to this discussion is the authors' statement that "GOD-CENTERED strategic planning is a disciplined, intentional effort to develop and follow a method to accomplish God's objective for His church in order to meet the enemy under conditions that give us the advantage" (177). And while the authors deal forthrightly with issues like conflict in the church, they also provide hope that "No matter what method or set of rules or stages is used, God is always there with much more insight to the problem than the leader has and stands ready to give insight and His presence in the midst of difficult situations" (219).

Like the four parts of the book described above, the book itself can be described in ministering to and challenging women in four ways: leadership, ministry, a Bible study of women and for women, and the nature and work of the church. *Women Leading Women* fills a large hole in the church leadership literature and should be welcomed by churches and by both women and men alike. The book fleshes out many of the biblical teachings concerning the significance and

the role of women as Christians and as leaders in the local church, teachings that have been articulated scripturally and theologically but that have gone wanting for greater explanation and application in the life of the assembly we call the local church.

This book is not just for women. Men, especially church leaders, will profit from reading this book. Many key connections are made between church ministries and the Scriptures that apply to all ministries, and the unique understanding of women's ministries articulated in these pages is essential to all who will work with and oversee the service of women in and to the church.

Two improvements are suggested for the future. First, a few parts of the book could be augmented with more direct references to biblical passages and references. This small deficiency probably results from the brevity of the work. Second, if space is not available to add to the third and fourth parts of the book, the tasks and the how-to, the authors should consider a second book focused directly upon those vital matters.

Women Leading Women is an excellent work to be read by anyone even remotely interested in seeing the local church be who God has laid out for it to be. Those of us who read it will want to share it with others.

Waylan Owens
Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

Missions and Evangelism

***Called to Reach: Equipping Cross-Cultural Disciplers.* By William R. Yount and Mike Barnett. Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2007. 251 pages. Softcover, \$24.99.**

With their years of cross-cultural ministry experience and hearts that burn for the nations, the authorial partnership of Rick Yount and Mike Barnett in a book on cross-cultural discipling could only lead to a positive outcome. These men bring years of classroom experience to the table having instructed students, pastors, and missionaries around the world in the art of discipling. *Called to Reach* is the culmination of these years of discipling disciplers.

The text uses the Discippler's Model, first developed by Yount more than twenty-five years ago, and the Teacher's Triad, described by Yount in his earlier work *Created to Learn* (chap 11), as the framework upon which to build a cross-cultural discipleship approach based on character development. After introducing the basics of cross-cultural discipling, Yount and Barnett describe seven different areas of character development devoting a chapter to each. The character traits are based on the elements of the Discippler's Model: the Holy Spirit element is transformed into Spiritual Development; the Bible to Biblical Character; the Think element to Rational Character; the Needs element into Compassionate Character; the Values element into Impassioned Character; the Relate element into Relational Character; and the Growth element becomes Maturational Character.

The final chapter synergizes all of the character traits and discusses the necessity of balance between the elements.

Each chapter begins with an overview of the characteristic to be discussed and what Yount and Barnett call “The Toxic Flip Side” of that characteristic, which is a short description of what it looks like not to have this character trait. Placed strategically within each chapter are pertinent illustrations drawn from the lives of the authors and missionaries they have known. These illustrations are one of the strengths of this treatise without which it would become a purely academic endeavor. Understanding how each character trait is manifested in real life situations underscores the importance of its development within those who disciple the followers of Christ. Yount and Barnett also add comments at the end of each other’s chapters to give their readers a fuller picture of where each stands and what important points they gleaned from their partner’s chapter.

One point of particular interest in this treatise is the development of spiritual character. This first characteristic comprises the circle around the rest of the model and involves “a perspective devoted to ongoing surrender to the Holy Spirit’s leadership” (15). The development of spiritual character and subsequent surrender to the Holy Spirit’s leading is portrayed as a necessary foundation for the other character traits. Throughout the remainder of the book, Yount and Barnett refer back to spiritual character and its relationship to each of the other characteristics.

Pulling together educational models, character development, missiological principles, and years of experience, these two cross-cultural disciplers succeed not only in presenting a wise model for equipping cross-cultural disciplers but also in sharing God’s heart for the nations. This volume is an excellent resource for anyone seeking to minister in a cross-cultural situation whether it be at home or abroad.

