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BOOK REVIEWS

***Apostle of the Lost Cause: J. William Jones, Baptists, and the Development of Confederate Memory.* By Christopher C. Moore. Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 2019, x+300pp., \$50.00.**

From 1865 until his death in 1909, no one did more to promote the glories of the Confederacy than the Southern Baptist preacher, J. William Jones (1836–1909). He led a host of Southern propagandists who rehabilitated the reputation of white Southerners and made possible the nation’s indulgence of the nullification of the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth amendments of the United States Constitution through Jim Crow legislation, convict leasing, and suppression of black voting. It made possible also the extensive success and influence of such novels as Margaret Mitchell’s *Gone with the Wind* and Thomas Dixon’s *The Leopard’s Spots* and *The Clansman*, and their even more popular screen adaptations.

Christopher Moore, instructor of history and religion at Catawba Valley Community College in North Carolina, casts J. William Jones as the most influential figure in this movement. Jones especially established the veneration of Robert E. Lee, Stonewall Jackson, and Jefferson Davis as heroes of Southern religion and civic virtue. Jones’s books, lectures, and sermons made him, more than any other, the “apostle of the Lost Cause,” popularizing its version of the meaning of Confederacy and the South. And he had apostolic credentials—he knew personally Lee, Jackson, and Davis, and had the endorsement of both the Lee and Davis families.

The book, which began as a dissertation at Baylor University and is part of the America’s Baptists series at the University of Tennessee Press, argues that Jones viewed himself as called by the providence of God to be an apostle of the Confederacy to spread the gospel of the Lost Cause, vindicating Southern whites from accusations of the

sins of slaveholding and secession, and from depictions of them as weaker or inferior to Northerners. It argues also that Jones's commitment to Baptist denominationalism increased his effectiveness as an apostle of the Lost Cause.

What was the Lost Cause? It was a version of the history of the South and of the United States that insisted on the righteousness and justice of Southern whites in establishing and defending the Confederacy. Jones's vindication of the Confederacy defended the following ideas: 1) Southern secession was entirely justified and constitutional. 2) The South did not secede because of slavery, but Southern slavery was in any case a kind and beneficial arrangement. 3) The South actually seceded to gain freedom from unconstitutional tyranny. 4) Southern soldiers comprised the greatest and most pious army in history. 5) Lee was the greatest general, Jackson the most brilliant tactician, and Davis among the greatest leaders in all history—and the three were also the most virtuous, devout, and godly men to lead any nation or army. 6) God favored the South because the South was just and right in its actions, and demonstrated his favor by visiting the Confederate army with an extraordinary revival. 7) By means of the Confederacy's defeat and reunion with the North, loyalty to Southern values and valor would preserve the true American spirit and save America from internal dangers and external foes.

Jones and most Lost Cause writers diminished the significance of slavery in the secession of the slave states, and rarely appealed directly to the notion of white superiority. Belief in white superiority however undergirded and gave coherence to their vindication of slaveholding and to their understanding of the Confederacy and of the antebellum and postwar South.

Moore demonstrates that Jones felt a deep commitment to preach the everlasting gospel as a Southern Baptist and that he became an important figure in the denomination. He joined the very first class of students at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Greenville, South Carolina, in 1859. He was appointed as a missionary of the Southern Baptist Convention's Foreign Mission Board, though he never served overseas due to the Civil War. Throughout his career, Jones pastored various Southern Baptist churches, served as the agent for Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, served the denomination's

Home Mission Board and edited its official journal, and was elected a vice-president of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Jones's experiences in the war made him an apostle of the Lost Cause as well as a preacher of the gospel. Jones served with Lee's army during the entire war, first as a soldier, then as a chaplain, and finally as a missionary to the army. He knew Stonewall Jackson and Robert E. Lee during the war and developed a close relationship with Lee and Jefferson Davis after the war. He wrote biographies of Lee and Davis with the support and endorsement of their wives, Mary Custis Lee and Varina Davis. He also published a lengthy account of Jackson's spiritual life. For twelve critical years he supervised the conservation and construction of Confederate memory as the editor of the *Southern Historical Society Papers*. In 1887 Jones published *Christ in the Camp*, his account of the revivals in the Southern armies. He later held other positions in Confederate memorial organizations.

The book makes important contributions. Above all it reveals the irony—the contradiction—between Jones's attitude toward the Confederacy and toward Christianity. Jones served two gospels. Throughout his life Jones preached the gospel of the cross, imploring sinners to humble themselves and confess their guilt and insufficiency to God, and ask his pardon through faith in Christ. When he preached the gospel of the Lost Cause, however, Jones asserted that Southern whites were entirely right, with hardly a fault or weakness, and needing no forgiveness. "We thought we were right in the brave old days when to do battle was a sacred duty," Jones told the 1894 reunion of Confederate veterans, "but now, in light of subsequent events, we *know* we were right; and with malice toward none and charity for all, we are asking pardon of no living man" (p. 199).

Throughout his career, Jones was a minister of the Confederate battle flag no less than he was a minister of the cross. At the 1906 annual meeting of the United Confederate Veterans, one former Confederate general praised Jones before the assemblage as "the greatest living Confederate today," for Jones had "prayed harder and preached longer and more about the Confederacy than any man since the war" (p. 202). Thus, the gospel of the Confederacy spread widely in the South alongside the everlasting gospel.

Though he did not intend it, Jones's Lost Cause crusade suborned the scriptural message of the cross to advance a secular identity rooted

in Confederate patriotism, political partisanship, and the unshakeable belief in white superiority, all of which served to justify continued oppression and injustice toward American blacks through violence, legislation, and the judiciary. Jones subordinated the true gospel to a false one, with horrific consequences.

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***Christ Above All: The Book of Hebrews.* By Adrio König. Bellingham: Lexham Press, 2019, viii+100pp., \$17.99.**

Adrio König was a professor of systematic theology at the University of South Africa. *Christ above All* is part of the Transformative Word Series edited by Craig G. Bartholomew and David Beldman.

In the introductory chapter, König notes the difficulties associated with Hebrews. The author, the intended audience and the specific date of its composition are unknown to contemporary scholars. Paul, Luke and Apollos appear to be conducive candidates, yet the identity of the author is far from certain. König proposes that the recipients could be believers who were tempted to go back to the belief and practices of Judaism, hence needing to be retold of the supremacy of Christ. The chapter also overviews the main themes of Hebrews, which will be fleshed out in the subsequent chapters: the humanity and humility of Christ, the use of the OT, the six warnings and the call to perseverance.

Chapter two presents the supremacy of Christ. König argues that Hebrews 1:1–3 is foundational to Hebrews. These verses portray Christ as the final revelation of God, co-Creator with God, sovereign, divine, sustainer of the world, reconciler with God, and King. Following his brief explanation of Hebrews 1:1–3, König states that these verses provide an understanding of both Jesus and the doctrine of the Trinity.

