Book Reviews

George GALLUP, Jr., and D. Michael LINDSAY. *Surveying the Religious Landscape: Trends in U.S. Beliefs.* Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press, 2000. 208 pp. $17.95.

The relationship between religion and culture continues to captivate discussions and provide the impetus for more research on the matter. This volume takes a hard look at how religion and culture intertwine in American society. Their results are based on extensive research. In fact, the book is the product of surveys and the dissemination of the information garnered by such surveys.

Reading the findings of surveys can tend to turn into laborious reading. This book is not exempt from falling into such a trap. However, the book, for the most part, communicates information in a clear and concise manner. One way in which it accomplishes such effective dissemination of material is through the abundance of graphs and charts. Very rarely does the reader encounter a page without a graph. The use of the graphs allows the reader to digest what he has just read and process it by incorporating another sense.

Gallup's strength lies in asking questions. His solicitation of answers provides both insight and debate. This book will more than likely continue such a trend. While Gallup knows what questions to ask, he rarely formulates bedrock conclusions. Rather, he is careful to disclose the revelation of the survey answers without additional commentary. There are times, like the instance of parents and their children attending church services together, where Gallup points out that his findings contradict popular belief. It is these findings that are the treasure of this book. Undoubtedly, some findings will not surprise most readers. Yet, Gallup delves into just enough controversial issues that some findings are certain to surprise the majority of those who read this latest work.

Gallup leaves no corner untouched in his attempts to gauge the religious pulse of American society. In light of fears of the churched population that this country is continuing a downward moral slide, Gallup seeks to not simply justify such fears, but to establish the validity of those fears in the first place. Therefore, it comes as no surprise that 95 percent of Americans affirm a belief in the existence of God or a "Higher Power." What is surprising is that this belief does not affect the lifestyle choices of the respondents.

The brightest section of the book has to do with the renewed emphasis on the part of the younger generation to embrace religious values and principles. Whereas, the Baby Boomer generation has sought to teach tolerance at the expense of truth, the next generation longs to integrate both concepts. One

interesting conclusion derived from Gallup's research is the desire of the younger generation to engage more actively in corporate worship life. On the other hand, the Baby Boomers who do not show as strong a desire for involvement in corporate worship, are more likely to enthusiastically embrace private worship, meaning personal Bible study and prayer. What is fascinating about this conclusion is the willingness of teenagers to delve headfirst into corporate church life without establishing any foundation in personal Bible study and prayer. One can only surmise about the influence that such an attitude and practice will have on individual churches within years to come.

Although the conclusions deduced from the surveys apply broadly, those from the Stone-Campbell Restoration Movement can find helpful results from this study. Many of Gallup's questions cross the denominational lines. Questions that call for category labels of "religiously conservative" or "religiously liberal" serve to show how segmented churches from the Stone-Campbell Restoration tradition have become.

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Timothy DUDLEY-SMITH. *John Stott: The Making of a Leader: The Early Years*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1999. 513 pp. $24.99.

> At the time of his ordination in 1945 it was difficult to see a future for evangelicalism, in the Church of England at least, as anything more than a faithful remnant, marginalized and all but excluded from the main stream of church life. In this unpropitious climate All Souls Church presented a platform of opportunity . . . from which John Stott began to perceive and then pursue his vision of a church apostolic in faith, alive in the Spirit, taught by the Scriptures and ready to respond in mission to the call of Jesus Christ (8-9).

As we enter the twenty-first century, evangelicalism in general is hardly a peripheral phenomenon, and a biblically oriented Anglicanism, while still relatively small in numbers, is a recognizable presence in the English academic and spiritual scene. In no small way is this current evangelical "rebirth" due to God's sovereign use of a parish preacher in the heart of London, whose pulpit has literally touched the world. As historians begin to review the surprising resurgence of evangelical Christianity during the past fifty years or so, the person of John R.W. Stott will undoubtedly deserve significant discussion, such as a 513-page biography that essentially chronicles this extraordinary life to the dawn of the 1960s. To those of us baby boomers who first began to "cut our

theological teeth" on John Stott in the early seventies, a book of such magnitude on the pre-Lusanne (1974) days of this patriarch of evangelicalism is utterly astonishing and enlightening. As the evangelical mantel is transferred from Stott's generation to our own, it is sometimes perplexing to the postmodern generation why our "parents in the faith" are so resistant to negotiating away the rationality and truth of the Christian Faith while doggedly insisting that issues like baptism, eschatology, and women's ministry remain as *adiaphora* (see my review on Stott's *Evangelical Truth* in this *SCJ* issue).