Lisa Seeley
Dallas Baptist University

***The Crescent through the Eyes of the Cross.* By Nabeel T. Jabbour. Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2008. 272 pages. Paperback, \$ 14.99.**

The main purpose of *The Crescent through the Eyes of the Cross* is to convey, especially to the western reader, how Muslims feel and what they think towards both the West and Christianity. In this book, Nabeel Jabbour tries to explain, out of his experiences with Muslims for more than five decades, how Muslims feel about Christians and the major reasons or motives of their reactions towards America and the West. Jabbour, in his attempt to describe Muslims’ points of view on many current topics, presents a fictional character of a Muslim intellectual man, called Ahmad, who was studying for a Ph.D. in the USA.

In the first part of the book, chapters 1 through 7, Ahmad explains three major reasons that hinder him from becoming a Christian: the Christian message, the Christian messenger or evangelist, and the Muslim as the receiver of the message. Ahmad claims that the Christian message does not make sense to most

Muslims, links the Christian evangelists with the western culture then combines it with colonialism, and finally believes that leaving Islam, and becoming integrated into Christianity, would cause him to lose his identity. Furthermore, in this part of the book, Ahmad's father and sister share about some of their grievances against Christians and the role America plays in the world and link this role to Christianity. They explain some of their perspectives concerning world events and Islamic beliefs. Jabbour then addresses the issues that the fictional Ahmad raised.

In the second part of the book, chapters 8 through 13, Jabbour explains how Muslims think and react by clarifying in-depth the different paradigm through which they look at the world. In the third part of the book, chapters 14 through 17, Jabbour discusses practical ways to connect with Muslims. He emphasizes the importance of ministering to Muslims within their context and assuring that a Muslim can believe wholeheartedly in Christ while remaining among his people as salt and light.

There are four major strengths in this book. First, as an Arab Christian, Jabbour has significant experience with Muslims, especially in the Middle Eastern cultures, which provides him a unique understanding of Islam that is needed in the West. Jabbour provides beneficial insights and important tools for Christians to understand Islam and to know how to connect with Muslims (94–95). Second, inventing Ahmad as a Muslim character to dialog about Muslims is a creative turn. The reader of this book feels the sincerity and honesty, as well as the frustration and grievance, in Ahmad's words and tone. Ahmad seems to be very real. Third, Jabbour explains the main four paradigms that exist worldwide: guilt/righteousness, shame/honor, defilement/clean, and fear/power. Jabbour encourages Christians to understand how these paradigms work among different Islamic groups and societies (171–72). Finally, the examples Jabbour gives on relational evangelism are very helpful for Christians, especially in the West, to understand how to approach Muslims and connect with them, in practical ways, in their own context.

There is only one drawback in this book. Although Ahmad's character well-represents the worldview of some Muslims, it does not in reality represent the vast majority of Muslims. Ahmad might represent a sample of some Quranic Muslims but not all, and definitely he does not represent cultural or militant Muslims. He is a very well-educated PhD student who is exposed to the Western culture; consequently, his worldview does not necessarily describe how the vast majority of Arabs believe. Ahmad indeed represents a rare case among Arab Muslims.

In such challenging and confusing days of trying to understand Islam, *The Crescent through the Eyes of the Cross* helps Christians, especially in the West, understand Muslims. Out of his unique background and experience, Jabbour encourages Christians to step into the shoes of Muslims and to get out of their Western comfort zone and to start taking initiatives in connecting with Muslims in their own context. Jabbour's book provides great insights on Islamic beliefs, culture, and context. As many debates are being waged over Islam, and as the frustration against Muslims is raising day after day, Jabbour's book would be a great help to comprehend Muslims and love them as Christ does. The careful reading,

the diligent use, and the genuine application of this book could revolutionize and transform one's experience in communicating the gospel to Muslims.

Ayman S. Ibrahim
Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

***The Missional Church in Context: Helping Congregations Develop Contextual Ministry.* Edited by Craig Van Gelder. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007. 243 pages. Softcover, \$20.00.**

William Carey opined in his *Enquiry* that missions and mission work were the task and duty of every Christian. Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, missionary activity and missionary agencies were active in sharing the gospel with the "heathen." The Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions perhaps was the apex of the missionary endeavor. Yet, after the Edinburgh conference of 1910 and World War I, the excitement of world mission seemed to come to an abrupt halt. As a result, world missions over the past 90 years have been primarily concerned with doing missions as they had been carried out during these two centuries. Craig Van Gelder and others posit that a change is needed in the church in order to effectively reach the contemporary, postmodern world with the gospel.

