Book Reviews

Stephen V. SPRINKLE. ***Disciples and Theology: Understanding the Faith of a Covenant People.*** **St. Louis: Chalice, 1999. 142 pp. $19.99.**

Following Eugene Boring's substantial study *Disciples and the Bible,* this slim volume appears to be much less ambitious in its aims. Sprinkle acknowledges that though people in the Stone-Campbell Movement decried theology as divisive speculation, we did theology whether we knew it or not. He treats Disciples thought under Campbellite (1804-1866), Milliganite (1867-1899), Liberal (1900-1957), and Ecumenical (1958-1977) syntheses, ending with a call for current Disciples to write a systematic theology. Throughout the book he contends that covenant was always the essential defining motif for Disciples theology, though suffering neglect in certain eras.

Disciples' longing for pristine NT Christianity produced our distinctive theological style, which Sprinkle labels "creative nostalgia." The theological pattern adopted by Thomas Campbell set the rules for Disciples theology for two generations, a form that rejected sectarianism and creedalism and therefore, for the most part, systematic and propositional approaches. Instead, the person and work of Christ was the organizing principle.

Sprinkle then does a brief reappraisal of Alexander Campbell's ideas on hermeneutics, covenant, and Christology. Campbell shifted the hermeneutical question from who interprets the text to how any faithful Christian could rightly interpret it, providing rules in his *Christian System.* He taught that the covenants between God and humans have been dispensational and progressive, culminating in the establishment of the kingdom of heaven after Christ's resurrection. While Campbell's definition of faith at first looks rather cold and intellectual, he clearly understood that the transforming power was in the person of Christ, not propositions about him.

Sprinkle then shifts abruptly to a short treatment of the work of Robert Milligan. While Milligan's 1869 *Scheme of Redemption* reflected Campbell's earlier focus on "Bible facts," it had none of *The Christian System*'s questing and creative spirit. Milligan's work was rationalistic and final, not subject to revision and renewal. This uncritical spirit of self-confidence dominated the late Campbellite and Milliganite eras and became a foil for those who formed the Liberal synthesis.

W.E. Garrison is Sprinkle's chief representative of that Liberal synthesis. One of the founders of Disciples history, Garrison profoundly influenced Disciples theology through his emphasis on personal liberty and diversity as the

essential pieces of Disciples identity. While acknowledging Garrison's positive contributions of a passion for ecumenism, the integrity of the individual, and anti-scholasticism, Sprinkle charges that his focus on individual sovereignty undercut the development of covenantal theology.

The section on the Ecumenical synthesis focuses primarily on the thought of William Barnett Blakemore and Ronald E. Osborn. Blakemore's ecumenical commitment arose from his understanding that the faith of the Disciples was—unlike Garrison's idea—essentially ecclesiological and that the community is primary in Christian identity. For Blakemore authority in religion rises out of the covenant community, not the sovereignty of individual Christians. Osborn's greatest contribution was creating a theology that makes covenant the key to Christian unity. Freedom is not individual right to personal opinion, but mutual consent and common commitment to God's reign freely chosen.

During the Ecumenical synthesis, Sprinkle contends, Disciples began to realize their lack of a substantive theology. In his final chapter the author lays out a trajectory for Disciples to write just such a systematic theology. Drawing from the work of contemporary Disciples historians and theologians, he contends that since the covenant community of faith is the primary datum of Disciples tradition, the construction of a theology in the context of covenant is the clear way to go. In Disciples practice of baptism and the Lord's Supper the resources for a christologically formed covenant theology are most readily available.

While written primarily for persons in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), there is something of value in this succinct volume for all heirs of the Stone-Campbell Movement, not the least of which is its call to articulate a systematic theology. Among its weaknesses are its uneven treatment of the periods (the Milliganite synthesis gets only seven pages at the end of the second chapter) and its dismissal of the other two branches of the Movement in a sentence that relegates them to a rigid Milliganite stance. I also felt that the concept of covenant could have been developed in a more coherent way since Sprinkle makes it so central to his approach. Nevertheless, this is a valuable contribution to Stone-Campbell studies, one that anyone interested in current theological trends cannot ignore.

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Fran CRADDOCK, Martha FAW, and Nancy HEIMER. ***In the Fullness of Time: A History of Women in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).*** **St. Louis: Chalice, 1999. 276 pp. $14.99.**

In 1970, Lorraine Lollis published *The Shape of Adam's Rib* to explore the activities of women's organizations within the Disciples of Christ. Since that publication, women have made tremendous advances in both involvement and leadership within Disciple Churches. To revise and update the activities of Disciple women, Fran Craddock, Martha Faw, and Nancy Heimer, three prominent women within Disciple circles, have combined their efforts to produce this volume.

Written in recognition of the fiftieth anniversary of the Christian Women's Fellowship, this book is presented in three parts. The initial section, written by Faw, examines women's organizations from 1874 to 1968. Beginning with the founding of the Christian Woman's Board of Missions in 1874, Faw looks at the success and growth of female participation in the male-dominated missionary work of the church. In 1920, the CWBM was absorbed into the United Christian Missionary Society leaving women with "no elected officers, no unified women's organization beyond the local congregation . . . during the thirty-year period between 1920 and 1950" (91). In response to their declining impact upon the church, a group of women met at Turkey Run State Park, Indiana, to form the Christian Women's Fellowship as an organization through which women could advance their positions in the church. Faw traces the development of the CWF in 1950 through the beginning of Disciple Restructure in 1968.

Heimer authored the second section of the book, "1968 to the Present and Beyond," to show the "processes…that brought women into boards, pulpits, community service, and advocacy" (117). Beginning with the Restructure year of 1968, Heimer recounts the advancements of the CWF and the progress women made as they pursued an inclusive theology that would enable them to have total participation in the life of the church. Heimer concludes with a chapter that explores the "possibilities and problems that women face as they move into the twenty-first century" (124).

The final section of the book, compiled by Craddock, consists of five appendices that provide names, dates, finances, and a variety of other information dealing with the women's organizations of the Disciples of Christ. In addition to the helpful appendices, the authors have supplemented their study with a vast array of photographs that have been widely dispersed throughout the pages of the book.

Throughout the course of this writing, readers will notice a transition of aspirations between earlier and latter Disciple women. Faw points out that "there was no ambiguity about the intent and purpose" of the CWBM. Their objective, as quoted from the CWBM constitution, was "to cultivate a mis-

sionary spirit, to encourage missionary effort in our churches, to disseminate missionary intelligence, and to secure systematic contributions for missionary purposes" (12). The CWF, however, took up different goals. Through social and political activities (Meals-on-Wheels, the Equal Rights Amendment, the Nestle boycott, etc.) the CWF sought to advance and solidify the position of women in the church.

Along with a handful of grammatical errors, the authors also make a few minor factual errors. Josephine Smith is reported to have been "the first Disciples missionary to die on foreign soil" in 1885 (26). Thirty-one years previous to Smith's death, however, Alexander Cross, a slave who was bought, freed, and educated by the American Christian Missionary Society, died while taking the gospel message to Liberia in 1854. Furthermore, Faw notes a decline in the financial support of the UCMS by local congregations in the late 1920s, though "women's missionary groups continued to *increase* their giving for several years" (65). She attributes the decline in finances to "drastic changes" in society and the approaching Great Depression. One wonders if the development of the independent missionary movement at this time might also have impacted this trend.

Aside from these few minor mistakes, *In the Fullness of Time* provides an insightful overview of the work that women have performed and continue to perform within Disciple Churches. For those who are interested in the activities of Disciple of Christ women's organizations, this is the most comprehensive and up-to-date study that is available. Its readability lends itself to both graduate and undergraduate students, though its subject has little interest to those outside of Disciple Churches.

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William H. NEWMAN and Peter L. HALVORSON, eds. *Atlas of American Religion: The Denominational Era, 1776-1990.* New York: AltaMira, 2000. 176 pp. $49.95.

This brief volume traces the growth patterns of American denominations since 1776, using charts, graphs, and maps. Written by a sociologist and a geographer, it is more a scholarly monograph on religious change than a mere atlas.

The authors divide contemporary religious groups into two main categories—denominations and sects—using four criteria of definition. First is cultural normativeness, a qualitative measure of how much tension there is between the group and its social environment. Organizations viewed as main-

stream by the culture are denominations. Those viewed as different are defined as sects.

The other three criteria are quantitative and spatial: size (denominations are generally larger than sects), spatial extent (denominations have churches in more counties than sects do), and spatial dispersion (denominations are found nationwide while sects tend to be more regional. Using all four criteria, the atlas divides religious groups into five categories: National Denominations (such as the Catholic Church and the Southern Baptist Convention), Multiregional Denominations (such as the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and the United Church of Christ), Multiregional Sects (such as the Reformed Church in America and the Salvation Army), Classic Sects (such as the Mennonite Church and the Brethren in Christ), and National Sects (such as the Latter Day Saints and the Church of God).

Interestingly, all three Restoration groups are classified as denominations. This poses a question for those in Churches of Christ and Christian Churches. Although internally considered undenominational, are we so part of our culture that Newman and Halvorson do not view us as distinctive? Also of interest, Churches of Christ are listed with the National Denominations while the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and the Christian Churches and Churches of Christ are listed as Multiregional Denominations. This is based on the relative size and geographical distribution of the three groups. The authors even speculate that the three groups could experience reunification mergers in this century, "creating a significantly larger and more national denomination."

Although one might disagree with some of the book's conclusions, scholars of American religion will find it is the most helpful source available for examining the changing patterns of church membership in America. Unfortunately, it has little information on newer, smaller, and non-Christian religious groups.

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Erwin FAHLBUSCH, Jan Milic LOCHMAN, John MBITI, Jaroslav PELIKAN, and Lukas VISCHER, editors; Geoffrey W. BROMILEY, English-language editor; David B. BARRETT, statistical editor. *The Encyclopedia of Christianity.* Volume 1 (A–D). Grand Rapids: Eerdmans; Leiden: Brill, 1999. 893 pp. $100.00.

In 1999, Eerdmans and Brill jointly published the first volume (A–D) of the five-volume English translation of *Evangelisches Kirchenlexikon* (3d ed., 1997), making a significant contribution to encyclopedic treatments of

Christianity as an academic subject. More than a translation, however, this edition includes a number of features that were not a part of its German-language predecessor. Among these, according to the publishers, are articles on the religious history and climate of nearly every country of the world, concise statistical summaries of the religious (even church) affiliation of these countries, new biographies on prominent figures of church history, and articles dealing with topics of particular interest to English-speaking readers.

The scope of the *EC* is broad, as one might expect of a major reference work such as this. The editors have included articles on biblical and related studies, church history and traditions, contemporary church practices, theology and doctrine, as well as the geographical treatment mentioned above. What is unexpected, however, is the inclusion of a number of articles on political, social, philosophical, and psychological topics as they relate to Christianity or are viewed from a Christian perspective. In this regard, readers may be surprised to find a discussion of such topics as "The Absolute," "Acculturation," "Childhood," "City," "Creativity," "Distance Education," and "Depression." In keeping with the editors' commitment to present Christianity in a global context, there are also articles on the Third World theologies ("African Theology," "Asian Theology") and various aspects of other world religions ("Bhagavad Gita," "Caste," "Confucianism"). In spite of the publishers' contention that "over seventy biographical articles on prominent figures throughout church history" were added to the English edition, most users will be disappointed in the *EC* as a source for biographical research. This reviewer found few biographies on any *but* the most prominent names of Christian history (no Asbury, Campbell, or Carey here), and the coverage at times seemed inexplicably uneven (Barth, but not Bultmann).

All articles are signed and a complete list of the contributors, along with their locations, is given in the preliminaries. The readability of this list would have been improved had the names been presented in inverted order, and some users may prefer that the institutional affiliation of the contributors had also been given. To some degree, it is assumed that the contributors are well qualified to write the articles assigned to them and that most, while attempting to be unbiased, write from an evangelical Christian or Protestant worldview. However, because of the work's preponderance of German authorship, many readers of the English version may find it difficult to evaluate these aspects of the work, particularly with topics outside their own area of scholarship. At least one author recognized by the readers of *SCJ* will be Frederick W. Norris, who contributed the article on "Athanasius."

Among the useful features of the *EC* is a well-developed cross-reference system, which incorporates an arrow as a visual symbol and seems to mimic hypertext links found in electronic sources. Because these references are not only placed between entry words and at the end of articles but also imbedded

into the entries themselves, some users may find that they interrupt a smooth reading of the text. Perhaps simply bolding the in-text references would have been a less intrusive way to identify them. Another feature that will be useful to researchers is the brief, but up-to-date, statistical information (population, annual growth rate, life expectancy) for all major countries of the world. These same data are summarized for each of the continents as well, which permits easy comparison. Still other helpful features are the outlines placed at the beginning of longer articles and the bibliographies included at the end of (sometimes even within) all articles, regardless of their length. The bibliographies, however, are yet another place where English-speaking users will detect the work's German origins.

With any reference book of this type and magnitude, one may find it easy to question an editor's decision to include some topics ("Children of God") while omitting others (Campus Crusade for Christ) or the relative coverage given certain subjects (Baptists, 3 pages; Baroque, 6 pages). Such will undoubtedly be the case with *The Encyclopedia of Christianity.* Nevertheless, this should not detract from the fact that libraries and individual scholars have been presented an extremely valuable reference tool that should serve as a standard for years to come.

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John POLKINGHORNE and Michael WELKER, eds. *The End of the World and the Ends of God: Science and Theology on Eschatology.* Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2000. 320 pp. $27.00.