Chapter three explicates the humanity of Christ in Hebrews. The epistle not only highlights the supremacy of Christ but also

expounds upon the humility of Christ. In so doing, Hebrews reveals Christ's identification with humanity. Hebrews portrays Christ as a human who was tempted, suffered and died in order to represent us before God. Nonetheless, unlike the rest of humanity, Christ remains without sin. König posits that Hebrews presents Christ as God-Man, a human being with two natures. As such, Jesus reveals both the image of God and the image of humanity simultaneously.

Chapter four delineates the supremacy of Christ. Christ is superior to the angels who have access to the presence of God and are higher than humanity. He is also superior to Moses, for Moses was only a faithful servant, whereas Jesus is the faithful Son who rules over God's house. Christ provides a superior rest than that of the OT (Joshua) because of his death and resurrection. Believers are then to rest from sinning against God and enter into that permanent rest through Christ. Christ is also superior to the temple, rituals, sacrifices and the Levitical priests of the OT.

In chapter five, König discusses both the positive and negative deployment of the OT in Hebrews. Although Hebrews asserts the superiority of Christ, it does not denigrate the prophets, the angels, Moses or Melchizedek. These, along with institutions, foreshadow Christ. König uses Hebrews 11 and 12 so as to illustrate Hebrews' positive view of the OT. Hebrews 11 comes immediately after chapters 7–10 to signify that the Christian faith is composed of suffering; hence, they are urged to persevere. Hebrews is also "negative about certain features in the OT" (p. 60). The repetitive sacrifices and the inability of the law to bring about perfection are the main negative elements Hebrews highlights.

Chapter six is concerned with the warning passages in Hebrews. The epistle's main thrust, König postulates, is a call for perseverance. Although the warning in Hebrews 6 is frequently highlighted, there are other warnings dispersed throughout the epistle. The warning passages have created heated debates between two camps: those who believe that there is a possibility to fall from grace and those who argue for the perseverance of the saints. König identifies strong scriptural evidence employed for both views. He suggests that we use the warning passages to encourage doubters of the faithfulness of God in securing believers and to seriously warn Christians who are apathetic and on the cusp of abandoning the faith.

In chapter seven, König addresses the issue of the unforgivable sin. The idea of the unforgivable sin is mentioned in three passages (Heb 6:4–6; 10:26–27; 12:14–17). These passages delineate the fact that after the commission of this sin, repentance, sacrifice, and turning back to the faith are impossible. By gleaning from passages outside of Hebrews (such as Matt 12 and 1 John), König identifies the unforgivable sin: identifying the works of the Spirit as being those of Satan and continuing to sin after being informed about God’s truth. He proceeds to argue that in Hebrews, the unforgivable sin is committed not only against the Spirit but also against Jesus, for the person committing this sin is rejecting the once-for-all sacrifice of Jesus.

König reads Hebrews with a Chalcedonian framework, and he repeatedly affirms both the divinity and humanity of Christ while at the same time explicating the supremacy of Christ. The clarity and conciseness of the book, coupled with suggested reading passages of Scripture and reflection questions at the end of every chapter, will enable readers to pause and ponder what was said in each chapter. This book will be helpful both in ecclesiastical and academic settings to those who would like to understand what Hebrews is all about.

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***Who Is God?: Key Moments of Biblical Revelation.* By Richard Bauckham. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2020, vii+120pp., \$21.99.**

Based on *Key Moments of Biblical Revelation*, Richard Bauckham asks, “*Who Is God?*” rather than asking, “Does God exist?” or “Who is the God you are talking about?” (p. 1). Bauckham prioritizes this question because “God defines who God is for us” (p. 2). Originating with two lecture series, the 2015 Frumentius Lectures at the Ethiopian Graduate School of Theology in Addis Ababa and the 2018 Haywood Lectures at Acadia Divinity College in Nova

Scotia, Canada, Bauckham inextricably links the rich content in each chapter as he pursues the question of who God is through biblical revelation.

Emphasizing the divine presence in the narrative of Jacob's dream at Bethel in Genesis 28:10–22, the first chapter brings out the principal concept of “with-ness” by indicating God's faithful presence to his people Israel (pp. 6–11). Bauckham, then, introduces two significant parallels with Jacob's dream, which are related to where God resided “with” his people: tabernacle and temple. He makes two outstanding points regarding the places in comparison with Jacob's life: “the tabernacle corresponds to the ongoing, accompanying presence of God” with Jacob's journey and “the temple corresponds to the more permanent residence of God” in relation to Bethel (p. 15). The concept of “with-ness” in Genesis 28 is expanded from Genesis to Revelation, reaching its climax when it comes to the person of Jesus Christ who is the new tabernacle and the new temple, and who also is God dwelling among his people (pp. 27–29).

The central passage of the second chapter is found in Exodus 3:1–6, which deals with God's revelation of his divine name at the burning bush. God reveals his divine presence by allowing the people of Israel to have the name that drives binds and identifies the newly formed relationship. But God's revealing of his name to Moses as “I will be who I will be,” confirming that God makes a free choice, utterly self-determining, which helps us understand that God “cannot be constrained by anything other than himself” (p. 42). God's revelation of the divine name is his act of grace, condescending to the people so they could access and know him (p. 45). However, this name “was not for Israel's sake alone but with a view toward God's revelation of himself to all nations” (p. 59). More significantly, as evidenced by Philippians 2:9–11, God, the Father, gave his name to Jesus because Jesus not only shares God's name “the Lord” but he also “belongs to God's unique identity” (pp. 56–58). Ultimately, it is in Jesus Christ that God makes himself “knowable and accessible to all people” (p. 59).

In chapter three, Bauckham deals with God's revelation of his divine character through the conversation between God and Moses in Exodus 33 and 34:5–8 after the golden calf incident among the Israelites. When Moses requests to see his glory, God twice

proclaimed his name “The Lord,” then he lists five characteristics of who “The Lord” is: merciful, gracious, slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness. The common feature found among these characteristics is that these are relational terms, which reveal “the foundation in God’s character for the remarkable way God has treated Israel since the episode of the golden calf” (p. 69). The minor prophets, Joel and Jonah, echo the descriptions of God (pp. 71–75). Focusing on Psalm 145, Bauckham stresses how God’s positive characteristics were made known to the foreign nations and even to all creation.

Finally, based on the OT passages noted above, Bauckham introduces three moments of revelation in the life of Jesus: the vision of baptism (Mark 1), the transfiguration (Mark 9), and the centurion’s confession (Mark 15). The Gospel of Mark provides the main ground for tying together these moments. The most conspicuous feature, however, is that each passage further reveals the identity of Jesus Christ, which means Jesus is the Son of God (p. 91). In this sense, the Gospel of Mark manifests the life and ministry of Jesus Christ from the beginning to the midpoint and extending to the completion of the book.