Van Gelder mentions that the "gospel in our culture" concept which permeated England during the 1980s has finally emerged as the term "missional" in the West. Authors such as Michael Frost, Alan Roxburgh, George Hunsberger, and Darrell Guder have elicited many ideas on the topic; however, few address it from the point of contextualization. Van Gelder recognizes that if any successful and biblical model of a missional life is to be examined, one must ultimately examine his context in order to discern the immediate needs of the community. He brings this point to light in chapter one as he argues, "It is interesting that the discipline of missiology, as it emerged in Western theological education, did not tend to focus its attention on congregations—at least not those at home. The missional church conversation offers a corrective to that focus" (13).

One of the primary movements within Christian circles in the twenty-first century is that of the Emerging movement. Although he does not directly involve this movement, Gary Simpson does address the notion that the universal or "catholic" church is emerging. He mentions that missions in the present environment has five things that are constant: Mission as promissio, communicatio, communio, confessio, and vocatio (65–93). Each of these represents a distinct area in the missional "reformation" that is presently engaged with the contemporary church. As the church continues to advance, the contextualization of mission in this manner encourages the people to God to connect in an effective manner to the world around them. This, Simpson deduces, is found most effectively in the life of the missional church.

Van Gelder divides the work into two sections. In the first four chapters, he focuses on contextualization and how that concept can be applied in terms of a missional life. In the second part of the book, he addresses case studies that deal

specifically with the issue of contextualization. By doing this, he allows the reader to join in the conversation of missional contextualization by giving them practical, applicable examples of this strategy.

Van Gelder is a conservative scholar who approaches the issue of “missional” from a postmodern viewpoint in that he confesses that any discussion regarding “missional” should be done by way of a “conversation” (1). Postmodernism has forced the church to re-examine its strategies and ideas on not only evangelization and missions, but it has challenged the church to reconnect through the missional life to this postmodern generation. People in this age do not desire to be told “how to live”; instead, they seek authenticity and genuineness through a person’s life. This life, according to Van Gelder, is best lived when done so through contextualization.

Van Gelder has compiled a book that is not only encouraging, but it approaches an often difficult subject from a conservative point of view. He does not engage the reader with issues such as the social gospel, but instead, he focuses upon Christian community within the confines of this missional existence. As a result, his work is challenging, yet, a fresh read in an often over abused subject.

Brian Robertson
Pastor, First Baptist Church, Kenton, TN

***Paul the Missionary: Realities, Strategies and Methods.* By Eckhard J. Schnabel. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2008. 518 pages. Softcover, \$32.00.**

A quick glance at the reviews on the back of Schnabel’s book, *Paul the Missionary*, gives an early indication of the intended audience. It is described as “an invaluable foundation,” a useful “textbook” for the missions classroom and current missionary practitioners. Thus, unlike Schnabel’s meticulous two-volume work, *Early Christian Mission*, this book manages its subject in a more introductory fashion, yet with a specific purpose: to challenge pastors and missionaries to read Paul more closely and then evaluate their own goals and methods accordingly (14). This purpose determines the structure behind Schnabel’s book. Before looking critically at modern missionary methodologies, before even attempting a synthesis of Paul’s goals and methods, Schnabel observes Paul’s missionary career, Paul’s description of his own task, and the central aspects of Paul’s message.

In chapter 1, Schnabel begins with brief summaries of Paul’s cultural background, his conversion, and his relationship with the Jerusalem apostles before conducting a survey of his missionary activities. Schnabel’s approach in this chapter is unique in two ways. First, his description of Paul’s ministry and travels is an integration of the content found in Acts, Paul’s letters, and early church tradition. This is a refreshing contrast to works that see Paul’s letters as the only reliable source of information. Second, Schnabel avoids the traditional division of Paul’s work into the three journeys described in Acts. Instead, he divides Paul’s efforts into fifteen smaller “periods” that include his early work in Jerusalem and his later work in Spain and Crete. The result is a panoramic scope of Paul’s entire life’s work.

In chapter 2, Schnabel turns almost exclusively to Paul's letters with a focus on key passages where Paul describes the nature of his mission. For example, in Galatians 1–2, Paul provides his understanding of his call to missionary work; in 1 Thessalonians 1:4–10, he presents a succinct summary of his message; in 1 Thessalonians 2:2–8, he remarks on the importance of the manner of his proclamation; and in 1 Corinthians 3:5–15, Paul describes his goal as the establishment of churches, and so on.