In an elegant style, befitting the writer of many hymns, Dudley-Smith patiently unfolds the formative years of his longtime colleague and friend, John Stott, often utilizing sizable excerpts from the latter's own personal correspondence. With a minimum of analyses, the biographer allows his readers to track Stott's personal, intellectual and spiritual journey decade by decade, from privileged family roots which included a musician father steeped in the "scientific secularism" of the early twenties and a mother who still held on to her childhood Lutheran piety (41-44). The Stott household also included a number of nannies, including one "Nanny Golden," a devout Christian, who left an indelible mark upon young John through "her shining display of selfless disinterested love" (50). Dudley-Smith then takes us through the prep school years where Stott developed his well-known love of birds, to his education at Rugby (his father's school) where he was invited to the "Christian Union" and henceforth, became a believer in Jesus Christ. While he had been a regular Bible reader before his conversion, the teen-aged Stott now "began to read the Bible from a new standpoint, he was ready to receive its teaching with a humble mind. He no longer presumed to sit in judgment on the Scriptures, but allowed them to be his teacher" (99). This humble submission to the Written Word has certainly characterized the preaching and pen of John Stott to this very day.

We next join our Christian mentor in his Cambridge years ('40s), as he prepares for a life of parish ministry and adopts an "instinctive pacifism," much to the chagrin of his father, a proud veteran. Dudley-Smith captures well the anguish that resulted from John's "disappointing choices," creating a rift which would never be quite fully healed (192).

Stott's subsequent pilgrimage to Ridley Hall in pursuit of ordination provides some of the most interesting parts of the entire book. Dudley-Smith tells us that before the war "Academic theology in Cambridge . . . had been something of a graveyard for religion" (181). Quoting Oliver Barclay, he notes that theological study "did not pretend to be much of a preparation for the ministry . . . to study theology was to enter a spiritual wilderness" (181). Casting an enormous shadow at Ridley during this time was the great C.H. Dodd, who by the standards of academic theology was more orthodox and pastoral than most of his colleagues. Stott, however, was less than impressed.

> He lectured on St. John's Gospel particularly, and the Hellenistic background of the Gospel. It was well attended . . . and one of my difficulties in reading theology was not so much the individual liberal arguments but just looking around that room of 200 students drinking in every word of the great Professor C.H. Dodd and saying to myself, "I'm the only person who doesn't agree with him" (183).

While he in no way found liberal theology an easy foe to dismiss, Stott's Cambridge days caused him to develop a certain "pain in the mind" (183), which has been evidenced in his writings to this day, a distaste for the arrogance of current academic trends as well as the discipline of providing fair hearing of unwelcome arguments. In this less-than-friendly theological environment, John Stott's evangelical passion was sorely tested and emerged intact because it withstood the criteria of truth.

The Stott saga is then continued through his years at All Souls, first as an assistant curate and then as its longtime rector where he developed his strategy for evangelism. During the 1950s, John Stott became involved in his well known "university missions" (extending his influence to virtually every corner of the world), extended his advocacy on behalf of the young Billy Graham in his British crusades, and launched an "Eclectic Society," which became a veritable lifeline to younger clergy in terms of both fellowship and intellectual nourishment. During the fifties, the path of John Stott would become inextricably crossed with the likes of Martyn Lloyd-Jones, J.I. Packer, the aforementioned Graham, and countless numbers of university students, such as contemporary evangelical theologian David Wells who was challenged to accept Christ while attending a Stott "mission" at the University of Cape Town (414). The anemic condition of pre-war evangelicalism was in large part reversed in a decade, due to an Anglican rector who returned to the church home (All Souls) that had done little to negate his own father's skepticism thirty years before!

This volume will disappoint the reader who is expecting a theological commentary on the level of Alister McGrath's excellent biography of J.I. Packer. On the other hand, if one desires to simply open the "cedar chest" of one of evangelicalism's greatest statesmen, Dudley-Smith provides a voluminous file to peruse. *The Early Years* is in many ways like climbing into the lap of a grandparent and learning what life was like when he was a "little child." The difference with this grandfather's story is that his younger years have shaped the evangelical family tree that so many of us share. It is with this kind of expectation that this reviewer eagerly awaits the second volume recounting his "Grandpa Stott's" next forty years.

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John STOTT. *Evangelical Truth: A Personal Plea for Unity, Integrity and Faithfulness.* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1999. 131 pp. $9.99.