Bauckham unfolds this book in a canonical manner rather than through a historical reconstruction behind and around the texts. He brings into sharp focus the points of biblical revelation through key moments in both the OT and the life of Christ. In doing so, readers are allowed to see how God used these moments to reveal himself and to make known who he is. This book is accessible for laypeople as well as scholars. I gladly recommend this book for any person who desires to wholeheartedly pursue and follow God.

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***Not Scattered or Confused: Rethinking the Urban World of the Hebrew Bible.* By Mark McEntire. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2019, 300pp., \$30.00.**

Mark McEntire, who serves as professor of biblical studies at Belmont University, has written a provocative and erudite book. He argues that scribes reshaped and rearranged their source material, so that the final form of the OT had a positive perspective toward cities. He states, “the central question of this volume is how the understandings of cities and urban life in biblical texts shift in response to the changes in the culture that produced those texts” (p. 2). To justify this claim, he brings together literary, historical, and archaeological data on ancient Israel and its scribal class.

McEntire largely agrees with the neo-documentary hypothesis and contends that a supposed J source had a decidedly anti-urban bent. On his reading, the traditions associated with J see “city building and technology [as] skills that humans acquire illegitimately and use in opposition to God” (p. 67). He contends that the original J composition situated the Tower of Babel narrative before the Flood narrative. Thus, the flood is God’s response to their city-building project. He suggests that later scribes moved the Tower of Babel narrative into its current position within a post-flood world as part of a strategy to dilute “the anti-city tone of J without removing it” (p. 73). In this arrangement, God’s judgment in Genesis 6 arises solely from evil human inclinations and is no longer associated with the city-building project of Babel. Instead of Genesis 11 serving purely as a condemnation of city-building policies, in the final form of Genesis it now serves as an expansion of the story of Nimrod’s construction of Babylon in Genesis 10, which resulted in the formation of multiple cities (Gen 10:9–12). On this account, the redactor has changed the story so that God merely slows the city-building efforts of humans, so that they spread further before settling and developing cities.

McEntire’s general assessment of the anti-urban and pro-urban sentiments that Genesis 1–11 continues throughout his assessment of the OT. In passages that critical scholars have often associated with a J tradition, he finds a consistent, anti-urban sentiment. In passages that critical scholars have often associated with a P tradition, he finds a consistent, pro-urban sentiment. McEntire reads these passages closely, searching for seams between traditions that he suggests reveal opposing sentiments toward urban life.

Evangelical scholars will find much of value in this volume.

Although evangelicals will disagree with some of his core presuppositions and reconstructions of the text, his close reading often produces valuable exegetical insights. For instance, his comments on the urban ideals that both Genesis 1 and the covenant code presuppose offer much for evangelical readers, particularly those with a missiological interest.

In response to McEntire's primary arguments, an evangelical could respond that the texts he associates with J are not anti-urban—or at least that they are neutral toward cities. As an example, John Sailhamer and others have argued that Cain's narrative and city-building have literary ties to the cities of refuge. On this reading, the city should be seen as a sign of God's grace given to a manslayer, whom Israelite laws would condemn to death. Furthermore, many evangelical scholars have argued that God's punishment on Babel arises not as a response to their city-building, but to their refusal to be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, and subdue it. Their rebellious act came not through city-building, but from seeking a name for themselves apart from God's command. If scholars can show that these texts view cities in a positive light, then the Pentateuch does not have opposing views on cities but sees them as generally positive.

Although evangelicals will not agree with many of the presuppositions and conclusions of McEntire's work, they can justly appreciate his erudition and close reading of the text. McEntire does not claim to have written a biblical theology on cities, yet each chapter ends with a reflection on implications for the rapidly urbanizing world of the twenty-first century. Whereas these are noble attempts to apply his research, the book still fits more squarely as a work of biblical criticism. Pastors and church leaders will most likely not profit from this work and without a sufficient understanding of biblical criticism and its presuppositions, evangelical pastors may come away confused. I recommend the book for biblical scholars, more familiar with this type of argument, who can profit from various insights, even if they do not agree with his overall thesis or conclusions.

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***The Gospels as Stories: A Narrative Approach to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.* By Jeannine K. Brown. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2020, xiv+210pp., \$21.99.**

If probing the world of biblical studies were like visiting a museum with an entire gallery devoted to the Gospels, having Jeannine K. Brown as your docent would be make all the difference, moving you from interest and appreciation to a paradigm shift in your perspective. As both a seasoned professor of NT—having taught at Bethel Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota, for two decades—and an accomplished author, Brown’s pedagogical experience and depth of scholarship meld in the expert guidance she provides to engaging the narrative dimensions of the four canonical Gospels.

In the brief preface, Brown shares her own journey from interest in narrative criticism to appreciation of its value for her students. What began with her dissertation on Matthew’s characterization of Jesus’s disciples has developed into the more comprehensive method outlined and illustrated in *The Gospels as Stories*. Written in a personable style and clearly structured, the book supplies a content-rich introduction to narrative criticism while remaining accessible to a wide audience. Like a good docent, Brown immediately invites the readers’ interest in the subject matter, wins their confidence in her expertise, and challenges them to examine the literary craftsmanship of the Gospels.

The book is organized in six parts of approximately twenty pages each, except for the three-page conclusion. Several features enhance the book’s usefulness as a text both for college or graduate level courses and for readers new to the subject matter. Key terms are noted in bold and appear in a glossary with concise definitions. A few pages of “Recommended Resources,” provide a handful of bibliographic references pertinent to parts 1 through 5. The book also has a Scripture index and a subject index. Throughout the book, Brown includes twenty-three figures or charts visually organizing key details or data.

Part 1: “The Turn to Gospels as Stories” surveys “some of the key ways scholarship and the church have read the Gospels” and introduces narrative criticism “as a beneficial and developing methodology” (p. 19). Readers can easily imagine themselves as students

in Brown's classroom as she employs three versions of a well-known fairy tale (the original account written by Hans Christian Andersen, a picture book, and a musical) to illustrate other approaches to the Gospels. Brown openly invites the audience to consider the analogy, asking for example, "What do you notice about these various methods applied" to the fairy tale? (p. 7). As she guides the reader through her own thought process in response to such questions, terms that would be unfamiliar to those outside the domain of academic biblical studies—like *source criticism* and *redaction criticism*—become both clear and memorable. Brown further extends the analogy to provide three basic categories for these approaches that fail to account for "the narrative character of the Gospels in some significant way" (p. 7). This exercise establishes context for introducing "the role and contribution of narrative criticism" through a concentrated summary of the method's emergence and implementation in academic study of the Gospels.