This collection of 23 essays is the fruit of a three-year consultation on eschatology held at Princeton and Heidelberg. In these studies leading theologians, ethicists, scientists, and biblical scholars contribute to a growing body of literature devoted to expanding the dialogue between theology and science into traditional theological topics such as eschatology. In the Introduction, Polkinghorne and Welker lay out some guiding principles that the essayists hold in common. First, traditional religious eschatology affirms that the ultimate future will have both continuity and discontinuity with the present world of nature. This assumption founds the hope that science and theology might cooperate in search of a "realistic eschatology and . . . of hope and joy in the face of physical death and the threat posed by a finite world and universe" (2). Second, theology and science both share in a "common search for truth about reality" (5). Third, the dialogue between theology and science should have a "genuinely theological focus" (5) because "Christian theology has to expose and expound its theological truth claims in public discourse" (6). Fourth,

eschatology proves to be a surprisingly fruitful topic for dialogue because of the cultural impact of "exterminationist" senarios of recent scientific theories of the universe's future (7). Theology must give a realistic picture of hope in the face of this pessimistic scientific vision.

Part One, "Eschatology and the Natural Sciences: Catastrophes and Hope," projects the history of the universe forward toward the indefinite future. William Stoeger enumerates the catastrophic possibilities that threaten life on earth and in the universe: impacts by giant asteroids and comets, the ultimate expansion of our Sun to engulf the earth, gamma rays from two colliding neutron stars within 3000 light years of earth, and, finally, the universe will either run down or collapse in on itself, robbing the universe of even the possibility of life. John Polkinghorne contrasts this bleak scientific outlook to the Christian doctrine of resurrection. For Polkinghorne the soul must be thought of as a "pattern of information" that can be held in God's memory and "re-embodied" in a new creation.

In Part Two, "Cultural Perspectives on Eschatology," William Stoeger, Janet Soskice, Larry Bouchard, Christoph Schwoebel and William Schweiker explore eschatology in its cultural dimension. William Stoeger reflects on a cultural dilemma: our culture has come increasingly to look to science and technology for truth and the good life while neglecting traditional religious sources of meaning; however the new scientific eschatology indicates that we live in a hostile and meaningless world doomed to extinction.

In Part Three, "Eschatology in the Biblical Traditions," Walter Bruggemann, Patrick D. Miller, Donald H. Juel and Hans Weder look at eschatology from the biblical perspective. In Part Four, "Eschatology in Theology and Spirituality," theologians Michael Welker, Gerhard Sauter, Kathryn Tanner, Juergan Moltmann, and Miroslav Volf consider the systematic issues raised in the encounter of Christian eschatology with contemporary science. Sauter points out the difference between optimism and the hope inspired by the resurrection. Kathryn Tanner takes issue with the future oriented eschatologies of Moltmann, Pannenberg and much contemporary theology. Moltmann addresses the question, "Where are the dead?" by rehabilitating the doctrine of purgatory. Volf argues against much contemporary eschatology (Juengel and Pannenberg) that understands eternal life as God's eternal memory of our historic lives. It must rather involve a "post-mortem" transformation of humanity and the world. Finally, Welker uses the anthropological notion of cultural memory to facilitate a dialogue between social science and the doctrine of the resurrection of Christ.

Unusual for a book with 23 essays, this collection sustains a high quality throughout. The challenge that faces any interdisciplinary study is integration, and this book succeeds only moderately well. The introductory essay attempts to draw all the contributions together in a coherent fashion. But as one moves

from discipline to discipline and from essay to essay one can easily get the feeling of moving from one universe to another. It would have been helpful to include one or more integrative essays. Ironically, for a book so broad in its scope, it will have a narrow audience. Combining a high-level discussion with an interdisciplinary format will mean that few people will have capacity or the interest to read all the essays. But for those who are interested in the latest developments in the science and theology dialogue or who are interested in the new twist that modern science has given questions of eschatology, this book is required reading.

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John FINNIS. *Aquinas: Moral, Political, and Legal Theory.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1998. 385 pp. $18.95.

Very few readers would be unacquainted with St. Thomas Aquinas as a theologian or philosopher. However, Finnis acquaints us with a different dimension of Aquinas's endeavors and interests. This is the first volume of a series entitled Founders of Modern Political and Social Thought. Finnis provides the reader with a topically arranged "sound critique" of Thomas Aquinas's philosophy (vii). The treatment of various subjects is based on the most recent Latin edition of over sixty works authored by Aquinas. It includes not only extensive citation and quotation of primary sources but supplies accompanying commentary and critical reflection by Finnis. The author's intention, beyond the obvious historical value of the text, is to demonstrate the relevance of Aquinas's perspective in spite of the centuries that have passed since being written.

Finnis treats Aquinas's contribution to Western culture along three interactive lines of thought: human nature, society, government, and civil law. Therefore, the text has a distinctively legal focus. Finnis is Professor of Law and Legal Philosophy at the University of Oxford. On occasion he provides charts of comparative or illustrative data not only to clarify Aquinas's position, but to advance the interpretation provided by the author. The text is extremely well documented and provides an extensive set of indices, including subject and citation, which allows the reader a thorough reference to the subjects treated. It provides the reader a thorough treatment of Aquinas's views in regard to civil law.

However, one must question how applicable it is to the general or even scholastic concerns of SCJ readership. The text appears to be most appropriate for the study of law, business, or political science, and perhaps philosophy. However, the author intentionally provides little attention to Aquinas's theo-

logical contributions. Not until the last chapter does Finnis deal directly with Aquinas's theological framework. However, even chapter ten addresses the theological framework *as it applies* to legal and governmental issues addressed in earlier chapters. Nevertheless, this chapter does provide the reader with an excellent paradigm for the integration of theology into society. "Everyone knows that for Aquinas the answers to all these questions [previously listed throughout the text] includes, and is shaped by, certain positives which he regards as truths about God" (295).

Section headings detail God's interaction, both directly and indirectly through the church, with individuals, society, and law/government. For example, "God's Providence, Law, and Choice," and "Revelation and Public Reasons: Church and States." The most applicable aspect of the book, then, for the readers of SCJ is the chapter which the author describes as a minimal concern of the text. Hence, while the book itself is an outstanding achievement and the vanguard of a new series, it is limited in regard to its usefulness to the constituency of SCJ.

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Philip D. KENNESON. ***Beyond Sectarianism: Re-Imagining Church and World.*** **Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1999. 124 pp. $10.00.**

Philip Kenneson's new book is a new title in a series of books called Christian Mission and Culture. In it Kenneson tackles the misconceptions and abuses of the word "sect" as it has been applied to the church. By employing a three-part approach the author lays out how these misconceptions need to be reevaluated.

In the opening chapter, Kenneson shows that a sociological definition of sectarianism is too narrow. He uses no less then six different contexts to define the idea of what constitutes a sect: sociology, ecclesiology, theology, epistemology, legal contexts, and media contexts. While the author states that the contexts of sociology, theology, and ecclesiology are closely related, the separation of these different contexts does help the reader to comprehend the different aspects of sectarianism in religious studies. The contexts of epistemology, legal, and media present new contexts to explore sectarianism. However, Kenneson shows that these additional categories have also contributed to the modern concepts and usages of the word "sect."

In the middle section of the book, Kenneson leads the reader through the presuppositions behind the contemporary charge of sectarianism. They are: the

real community as universal and rational, culture as monolithic, the shape of "politics" as given, the shape of religion as given, and insulation from critique. Kenneson shows how these presuppositions, which find their origins in culture, are not just accepted in society alone but have also shaped the thinking of the church. Kenneson makes an interesting observation that the culture that charges the church with sectarianism is many times guilty itself of this same charge.

In the last chapter, Kenneson challenges the church to re-imagine again it's role of mission in the world. Kenneson underlines the fact that the church can be in the world without being of the world and that the church does have a mission to the world by being the church and not being the world. In this way, Kenneson calls for the church to move beyond the term of "sect" to be a "contrast society" that utilizes to a greater extent the ability to discern what is from men and what is from God.

This well-written book should hold the interest of people in the Stone-Campbell Restoration movement who have always placed a premium on being a people of the Book. This work helped me to appreciate better the Stone/Lipscomb side of the movement and their conviction to be a contrast society. Perhaps, the Stone-Campbell movement can see the need to re-imagine the church as these founding fathers did.

The only really major downside to this work is its brevity. Yet, the small size of this book does not mean it is a lightweight in content. The one hundred cited references in the back of the book give one ample opportunity to explore sectarianism in much greater detail.

This book would be a helpful addition to any church leader's library—I quoted it twice in two recent sermons. I believe it would also be useful as introductory or supplemental material in the class room for church history, theology, or sociology.

While Philip Kenneson's major premise of God's people being a contrast-society is as old as God's calling of the ancient Israelites, this idea finds freshness in the context of the modern day pluralism with which the church is confronted.

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Charles C. WEST. ***Power, Truth, and Community in Modern Culture.*** **Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1999. 160 pp. $14.00.**

In 1983 Lesslie Newbigin published *The Other Side of 1984*. Shortly after it came out, members of the Selly Oak Colleges (Birmingham, England) were invited to a seminar to discuss this book. Those of us who participated in that

discussion were hardly aware that we were witnessing the birth of a momentous missiological movement. The seminar and subsequent discussions were to lead to the creation of "The Gospel and Our Culture Network," a movement that grew to have an international scope and impact.

One of the many fruits of The Gospel and Our Culture is a series of books under the title "Christian Mission and Modern Culture." One of the more than twenty books in this series was written by a scholar from the Stone-Campbell Movement (*Beyond Sectarianism* by Phillip D. Kenneson).

Charles West is retired professor of Christian Ethics from Princeton University. Earlier in his life he served as a missionary in China. These two vocations—missionary and ethicist—come together in his book. He has a missionary's concern for secular postmodern culture and an ethicist's desire for social justice. He wants to challenge the church to be faithful to the Christian hope, and he wants to see Christians with a concern for the marginalized of society. These concerns give rise to three questions, and he devotes a chapter to each of these concerns.

In Chapter One he poses the question, "What does it mean to say that the gospel is true, not just in the private experience of believers, but for all?" Contemporary Christian witness faces a postmodern culture that has rejected the universal structures of the Enlightenment. How then are we to validate any truth claim, especially the claim of the Triune God revealed in Christ?

In Chapter Two he addresses the question, "How is the one universal community of the people of God, gathered by the Holy Spirit into the body of Christ, related to the diverse and competing human communities in which the cultures of the world take form?" West does not see the church as a "resident alien" in the world. Rather he argues that the gospel informs and transforms every culture into which it comes. West wants to find the middle ground between an understanding of the church as casting its lot with its culture as opposed to a form of church "sectarianism" that has essentially despaired of influencing culture and thus strives for purity within the community of faith.

In Chapter Three the question is posed, "How is the power of God in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ related to the human powers at work in the world?" West offers a perceptive contrast between the gospel as the power of God and human powers. His analysis and critique of political and economic powers are helpful, particularly as he assesses the post-communist order that is dominated by international business interests. I thought of West's critique when a Hungarian Christian banker explained to me that foreign investors today own 80% of all banking interests in Hungary. The switch to a market economy has not entirely freed former communist satellite countries from foreign powers.

When it comes to the question as to how the church will confront the powers of this present world, West offers more of a challenge than a solution. He

raises some soul-searching questions for Christians to consider, but he does not seem to advocate forms of institutionalized Christian pressure groups. He does suggest three guidelines for Christians. First, rather than think of ourselves as agents of human power, Christians are witnesses to the judging and transforming power of God in Jesus Christ. Secondly, because Christians are stewards of the mysteries of the power of God, we should unmask the ideologies with which special interests rationalize their power, their status, or the activities they pursue. Thirdly, we must give witness to the realization that power is an ingredient of relationships, not just a fact of impersonal political and economic forces. He concludes by challenging Christians to what he calls a new work, inspiring hope, hope in the redemptive power of Christ.

West gives us a helpful understanding of the cultural dynamics facing the contemporary church in the West. I am still trying to decide how his insights are to be translated into action by the local congregation or by the church at large. I did not find him evenhanded in his critical analysis of evangelicalism and the Ecumenical Movement. Although some of his criticisms of evangelicalism were persuasive, it would have been good if he could have brought the same perspicuity to his criticisms of the Ecumenical Movement. He seems to look for some reinvigorated form of ecumenical organization to provide the motivation and structure that would enable the church to impact the culture in which it finds itself.

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Ellen T. CHARRY. ***By the Renewing of Your Minds: The Pastoral Function of Christian Doctrine.*** **New York: Oxford University Press, 1997. 264 pp. $17.95.**

Ellen T. Charry is Margaret W. Harmon Associate Professor of Systematic Theology at Princeton Theological Seminary. As George Lindbeck notes in the foreword, she is "one of the first in a new generation of theologians" to explore the inseparability of the "cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions" of faith (xiii). The disjunction between faith and reason, between theology and spirituality, between academy and church has reigned since the Enlightenment. Postmodernism, and specifically postliberal theology, has undermined these dichotomies, and theology is only beginning to explore the implications of this new horizon.

Charry, however, argues that this new horizon is actually an old art. The bifurcation of theology and spirituality is a relatively new phenomenon. Premodern Christians explicitly rejected theology as a solely scientific (cognitive) discipline. On the contrary, Christian doctrine served the goal of moral

transformation and excellence. Charry examines some pre-seventeenth century theologians, especially those "who are now widely regarded as useless or harmful," in order to understand how they viewed theology as intended "to shape readers for the good life" (pp. viii-ix). Through investigating premodern writers, Charry critiques modern theology from a postmodern perspective. Listening to these past theologians enables contemporary believers to examine their own prejudices and limitations.

Charry's book is interdisciplinary, and this is consistent with her holistic understanding of theology. It is progressively biblical, historical and systematic theology that serves the goal of "aretegenic" reflection. "Aretegenic" is Charry's neologism which means "conducive to virtue" (19). The heart of Charry's contribution is her attempt to find a place for theology in the process of character formation.