At first glance, Schnabel's description of Paul's message in chapter 3 appears to be simply the re-stating of material found in *Early Christian Mission* vol. 2, since the sub-headings are almost identical. However, here Schnabel's approach differs as he focuses primarily on Luke's recordings of Paul's sermons in Acts for the content of his preaching to different audiences. Schnabel's analysis shows that the content of Paul's message has specific relevance both for Jewish and Gentile audiences, and that the gospel of salvation through Christ confronts the cultural norms of its converts.

With chapter 4, Schnabel turns from the descriptive task to synthetic analysis, seeking to describe the goals of Paul's missionary activity based on his previous observations. Paul preaches the gospel, both to Jews and Gentiles, to convert individuals. He further seeks to establish these converts into communities of faith and instruct them in church life and outreach. Finally, Paul also trains new missionaries for service. Schnabel's approach here incorporates some interesting word studies. While considering the goal of Paul's preaching, Schnabel observes the usage and meaning of εὐαγγελιζῶ; for Paul's intended audience, the use of the term ἔθνος; for the importance of forming communities, ἐκκλησία; etc. Yet, this section also contains one of the most detailed arguments against Reisner's theory for Paul's geographical movements. Schnabel asserts that Paul's journeys were not motivated by a grand strategy, but were 'logical' steps to adjacent areas open for missionary work (224).

In chapter 5, Schnabel brings the study to its climax, not so much by giving a detailed analysis of Paul's methods, but rather by showing how a closer look at Paul's missionary work will challenge common misconceptions that are often still prominent today in the teaching of missionary methods. For example, in his analysis of the cities Paul visited and the methodology behind his movements, Schnabel demonstrates that Paul did not intentionally seek out metropolitan areas on a consistent basis. As for the venues which Paul frequented for his preaching, Schnabel challenges the reader to consider that his going first to synagogues was motivated by pragmatic reasons rather than a thought-out methodology. Schnabel also provides the assessment that Paul was not a cross-cultural missionary in the way missionaries use the term today, but rather a Diaspora Jew who was already familiar with the audiences to which he proclaimed the gospel. Schnabel's greatest point, however, comes in describing the explanation of Paul's missionary success—it was, above all, not the result of a method or strategy, but the result of God's power.

In his final chapter, Schnabel demonstrates how a more careful observation of Paul's missionary activity should impact the evaluation of methods in current evangelization and mission efforts. In this chapter, as with Schnabel's work

overall, there is a voice of caution, but also a challenge to learn from and follow Paul's example in not compromising the message or the methods for the sake of effectiveness.

It is Schnabel's approach to the topic, beginning with careful and thorough observation, that makes this work a useful, if not essential, addition to the missionary's and pastor's library. It is this same characteristic that makes the work more than a summary of Schnabel's previous work. Schnabel demonstrates how a more careful observation of Paul can contribute to the avoidance of uninformed conclusions and proof-texting tendencies often observable in other works focused on missionary methodology. Thus, Schnabel rightly compares his work to Rowland Allen's influential work, *Missionary Methods*, for which he has high esteem, and even corrects Allen's observations on occasion (14, 21, 282–86).

David E. Sanchez
Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

***Transforming Worldviews: An Anthropological Understanding of How People Change.* By Paul G. Hiebert. Baker Academic, 2008. 367 pages. Softcover, \$24.99.**

Paul G. Hiebert's book, *Transforming Worldviews: An Anthropological Understanding of How People Change*, is an excellent philosophical and sociological examination of culture that is written with the intent of showing the science (and art) involved in fundamentally reworking the outlook of a people group's collective worldview. In light of Hiebert's authority and credentials as a top scholar in the field of anthropology, the book possesses a unique perspective along with an expertise that is not commonly demonstrated in sociological/anthropological works that have evangelicals as the target audience.

Hiebert introduces his book by starting with a description of a worldview as "the foundational cognitive, affective, and evaluative assumptions and frameworks a group of people makes about the nature of reality which they use to order their lives" (25–26). He notes how differing people groups live in radically diverse conceptual worlds that entail multifarious metaphysical issues. Those commissioned to rewire the hearts and minds of a given people group will need to be equipped to change conceptually that group's old thinking patterns to ways of seeing their world in a fundamentally new way, one that is predicated upon biblical revelation. In order for the process of sanctification to move towards perfection, it is necessary that the individual appropriate an entirely new conception of reality, since the "new" man sees the world in a conceptually different way from the "old."