Parts 2 through 5 are each comprised of two chapters. In parts 2, 3, and 4, the first chapter concentrates on a major strategy for analyzing the Gospels, with examples drawing on facets of all four Gospels. The second illustrates the strategy's application to reading one of the Gospels. Part 2 focuses on "Plot and Plotting" illustrated in the structure of Luke's Gospel. Part 3 addresses characterization and draws on Brown's extensive study of Matthew's portrayal of the disciples as a character group. Part 4 counters atomization of Scripture with exploration of intertextuality, specifically the Gospel writers' use of the OT. Brown's research for previously published articles undergirds her demonstration of the way two major themes of John's Gospel—Jesus as the Passover Lamb and the renewal of creation—unfold through OT allusions and echoes. Part 5 also follows the pattern, but instead of highlighting a narrative strategy, the first chapter explores "How a Story Theologizes." In the second, Brown performs a "kind of integrated reading" of the Gospel of Mark, walking through it sequentially and noting "how Mark's plotting, characterization, and use of the Old Testament intersect to illuminate his understanding of God" (p. 168). In the few pages of part 6, Brown succinctly summarizes the narrative method proposed in the book. However, the concluding remarks also capsulize her overarching apologetic for reading each Gospel as a whole story, not

merely a series of loosely related pericopes, and for attending to “how a particular Gospel writer shapes his narrative” (p. 185).

The Gospels as Stories will prove to be an eminently teachable and accessible text in a variety of settings. Brown successfully showcases four major strategies and clearly demonstrates the value of each. She is judicious in use of Greek vocabulary, which is limited to transliteration. The chapters are well-organized with sensible subheadings. Footnotes do not overwhelm, but neither are they skimpy in providing pertinent clarifications or directing the reader to important sources or concepts. Compared with the substantive content and even the insightful choice of cover art for the book, the subject index was disappointing. Numerous terms and authors cited are entirely missing from the index or lacking a complete list of page numbers. In addition, a handful of literary terms used in the text could have been included among those appearing in bold and in the glossary.

Apart from these relatively minor shortcomings, weaknesses are few. First, because Brown has clearly situated her narrative approach within the field of biblical studies, its relationship to theological interpretation is treated tangentially, mentioned as merely one “reading strategy” among many with which narrative criticism can easily be in conversation (p. 18). Consequently, the introductory chapter’s account of the method’s historical development is narrowly limited in scope, with no mention of such key movements as new criticism and study of patristic reading strategies or of the contributions of such scholars as Hans Frei or Brevard Childs. Perhaps the addition of a bibliography could supply references to some of the more important works without detracting from the appropriate focus on narrative criticism alone. Especially since Brown devotes a section of the book to narrative theology (part 5), at least initiating “conversation” between narrative criticism and theological interpretation would help readers distinguish between them. Second, the conclusion seems exceptionally brief. Although it works well as it is, Brown’s readers would benefit from an expanded essay, especially one that extended the practical dimensions of her narrative approach. These comments aside, Bible teachers, seminary professors and students, ministers, pastors, and, as argued below, oral communicators of the gospel who follow Jeannine Brown’s guidance to reading the Gospels as stories can expect to experience, potentially, a paradigm shift in

the way they detect and are transformed by the distinctive narrative shape of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

A particularly significant strength of Brown's proposal is its potential for practical application. *The Gospels as Stories* defines and illustrates the narrative critical approach in a masterful manner. In addition to providing a theoretical framework for an in-depth understanding of the biblical stories, this book can contribute significantly to the practical task of communicating the gospel to oral communicators. Grant Lovejoy estimates that "there are 5.7 billion people in the world who are oral communicators because either they are illiterate or their reading comprehension is inadequate. That is over 80% of the world's total population."¹ Lovejoy explains that

The oral cultures of the world pose a particular challenge for conventional Christian ministry. Oral cultures are not print-oriented and do not respond well to forms of witnessing, discipling, teaching and preaching that are based on print. . . . Sermons built around outlines and lists of principles communicate poorly with people whose life is lived in oral cultures.²

To address this need, Jim Slack and J.O. Terry designed an approach to telling stories called "Bible Storying." "It is a method of sharing biblical truths by telling the stories of the Bible as intact stories in the order they happened in time. The person using this method leads the hearer to discover the truths in the stories for the purpose of evangelization, discipleship, church planting, and leadership training."³ While this method has been very effective in reaching oral communicators,⁴ it has encountered resistance in some highly literate, propositional, and Western academic circles in which the mere mention of the word "orality" sets off red flags.⁵ In light of

¹Grant Lovejoy, "The Extent of Orality: 2012 Update," *Orality Journal* 1 (November 1, 2012), 31.

²Lovejoy, "The Extent of Orality: 2012 Update," 13.

³Samuel E. Chiang and Grant Lovejoy, eds., *Beyond Literate Western Models: Contextualizing Theological Education in Oral Cultures* (Richmond, VA: International Orality Network, 2013), 205.

⁴J. Dudley Woodberry, ed., *Seed to Fruit*, 2nd ed. (Pasadena: William Carey Press, 2011), see the technical data article on CD that is included with the book.

⁵Larry Dinkins, "Presenting Orality in Academic Contexts," in *Beyond Literate Western Practices: Continuing Conversation in Orality and Theological Education*; eds., Samuel E. Chiang and Grant

this, Jeannine Brown's *The Gospel as Stories* can be of great benefit to those employing oral methodologies to share the gospel message with oral communicators in the following ways.

First, the manner in which this book defines and illustrates narrative criticism can provide a validation for Bible Storying. While form criticism, source criticism, and redaction criticism have their place in interpreting other genres in Scripture,⁶ by focusing on the literary and storied qualities of a narrative portion (e.g., the Gospel of John), narrative criticism can facilitate its interpretation in a clear and precise manner. Bible Storying, by employing narrative criticism properly, does not need to be perceived as a "light" or non-exegetical form of communication. Instead, it will be recognized as instrumental in allowing the stories in the Bible to be clearly understood and internalized by oral communicators, resulting in the transformation of their lives.

Second, Bible Storying can benefit from the emphasis in this book focusing on the final form so the entire storyline is understood. While Bible Storying correctly emphasizes the importance of telling the complete story without interruption,⁷ the advice that the storyer should read the entire book (e.g., the Gospel of Matthew) repeatedly to grasp the entire story at the book level is well taken. While Bible Storying emphasizes the importance of selecting specific stories to communicate specific biblical truths,⁸ it is extremely important that the storyer understand the entire storyline if the story to be shared is going to be properly interpreted. What the author recommends about the Gospels needs to be applied to the other books of the Bible from which the stories are taken.