Charry divides her book into six sections. First, she introduces her thesis: Christian doctrine ought to shape virtues and connect with the lives of believers. Christian doctrine is not esoteric metaphysics, but theological reflection that shapes praxis. Theologically, we come to understand that God is good for us and therefore the life to which he calls us is good for us as well (29). Second, she explores the aretegenic function of Paul's theology and the Matthean Sermon on the Mount. Paul's aretegenic theology roots moral transformation in divine action and our participation in the divine community. Paul's theological purpose was to "strengthen Christian identity . . . by helping [readers] grasp the dignity accomplished for them by Christ." Matthew's aretegenic theology calls for an other-centered righteousness which embodies the character of God (stressing being rather than doing).

Third, Charry explores the aretegenic function of theology in three patristic writers: Athanasius, Basil, and Augustine. For Athanasius, Christ's *homoousios* with us and God is no metaphysical construct but is the ground of both the medium and the message of God's goodness whereby we are restored to "our true nature" and God provides us "with the standard of human excellence" (99). Basil's pneumatological *homoousios* serves the function of reminding readers that "the Spirit empowers and perfects the strength of character revealed by the Son" (118). Augustine's Trinitarianism (which is defended over against recent revisions by Rahner and LaCugna) has the "aretegenic goal" to establish "the seeker's identity as arising from the being of God" (147) so as to recognize in ourselves the *imago Dei* and thereby ground our character in his life and community (Trinity).

Fourth, Charry explores the aretegenic function of theology in Anselm, Aquinas, and Dame Julian. Anselm reflects on incarnation and atonement in order to lead us to mercy and justice. Aquinas explores a theology of anger tempered by love. Theology functions aretegenicly in both Anselm and Aquinas, but they represent a turn in medieval piety toward the question,

"How can I ever be certain that God loves me?" (153). This moves away from the Patristic interest in the character-shaping function of the indwelling God. Consequently, medieval theology turned more to the salutary function of the death of Christ rather than its character-forming function. Julian, however, retains the Patristic emphasis even though her reflections are rooted in the Passion of Christ whose act is a testimony of love unmixed with wrath.

Fifth, Charry explores the aretegenic function of Calvin's theology. Despite Calvin's predestinarianism (which has an aretegenic function itself—assurance, confidence, and motivation) and his negative view of the fallen human being, Calvin represents a return to some Patristic themes, particularly, "moral personhood is shaped by knowing God" (197). The knowledge of self and God are intertwined. One cannot know one's self without knowing God. The function of theology in Calvin is to enhance godliness, not to speculate about the eternity of God.

Sixth, Charry concludes her work with a summarizing and programmatic essay. She summarizes her historical work as a launching pad for suggesting an appropriate direction for contemporary theology. Theology must overcome the intellectual and pastoral bifurcation of the modern world. In reality, the two aspects are indivisible. Theology is an invitation to seek God wherein one find's certainty. It is not a quest for certainty (either in rationality or in answering the *Angst* of whether God loves me or not). It is a quest to know God in order to know ourselves and who we should be. Charry calls for a renewal of "sapiental theology" (235).

Charry's book is insightful, engaging and reflective. Her call for theology to serve as a norm again—theology must not only be descriptive but also prescriptive about "what an excellent life looks like" (239)—is encouraging. But this call is not simply cognitive or academic, it is affective and pastoral. Contemporary theologians must once again, as did premodern theologians, see themselves as pastors who help people "find their identity in God" (239).

Her agenda is refreshing. Theology is not metaphysical speculation, but applied story with the intent of character-formation. As Paul told Titus, teach Christian doctrine and the Christian community will be full of good works (Titus 3:8). But this theological art must be practiced with the intention of character-formation rather than cognitive exercises. Theologians (and all believers) pay heed. Writing and teaching theology must be aretegenic if it is to be biblical. Reading Charry's book is a good place to orient ourselves to that task.

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Maurice WILES. *Reason to Believe.* Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1999. 131 pp. $14.00.

Wiles is Regius Professor of Divinity (Emeritus) at Oxford and is widely published in theology. I recommend this volume as a succinct introduction to problems raised by modern skeptics against traditional Christian philosophies of religion. Unfortunately, the objections raised are as often those of the author himself as of unnamed non-Christian skeptics. For all the care with which he discusses a wide range of traditional topics, Wiles will disappoint many readers who are looking for help finding fresh "reasons to believe."

The central problem does not lie with organization; the book moves more or less systematically from the topic of God's existence, through discussions of biblical reliability, the nature of the gospel, and the life of the church, to the problem of evil and the challenge of death. Nor is there significant trouble with readability (it aims successfully at those without background knowledge in Christian theology), depth (though the discussions are very brief), or honesty. The problem is one of method: the author's presuppositions include evolutionary doctrine and the "assured" results of humanistic higher-critical studies. Thus he takes for granted a radical discontinuity between Scripture and modern experience with the result that Christians are on no firmer footing than non-Christians when it comes to answering the familiar philosophical puzzles.

As examples: the Genesis account of the sin of Adam and Eve and the consequent curse of God cannot help us think about the problem of natural evil: "For us who know human life to be a late emergent on our planet, there can be no such direct link between the disorder of human behaviour and the disorder of the natural world" (106); the story of God's forming Adam of dust is an embarrassment to modern anthropology, but it need not conflict with the evolutionary story "that science has disclosed, unless we make the perverse choice to read it as pure history" (13); nor can the resurrection of Jesus be any more than a "symbolic truth" in helping us deal with our own deaths, since "we are not in a position to know just what happened to give rise to the records of Jesus' resurrection; the Gospels are not the kind of documents to provide an answer to that question" (113). Wiles believes that God exists, but only (as developed here) because the idea has been central to human history and culture, and science cannot rule it out.

On the fundamental question of the historicity of the Bible, the author weaves condescension and sentimentality in that schizoid form so familiar to readers of liberal and neo-orthodox theology, accepting a text as sober truth if it appears consonant with current social and psychological tastes, rejecting it if it affirms anything supernatural or morally absolute. Stories of miraculous events are ways of expressing faith, not real history.

Students acquainted with traditional discussions of these problems will be struck by the ease and speed with which Wiles gives in to questions to which

answers that respect the convictions of historic Christianity are getting easier, not more difficult, to come by. In a day in which evolutionary doctrine is in disarray, and in which the discoveries of historiographers, archaeologists, and textual critics converge along a single vector toward the complete historical reliability and genuineness of the biblical texts, Wiles's sentiments are oddly dated. A statement attributed to Ronald Reagan is apropos for theologians of Wiles's ilk: "It's not that liberals are ignorant. It's just that they know so much that isn't so."

I found the chapters on "Beginnings" (the existence of God), "Morality" and "The Problem of Evil" particularly cogent. But even here, as soon as the problems are put, the author despairs of finding any credible defense of traditional Christian answers. Wiles deserves to be read primarily for the clarity with which he gives expression to the mindset of the educated skeptic, which is after all no small service.

The book's style is economical without being graceless, though one can hardly imagine shorter treatments of its topics. Reading notes are foregone in favor of short and briefly annotated bibliographies appearing under chapter headings at the back of the book. The author's understanding of theological method is captured in a series of "interludes" between main chapters addressing such topics as "Using the Bible," "Symbolism," and "The Development of Doctrine."

Wiles ends an interlude on miracles with the following question: "If the story of Christ as it has been traditionally affirmed in the creed calls for the degree of question and revision that I have been suggesting, does it remain a gospel by which men and women may continue to live and worship today?" (42) This is the book's central question; and while it explains the sense of the title, it also makes clear why readers expecting anything like a book of traditional apologetics will be misled.

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Avery DULLES. *The Splendors of Faith: The Theological Vision of Pope John Paul II.* New York: Crossroad, 1999. 204 pp. $19.95.

As a small boy growing up in a heavily Catholic community in Eastern Iowa, there was one "given" in religious dialogue between my Protestant circle and my Roman neighbors: suspicion. I was suspicious of them and they, in turn, were suspicious of me. Such was the climate in the pre-Vatican II of Christendom of the late '50s and early '60s.

Since that monumental twenty-first ecumenical council (1962–65), how-

ever, there has been a "paradigmatic revolution" in Catholic-Protestant relations: from the uncompromising pre-Vatican II Roman exclusivity ("*extra ecclesia nulla salus*") to one which now embraces Protestants as "separated brothers." In addition, the past 35 years have witnessed a church move from a position of virtual isolation (or "dismissal") of her world to one that now actively engages the issues and complexities of modern (postmodern) culture. Furthermore, the task of charting the course of these heretofore unfamiliar waters of dialogue and relevance has, for the most part, been the province of one papal figure, John Paul II, whose ecclesiastical reign has covered nearly two-thirds of the post-Vatican II Roman Catholic era.

Given this pope's proclivity for theological pronouncement on a wide variety of topics, as well the multitudinal changes in Catholicism since Vatican II, one might be tempted to readily dismiss a 204-page book that purports to summarize and synthesize the "vision" of John Paul II. Roman Catholic theology in general defies such succinct analysis, and this becomes an especially daunting enterprise when applied to the most "untraditional" era of this tradition-laden church. This particular title, however, gains immediate credibility as well as a reading mandate due to the notoriety of its author, Avery Dulles, S.J., currently the L.J. McGinley Professor of Religion and Society at Fordham University. This leading Catholic thinker, arguably the leading moderate Catholic theologian in the West, again displays his uncanny ability to organize apparent theological diversities into coherent patterns and a comprehensible "whole" (See *Models of the Church* and *Models of Revelation*). In *The Splendor of Faith*, Fr. Dulles gives his readers a readable, not-overly-technical, yet fairly comprehensive discussion of the "theological vision" of this history-shaping pope. Beginning with an insightful chapter on "Karol Wojtyla as a Theologian" (especially helpful to this evangelical reviewer who has tended to view the pontiff as a "pastor" rather than as a scholar with two academic doctorates), Dulles marches us through a systematic survey of John Paul's teachings on the Godhead, Christology, Mariology, ecclesiology, the sacraments, issues relating to "secular life," the relations of the Catholic Church to other faiths, and eschatalogy. In a most helpful fashion, the author concludes his work with a summary chapter that succinctly captures the theological contributions of this pope to the areas more thoroughly discussed in the preceding chapters.

As one attempts to evaluate Fr. Dulles's ambitious and often brilliant summary of John Paul II, one cannot help but see this volume as a summary of something even larger than the prolific pontiff. As the reader is continually reminded that "this pope is the articulation of a Catholic faith in the light of Vatican II" (2), one recognizes that this book, itself, is a brief commentary on an ethos—the general spirit of Post-Vatican II Catholicism.

The *Splendor of Faith* resonates a Second Vatican ideology in the following ways:

(1) Its "unpretentious" claims. In his preface, Fr. Dulles confesses that such an undertaking (a summary of the pope's theological reflection) has its serious limitations (vii). He acknowledges that such a study cannot "take the place of specialized studies of the pope's thinking on particular subjects," nor will it attempt to set John Paul's theology in a context of contemporary Catholic analysis—either pro or con (vii). Dulles further eschews any urge to become involved in polemic, noting that his subject would never engage in such "style of discourse," believing instead, "that a serene exposition of the truth is its best defense" (vii). Such admissions are themselves, disarmingly different from the writings of pre-1960s "loyal" Catholic thinkers who tended to be zealously dogmatic in their writings (the contentious unchallengeable dogma of the Church) as well as those more contemporary voices who become openly defiant at papal directives (American bishops). Dulles exudes the more genuine spirit of the Second Vatican "culture" which values conversation over confrontation.

(2) Dulles's work also narrates a Vatican II story. As he recounts Karol Wojtyla's theological formation, we are introduced to a person whose thinking is as indebted to the mystical writings of Sts. John of the Cross and Teresa of Avila as it is to Thomas Aquinas. Indeed a devotional student, the would-be-pope attempted to harmonize St. John and Thomas—a synthesis of the mystical with intellectual understanding of faith—a point not necessarily shared by all Catholic scholars (3,4). After a stint as a parish priest, the then 31-year-old Wojtyla wrote a second doctoral dissertation on the ethics of German phenomenologist, Max Scheler, which in turn, influenced the young pastor-scholar to adopt a strong Christian personalism—a sharing in the inner life of the triune God (4,5). This phenomenological bent was later expressed as Bishop (of Krakow) Wojtyla submitted suggestions to the commission laying out the agenda for the upcoming Vatican council. In a nine-point memorandum, he laid out a strong personalistic philosophy as the necessary antidote to contemporary materialism. In fact, a statement of this Christian personalism was the first of these items which "anticipated what Vatican II would actually declare" (5). The other Wojtyla emphases included ecumenism (Christian unity), the lay apostolate, the intellectual standards of seminaries, the role of vowed religious in the Church, the form of the liturgy, and the updating of canon law (5). Every one of these became key emphases in the pronouncements of this revolutionary Council, which in effect made Vatican II a "virtual representation" of Karol Wojtyla as well as set in place a perfect candidate for one who would lead the Church in its postconciliar form. This is not to imply that Wojtyla was the dominant voice or even the chief architect of the Vatican documents (he was not), but it is to say that he was a virtual incarnation of a *synthesis* of modern Catholic thought as it came to be expressed in these writings. Consequently, Pope John Paul II's later papal deliberations are extended commentaries on the

Vatican decrees, true to the spirit of one whose thinking defined their contents, albeit a figure who is often hidden in the shadow of the council's progenitor, John XXIII.

Perhaps, it would be wise at this point to summarize the unique ethics of the Second Vatican documents.