A new millennium has dawned, and for evangelicals this has significance beyond time measurement. A hallowed generation of Christian statesmen are coming to the close of their earthly endeavors and are now extending to their theological descendants some final words of wisdom. Such evangelical "shapers" as Billy Graham, Carl Henry, Kenneth Kantzer, etc., as well as Stone-Campbell Restoration thinkers (Jack Cottrell, James Strauss) are leaving their heirs with a greater understanding of our heritage as well as some cautionary counsel as this movement which attained an intellectual credibility through their thoughts and writings moves into its second half-century of life.

The title by itself from this evangelical sage gives a glimpse of not only the book's contents but also a sense of the "older generation's" concerns for the movement they grew and defined. "Evangelical *Truth*" is a less than subtle insistence upon a propositional revelation that is currently under assault from a "younger" scholarship flirting with postmodernism's subjectivism. While John Stackhouse, Jr. (*Christianity Today*, Feb. 17, 2000) may find Stott's titular choice a bit "questionable" (rationalistic, really), this reviewer finds "truth" to be a very intentional decision on the writer's part, in part to curb the recent tide which tends to "reduce" the Faith to "community convictions." Indeed, Stott asserts that "the evangelical faith cannot capitulate to this pluralism and relativism. We must continue to argue that truth is truth" (45). No less poignant are the other words that constitute Stott's "little book": "a personal plea" rightly captures the work's nonauthoritarian, yet recognized pastoral spirit, "unity" frames both an original and still-to-be-realized vision of evangelicalism's founders; "integrity," and "faithfulness" represent the kind of intellectual and behavioral practice that need to inform and guide our appropriation of Christianity.

In a scant 131 pages, then, the near-octogenarian Anglican lays out a primer for a postmodern evangelical generation: defining who we are (as well as who we are not), what doctrines are nonnegotiable in belief and what areas are adiaphora, and how we are to live our convictions (with integrity, commitment, unity, and an all-too-often evangelical "exclusion," humility).

In a tripartite style that pervades *Evangelical Truth*, Stott begins by clarifying that the evangelical faith is not the "new," out-of-the-mainstream and anti-intellectual phenomenon so prominently portrayed by academia and media alike. "On the contrary, we dare to claim that evangelical Christianity is original, apostolic, New Testament Christianity" (14). It is an attempt to recover the authentic gospel in a manner akin to the Reformers or John Wesley. Evangelicals are not *innovators* but rather *renovators* (or "restorers"). Secondly, evangelicalism does not set aside historic Christian orthodoxy but proudly recites the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds as reliable representations of authori-

tative Scripture. Historically, evangelicals have been agents of literacy, social reform (antislavery), and benevolence due to their commitment to the gospel of Christ (16, 17). Thirdly, one cannot simply equate the evangelical faith with fundamentalism (a common cultural error) for the two have a far different pedigree, as well as conceptions. Whereas fundamentalists tend to be suspicious of scholarship, exhibit an excessive biblical literalism, separate the spiritual from the physical realms in their soteriology, and "dogmatize" the future (19-21), evangelicals on the other hand are marked by a less intellectually hostile, more culturally-engaging, and more holistic understanding of the Christian message. In fact, contends Stott, the evangelical faith can be "limited" to three "priorities" all reflecting the triune nature of both God and the gospel: (1) the self revelation of God the Father; (2) the redemptive work of God the Son; and (3) the transforming work of God the Spirit (25). Drawing upon Paul's statement in 1 Cor 2:1-5, Stott argues that the "evangel" (gospel) is "God's wisdom" (from which he will comment on the doctrine of Scripture) centered in the cross of Christ (a popular Stott theme) and administrated by the power of the Holy Spirit in conversion and subsequent sanctification. Furthermore, in his own creative way, Stott characterizes these truths as the *hapax* and *mallon* of God's work. These two adverbs encapsulate the essence of evangelism in that they emphasize the once-for-all "givenness" of God's special revelation, particularly as seen in the nature and work of Christ as well as ongoing activity of the Holy Spirit which is "more and more" enabling us both to comprehend and obey Scripture (30-33). Consequently, Stott is not simply a "rationalist" about the orthodox faith (nor for that matter, an existentialist) but rather a defender for a theology that is both propositional and personal (truth-based/Spirit-actualized).