Third, the discussion in this book on characterization can be very helpful to Bible Storying. While Bible Storying has stressed the importance of knowing the characters in the story, characterization provides the additional dimensions of knowing the relationship of the character to the narrator, to other characters, to the reader,

Lovejoy (Richmond, VA: International Orality Network, 2014), 103.

⁶David S. Dockery and George H. Guthrie, *The Holman Guide to Interpreting the Bible* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2005).

⁷J.O. Terry, *Basic Bible Storying* (Fort Worth, TX: Church Starting Network, 2008), 2. Terry defines Bible Storying as "the intentional and uninterrupted sharing of God's Word primarily as stories."

⁸Terry, *Basic Bible Storying*, 45–49.

and to the narrative features like the plot, setting and theme. Oral communicators have the tendency to identify with the characters in the story. Being informed about characterization can enable the storyer to select the stories and to present them in such a way that they relate to the spiritual needs of the oral communicators.

Fourth, a strength of Bible Storying is that it strongly emphasizes the importance of studying the worldview of the hearers of the story not only to learn about their central assumptions, concepts and premises but also to identify the bridges and barriers that must be addressed in communicating the Gospel story.⁹ An area in which this book can be of great help is in focusing on understanding the cultural context of the first hearers (readers) of the Gospels.¹⁰ As Brown points out, “Reading the characters of the Gospels today, we will be better interpreters if we fill in narrative gaps as much as possible with relevant historical information” (p. 78).

Fifth, for a number of years Bible Storying has entertained the idea that oral communicators can learn sufficient stories as to have an “oral Bible” in their hearts and minds.¹¹ This is based on the observation that some oral communicators have an extraordinary capacity to retain Bible stories and that many people groups have neither a written Bible nor the capacity to read one if it existed. A dimension that *The Gospel as Stories* can add to this concept is that oral communicators can theologize as they listen to the stories and reflect on their implications for their lives. While I (Daniel) was ministering to a Kekchi tribal group in Guatemala that had been trained through Bible Storying, I was amazed that every time I asked a theological question they would answer with a Bible story. This book can help Bible storyers know how to enable narrative theological reflection among oral communicators. This book can enhance the Bible Storying effort to evangelize oral communicators in other ways. Due to space limitations, we will confine ourselves to these observations with the disposition to continue to dialogue about this vital topic.¹²

⁹Daniel R. Sanchez, J.O. Terry, and Lanette W. Thompson, *Bible Storying for Church Planting* (Fort Worth, TX: Church Starting Network, 2008), 56–62.

¹⁰Anthony C. Thiselton, *The Two Horizons: New Testament Hermeneutical and Philosophical Description* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980).

¹¹Terry, *Basic Bible Storying*, 147–50.

¹²It has been my (Daniel’s) privilege to teach Bible Storying courses with J.O. Terry at Southwestern

Overall, we recommend *The Gospels as Stories* as an excellent book providing perspectives and strategies that enable its readers to understand and apply narrative analysis in teaching, preaching, and story-telling settings in such a way that the story of Jesus will transform the lives of its hearers.

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***Pastors and Their Critics: A Guide to Coping with Criticism in Ministry.* By Joel R. Beeke and Nicholas J. Thompson. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2020, 177pp., \$15.99.**

This is a subject that no pastor wants to talk about, but every pastor wants to hear. *Pastors and Their Critics* is a book worth reading.

The authors represent a unique perspective in their writing. The book combines the extensive experience of Beeke, president of Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary and his forty years of pastoral experience, with the freshness of Thompson, a recent graduate of Reformed Theological Seminary who was pursuing ordination at the time of this writing.

This is a work for criticized pastors and critical church members. It primarily targets those in ministry as well as those preparing for it. However, its application to all believers is apparent.

The book is divided into four parts. The first part lays out the biblical foundation for dealing with criticism. Part two gives practical principles for coping with criticism. Part three outlines principles for the church in practicing criticism. Part four focuses on Paul's example in casting a vision for the church in dealing with criticism.

The strength of the work is its ease to read style, practical advice, and excellent use of illustrations. The transparency of the authors is evident throughout. Using biblical examples as well as their own experiences, the authors show the frequency of criticism in ministry

Baptist Theological Seminary for the past ten years. He would agree with me when I say that we are continuing to learn about the use of narrative approaches to reach oral communicators.

and describe its real and potential dangers. It is also evident that they have sought to live out the principles they advocate in the work.

Beginning with a focus on examples in Scripture, the writers trace criticism to the garden but spend most of the section on the OT revealing those leveled at Moses, David, and Nehemiah. Focusing mainly on the attack against Moses and Aaron by Korah, Dathan, Abiram, and On, the authors show how God's servants endured accusations of crime, false pretenses, personal aspiration, and failure in leadership (pp. 24–25). Next, Beeke and Thompson point out the unjust verbal assault of David by Shimei (pp. 27–28). While the criticisms of Moses and David were from within the covenant community, those leveled against Nehemiah came from outside the community of faith. Sanballat, Tobiah, and Gesham attempted to discourage Nehemiah, mock him, threaten him, and distract him (pp. 31–34).

What is evident from the examples of Moses, David, and Nehemiah is the faithfulness of their responses. Moses and Aaron turned to the Lord and interceded for the people (pp. 26–27) demonstrating their personal trust in God and their love for God's people. David submitted to the sovereignty of God and responded with humility (pp. 28–29). Nehemiah sought the Lord, took wise measures, and challenged the people (as well as modeled for them the need) to get back to work (pp. 34–35).

In the section on the Christological foundations for coping with criticism, the authors demonstrate how Christ obediently responded to criticism. His silence, meekness, inner strength, obedience, and faith serve as a perfect model for all Christians in the face of unjust attacks.

Part two deals with practical principles for dealing with criticism. In this section, the authors point out biblical principles for dealing with criticism realistically, with humility, with sober judgment, and with grace. One of the key takeaways of this section is understanding when criticism calls for silence and when it demands a response (pp. 94–98). Ultimately, Beeke and Thompson remind us that critical attacks highlight our desperate need for the Lord.

Part three alone is worth the price of the book. Its worth is substantial. Few works have been written on how to criticize others in ministry. While more specific instructions on how Christians may

appropriately criticize others would have been helpful, the emphasis on creating a culture where constructive criticism is fostered is well-taken (pp. 144–46).

Part four returns to the subject of dealing with criticism and argues that Paul casts a vision for the church in facing criticism in a way that glorifies God, maintains an ultimate focus, and highlights an eschatological hope. The authors exhort pastors and church leaders to exemplify this vision in their ministries and cast it before the people they serve.