Vatican II is characterized by a distinctive, if not wholly convincing, blend of an irenic, dialogical, and culture-engaging spirit with historic Catholic orthodoxy. In practice, this finds the Church often "downplaying" her traditional views of the ecclesia, the place of Mary, justification, etc. that have separated her from Protestant (and Orthodox) communions, without necessarily changing them. For example, in the document "The Blessed Virgin of the Church," the authors affirm the unique "dignity and efficacy of Christ the one Mediator" and the clearly "subordinate role of Mary" (Vatican Council II, Vol. I, Ed. Austin Flannery, Eerdmans, 1987, 419). These statements and others present the Virgin as model servant—a "handmaid of the Lord"—sure to bring agreement and a sense of relief to wary Protestants. In the same breath, however, this same statement affirms the Church's tradition of invoking Mary as "Advocate," "Helper," "Benefactress," and "Mediatrix" (419). The succeeding section describes the growth of the Marian cult in favorable terms, yet cautions its adherents in turn, to avoid "false exaggeration" or any "word or deed" that might "lead the separated brethren . . . into error" (422). This "both/and" position, while undeniably more irenic than the Catholicism of previous times, is nonetheless confusing if not contradictory. I am not accusing the Second Vatican authors of disingenuousness or a purely pragmatic agenda; I am, however, calling attention to an early exhibit of postmodern pluralism which is difficult at least to square with an evangelical understanding of truth.

It is not surprising, then, to see this "inclusive/exclusivism" expressed in the pontifical works of VII's defining spirit, John Paul II. As one reads through Dulles's clear summaries of the pope's post-Vatican teachings, we see very little different from the council's pronouncements (although more context-oriented), in context or demeanor; always engaging, never polemical, more conscious of biblical texts (a VII characteristic), yet never wavering from accepted dogma. In short, John Paul is the ideal expositor of the letter and spirit of Vatican II theology.

(3) Finally, *The Splendor of Faith* resonates with Second Vatican thought in its evaluative methodology, or more correctly, its lack thereof. Like the conciliar authors, Avery Dulles does not offer a critical evaluation of the subject (John Paul) but rather brings a description of the aforementioned modern/tradition "antinomies" of his teachings. He comes off as a papal "cheerleader," extolling the pontiff's obvious intellectual and pastoral abilities without voicing the concerns that I would suspect a critical scholar like Fr. Dulles would harbor. Granted, the author has stated up front that he will not interact with the pope's

critics, but even in the dialogical spirit of Vatican II, is this really fair? The pluralism inherent in the council as well as John Paul's writings may strike a positive chord in today's postmodern ecumenism, but does it really serve to resolve age-old differences or merely cover them up (see Douglas Sweeney's article on the recent Lutheran-Catholic Justification Declaration "Taming the Reformation," *Christianity Today* 1/10/2000)? In a much needed word of caution the Trinity history professor aptly warns that "no ecumenical body should claim consensus among its constituents *when it has glossed over the differences* on which some have staked their lives" (emphasis mine). Sweeney's comment seems to be a fitting assessment of Pope John Paul and the Vatican II theology that he has "visioned."

In conclusion, Avery Dulles has given us a thoroughly competent treatment of the premier figure in Roman Catholicism's thirty-five year ecumenical quest, in a thoroughly Vatican II hermeneutical style. It is incumbent upon Stone-Campbell Movement heirs to eagerly investigate this fairly recent major voice in the Christian unity chorus, for John 17 should be as much a part of our plea for biblical authority as Acts 2. Yet as we turn our ears to John Paul and his American commentator, we detect a dissonant chord, for their church, which approaches as a "sister" in the faith, still sounds like our "mother."

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Linda BELLEVILLE. *Women Leaders and the Church: Three Crucial Questions.* Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000. 256 pp. $13.99.

The crucial questions in this volume are: In which ministries can women be involved? 2) What roles can women assume in the family and in society? 3) What, if any, positions of authority can women hold in the church?

The author, professor of biblical literature at North Park Theological Seminary, identifies the third question as the divisive one in today's climate. "The debate over women's roles today is in the final analysis a debate over authority" (16).

She thus begins by drawing attention to this important word and the character of leadership in the New Testament. Belleville is careful to note the limitations of the task, given the fact that there is no systematic biblical teaching on the topic of women in leadership. She provides an excellent overview of the biblical material, as well as historical evidence attesting to the role of women in first-century culture at large. This evidence helps the reader understand biblical references and practices more clearly. In light of the research presented, Belleville gleans these truths from the study (181): 1) God gifts women in

exactly the same ways he gifts men; 2) God intended the male-female relationship to be equal and mutual; 3) in the NT church roles are not defined on the basis of gender.

Her conclusion is that, "ministry and leadership in the NT are a cooperative venture, whose success depends on the gifting and empowerment of women and men committed to serving Christ and his church" (183). In many respects her conclusions are not startling or new; other authors sharing her convictions include Gilbert Bilezikian (*Beyond Sex Roles*), Aida Spencer (*Beyond the Curse*), and Gretchen Gaebelein Hull (*Equal to Serve*). There are some unique and worthwhile differences to make *Women Leaders and the Church* a useful addition to one's library, however.

For example, Belleville presents extensive historical research regarding the ministries of women in both Jewish and Greco-Roman society of the first century. Of particular interest is the evidence of wide-ranging involvement for Jewish women, especially those living outside of Palestine. They filled a variety of roles, including donors, heads of synagogues, elders, priestesses, and mothers of the synagogue. Belleville (185, n. 3) draws this information from synagogue inscriptions and burial markers:

> One must be careful not to depend too heavily on the rabbis for information about women's roles. Rabbinic materials, on the whole, reflect a conservative theologian's outlook toward women rather than the actual practices of women. It is synagogue records, inscriptions, burial epitaphs, and art that bring us close to the real-life situation of Jewish women.

Belleville debunks many myths about women in the first century. Jewish women could rightfully lay claim to significant civil rights. They were not, contrary to popular misconception, viewed as property. A wife was not in the same legal category as a slave. Though inheritance laws favored men, to be sure, the general tenor of Mosaic law granted equal rights to men and women. Even within the context of marriage, Jewish women did not give up all their personal rights. Jewish children were educated together until the age of twelve, at which time formal education ended for girls. Girls received basic teaching in reading, writing and mathematics, just as boys did; all learners gained skill in reading, memorizing, and reciting Scripture.

She uses similar methods to investigate religious and other activities of women in both the Greek and Roman societies. In general, a greater number of women in these societies were involved (by comparison to Jewish society). She suggests that this phenomenon was due, at least in part, to the expectation of civic involvement on the part of all citizens in the Empire. Greek and Roman women were generally afforded more freedom and had more opportunities available than did Jewish women, especially within Palestine.

A second feature of this book that sets it apart from others on the topic is

Belleville's careful consideration of the issue of biblical leadership and ministry functions. Two vital questions govern her approach: What is the church? What are its ministries? The church is "unlike any other religious institution" (39), especially with reference to leadership roles and ministry functions. The contrast between early Christianity and contemporaneous religious institutions ". . . lay not in the *what* of worship but in the *who*. Participation in the early church was a participation of the whole, not the few, and those who participated did so prompted by the Spirit's leading and gifting, not by their official or professional standing among God's people" (40-41).

After surveying both OT and NT to see the leadership roles women played in carrying forward God's redemptive purpose, Belleville quotes a prayer from the early centuries of the church. "'You who filled Deborah, Hannah and Huldah with the Holy Spirit . . . who in the tabernacle and in the temple appointed women to keep the holy doors, look upon your servant chosen for the ministry and give to her the Holy Spirit . . . that she may worthily perform the office committed unto her'" (69). This prayer, traditionally used during ordination services for women deacons, summarizes the early church's view of ministries for women in several ways. First, female leadership was not a new phenomenon in God's economy but rather marked a continuation of his working in history. Second, this prayer identifies the work that women were doing as *ministry*. Finally, the prayer recognizes that ministry is dependent upon the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, not a specific office.

Belleville repeatedly emphasizes the true nature of authority and leadership in the New Testament; this is perhaps the greatest contribution she makes to the literature. She clearly states that authority rests in Christ and his church, not in human positions or roles (whether filled by males or females). Leadership is defined by servanthood, not the "lording it over" posture of the Gentiles (Mark 10:42-45). "The New Testament language of local church leadership is the language of pastoral care—guide, shepherd, overseer, servant—and the way of leadership is by example and hard work" (182).

Herein is a source of great frustration in the controversy over the role of women in church leadership. Much of the rhetoric aimed at denying women responsible places of Kingdom service reflects a view of leadership that Jesus explicitly rejected. Does it not seem odd that it is acceptable to identify a woman as "director" of something in the church, but not a "minister"? Is not the first word more "top-down" in orientation than the second? Where in the NT do we see a leadership model that claims authority to a particular office? Belleville offers this insight regarding the mission on which Christ sent his disciples (Matthew 10:1): "It is interesting, though, that the Twelve were also sent out to preach and teach, yet authority is not mentioned in conjunction with these two activities. Only exorcisms and healings were done with authority. Yet some today are quick to identify preaching and teaching as authoritative activities" (135-136).

Belleville also points out that Gen 3:16 is not the "text of choice" for either Jesus or Paul in their discussions of marriage or male-female relationships. Rather, they draw attention to Gen 1:27 and/or Gen 2:23-24, both of which prescribe God's ideal for humanity (coming as they do prior to the disobedience in the Garden). An interesting insight indeed, shows that Gen 3:16 should rightly be seen as descriptive, rather than prescriptive, of relationships marred by sin.

Belleville's expertise is not limited to historical backgrounds. She gives careful attention to language, context, and grammar for the two most problematic texts, namely 1 Cor 14:33-35 and 1 Tim 2:11-15. Her conclusions are not noticeably different from those of other authors, as noted above. Given this expertise, she makes a curious and rather elementary error in the 1 Timothy 2 discussion by including references to the Epistle to Titus as confirming the context of 1 Timothy. While there are indeed notable similarities between the two letters, Titus's work of ministry took place in Crete and Timothy's in Ephesus. Yet, to support her statement that the false teaching in Ephesus had a Jewish flavor, Belleville refers the reader to passages in 1 Timothy *and* Titus (166-167). Both letters do focus on problems of false teaching in the early church, but the problems arose in two different cities with two different cultural contexts. Belleville's presentation would be more accurate by noting that similar problems apparently existed in Crete, as noted by references in the book of Titus.

Nevertheless, this volume is a helpful addition to the literature on this important issue. Belleville presents her research clearly and logically in an irenic spirit. Her work is well-documented and the bibliography, though brief, is comprehensive enough to introduce various streams of thought on this important issue. Readers of *SCJ* will appreciate the emphasis on looking to the NT rather than to contemporary culture for answers to biblical questions. In particular, the attention to servant leadership as the appropriate model for church leaders, whether male or female, is refreshing and noteworthy. In Belleville's own words, "May we labor faithfully at providing men and women every possible avenue to function as the partners and coworkers God created them to be" (183).

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Mary Donovan TURNER and Mary Lin HUDSON. ***Saved from Silence: Finding Women's Voice in Preaching.*** **St. Louis, MO: Chalice, 1999. 168 pp. $ 17.99.**

In the last quarter of the twentieth century, more women than ever are participating as fully ordained ministers as pastors, preachers, and elders. In *Clergy*

Women: An Uphill Calling (24), Barbara Brown Zikmund relates that within the past twenty years the number of female preachers in Protestant churches has increased by approximately 30,000. This burgeoning influx of women in ministry has given impetus to a number of engaging studies which seek to address the particular difficulties inherent in being a woman in the pulpit, to borrow Carol Nor's phrase. This volume participates in this growing canon of feminist homiletics. The work is wide enough in scope, however, to be of value for anyone who has struggled with the prospect of finding a voice in ministry.

In the first four chapters, the authors flesh out their use of the "voice" metaphor and work to establish a theology of voice by tracing this theme through the OT and NT. The fifth chapter, then, serves as a bridge to the second half of the book as it narrates the stories of four historical women who have "found their voice" in the midst of opposition. In chapters six and seven, the authors illustrate the ways in which women continue to be silenced in the church and the means by which they might be saved from silence through the practices of imagining, listening, and naming. Three sermons by women are offered as examples of these practices in the eighth chapter. The book concludes with a prophetic call for the church to embrace a voice-centered theology which takes seriously its responsibility to imagine, to listen, and to name.

The truly creative contribution of this volume is seen in Turner and Hudson's use of the human voice as a powerful theological metaphor as they explore the myriad ways in which all people are "created in the sound of God." This theological undertaking contains some of the most deft and perceptive reflections of the book. With fresh and poetic insight, Turner and Hudson shed light on the importance of linguistic agency in the Genesis account of creation by explaining that, though humankind appeared in God's image, they were created through God's sound. God authors creation through naming, through giving voice. It is God's breath, his *ruach*, in humankind which marks us as Godlike and which endows us with the ability to give voice to God's word. Far from being a mere exercise in ego-stroking, the process of finding one's voice is an essential affirmation of the goodness of God's creation. Furthermore, as they extend this vocal metaphor, the authors underscore the dialogic nature of God's relationship to humans in their description of the theological concept of covenant as conversation.

Turner and Hudson's creative biblical insights, however, are governed by a strong liberation theology as they posit the human voice as that which expresses the self as distinctive, authentic, authoritative, resistant, and relational. While this view of selfhood brings a desired empowerment for the individual, some evangelicals will be far from comfortable with the view of revelation that accompanies it.

In their espousal of a theology of voice, the authors are working against a classical conservative as well as a Barthian homiletic which views the preacher

as a mere mouthpiece for the Word from God. They seek to change the key term for homiletics from "word" to "voice" and in doing so, promote a theory of revelation as ultimately present, continuous, and experiential. This move from "text" to "life," of course, resonates with much of contemporary feminist discourse in the academy. Yet this approach also suggests a kind of contradiction for Turner and Hudson. Their early emphasis on the power of linguistic agency would seem to discourage this later, perhaps indefensible, schism of "text" and "life."