An important distinction that Hiebert makes is that while worldviews may be at the ground level of a people's conception of reality, they are not defined in foundational terminology because they possess one-way causality. On the contrary, what happens at the more practical, "conditioned" level of existence can also have profound effects at the theoretical level. Hiebert is wise to point this out because he knows that missionaries must understand that in the process of engaging a culture there is the dual need of addressing the individuals at the presuppositional

level and at the suppositional level. Neither exists independently of the other, nor is one causally impotent in relation to the other. The metaphysical baggage has accumulated and been reinforced at both poles of reality.

Hiebert devotes the largest portion of the book to analyzing the worldviews associated with different categories of people groups. He begins by examining the network of presuppositions driving the most primitive, small-scale societies for which there is data. He makes observations on the similarities that can be inferred about the nature of the conceptual worldview that guides the least sophisticated of people groups. He then takes a step up the developmental hierarchy to peasant societies and attempts to discern the same nuances of their theoretical outlook. He continues to the modern worldview, then to the postmodern worldview, and finally to what he refers to as the glocal worldview, the worldview that is materializing via the global economy and the information systems of the highly developed civilizations in the twenty-first century.

One of the weaknesses of the book is that while Hiebert does an excellent job of explaining the nature of different worldviews and how they seem to evolve through socio-economic phases, he does not direct the reader to those who are equipped to handle the massive project entailed in changing them to a biblical worldview. This will obviously require voluminous systematic and biblical theology, and one would doubt that he expects each missionary to do this on his own. However, he only cites a few references in this section without giving explicit recommendations except to the creeds and the history of the church and to those theologians who he believes would be the most useful in equipping missionaries for this task (of course, he may have good reasons for not doing this). Rather, he devotes a section of the book to giving a mini systematic theology of his own, but I think that it is ultimately a bit superfluous and comparatively lacking to that which a professional systematic theologian could accomplish. In light of this, the book is a little anti-climactic since technically he does not show how to transform the culture in any detailed way. The book serves more as guide of what to expect and of what you will have to deal with if you attempt to transform a culture.

Ultimately, the greatest value of this book is one of the things about which he is most adamant—the need to know how to follow up with new converts. Humans need to find patterns and categories to make sense of their reality, and upon converting to this shockingly new and exciting account of reality, there must be trained personnel who can help solidify and make sense of that new reality. This book would serve as a great preliminary study for anyone who is interested in the paradigms that guide transforming cultures.