It is ironic to criticize a book dealing with criticism. Nevertheless, while the value of this book is significant, some practical and organizational adjustments might have added to its impact. The principles on dealing with criticism in part two are relevant, biblical, and sound. However, given that part one highlights examples of criticisms against leaders and tracks the obedient responses of those leaders, the principles listed in part two would have been clearer had they been directly taken from the examples recorded in part one. Nearly all of the content covered in part two overlaps the lessons learned from parts one and four and would seem to have carried more authority if presented as lessons learned from those biblical examples. Other biblical passages that are recorded in part two could then have been elucidated to compliment the lessons learned from Moses, David, Nehemiah, Jesus, and Paul. Thus, the principles recorded in part two seem redundant to the lessons learned from the responses of those five examples in parts one and four.

Organizationally, the flow of the book seems a little cumbersome. While the intent of part four is to cast a vision for the church, its content seems to more naturally follow part one than part three. Instead, parts two and four sandwich part three and overshadow some of its impact. Parts one, two, and four could have been combined to make the flow of the work more clear. Since part one covers both OT and NT examples, the section in part four on Paul appears awkwardly isolated from the section on biblical foundations. Separate chapters on the OT, Christ, and Paul under one section might have improved the flow. Those chapters could have then been followed by a chapter on practical principles drawn from those biblical examples. Thus, a two-part structure giving practical examples from Scripture

in part one on coping with criticism and principles in part two for practicing criticism would seem more efficient.

Overall, *Pastors and Their Critics* addresses a vital subject in ministry and exposes a conversation that every church needs to have. The Bible resounds with examples and instructions for giving and receiving criticism that all believers need to hear and follow. This book is an encouragement to pastors and a valuable contribution to an often-overlooked issue in the church.

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***The Innovative Church: How Leaders and Their Congregations Can Adapt in an Ever-Changing World.* By Scott Cormode. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2020, 304pp., \$26.99.**

Scott Cormode's *The Innovative Church* proves to be a timely volume, in which he addresses planned ministry adaptation for the purpose of congregational change. Cormode is the Hugh De Pree Professor of Leadership Development at Fuller Theological Seminary, and he notes that while he was finalizing manuscript edits, the world was experiencing "the unfolding effects of this global pandemic" (p. xiii). It is with this unique COVID-19 background in mind, that he offers his central argument, "A changed world demands innovation, and a changed religious world requires innovative congregations" (p. 3).

The impetus for the specific research came as Cormode observed a convergence of two "unrelated conversations" in discrete fields. In the "Christian world" he heard consistent pleas for churches to change, while in the "tech world" he noticed continual calls for innovation (pp. xi–xii). He then began to "read the innovation literature with an eye toward how it might help us recalibrate the church for life in an ever-changing world" (p. xii). However, Cormode observed that the literature commonly positioned inventions that "tear down the

structures of the past and replace them with something better” as the optimal innovations to be prized and emulated (p. 3).

As a proposed alternative, Cormode suggests that “congregational innovation” is a distinctive means to “account for both the ever-changing culture and the never-changing gospel” (p. 4). In Chapter one, he argues that this approach necessitates a “recalibration of leadership,” through a commitment to what he terms the “dual standard of people and practices” (p. 4). This method for innovation through “stewarding” leadership is then performed “according to the longings and losses of the ever-changing people entrusted to our care and according to the practices that constitute the never-changing gospel” (p. 4). He notes that the writing process took four years, between initial draft completion and final form. This multi-year window allowed time for the “road-testing and refining” work of applying these ideas in specific congregational contexts to unfold (p. xii). Chapters two to six provide the reader with a detailed treatment of the background ideas and standard process through which Cormode guided these “congregational teams” (p. xii).

The core of his consultative approach with congregational leaders is rooted in a modified set of “The Drucker Questions,” coined and developed for organizational leadership, primarily in business contexts, by celebrated management thinker Peter Drucker. These five questions have become common diagnostic helps in organizational assessment and development. Cormode observes that the full question set is often shortened to “Who is your customer, and what does this customer value?” (p. 7). Remarking that churches do not serve “customers,” as “profit is not our goal,” he devised analogous questions that “can guide Christians and Christian organizations in their pursuit of God’s purposes” (p. 7). The author’s five questions to initiate congregational innovation are: (1) “Who are the people entrusted to your care?”; (2) “How do those people experience the longings and losses that make up the human condition?”; (3) “What Big Lies do your people believe that prevent them from hearing the gospel?”; (4) “How do you make spiritual sense of those longings and losses?”; and (5) “How do you express that spiritual meaning as a shared story of hope?” (pp. 8–15). These questions are utilized to arrive at a “shared story of hope,” which the author argues will establish the “vision” for the church or ministry (p. 14).

Through the formal use of these queries, applied in consultation with congregational teams, “Christian innovation happens when we make spiritual sense of the longings and losses of the people entrusted to our care,” which occurs as leaders understand and engage “mental models” rooted in the “Christian tradition,” and focused on “innovation of meaning” (pp. 21–30). Meaning innovation is intended to provide “new categories” for how to make sense of life and experience, based on theological understanding (p. 32). The author argues that this entire process is supported and sustained by leaders who practice “transformative listening,” which allows the leader to be changed through the process of listening to the people they serve and steward (pp. 41–42). Chapters seven to ten then outline defined practices needed for leaders and congregations to establish organizational culture and continued enhancement of their “capacity for agility” (p. 203). It is in this section that Cormode more fully addresses ideas related to: conventions of organizational culture, form and dynamics (pp. 152–72); variables and contours of “adaptive change” management proper (pp. 178–200); and best practices of “agile” change planning and execution (pp. 211–28).

While the work offers a stimulating treatment of innovation and its application to local ecclesial settings, there are several areas of needed caution for the reader. First, according to Cormode, the “ultimate goal of Christian innovation is to invite our people into a new story” which is intended to be a “communal” and “hopeful” story (p. 13). He employs Jesus’s use of parables as the principal model for this approach (p. 13). A telltale sign that he rests his case on an unsettled foundation is that the single expert voice cited is postliberal theologian George Lindbeck, whose cultural-linguistic “rule theory” suggests that biblical and theological interpretations are to be determined by the individual culture or societal group (p. 222). Similarly, from this viewpoint, he sees that “Christian leadership is fundamentally an act of theological interpretation” (p. 68). He then extends this line of reasoning to assert that “Christian innovation is fundamentally an act of creating new theological interpretation” (p. 68). This contention is rooted in his more foundational conviction that Christian leaders are tasked primarily to “make spiritual meaning” (p. 68). This meaning-making occurs, primarily, by “planting language,” “changing mental models,” and “reinventing practices”

(pp. 70–83). His examples of such Christian “practices” include hospitality, vocation, prayer and community (p. 98). However, instead of a plea to overhaul how churches think, speak and engage these domains, Cormode directs the reader to contextually apply categories and employ disciplines. Rather than true “innovation” or “reinvention,” he appears to simply advocate for church culture analysis and feature identification, which are standard fare on the menu of organizational and leadership assessments. This approach, paired with the aforementioned postliberal hermeneutic, appears to provide change leaders with inadequate biblically and theologically–moored guidance.