The greatest value of this volume is in the potential encouragement it provides for young women in theological institutions of higher education who have struggled to give voice to their own emerging theological formulations and their own sense of calling. The spiritual exercises of imagining, listening and naming offered by Turner and Hudson provide concrete ways for those who have felt silenced to take courage and find voice.

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Nils HARPER. *Urban Churches, Vital Signs: Beyond Charity toward Justice.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999. 333 pp. $25.00.

What does a successful urban church look like? How is its leadership structured? Those who work in urban settings, those who train urban workers, those who support urban works, and those who want to understand the complexities of ministry within today's large cities will all want to add this book to their collection. The book takes a look at 28 very diverse urban church ministries. It does not seek to make any judgments concerning theological views, ministry concepts, or methods employed.

I found myself disagreeing with several of the programs that churches highlighted in the book employed as a part of their ministry. Yet, I also found myself seeing how other works illustrated in the book had successfully pushed beyond traditional "ministry" and, as a result, presented the message of Christ in a manner understandable to today's city dweller. This is really the central challenge of this book. What is being done in the city that reaches those who live in the city? Urban ministry is a complex issue, especially for a church movement that was born on a frontier and has had a lot of its successes in suburban and rural contexts. Thus, for those connected to the Stone-Campbell movement, this book represents an important area of thought. As one of the church reviews mentioned, "Outreach without spiritual conversion is merely well-intentioned social work that will not last for long. Religious activity without social outcomes is shallow spirituality that does not really affect daily living" (28). The book attempts to show churches that are struggling to do both.

The first section is a type of executive summary of what the reader will find in the rest of the book. The great struggle of the urban church is to be credible to those who live there. Many urban dwellers find the church to be disconnected from their needs. They would sooner seek out a fortuneteller than a preacher. That indicates to me that many sense a spiritual need. It is up to the church, I believe, to position itself as a credible group that can meet real spiritual needs. The characteristics of churches across the country and across theological lines that are meeting the needs of the city dweller are very similar. Their worship is creative and alive. The leadership is directly involved in the community. It is their community, and they have a stake in its success or failure. The church should be the center of renewal. Churches are very accepting and affirming. Some of the churches highlighted, I believe, stray into accepting sin. This, however, does not compromise the truth that a successful urban work must accept those who come to Christ with many difficult situations. The successful churches are also politically involved. Some even to the extent that the preacher is directly involved in politics. These churches also have partnered with government organizations, other churches, and businesses to accomplish their missions. They are churches that seek to rebuild the family and seek out troubled youth. The issue that keeps resurfacing throughout the book is the role of the church leadership in the success of the urban church. I was struck by the new set of skills required for the job. Beyond teaching, beyond preaching, beyond calling is a whole range of new skills that call for a new generation of urban church leaders. Issues like grant writing, political savvy, urban renewal programs, addiction recovery programs, and on are noted throughout this book. I kept asking myself if we are preparing leaders well enough in these areas.

The selection process of ministries to be included in the book was churches that were, “creating meaningful worship, doing a good job of Christian education, and engaging the challenges of housing, health, employment, education, and family life.” His intent seems to be to allow the churches simply to tell their stories. He indeed looked for the unique, the innovative. Many of the ministries are quite distinct, yet they share the characteristics of a strong leadership meeting the challenges of city life with innovative, sometimes daring programs. At the end of each story is a bulleted section titled, “What We Can Learn.” In this section he draws out the fundamental issues that surround the success of the highlighted church and attempts to place them in a broader context to allow the reader to apply them to his or her situation. It would be pointless to attempt to review the 28 urban churches that are examined in the main body of the book. Each story is presented in a similar format and is allowed to speak for itself.

The concluding sections are constructed to allow for group discussion and a summation of moving beyond charity and toward justice. It is the author’s feeling that charity deals with the immediate needs and tends to ignore the root

causes of social problems. Justice, on the other hand, struggles to find full solutions to social problems. The closing sections are where Harper puts his views into the book. The churches were allowed to speak for themselves. He now comments on such matters as barriers to urban revitalization and the need for spiritual and personal authenticity among the leadership. He concludes with applicable Scripture references, some guidelines for moving beyond charity, and a strong list of resources and contacts.

Some of the theological positions taken by the churches highlighted in the book will be distinct from many connected with the Stone-Campbell Restoration movement. Many of them were distinct from my personal views. That must not, however, stop us from allowing the concepts to affect our views and understanding of urban ministry. We must continue to seek new ways to be effective in the urban centers. I am pleased to recommend this book to both those who are new to urban ministry and to those who are long-time city workers.

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Lee N. JUNE, ed. *Evangelism and Discipleship in African-American Churches.* Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999. 192 pp. $12.99.

This volume plays an important role in the series of tools for the African-American church community. The Institute for Black Family Development, which produced this tool, has been recognized by Focus on the Family as having a vital part in the Christian development of the African-American church and family. The diverse array of Christian workers utilized to put together this helpful resource speaks to the need for a variety of trained, experienced people to work in the African-American church context.

Appropriately, it begins with history, for unless one understands the evolution of the African-American church, one can easily make false assumptions about the needs, difficulties, and challenges confronting it.

America, from its settlement, created a social climate with slavery that put Africans in a difficult social status. They became property instead of humans with freedom and an opportunity to pave their own destiny. Yet there was some opportunity for Africans to learn to read and to have freedom to respond to the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. As far back as the late 1700s some Africans participated in evangelism in a multiracial setting especially among Methodists.

With the atmosphere of America as it was in the early years concerning Africans, they eventually formed their own churches and denominations to reach their people in an environment more compatible to their spiritual and social needs. Historically, the first Negro Baptist Church came into existence in

1773, under the direction of George Liele and Andrew Bryan. Later, in 1787, Richard Allen and Absalom Jones started the Free African Society. Out of this quasi-religious organization came Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church in 1894. This church led in the formation of the African Methodist Episcopal Church denomination later.

For African-Americans to evangelize and disciple those from Africa seemed to be the socially acceptable thing to do, given the lack of acceptance from the Europeans. The separation of Africans from Europeans on the church scene continues to this very day in most settings in America. Its history still prevails for convenience, social compatibility, and to avoid much unneeded discourtesy.

As the divisions of this volume unfold in five parts, a comprehensive overview comes together from the experiences of a variety of practical evangelists: Part 1—History of African-American Evangelism; Part 2—Taking the Lead in Evangelism and Discipleship; Part 3—Training Laborers for Evangelism and Discipleship; Part 4—Practicing Evangelism and Discipleship at Home and at College; Part 5—Going into the Field.

One of the tools that appealed to me involves the way each chapter is written by a person with real-life Christian experience in their subject area . The practical spiritual wisdom that flows in each chapter speaks volumes to those desiring some direction for their personal evangelism and discipleship development. For the Christian working in the ministry of the church much has been given for the context of the church. For the church in general, wisdom comes from a pastor with years of practical experience that has built a successful ministry.

I recommend this tool to any Christian that wants to have some practical insight for evangelism and discipleship in the African-American church community. My life verse, the Great Commission says, "Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age" (Matt 28:19-20). The core of this book brings a workable plan for outreach and training for the local church.

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Robert BANKS. ***Reenvisioning Theological Education: Exploring a Missional Alternative to Current Models.*** **Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999. 262 pp. $20.00.**

Robert Banks makes a significant contribution to the discussions taking place on the nature, methods, and goals of theological education. His primary emphasis is the graduate seminary, although he does at times address the Bible colleges and institutes. The book starts out with an ambitious agenda and real promise, but in the end it ultimately falls short of its goal.

In Part One Banks outlines the present debate in theological education with a survey that is more "exhaustive and up-to-date than any other survey." (12) Much of this section deals with the two major approaches to theological education, the classical model and the vocational model. While he sees the goals of these two models as not being the same, he does hold the nature of the educational enterprise of the seminaries employing these models as not being significantly different. In this section his extensive references in the footnotes provide a wealth of material for those interested in pursuing further the issues he raises.

Part Two looks at educational activities that were used by several groups or individuals in the biblical context as a basis for his missional model that is to follow. In Part Three he outlines his proposal for a missional approach to theological education. His emphasis on personal formation, not just spiritual, intellectual, or ministry formation, is an overarching concern. He deals with today's seminary student, the nature of learning, the context of the educational experience, curricular issues, and the role of traditional theological faculty in the education process. Part Four offers suggestions on how the missional approach to theological education could be implemented.

Banks advocates numerous changes to improve theological education. However, he falls short of his goal to create a radically new approach to theological education. Much of what he writes, offering good practical suggestions, does not create a new model but expands and improves on what a number of seminaries committed to the vocational approach to theological education are already doing.

Banks' critique of most current practices in theological education is that it is too classroom based, too theoretical, too short on practice that is related to the educational goals, and too short on meaningful reflection. Most observers of theological education would agree. The extraction model of education, removing students from the context of community and church to an isolated campus, has been criticized for more than two decades. He advocates a greater cooperation to create a synergy between the academy and the church, more intimate mentoring relationships, better supervision of ministry experience, less centralization and more diversification.

Two primary concerns raised by Banks in contemporary approaches to the-

ological education—the relationship of theory to practice and action to reflection—deserve the attention he gives them. He advocates a greater cooperation between traditional seminary faculty and practitioners to remedy the situation.

Although Banks would like to see major changes in the way seminaries do education, he acknowledges that his proposals are probably not realistic and will not most likely be implemented on a wide scale (249). However, he does see some hopeful signs of change and this book should facilitate further discussion.

Reenvisioning Theological Education falls short of its goal, but it does provide valuable reading for those who are interested in the issues involved in evaluating the present status of theological education and want to give direction to it. In other words, I would recommend it to both faculty and administrators of seminaries and Bible colleges.

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Fredrick C. HOLMGREN. ***The Old Testament and the Significance of Jesus: Embracing Change—Maintaining Christian Identity.*** **Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999. 222 pp. $16.00.**

Holmgren's work is another in a long line of books trying to rectify the abuse of the text, both OT and NT, by the Church in terms of an anti-Semitic approach to the Bible in pre-WW II days. Since the Holocaust, scholars have struggled to understand, rethink, and reassess the Western Church's position and approach. Thus, Holmgren considers three areas: "(1) the manner in which Christians approach the OT Scripture, which, with a different arrangement of books, is also the Jewish Bible; (2) areas of commonality with and differences from Judaism; (3) the NT's witness concerning Jesus Christ, who is the church's reason for existence" (xvi).

Holmgren will challenge the thinking of most Christians by his presentation of Israel's own self-criticism through the prophets, a critique of the promise-fulfillment interpretation of the OT by most evangelicals, and the NT's own "creative" or "depth" exegesis of the OT. On the latter point one is "uneasy" about Holmgren's use of "depth" exegesis as he describes the NT's use of the Hebrew text to bring a "living word" to the Christian community about Christ, who is the heart of the Bible's message. He writes: "Depth or creative interpretation arises out of the faith stance of the community; it is believer exegesis" (37). I am not convinced that the NT use of the OT is just a faith stance of the community. It certainly includes that, but the quotations and allusions in the NT are much more complicated than that.

Holmgren does show how Jesus was seen by the early church as "Israel," the re-presentation of the history of Israel and that the Church is the new Israel. This, to me, helps to explain many of the so-called "depth" interpretations of the OT texts by the NT authors.

The longer I stayed with Holmgren's thinking, the more I agreed with him. His analysis of Jer 31:31-34 for Israel and the "New Covenant" as one of satirical irony, i.e., Jeremiah is calling for a "deep-down change" and a "renewal" of commitment to the Sinai covenant, seems to me to be exactly right. Following Norbert Lohfink's lead in this area, Holmgren shows how to recognize and understand "the tensions that exist between 'depth' interpretation and the original sense of the OT text" (97). He highlights the importance of the "Old Testament" (a title debated in the book) to the Church's understanding of itself and Christ. The NT does not tell us everything we need to know about our faith. The OT is essential to that understanding!

Finally, Holmgren discusses the early church creeds (Nicaea primarily) about Christ and explains why they are so different from the OT or NT descriptions. The average reader in this concluding chapter will reap much insight and have a better understanding and appreciation for what the early church was facing in terms of an adequate apologetic for the nature of Christ.

The final words of Holmgren reveal what he attempted to do with this book. The interested reader may not agree with every detail or the manner by which Holmgren reaches his destination, but the journey is worthwhile:

> The OT and the NT, in dialogue with each other, constitute the Christian Scripture. Neither can be the scripture of the church without the other. The OT does not exist simply as the background of the NT, nor is it to be viewed as a writing that, in its plain and literal sense, points to the NT. It is, rather, an integral part of the character of the NT. To become only "New Testament" Christians has serious implications for our contemporary experience of Jesus Christ (194-195).

Since there has been a tendency in our Stone-Campbell Restoration heritage to take the cliché, "We are a New Testament church," to the illogical conclusion that the OT is no longer "needed" by the church, Holmgren's statement above should challenge that assumption. While I would greatly modify and restate Holmgren's concept of "depth" or "creative" exegesis, I recommend his book to all, but especially to those who may question the importance of the OT today.