In his exposition of the first *hapax* ("the Revelation of God"), Stott discusses divine self-disclosure in fairly typical terms: general, special, progressive, and personal. This leads into a discourse on the nature of inspiration which again is generally reflective of standard "old guard" evangelical treatments, except for his generally positive appreciation of "reverent" criticism (textual, historical, literary, and redaction – Stott is not a naïve biblicist) and his distaste for the term "inerrancy" (61-62). While the author will "comfortably" assent to a Bible which is "completely true and trustworthy" ("Evangelical Affirmations"), he is nonetheless opposed to resolving biblical "discrepancies" by an inerrantist appeal rather than by admitting that a problem exists, presumably due to our own scarcity of information (62). In this, Stott becomes a model of balance to his fellow evangelicals who have too often resorted to clumsy harmonizations to protect an error-free Bible, or on the other hand embraced a Barthian-like subjectivism (limited inerrancy). Stott is quick to point out that an evangelical's confidence in the Bible as God's Word is qualified by two "clarifications," Scripture as originally given (autographs) and as correctly interpret-

ed (63-66). While this is, again, fairly typical affirmation from his generation of scholars, Stott once more proves that he is not an uninformed fideist calling textual criticism "one of the church's vital responsibilities" (63) and a hermeneutical method of which allows "every biblical author to lay down his own theological emphases and literary principles and to abide by them" (64). On the other hand, he is adamant that there is a determinant meaning in the biblical texts and any attempt to "deconstruct" them is not only mistaken but also futile.

While some may find Stott's extensive treatment on revelation (over 30 pages) an all-too-familiar rehash of old-time evangelical rationalism, they must also ask themselves the question posed by the author at the beginning of this chapter (" the primary question in every religion"): by what authority do we believe what we believe (35)? Recent attempts to bury the doctrine of Scripture amidst discussions of the Holy Spirit and the believing community (See Grenz, *Theology for the Community of God*) rob evangelicals of a clear norm for Christian belief and practices, not to mention a genuine base for unity.

Stott next develops his second *hapax* truth, the cross of Christ, in a scant twenty pages but with no less lucidity than the preceding discussion. Invoking the Apostle Paul, as well as Martin Luther, the author argues that the death of Christ must be the center of our faith, life, and ministry (67). In a manner reminiscent of his classic 1986 tome by the same title, Stott revisits the great Reformation theme "justification by faith" which originates in God's grace and is grounded in Christ's blood (78). While some evangelicals may feel that their elder statesman has "downplayed" other aspects of the life of Christ (cf. Stackhouse) the reader must again be reminded that Stott is not attempting to provide a comprehensive discussion on Christology, but rather articulate that which is of "first importance" (1 Cor 15:3-4). This reviewer finds the "truth of the cross" to be a very helpful emphasis in a culture where evangelicals are too enamored with discovering alternative salvific schemes for the sincere practitioners of other religions, or advocating "feel good" therapies for church members who don't need to be burdened with the guilt of sin. By fixing our gaze upon Calvary, we are again reminded that salvation is entirely God's doing, its effect is full and complete forgiveness, and its dramatic portrayal of self-denial establishes a lifestyle that sets the Christian at variance with the selfism so rampant in our culture. In spite of the frequent hostility that the cross engenders from Christianity's foes (as well as the indifference it is given from the seeker-sensitive stream of evangelicalism), for Stott, the "cursed tree" is a nonnegotiable truth: "There is no possibility of compromise. A hallmark of authentic evangelical Christianity is that we glory only in the cross" (84).

In the third and final chapter of his "Trinitarian shape of the evangelical faith" ("ministry of the Holy Spirit"), Stott most clearly demonstrates his ability to create an ironic, "common ground" for his fragmented brethren.

Avoiding the extremes of both a scholasticism which denies the present-day possibility of miracles as well as a Vineyard-like emphasis on the "normalcy" of signs and wonders, this architect of twentieth-century evangelicalism charts out a six-stage analysis on the Spirit's work that begs dissent from anyone who claims to adhere to the biblical faith. Five aspects of the Christian life, then, bear the unmistakable mark of the Holy Spirit's regeneration (Stott preferred this term over conversion), assurance, holiness, community, mission, and hope. Stone-Campbell adherents might be reluctant to accept Stott's argument that the "new birth is not identical with baptism" (90); however, we must remember that the author's context is an Anglican communion whose members often assume their baptism (as infants) is identical with the new birth. While I, along with many other readers of *SCJ*, would challenge Stott's too facile description of baptism as a "visible and public dramatization of this (new birth's) inward and secret reality" (91), one cannot help but appreciate his repudiation of a "mechanical" view of the rite, a sacramentalism which has unfortunately crept into some perimeters of the Stone-Campbell Movement. Stott's comments (which reflect a fairly common evangelical aversion to a baptism-new birth equation) actually challenge me to better articulate a healthy baptismal theology that our Restoration heritage is perhaps best positioned to express: i.e., rather that driving an unbiblical wedge between faith and baptism (which relegates the latter to a mere symbol), we can present baptism within its NT context of "saving faith," belief in Jesus normally involves noting water baptism (Acts' conversion narratives).