Additionally, Cormode mentions that what began as a “much more scholarly book” was amended to instead be more accessible to church leaders. As such, he either moved the academic background to endnotes, or the material was “jettisoned altogether” (p. xii). While this revision likely achieves increased reader accessibility, it may prove to be less satisfying for those who desire to see how the research process and product were framed and structured (p. xii). Because this is the case, there are times when the absence of fuller rationale, and germane details, hinder his suggested applications to change leadership. With these identified cautions and limitations in mind, *The Innovative Church*, nevertheless, provides a thought-provoking and necessarily challenging prod to the consideration, planning and actions of church leaders, particularly as we move forward through and toward post-pandemic ministry.

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***Pages from a Preacher’s Notebook: Wisdom and Prayers from the Pen of John Stott.* By John Stott. Lexham Press, 2020, 280pp., \$24.99.**

John Stott was one of those rare individuals who is valued within all segments of the evangelical world. He was known for his keen

intellect, his strong text rendering in his sermons, and for his wealth of insights into common everyday issues the world was facing. His “double-listening” idea was sometimes mistaken for equating worldly ideas with the Scripture, but that is a complete misnomer. His ministry as rector of *All Souls Langham Place*, was one of effectiveness and accompanying integrity.

This book, *Preacher’s Notebook*, is an anthology of years of disciplined research and accompanying note taking that is voluminous in its depth. This is a compilation of those notes most impacting in his own ministry and which he saw as rich insights from that “double listening” concept he held. Those notes closely tied to his ministry at *All Souls* were removed from this compilation so that the book would be applicable to anyone, regardless of their situation in ministry.

The book is summarized into four categories: God and Gospel, Church and Christian, World and Worldviews, and a last section on Prayers. Inside each of these categories are numerous sub-categories that make looking up an idea or illustration for a message extremely helpful. This is a work more for reference than light reading. It would not be a preaching textbook per se, but as an appendix, it is very helpful.

There are unique aspects to it. It covers men such as Calvin, the great leader in the Reformation, to Jim Baker, the tawdry hypocrite who spent prison time for cheating Christians, to Harry Ironside, who pastored Moody Church in Chicago from 1929–1948. Any man who touched the church in any way, good or bad, could be an illustration for the cause of Christ. It evidences Stott’s dry wit. He quotes a lay member of the London Diocesan Synod in 1972 regarding their dismay over the theological arguments hindering Anglican and Methodist unity: “if all the theologians in the world were laid end to end, they would not reach a conclusion” (p. 18).

There are a number of historical synopses that are quite good. He lists five things that made the world ready for Christ’s coming: Pax Romana, Roman unity, Roman roads, Greek culture conquering the Roman nation that conquered Greece, and then he lists a number of men and their clamoring for spiritual realities (p. 68).

He approached Scripture with integrity, while at the same time treating science as something not to be demeaned. He illustrates this with Michael Faraday. He lauds a lecture where Faraday received

thunderous applause, and yet when all looked in Faraday's direction he was gone. He had left so as to be on time for a prayer meeting at a small church he attended. It was "under the cover of cheering, he slipped out" (p.58).

Some of his notes are most poignant. He quotes the great Charles Simeon as he is dying. "If I am admitted, as I hope to be, to heaven, then if there be one that will sing louder than the rest, I think I shall be that one. But while I am here I am a sinner—a redeemed sinner; that is my style; and as such I would lie here to the last, at the foot of the cross, looking unto Jesus, and go as such into the presence of my God."¹³

One last illustration, that for me was interesting, was C.S Lewis's advice on writing to a young girl's question. Not all will be quoted here, but it was fascinating to hear him tell her to stay away from magazines and only read books. Turn off the radio and if you quit on some work, not to throw it away but to file it away. He asserted that some of his best work was a result of the filing and not the discarding.¹⁴

It must be remembered that these illustrations, quotes, poems, etc., are all things with which Stott saw value. He was an avid bird watcher and there are a large number of odd facts about birds that I doubt anyone but he, or another bird watcher, would find to be beneficial. For example, he mentions the raptor migration in Israel, but with no apparent purpose or allusion to anything spiritual (p. 19). This is why the categories and sub-categories are so beneficial, as they allow readers to skip over those things with which they have no interest.

This is a great reference book for those seeking unique anecdotes from various areas of life, as catalogued by a man whom so many respect in so many ways.

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¹³Hugh Evan Hopkins, *Charles Simeon of Cambridge* (Hodder and Stoughton, 1977), 211–12.

¹⁴C. S. Lewis, *The Letters of C. S. Lewis*, ed. W. H. Lewis (Geoffrey Bles, 1966), 291–92.

***The Educational Ministry of a Church: A Comprehensive Model for Students and Ministers.* Edited by Jonathan J. Kim and Charles A. Tidwell. Second Edition. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2020, 316pp., \$34.99.**

In the preface to the second edition of *The Educational Ministry of a Church: A Comprehensive Model for Students and Ministers*, co-editor Jonathan Kim admits that in recent years the ministry of education in the local church has become “diversified” but the “basic facts associated with the nomenclature remain the same” (p. xvi). Kim, associate dean of the School of Christian Faith at Dallas Baptist University, explains “the project was not meant to be a simple update in bibliography... but a revision of the [1996 book] and introduce the next generation of church leaders to alternative ways of educational administration” (p. xvi). Included in the front matter is the preface from the 1996 revision, authored by Charles A. Tidwell, retired professor of administration at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, who indicated that the ministry of education was experiencing change even twenty years ago. Tidwell identified an “every increasing pace of change. And there seems to be no end to it. There must not be an end to it as long as most of the changes represent genuine progress” (p. xv).

The second edition is a collection of essays concerning the administration and organization of educational ministries in the local church, with a particular emphasis on Southern Baptist churches. Unlike the first edition, written exclusively by Tidwell, the essays in the new version were written by Southern Baptist Christian educators in the academy and ministry practitioners in the local church. One of the immediate strengths of the second edition is the diversity of experiences and perspectives offered by the authors, most of whom have decades of ministry experience in the local church and some who are now training men and women in seminaries and Christian colleges for a lifetime of service in educational ministry. The target audience for this book looks much like its authors: both the local church practitioner who needs guidance and wisdom in the day-to-day process of organizing and leading educational ministry as well as the minister-in-training who is studying for a future of fruitful ministry leadership.