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Eugene ULRICH. ***The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Origins of the Bible: Studies in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Related Literature.*** **Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999. 309 pp. $25.00.**

The present volume is a collection of fourteen studies previously published by Ulrich over a period of nineteen years (1980-1998). Ulrich was a student of Frank M. Cross, one of the original editors of the scrolls; he is also the successor to Patrick Skehan as an official editor of a number of biblical manuscripts from the Dead Sea. As a specialist in text criticism, he has distinguished himself as one of the leading scholars in the biblical texts preserved among the Qumran caves. The studies brought together in this book are timely. Of course, it was a great sensation when scholars first recognized in the 1950s that the Dead Sea Scrolls contain biblical manuscripts in the original languages which are a thousand years earlier than the previously known texts of the Hebrew Bible (preserved in the Masoretic tradition through the great codices from Leningrad and Aleppo). At that time, it was being emphasized among the religious laity that the biblical manuscripts from Qumran show how faithfully the Masoretic tradition preserved, and therefore did not deviate from, an original text. Research since the 1950s has shown, however, that this is not the end of the story. Ulrich's book is an attempt from a leading authority in the field to communicate to both biblical scholars and the general public something about the significance of the Greek, Hebrew, and Aramaic biblical manuscripts from the Dead Sea for an understanding of the Bible in Judaism before and during the period when Christianity began to take shape.

Despite the title of the book, not all the studies relate directly to the analysis of the Dead Sea Scrolls. Chapter 11 represents a study (published 1988) of Origen's Hexapla from the 3rd century C.E., and chapter 14 explores the possible significance of the pre-Vulgate Old Latin translation for establishing a critical text of the Septuagint (published 1985). Nevertheless, in chapters 12 and 13 Ulrich attempts to show how the biblical manuscripts of the Dead Sea Scrolls will have a bearing on present work in Hexaplaric and Septuagint studies (published 1998 and 1980 respectively). The inclusion of these studies in the book is significant in itself, because they are illustrations of how the study of the Greek biblical manuscripts from the Dead Sea materials of Cave 4 are beginning to have an impact on text criticism of the early Greek translations and Hebrew text tradition of the Jewish scriptures.

As for the Greek manuscript fragments from Cave 4 (so esp. chapter 9), Ulrich argues that at least two of the manuscripts, 4QLXXLev^a (4Q119) and 4QLXXNum (4Q121), contain a form of the text which is to be assigned priority in future attempts by scholars to reconstruct the earliest text traditions for Leviticus and Numbers. Although these Dead Sea materials are earlier than the later textual witnesses preserved in the Greek Codices Vaticanus (4th century), Alexandrinus (5th century), and Sinaiticus (4th century), it cannot therefore be

assumed that they contain the most original form of the text. In fact, before Ulrich, the original editor assigned to the biblical manuscripts, Patrick Skehan, and the Septuagint text-critic, John Wevers, had argued that the Dead Sea Greek fragments for 4QLXXNum are secondary to the previously known later codices. It is to Ulrich's credit that he has been able, after careful analysis, to put forth a case that shows how readings in the Cave 4 fragments should be compared with Wever's edition of Old Greek versions to Leviticus and Numbers (published 1982 and 1986 in separate volumes of the Göttingen Septuagint series). By implication, these Greek materials from Qumran should be given proper due in future text-critical editions of the Old Greek Bible.

Given the importance of the Greek biblical manuscripts, Ulrich goes a step further. He finds, for example, a text tradition in the earliest witness to the Greek Leviticus (4QLXXLeva) that may be traced back to a Hebrew text which, in turn, is both different from, and more elastic than, the Masoretic text. The use of Greek materials to establish readings for an early Hebrew or Aramaic text was going on long before the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered in the 1940s and 1950s. In order to make use of Greek versions to reconstruct an underlying Hebrew text, Ulrich joins a formidable array of other Septuagint scholars (for example, Emanuel Tov, Anneli Aejmelaeus, Sharon Pace Jeansonne, John Wevers, and Ludwig Koenen) who emphasize that the Greek translations are not so much to be studied for their "theological tendencies" (that is, for the translators' ways of *interpreting* a biblical text on the basis of their own theological perspectives) as for their "translation technique." The extent to which a Greek text's translation technique can be identified is the extent to which an original Hebrew or, in the case of Daniel chapters 2–7, Aramaic can be reconstructed through a retroversion from the Greek. This approach to the early Greek materials, whether from the Dead Sea or from the later manuscript traditions, is perhaps justified at this stage. Before the question of the theological interests of the Greek translators can be properly analyzed, it is necessary to establish as precisely as possible the earliest form of the text which was the product of the original translators. However, it may be that Ulrich and some of his colleagues are going too far; while wishing to assume that translations must in the first instance be understood as attempts to give faithful renderings, they by implication tend to discourage *the study of translation as interpretation* (42-43, 175). There is much to be gained from Ulrich's kind of analysis as a basis for studying Septuagint tradition in relation to Jewish ideas that emerged during the three centuries B.C.E. But it is the latter area for which Ulrich's text-critical studies should not be counted as a substitute. We may expect in the future that the potential value of the Septuagint for understanding early Jewish interpretations of the Bible during the Second Temple period will continue to be a much-debated issue, and it is important to note here that Ulrich stands on the text-critical, translation technique side of the debate.

Of great value in the book are Ulrich's chapters on the biblical manuscripts from Qumran Caves 1, 2, 4, 6, 7 (only Greek), and 11, from Nahal Hever (Greek version of the Minor Prophets), and from Masada. The Greek materials aside, Ulrich is aware that the study of the Hebrew and Aramaic "biblical" fragments is anything but straightforward. To begin with, the scrolls from Qumran demonstrate how difficult it is to idenitfy just which materials can properly be called a "biblical" manuscript. While no single manuscript has been discovered that belongs to the book of Esther among the scrolls, there are other works which, it could be argued, constituted "scripture" for those who copied and collected them: Jubilees (perhaps as many as 17 manuscripts), Enoch literature (including the Book of Giants, perhaps as many as 20 manuscripts), and the Community Rule of the group (about 12 manuscripts). Secondly, Ulrich knows that some of the "biblical" manuscripts pose problems for definitions of "scripture" that are based on the present canonical text. What kind of a biblical manuscript is it in which one of the Psalms has been copied alongside other psalms (11QPsalmsa), and what does it mean when the order and arrangement of the material in such a manuscript is either incomplete or differs from that of the received canonical text (11QPsalmsa-b, 4QPsalmse)? If, as Ulrich documents throughout the book, the early manuscript traditions of biblical books, including those of Qumran, represent different literary editions (as, in particular, for Exodus, Samuel, Jeremiah, Psalms, and Daniel), is it automatically the received "canonical" text which should be recognized as the more "biblical" one even though it is not necessarily the most "original" text? Ulrich is aware of how slippery each of these terms are (chapters 4 and 5). He is also well aware that current text-critical work being done on the Dead Sea Scrolls finds itself in tension with any sentimental allegiance to the hitherto received texts in Judaism and Christianity. Thirdly, despite the tension between textual criticism and the church's "Bible," Ulrich can be optimistic that it is only a matter of time before variants (indeed, including additional passages) in the biblical manuscripts will make their way into modern translations of the Bible. For some time, the text-critical editions of the *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* have included in the apparatus variant readings from the Dead Sea manuscripts, not only from the "biblical" fragments but also from those documents which formally cite the biblical text before offering an interpretation of it (as the *pesharim*). As some of the biblical materials have only been published since 1990 (in the Discoveries in the Judaean Desert series volumes number 9, 12, and 14-17), one can expect that future English translations will soon begin to reflect some of the more significant variants; perhaps some of these variants will establish themselves as part of the most "original" biblical text. In that case, it is not long before this will affect liturgical and public readings in synagogues and churches throughout the world.

Not all nonspecialists will find each of the chapters of the book equally

accessible. The studies in chapters 6 through 14 are probably too technical for those not trained in the Hebrew, Greek, and Latin languages and who know little about textual criticism of the Bible. On account of the first five chapters alone, however, the book will provide a valuable introduction to the basic problems posed and possibilities offered by careful work on the scrolls manuscripts for our understanding of what the Bible was around the time of Jesus. Whereas the evidence has made it increasingly difficult to talk about one "original" text of a given book, it does provide a cross section of scribal activity which shows that the "Bible" was still taking shape in the years when Christianity began to take root on Jewish soil. Our earliest manuscripts from the Dead Sea, though bringing us closer in time to the "original" composition of the books, have not therefore brought us closer to one uniform text. The Qumran scrolls show that, as far as text critics are concerned, the Bible was not made as its books were composed but rather at a later stage when various literary editions of the books began to be standardized into a more homogenous textual tradition.

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Michael V. FOX. *A Time to Tear Down and a Time to Build Up: A Rereading of Ecclesiastes.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999. 422 pp. $30.00.

Michael V. Fox is Weinstein-Bascom professor of Jewish Studies in the Department of Hebrew and Semitic Studies at the University of Wisconsin–Madison. He has written many works in the field of Wisdom Literature, one of which is entitled *Qohelet and His Contradictions* (1987). Fox states that the current book builds on, clarifies, and even takes issue with this earlier work although his basic thesis about Qohelet's message has not changed. However, in the current volume, Fox gives greater attention to Qohelet's phase of "building up" (ix).

This volume is divided into eleven chapters. Chapters ten and eleven are devoted to commentary on Ecclesiastes and compose half of the volume. Chapters two through eight present critical discussions clustered around four themes: 1) the absurd; 2) justice and injustice; 3) wisdom, knowledge and ignorance; and 4) the relationship between toil, reward, and pleasure.

Fox believes that contradiction plays a decisive role in interpreting Ecclesiastes. Many scholars attempt to smooth out the contradictions. But Fox maintains that the contradictions must stand in order for the reader to appreciate Qohelet's search for meaning. The contradictions are intentional. Qohelet does

not contradict himself but observes contradictions, the archetype of which is his desire to discover meaning in an "absurd" world.

Chapter two begins exploring this theme by investigating the meaning of *hebel*, which Fox believes is best translated "absurd." The word speaks of that which is irrational or contrary to reason. For Qohelet absurdity results when good actions do not yield the appropriate consequences. But Fox asserts that the phrase "all is *hebel*" is a generalization and not meant to be applied to every moment, act, or experience.

Contradiction is also a part of the theme of justice in Qohelet. As a sage, Qohelet accepts the traditional rule that the righteous prosper and the wicked suffer. Even though Israelite sages believed that there are exceptions to the rule, Qohelet focuses on the exceptions rather than the rule. For him each individual case is an "ethical microcosm." Qohelet refuses to diminish the significance of individual suffering even in the face of the bigger picture. So here is the contradiction to which Qohelet holds firm: God is just, but there are injustices. This is absurd. The only response is to embrace the good things that come one's way. Qohelet teaches the student how to make the best of a bad situation.

Fox's verse-by-verse commentary on Ecclesiastes in chapters 10 and 11 offers reasonable and penetrating analysis. Throughout, he presents various interpretations of difficult verses and argues cogently for what he believes to be the most plausible. No doubt disagreement will arise over a number of his conclusions. For example, he interprets the text of 12:1-8 as depicting a funeral procession through a village. Fox also argues that Qohelet does not hold to rigid determinism as some scholars conclude from their interpretation of the poem in 3:1-8. Whatever disagreements may arise over specific texts, Fox tries to remain consistent to his understanding of the interpretive role contradictions play in the book.

Fox allows the rough edges of contradictions to stand. But he is not as pessimistic in his view of the book as is James Crenshaw (1987). Fox's volume provides a substantive resource for serious study of the book of Ecclesiastes. Appropriately, he believes that the reading of Qohelet is an ongoing process, not a once-for-all effort. "The book is like a mountain that reveals new shape and colors as you approach it from different angles" (ix). Fox's work will serve both teachers and preachers well in exposing them to a particular angle on the book as they continue to explore the rich contours of this remarkable work.

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Scott MCKNIGHT. ***A New Vision for Israel: The Teachings of Jesus in National Context.*** **Studying the Historical Jesus Series. Ed. Bruce Chilton and Craig A. Evans. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999. 250 pp. $21.00.**

This volume aims to interpret the teacbings of Jesus as uttered by one whose paramount concern was for the imminent fate of his nation, Israel. National repentance, for which Jesus called, would lead forthwith to the climax of all of God's salvific promises to Israel, i.e., the establishment of the kingdom of God. Conversely, national recalcitrance would be repaid, within a generation, with the sacking of Jerusalem and her temple by the Romans. This catastrophe would then serve as the immediate prelude to "the final salvation, the final judgment, and the consummation of the kingdom of God in all its glory" (12). It is McKnight's burden to show how such a nationalistic agenda colors our understanding of one who considered himself "as in some sense" his nation's "king, messiah, and prophet" (6).

Within this framework McKnight identifies the three major themes of Jesus' proclamation as (1) *YHWH*, the covenant God of Israel, (2) the kingdom of God, and (3) kingdom ethics. The heart of the book is then an exploration of these themes in light of Jesus' national vision.

In a lengthy chapter two, devoted to Jesus' theology proper, McKnight identifies the God of Jesus under two rubrics, holiness and love. A conviction of God's inflexible holiness lies at the root of (1) Jesus' demand to revere God, (2) his use of circumlocutions in speaking about God, (3) his call for absolute surrender to God, (4) his warnings of judgment, both historical and eternal, and (5) his Cry of Dereliction. But Jesus' God also loves Israel, as is expressed by Jesus' table fellowship with sinners, his use of *abba* to address God, and by his compassionate deeds, especially miracles. This God is at one with the God of the OT, who lovingly chose Israel, bound himself to her with his covenant, and jealously demanded holiness and single-minded devotion to himself.

Chapters three and four treat "The Kingdom Now Present," and "The Kingdom Yet to Come," respectively. Jesus believed that he was the divinely appointed instrument to bring the long-awaited kingdom to Israel. Already in Jesus' lifetime the kingdom was becoming a reality, inauspiciously through *inter alia,* his table fellowship with sinners, and dynamically through his miracles. Those who coalesced around Jesus in faith, heeding his call for obedience to God's will, formed the vanguard of a holy nation, composed of faithful Israel and gentiles of faith, who would populate a world soon to be embraced by "a universal display of God's salvation" (119). Within a generation God would judge unrepentant Israel by allowing her enemies to destroy Jerusalem. On the other hand, faithful Israelites "who had survived the ordeal" "would become the restored Israel, constituted around the new tribal leaders, the Twelve"

(155). This eternal kingdom of peace, love, and justice would mark the consummation of the covenant that God long ago made with Abraham.