Keith Boozer
Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

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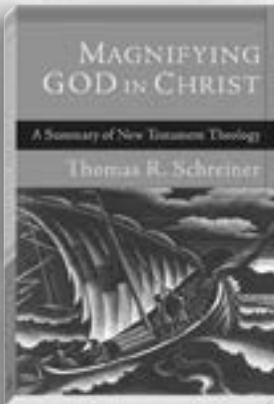
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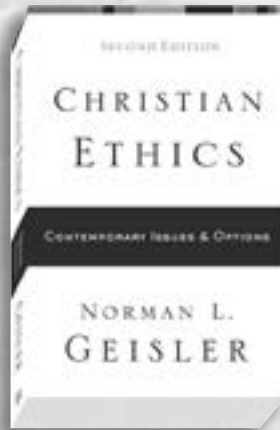
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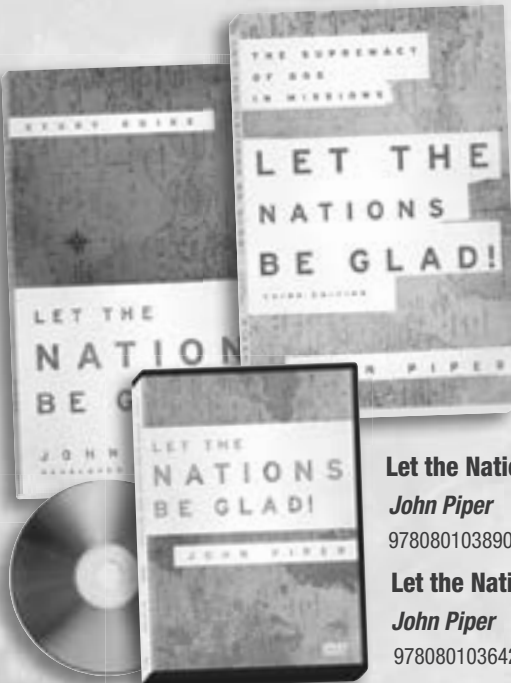
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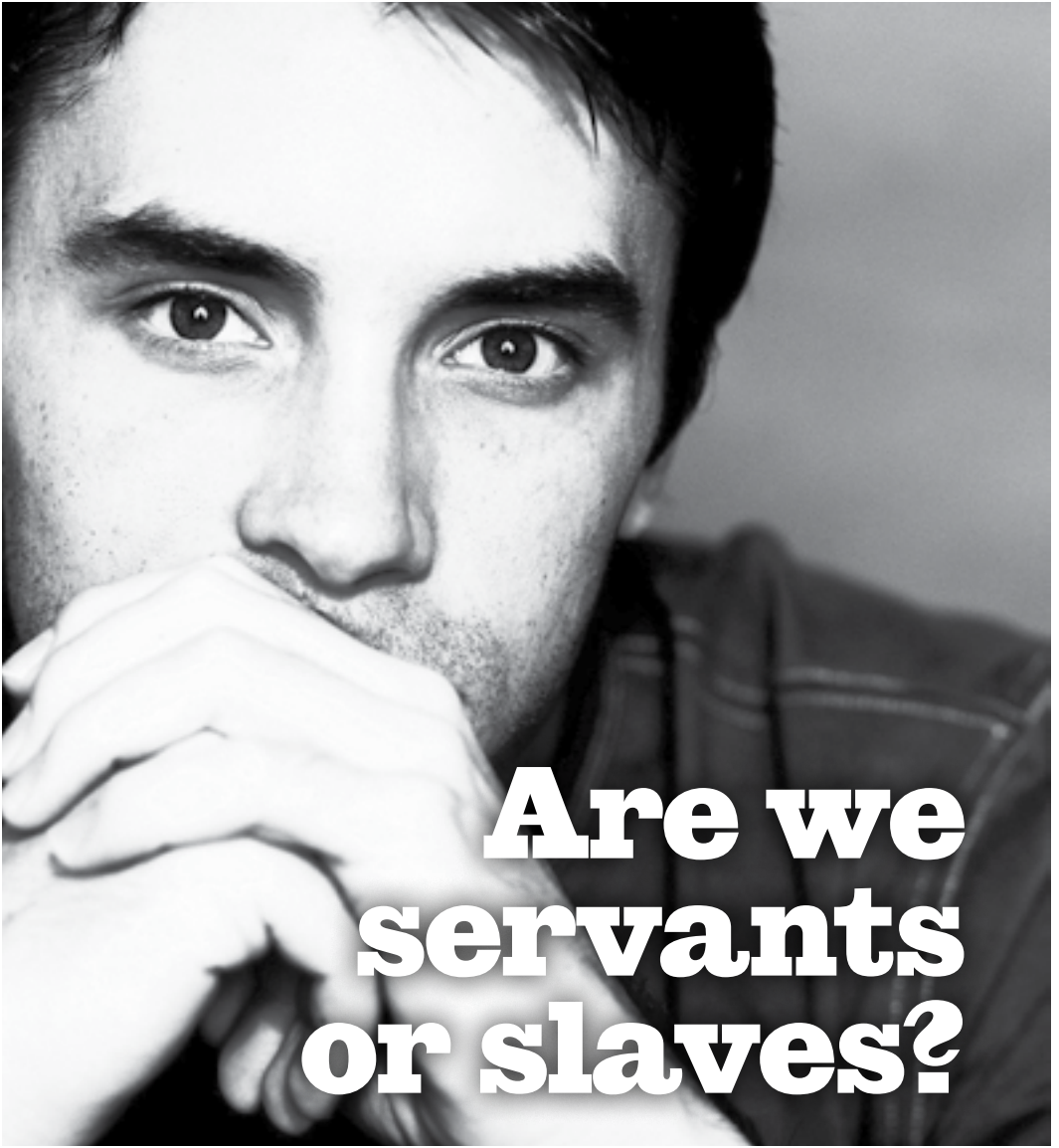


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