Organized in four parts with seventeen chapters, *The Educational Ministry of a Church* provides a foundational and comprehensive approach to educational administration. Part One, “Necessity,” offers the epistemological framework for Christian education in the church including a biblical, theological, and historical rationale, the understanding of human development, the ecclesiological mandate, and awareness of cultural trends. Kim reminds the reader of the importance of “increased understanding of the necessity of the educational ministry of the church” (p. 3) by building a reliable foundation for such an endeavor.

Part Two, “Basic Components,” describes the building blocks of ministry laid on the necessary foundation. The five essays in this section delineate the essential ministry activities comprising educational ministry: Bible teaching, discipleship, missions education, music ministry, and ministries for enrichment and support for families, age groups, stewardship, evangelism, recreation, and media. The wide swath of responsibilities in the educational ministry of a church indicates that “education touches all that a church attempts to do as it moves toward fulfilling its mission” (p. 97). In one of the standout chapters from this section—“Ministry of Bible Teaching and Learning”—Josh Rose, director of the Doctor of Education program at Southwestern Seminary, offers his expertise in training leaders for off-campus small groups as well as for an on-campus Sunday School ministry. This focus on contemporary, as well as traditional practices reveals the need for educational leaders to be adaptable in an era of shifting paradigms in ministry.

Part Three, “Leadership Personnel,” emphasizes the role of staff and lay leaders in the ongoing effectiveness of educational ministry; these serve as the “builders” of the ministry structure. Three chapters in this section build on one another in creating leadership philosophy and practice for ministry. The pastor and church staff provide ministry vision, guidance, and training (Chapter 11, “Pastoral Role in Education”). Members of the body “provide a workforce absolutely necessary for the church to carry out the Great Commission” (Chapter 12, “Volunteer Leaders in Education”). Ministry leadership teams—composed of staff and members who are gifted and trained for service—provide an array of “gifts, passions, and specific skill sets to develop a comprehensive educational ministry in the local church”

(Chapter 13, “Organizational Leadership Teams in Education”).

The final section, “How Leaders Lead,” resembles a module for ministry leadership training. Topics include basic leadership skills such as the role of the leader in planning and organizing, developing a leadership pipeline, resourcing workers, and evaluating ministry effectiveness. These are “make-or-break” competencies for an educational leader’s success on the field. Cheri Wyman’s essay, “Discovering, Recruiting, and Training Workers” represents the quality of authors in part four, as she takes a deep look at one of the most important tasks of an educational leader: finding, equipping, and maintaining gifted and skilled leaders for ministry needs. Wyman pulls from a deep bench of sources and offers specific and detailed suggestions for tending to human ministry resources.

Even though *The Educational Ministry of a Church* is a revision of a book originally published in 1982, the authors have accomplished their goal: to pass along a heritage of wisdom about Christian education administration and honor the unchangeable mission of this important disciple-making ministry. The chapter titles and topics mirror the first edition, but the content has been updated for a new generation. Considering any content gaps that may need to be filled in future editions, two come to mind. First is the role of technology in educational leadership including website development and social media. Virtual or remote teaching will also play a significant role in the future of Christian education. The second gap is the changing leadership structures in evangelical churches. Most Christian educators recognize the diminishing role of the traditional minister of education as well as the disappearance of Christian education as a ministry priority in the church. In the future, those who oversee the education or disciple-making ministry of the church will need to not only understand the mechanics of their ministry, but will also be called on to motivate and inspire congregations to grow deeply in their walk with Christ.

Tidwell can rest assured that his legacy book has a new life in the twenty-first century. Church educators and students alike will profit from the wisdom of the expert contributors. The redeployment of this text in this era will likely raise the awareness of educational ministry in our churches and on our campuses; and perhaps, a new generation

of trained leaders will contribute to a resurgence of education and growth in the church.

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***Resuscitating Evangelism.* By Jordan Easley and Ernest Easley. Nashville: B&H Publishing, 2020, 183pp., \$12.74.**

Jordan Easley and his father, Ernest serve together as a father-son duo as senior and teaching pastors of the First Baptist Church of Cleveland, Tennessee. Both men studied at Dallas Baptist University and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. They have published several articles and books. The present work, *Resuscitating Evangelism*, is meant to biblically encourage pastors, laypersons, and churches to obey Jesus Christ in fulfilling the Great Commission through evangelism. The aim of this book is to fan the readers' flame of evangelism and see God bring salvation and a new passion for more lost people to receive the good news.

The book is essentially divided into two main parts with a charge to pastors in between the two sections. The first four chapters provide an explanation for the decline of evangelism within local churches. Each chapter addresses the concerted need to make personal evangelism a priority for both individuals as well as for each local church because evangelism was Jesus's priority.

The authors begin with an examination of evangelism and its existing problems. An internal look and identification of the warning signs and symptoms provide indications of the priorities that a church or individuals have for evangelism. After these warning signs and symptoms are tackled, the book moves on to consider the Holy Spirit's empowerment of evangelism through examination of Acts 1–2.

The book accomplishes its purpose. The reader is stimulated to study the Scriptures, to rely on the witness's source of strength and power, and to boldly proclaim the good news of Jesus as

seed-scatterers. A lack of evangelism is essentially an issue with one's discipleship. The two are not in contrast to one another, but rather work in cooperation with each other. The reality that most drift away from rather than towards evangelism is acknowledged. Making disciples of Jesus Christ begins with the work of evangelism. To be anti-evangelistic is to be anti-Great Commission.

A charge is given to pastors to reprioritize and model weekly personal soul-winning for their congregations. This charge section discusses the role of pastors to lead their churches to be evangelistic and provides a plethora of illustrations of how mainstream Southern Baptists pastors passions have shaped their churches. The evangelistic heart of a church is only present where pastors too, highlights this heart.

The second half of the book is a practical guide to sharpen a church's evangelistic strategy. An analysis of 1 Peter 4 is well-handled in that the outcome for the witnessing encounter is up to God, not the soul-winner. Every pastor and layperson can benefit from this book because it provides helps to strengthen the lost soul consciousness of soul-winners. With regard to corporate evangelism, the work recommends a return to giving a public invitation; a time of response at the conclusion of decisional preaching.

Even so, weaknesses do exist in this work. First, an argument is made to reprioritize personal and corporate evangelism throughout churches; however, a standard method of sharing the gospel message should be included. This work is more useful as ancillary reading for local church leaders desiring to refine their cognizance for evangelism. Second, many cited resources are excellent, but are twenty-years old.

Resuscitating Evangelism is recommended due to the aforementioned strengths. The book emphasis on evangelism and discipleship will lead to steady local church growth. Pastors and students will benefit from the encouragement found in these pages that they are not alone in the struggle to keep evangelism at the helm of church-wide consciousness.

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