Lastly, chapters five and six explore Jesus' ethical teachings. The former is devoted to Jesus' call to conversion and the cost of discipleship, while the latter deals with morality. Above all, one must approach these teachings in full awareness that they were "shaped and conditioned by his [Jesus'] call to Israel (not the world or the subsequent church) and . . . designed to offer the nation a commitment that could redeem Israel from a coming judgment of God on the nation" (163). Thus Jesus called Israel to repent of her national sin and to commit herself to him as the one sent by God to bring her exile to an end and usher in the kingdom. For *some* disciples this would entail abandonment of vocation, family, and possessions, and for *all*, self-denial. Jesus' moral teachings—how the individual Israelite should relate to God, self, and others in view of God's own righteousness and love—must also be seen as constituting an ethic of the coming kingdom, though complete realization of God's designs for his people will not be attainable until the kingdom exists in all its fullness.

Enhancing the usefulness of McKnight's work is a bibliography and indexes of names and subjects, and scripture and other ancient writings.

Undoubtedly, E.P. Sanders and the Caird school—especially Wright—have opened up new and exciting vistas in the study of the historical Jesus. In particular, they have situated Jesus within a Judaism intensely concerned with the restoration of the nation of Israel by the covenant-making God of Abraham and Moses. McKnight's merit is that he shows us how such a framework might color and give an edge to the teachings of Jesus. On the other hand, his work will hardly be persuasive or useful to one who does not *begin with* a Jesus who is intent on preparing his nation for a devastating attack on Judea, issuing in the final judgment of the world and the establishment of the Kingdom of God. Furthermore, although McKnight offers occasional brief defenses of dominical logia he employs, especially in the case of certain Matthean texts, he frequently builds his case on texts widely considered unsecure by all but very conservative scholars (See his use of Luke 19:11 and Acts 1:6 on p. 130). Finally, the book is hampered by the omission of a concluding chapter, which would have helped integrate and summarize his findings.

McKnight's monograph, nevertheless, is a useful exercise in determining to what extent the hypothesis advocated by Caird et al. makes sense of the broad spectrum of Jesus' teachings appearing in the synoptic gospels. And in a general way I conclude that it does. Both undergraduate and graduate schools would do well to add this work to the ever-burgeoning literature on the historical Jesus.

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Craig S. KEENER. *A Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999. 1040 pp. $60.00.

With the plethora of recent commentaries on Matthew's Gospel one might legitimately question if yet another commentary should be added to the seeming glut. However, Craig Keener's recent contribution has captured a novelty of approach and an abundance of insightful observations not found in any other Matthew commentary. His effort to read the text in the light of the general eastern Mediterranean world (based on over 10,000 primary sources), coupled with a "pericope by pericope" analysis of the kinds of lessons Matthew intends to teach his targeted audience, make this commentary particularly useful both for scholar and pastor. Keener is not unaware of the problems associated with reconstructing with certainty Matthew's social situation. Accordingly, Keener draws from "the widest possible range of sources . . . for reconstructing Matthew's general milieu." While some may quibble with the relevance of certain texts used to shed light on Matthew's narrative, Keener's observations are usually grounded in a reliable and judicious use of his primary sources.

In a 71-page introduction Keener spells out some of his interpretive assumptions and procedures. As an "ancient biography" (16-24) Matthew is free to rearrange his material thematically, and is "more interested in interpreting tradition than creating it" (22). Typical of a Palestinian Jewish education oral traditions were revered and meticulously preserved and memorized (see Gerhardsson and Riesner). Though sayings may be conflated or paraphrased, Keener argues that the burden of proof weighs on those who betray an undue skepticism concerning the Gospel's historical authenticity (24-28).

Next, Keener addresses the traditional elements of Gospel introductions, the Gospel's structure, authorship, provenance, and date. With respect to structure, Keener finds no one literary formula or symmetrical pattern giving coherence to the overall flow of Matthew's story. He observes that "a more detailed confluence of structural elements is probably unnecessary, especially if Matthew intended his Gospel for oral performance in shorter sections" (37). Keener accepts the traditional view of Matthean authorship, yet acknowledges that the matter is far from certain (40). He favors a date in the late 70s, with Matthew's primary audience being a "Jewish-Christian community engaged in the Gentile mission and deadlocked in scriptural polemic with their local synagogue communities" (51). His introduction closes with a helpful overview of Matthew's christological portrayal of Jesus (51-71).

The commentary proper occupies 648 pages with excurses interspersed throughout. It concludes with 318 pages of secondary bibliographical sources and indexes, which contribute significantly to the usability of the commentary.

In a work of this magnitude it is difficult to do justice to the abundance of fresh insights provided by Keener's astute handling of the text and rereading of

Jewish and Greco-Roman sources. Although Keener does not provide a detailed exegetical treatment along the lines of W.D. Davies and Dale, the strength of his work is his attempt to bridge the gap between exegesis and the modern sermon by "extrapolating on the basis of [Matthew's] rhetorical method to the kind of lessons . . . Matthew would at least affirm to be consistent with his purpose" (5). One wonders, however, if Matthew's intended audience were a pre-70 Jewish-Christian community if Keener's reading of the text would be substantially different?

Be that as it may, Keener works through each section of Matthew's Gospel providing a helpful overview (in bold print) highlighting the key lessons to be gleaned from each section discussed. Ample discussion and excurses follow each main point, providing exegetical and cultural evidence to support the suggested lesson. While one may dispute on occasion, Keener's certainty that he has identified precisely the message Matthew intended his original readers to understand, his approach does take seriously the necessity to position the modern reader in the cultural and rhetorical milieu of the first century in order to properly appreciate the force of Matthew's exhortation. Certainly modern exposition would do well to first absorb the shock of Matthew's vision for discipleship before any effort is made to apply the instruction to the modern church. Keener's work is Evangelical scholarship at its best, reflecting the rigors of careful research alongside a pastoral sensitivity to bring the text to bear on matters of discipleship.

All serious students of Matthew's Gospel would benefit from Keener's commentary. His work provides a virtual goldmine of primary references that every serious student will appreciate. The clarity of his exposition and practical observations will prove to be particularly helpful to pastors and teachers. In short, this is a work that every student of Gospel literature will want to add to their personal library.

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Rodney A. WHITACRE. *John*. The IVP New Testament Commentary Series 4. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1999. 424 pp. $21.99.

As a student of the Gospel of John preachers often ask me which commentary would be most helpful as they prepare sermons on this Gospel. I must confess I find this a difficult question to answer. While the Gospel of John is strongly represented by detailed, technical commentaries, there are far fewer commentaries which are concerned with clarifying the Gospel and treating the issues most relevant for preaching. I have yet to find one which I can recom-

mend without reservation for pulpit preparation. Therefore when asked to review this book, it was with genuine anticipation that I approached the task. I had been pleased with other commentaries in this IVP series, so I hoped that this commentary would fulfill this purpose.

Whitacre begins his commentary with an introduction which, though brief, is a fairly complete and competent handling of the major issues. He then advances through the Gospel a section at a time. He typically begins his comments on a section by reminding the reader how it relates to what has come before and to what is coming after. In this way, the reader is constantly being reminded of the significance of the passage in light of the Gospel as a whole. Whitacre shows good familiarity with the Greek of the Gospel of John and frequently suggests translations different from those in the NIV, upon which this series is based. He brings in historical information when it is useful in clarifying the meaning of a passage. Generally, each section concludes with a few points of application. Notes on critical issues occur from time to time separated from the main text at the bottom of the page, but these notes are relatively few and not at all lengthy.

Many will appreciate the brevity of this commentary. Whitacre does not allow himself to become bogged down in controversial issues, preferring to devote more space to the theological and practical application of the text. Though I would certainly disagree with Whitacre at points, it was enjoyable to read a commentary in which the author writes from a viewpoint of faith as part of a series in which he is free to suggest application of the text. Perhaps Whitacre's most original contribution was the suggestion that the Gospel of John contains a continuing theme of "antimony" between personal responsibility and Divine sovereignty. I found this theme interesting and think that it is worthy of further development.

I do have two reservations, however. First, the author sometimes sacrifices completeness in order to achieve brevity. Some issues of importance for the way one interprets the Gospel of John were passed over quickly. Secondly, while some of Whitacre's applications were excellent, others were not so good. Some of these comments seemed to depart quite far from the meaning of the text itself. At other times it seemed that Whitacre made just a very basic comment out of necessity. The commentary would have been strengthened if Whitacre would have made application only when he had a strong point to make.

This is a good, basic commentary which would serve well alongside other commentaries, but it will not be the commentary on the Gospel of John I most strongly recommend to preachers wanting assistance in sermon preparation. For the graduate student, it is not written at a high enough level nor does it interact with enough other literature. While it could be used in the undergraduate classroom, there are perhaps other volumes which would hold the attention of the students better and give them a more well-rounded view of

scholarship on the Gospel of John. For the Johannine scholar, I doubt that this volume will provide much that is new.

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Larry KREITZER. *Pauline Images in Fiction and Film: On Reversing the Hermeneutical Flow.* Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999. 263 pp. $28.50.

If one loves reflecting on Christian theology, enjoys reading classic literature, and likes analyzing movies, this book will interest you. It seeks to bring into dialogue images from Paul's life and writings with parallel themes in well-known novels and movies derived from those novels.

Kreitzer, Tutor of New Testament at Regent's Park College, Oxford, develops four of these themes: shipwreck and sin/salvation (*Robinson Crusoe*), looking into mirrors (*The Picture of Dorian Gray*), blood and the Lord's Supper (*Dracula*), and slavery and liberation (*Uncle Tom's Cabin*).

As many people are reading less fiction and watching more films, the idea of relating these two contemporary forms of "literacy" to Pauline images is timely and creative. Preachers and teachers will especially be intrigued by the promise that careful study of these three areas (Bible, fiction, film) can result in "reversing the hermeneutical flow" (the subtitle). The meaning of this suggestive notion is spelled out as allowing the central metaphors in these classic novels and recent movies to interact retroactively with their original sources in Paul (8).

In support of this intriguing premise, much in this book is well done. The books chosen are well known and easily accessible (this is not true of the movies selected for discussion). The extensive research on the biblical imagery and the films is impressive and, on the novels, it is nearly overwhelming.

There are, however, very few references in the bibliography dealing with hermeneutical issues. It would have been helpful to have more sources listed that explore how understanding more fully human realities today can enhance our understanding of human realities in the Bible. The indexes of scriptures and names are also useful.

There are several problems, however, with the details of these parallels. For instance, I do not see how the shipwreck in Acts 27 serves Paul as a metaphor for "sin and salvation" as it does in Defoe's novel. One serious problem is that 2 Corinthians 11, where Paul speaks of his three shipwrecks, occurs years before the shipwreck of Acts 27 (36). At best, Kreitzer can show that Paul in 2 Corinthians 11 saw God's providence at work in his life (34, 39), a theme that does surface in one of the movies analyzed (75). But, if the shipwreck serves Defoe as a metaphor for Crusoe's "original sin," conversion, and salva-

tion, the shipwreck of Acts 27 certainly does not serve Paul that way in 2 Corinthians 11. Paul's Damascus' road experience provides a closer parallel, as Kreitzer seems to realize (56).

The chapter dealing with *The Picture of Dorian Gray* is at once suggestive of intriguing insights and yet quite unclear in its details. Can we really say that Paul uses the mirror imagery in 1 Cor 13:12 and 2 Cor 3:18 as "a symbol for self-knowledge" (82)? I propose that Paul is using the mirror imagery in two distinctly different ways yet both somehow having to do with our coming to know God (not our own souls!) face to face in the Lord Jesus Christ (already somewhat now, in the Spirit of the Lord, but fully in the eschaton).

The section on Paul's mirror imagery is insufficiently developed and made confusing by references to the role of the sphinx in the ancient world. This sphinx theme actually replaces the mirror metaphor in one of the movies analyzed.

Likewise, the theme of "drinking the blood" in *Dracula* does not find a convincing parallel in Paul since he uses the blood of Jesus as a metonymy for Jesus' sacrificial death (116). I wonder whether the NT image of the Holy Spirit mingling with the life-giving water that flows from Jesus' side (John 7:39-40; 19:34; 1 John 5:6-7) does not present a better contrast with the life-taking activities of the vampires. While this theme is more prominent in John, Paul does speak of Christians continuing to let themselves be filled with the Spirit in Eph 5:18.

The last chapter, on Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, does appear to me to fulfill the ambitious project of the author. Here the ambivalence concerning whether a slave should remain a slave or use any opportunity to gain his freedom, as dramatized in the contrast between the characters of Uncle Tom and George Harris, is carefully and fruitfully explored in order to reflect on Paul's enigmatic statement in 1 Cor 7:20-24. In this instance the reader senses that perhaps some "reversing of the hermeneutical flow" is indeed taking place.

Kreitzer promises that the patient reader/viewer will discover in this three-way conversation—back and forth in time between Paul, famous novels and their film adaptations—"new depths and fresh insights about the New Testament materials" (28). I feel that this intriguing promise has been adequately fulfilled only in the last of the four studies and needs to be explored more fully in more books like this one.

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Calvin ROETZEL. *Paul: The Man and the Myth.* Minneapolis: Fortress, 1999. 227 pp. $22.00.

An erudite tour through the socio-historical world Paul inhabited and that inhabited Paul, winner of the Biblical Archaeology Society's 1999 New Testament Book of the Year, Roetzel's *Paul* is required reading for anyone interested in the historical Paul.

This is exactly the sort of book one should assign for the college and seminary classroom discussion. It is perhaps not an entry level book, although there is a significant amount of introductory material which entry level students would find very helpful. The book would work best, though, for upper-level college, and seminary courses in NT introductions or courses dealing with the undisputed Pauline texts. Three definite movements in Paul's life are covered: Paul's early, pre-apostolic life is articulated in a particularly impressive manner. The section on the years of his apostleship focuses mainly on how Paul would understand what it meant to be an apostle and his practice of interpreting the Gospel for given occasions ("theologizing") represented by his letter writing. Finally, the book covers the aftermath of Paul's struggle as the church came to revere him as the preeminent Apostle (hence the term "myth" in the title).

If there was a vague sense of it a decade ago, books like Roetzel's *Paul* certainly concretize the fact that "Paul" is re-emerging into mainstream scholarship as a complex structure comprising, to use Roetzel's language, "the man and the myth." As we survey the vast fields of Pauline studies, the figure of an historical Paul is beginning to materialize as someone other than the canonical or even mythical Paul. For those wondering where Pauline studies is going with this, Roetzel will quickly bring them up to speed. To be sure, this is not a point Roetzel is trying to make, rather Roetzel is representative of the development. That is, Roetzel is attempting to generate a demythologizing framework (note once again the word "myth" in the title) in which Paul can be situated and which functions as a specific challenge to the framework that has dominated Pauline studies for quite some time.

A common refrain in Roetzel's book is that Paul is a man whose thoughts about the Gospel (his theology) were not prefabricated but forged in those historical circumstances which presented themselves to him in terms of his apostleship. Not that Paul enters into each situation empty-handed, he rather comes with the story of Christ and the skills to interpret that story for the given situation in which he finds himself. Thus, for Roetzel, Paul's writings simply reflect the way Paul attempts to interpret the Christ story. Furthermore, Roetzel does not assume that we have in Paul's letters a consistently developed evolution of thought, rather a representation of an "interactive process"; that is, rather than Paul being presented as a man whose thoughts are matured by virtue of time, we have instead a Paul whose thoughts are matured by his need to respond to

trial and challenge. If we may draw a distinction here, Roetzel prefers Paul as a theologizer rather than a theologian.

The great strength of Roetzel's book is his desire to look for depth of context. Rather than collecting a great number of social parallels and similarities, Roetzel delineates a more specific cultural framework and sinks his discussion deep into the development of the given context. Perhaps one contextual weakness observed here is that Roetzel tends to be less proficient with the Hellenistic philosophical contexts than he is with the Jewish contexts. Clear points occur along the way in which a discussion of philosophical structures would provide closure for questions he left open. For example, the whole discussion of Paul's use of gender-bending metaphors would be greatly assisted with more discussion on Graeco-Roman psychagogy and the philosophical language of nurture. Roetzel does not avoid such discussions, he simply does not develop them to the degree required.

While Roetzel has to start somewhere, his chosen starting point is one that tends to reject an uncomfortable amount scholarship. Indeed, the boldness with which he casually announces contested and sometimes dubious conclusions is muted only by the ease with which he dispatches the traditionally held views. An example is that he announces Corinth as the provenance for Philippians with barely a whisper, if anything, of the fact that, in terms of scholarly support, Corinth trails a significantly long way behind any of the other options: Rome, Caesarea, Ephesus.

Of course, traditionally held views are just that. However, one begins to suspect as Roetzel moves through his book that much more is going on than simply the presentation of historical data. The decision to represent such positions *prima facie* is a highly rhetorical maneuver with specific goals in view. The fact is that Roetzel needs Philippians to be representative of a Corinthian imprisonment, for example, in order for his larger story of Paul to hold together. The moment this becomes apparent in the text, the book becomes more valuable for its historical discussions than for any of its conclusions—not that we should belittle the conclusions of Roetzel's work—rather that we recognize them for what they are: participants in yet another mythology.

Roetzel has, without a doubt, woven together a stimulating story of Paul reconstructed from the "scraps of what was once a large and imposing canvas." Yet any time someone appears to present us with such a totalizing narrative (a metanarrative) such as the one represented in Roetzel's work (whether he was out to create such a narrative does not preclude the existence of one in his book), is the moment we should become suspicious of the ability of that metanarrative to function as a totalizing force in our comprehension and interpretation of the data at hand. Roetzel is at pains to represent Paul as a skilful interpreter of the gospel embroiled in the tension between anthropological and theological realities, and rightly so. However, it is also clear that we ought to

take pains to locate ourselves within the very same set of tensions as we ourselves interpret Paul. To the degree that we fail to do this is the degree to which we re-inscribe the very same mythological features we attempt to dislocate via our historical analysis. While Roetzel's work is truly significant, we recognize that in the process of articulating the "myth" of Paul in an attempt to demythologize Paul, the book is necessarily itself mythological.

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William R. BAKER. *2 Corinthians.* The College Press NIV Commentary. Joplin, MO: College Press, 1999. 470 pp. $29.99.

What is the measure of a good exegetical commentary? An adequate answer to this question would emphasize effectiveness in digesting new discoveries and applying these to the interpretation of a biblical writing and relevance for the intended readership. In these respects (among others), William Baker's commentary on 2 Corinthians is a good one. His discussion of the interpretive options and evidence is balanced and thorough, and conclusions reached are generally carefully substantiated in light of the best studies (see the Bibliography, 37-55). Equally, his exposition aims at (and will successfully reach) a wide readership, for which the decision to use the NIV as the base text is probably wise. A concise Introduction establishes the essential elements of background and offers entrance into the text without undue delays. The commentary proper treats the biblical text phrase by phrase, and where Greek terms and phrases are cited, translation and transliteration are consistently supplied alongside.

The scope of this review only allows mention of a few highlights and questions. First, notably, Baker reflects some recent developments in the application of literary and rhetorical analysis to 2 Corinthians (Witherington, 1995, et al.) in arguing that the canonical document represents a single, unified letter. As the Introduction points out, while few scholars doubt the authenticity of the writing as a whole, the majority view regards 2 Corinthians as consisting of two or three (or more) shorter letters (or fragments thereof) written by Paul at various stages in his dealings with the Corinthian community and subsequently joined together to form the document that appears in our NT. This question remains open (in my opinion), but it is good to have a fresh commentary that develops from Baker's starting point.

Second, Baker is not slow to test the adequacy of the NIV. His treatment of 3:7, for example, combines careful original exegesis with a judicious use of recent studies as he demonstrates that Paul's language (in this case, the Greek verb καταργέω, *katargeō*) should be understood as recalling the OT picture of

the veil that "hid" or "obstructed" the visibility of the glory of God, rather than as indicating the "fading" of glory (NIV). He argues convincingly that Paul stays within the orbit of Jewish assumptions in describing his mission to the Gentiles in continuity with the "old" covenant.

My questions are of two sorts. First, I wonder if the decision to present the commentary in twelve chapters, corresponding roughly to the chapter divisions of our 2 Corinthians, is wise. It is perhaps understandable as an effort to increase "user-friendliness," but it sits awkwardly with the literary-rhetorical realities of the biblical text. Similarly, linguistically, the traditional phrase-by-phrase treatment of the text is also somewhat problematic, though Baker's transitions sustain Paul's thought for the reader.

Second, I was mildly surprised when I reached the discussions of "righteousness" (3:9; 5:21) at the omission of some level of interaction with the increasingly influential "new perspective on Paul." Baker's explanation of the problematic phrase "that we might become the righteousness of God" in 5:21 (NIV) in terms of the human experience of Christ's relationship with God may be sufficient, but it should be tested within the current dialogue (a note in the text directing attention to the Bibliography that includes the study by N.T. Wright who develops this line of thought would have been useful).

Such questions aside, Dr. Baker's exposition of 2 Corinthians is a welcome contribution to the interpretation of Paul for the church today. He insists on the relevance of this Pauline writing for us, and effectively draws out this relevance at each point. Teachers, ministers, and other serious students of the New Testament will find this tool immensely helpful.

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Gordon D. FEE. *Philippians.* The IVP New Testament Commentary Series. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1999. 204 pp. $16.99.

Fee's latest contribution to the study of Philippians is a popularized version of his commentary in the New International Series (Eerdmans, 1995). It differs from the earlier commentary in that (1) it omits much of the linguistic discussion and historical documentation found in the longer work, and (2) it includes homiletical/hortatory paragraphs not found there. The commentary is true to the stated purpose of the IVP New Testament Commentary Series "to move from the [biblical] text to its contemporary relevance and application" within a context of responsible biblical scholarship.

While offering a commentary for the nonspecialist, the work includes references for those who will want to pursue additional study. Notes at the bot-

tom of pages offer passing allusions to linguistic and historical questions while MLA-style notations within the text refer the reader to additional resources listed in the bibliography. Among other works, the reader is frequently referred to Fee's longer commentary (1995) for discussion of exegetical issues.

With help from the ancient writing manual of pseudo-Demitrius Fee identifies the genre of Philippians as "a hortatory letter of friendship," refined by Paul's distinctive Christian agenda. Philippians offers its theological insights and exhortations within the framework of a three-way, triangular bond consisting of Jesus, Paul, and the Philippian Christians. The overarching concern of the Philippian letter is the peace and harmony of the believers. The first readers are directed toward these goals through appeals to the example of Jesus (2:5-11), Paul himself (3:4-14), and to a lesser extent, Timothy (2:19-24), and Epaphroditus (2:25-30). An important word in Philippians, one that offers an important key for understanding its message, is φρονέω (1:7; 2:2,5; 3:15,19; 4:2,10). Paul wants his readers "to consider well," "to think about" the matters he has placed before them.

Fee believes that the Christians of Philippi, like Paul himself, were suffering at the hands of the Empire. The apostle wanted to teach them through his own example that they ought to rejoice in the face of turmoil. In addition, they were in danger of being deceived by Jewish Christians who wanted to impose the Law of Moses, even though the teachers were not present in Philippi at the time Paul wrote. Finally, in the face of internal factions, the apostle wanted to urge the church to grow in love and support for one another. The hortatory appeal of the friendship letter called on the Philippians to continue steadfast in the Lord and to live together in unity of Spirit. The glue that holds the letter together, according to Fee, is (1) the friendship theme, and (2) the appeal for unity. The central focus of the letter is the Philippians' relationship with Christ as that is evidenced in their partnership with Paul in the gospel.

Fee's hortatory/application comments are both the strength of the commentary and its weakness. They are its strength because the Bible is a book for the guidance of the church in its spiritual life. Further, the remarks seem to come from a godly man who wants Christians to engage the mind as well as the heart. They are its weakness because the author is unable to resist occasional aspersions, trivia, and commonplace moralisms. When, for example, he takes a shot at those "whose passion for the gospel seems all too often a passion for their own 'correct' view of things," some clarification would be helpful.

The hortatory sections are frequently introduced with phrases such as, "greatly needed in the church today," or "in our postmodern world," or "contemporary Christianity can profit." Questionable generalizations tend to follow. With apparent passion he writes, "Christian ethics have nothing to do with rules that regulate conduct." Perhaps, but the statement is, at best, unclear. When Paul urges his readers, "Do all things without grumbling or questioning,

that you may be blameless and innocent" (2:14-15), that sounds like a rule of ethical import. In another place Fee writes that the righteousness that reflects God's character is "a million miles removed from religious observance." One might argue that reflection on God's character and attention to one's behavior fall under the rubric, "religious observance." If the intent to make "religious observance" a pejorative term for community liturgy, the remark is unjustified for many reasons.

On the whole, the commentary offers clear exegetical insights and careful scholarship in a format accessible to the general reader. Even if they are occasionally overblown, the hortatory comments make a commendable effort to relate the biblical text to the ongoing life of the church. The work is an excellent contribution to the study of Philippians.

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Colin G. KRUSE. *The Letters of John.* The Pillar New Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000. 288 pp. $28.00.

Kruse, Lecturer in New Testament at the Bible College of Victoria, Melbourne, Australia, continues the reputation of the Pillar. He does explain the cultural context well, giving extensive, yet easily understood, introductions to the three letters. He spends time and good effort on the Johannine genre, the Qumran comparisons and the letters' rhetorical form, but does not belabor any issue or bore the reader. He deals honestly with the antichrists' doctrines as these arise from the text of the letters, revealing a seeming "proto-gnosticism." He scrutinizes the biblical doctrine of the atonement (which is often lacking in today's preaching and teaching) and expounds the coming of Christ "in the flesh" and other Johannine themes. He connects themes from the epistles with themes from the Gospel. He explains the Spirit's work, the meaning of "eternal life," and what *agape* and *koinonia* really mean in the context of the letters ("helping others" and "contributing to one another"). In a pertinent note on *hilasmos*, Kruse adds to Morris's point over against Dodd, demonstrating the meaning of its uses in LXX: that it does mean, after all, both "the turning away of God's wrath from the sinner" and "the cleansing and forgiving of sin." Kruse does a good job of blending exacting exegesis with clear exposition. He is honest with the text, but is by no means a pedant. He is sensitive to the pastor's perspective, yet gives us more than devotional results. I appreciated his clear use of the Greek text without harping on it. The special studies scattered throughout are especially rich. Most of all, I enjoyed his balanced approach to difficult and fissiparous doctrinal positions, such as his brief note on "Antichrist."

Kruse's mediate commentary on the Johannine epistles is usable by Greek scholars or competent Bible students. Its greatest weakness is that it has no index of words in English or Greek, although it does contain an index of modern authors and an index of biblical and extrabiblical literature. Another weakness is its vocabulary. It is touted to be for the "general reader," but the vocabulary may be a bit extensive for that readership. However, it certainly is not too much for those acquainted with biblical scholarship.

Kruse has done us a great service; he has presented us with a fresh, helpful exposition of John's letters while shunning boring technical detail.

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