The chapter on the Holy Spirit's ministry is also Stott's most resounding salvo against contemporary charges that his brand of evangelicalism is nothing more than a sterile rationalism. While his first two truth planks are inherently propositional, this third aspect demonstrates that the Christian faith is indeed a personalizing of the truth, which is accomplished through the dynamic (*mallon*) enabling work of the Spirit. While various evangelical camps may disagree as to the exact nature of the "baptism of the Holy Spirit," the scope of the charismata, or the extent of Christian perfectionism, all would agree that such life is "life in the Spirit" (110). Stott concludes this most dialogical of his chapters with the very astute observation that many of our evangelical divisions (particularly between charismatics and noncharismatics) are in essence due to an "imbalanced eschatology," a failure to appreciate the tension between the "already" and "not yet" (109-110). This eschatological equilibrium is surely of far greater consequence than the details of the rapture, tribulation, or millennium; at least Paul would seem to suggest this is the case (Romans 8). In short, the truth of the Holy Spirit's ongoing ministry enables us to recognize the true nature of supernaturally empowered Christian discipleship, as well as appreciate the more critical theological contexts of issues like the new birth, holiness, and eschatology.

Evangelical Truth concludes with a call for integrity (a conduct in keeping with our calling), stability (which is grounded in truth), and a unity which discerns what matters cannot be compromised and what are to be treated as adiaphora. Stott offers the following maxim for making this difficult "call": "whenever equally biblical Christians, who are equally anxious to understand the teaching of Scripture and to submit to its authority, reach different conclusions, we should deduce that Scripture is not crystal clear in this matter, and therefore we can afford to give one another liberty" (117). Nearly two centuries ago, Thomas Campbell enunciated an almost identical sentiment: "In essentials unity, in nonessentials liberty, in all things love." However, Stott has taken the Restoration patriarch one step forward by actually identifying what those "essentials" are. Indeed, one of the unfortunate legacies of the Stone-Campbell heritage has been our reluctance to systematize our theology which has thereby resulted in a failure to distinguish a normative doctrine from its normal expression. Consequently, issues like the immersion of penitent believers (undoubtedly a "normal" Scriptural presentation) become as important and often more so than the defining doctrines of the trinity or the finished work of Christ at the cross. John Stott has provided the contemporary heirs of Campbell's unity dream with some much-needed systematic theology. Beyond this, he has handed a torch to the next generation of evangelicals, a torch of truth which threatens to be extinguished by philosophic capitulation (postmodernism), cultural accommodation, and evangelicalism's apparent readiness to fragment over less-than-ultimate issues. This powerful "little book," if carefully read and digested, might just be the fuel that rekindles a deep appreciation for the best of our evangelical heritage as well as it propels it to as yet unrealized witnesses of God's truth and grace.

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John B. COBB, Jr., and Clark H. PINNOCK, eds. *Searching for an Adequate God: A Dialogue between Process and Free Will Theists.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000. 269 pp. $26.00.

In these essays, David Ray Griffin is the primary advocate of process theism, in which the biblical concept of divine transcendence is regarded as philosophically incoherent, and William Hasker is the leading proponent of recently emergent openness theism, which sees little biblical support for the traditional, particularly the Augustinian/Calvinistic, understanding of divine foreknowledge and sovereignty. Nancy R. Howell, David L. Wheeler, and Richard Rice provide mediating reflections in essays and responses. Each con-

tributor is eager to affirm areas of agreement, yet is clear and forthright in addressing differences in reasoning and conclusions.

Griffin posits, as the best context of Christianity's gospel, what he terms naturalistic theism. In light of the last three centuries of progress in human knowledge, especially in the areas of science and biblical criticism, philosophical coherence requires that we see God's interaction with the world as exclusively persuasive, loving immanence rather than as involving the exercise of coercive (specifically, miraculous, as in creation *ex nihilo* or a bodily resurrection of Jesus) power. In contrast, Hasker maintains that the most adequate and biblical concept of God affirms his imperfect knowledge of, and thus genuine openness to, the contingent aspects of the future that pertain to human freedom. Nevertheless, the power to create out of nothing, to act decisively in history and righteously toward evil, and to communicate to human beings in definite and unambiguous ways, is intrinsic to the divine nature.

The material issue in *Searching for an Adequate God* is the balance of immanence and transcendence in God's interaction with the world. Yet the more crucial, underlying methodological question is, to what extent is biblical ontology true? Should we retain as not only biblically affirmed but also ontologically prerequisite to and epistemologically implicit in the gospel, the metaphysical distinction between eternal, necessary Creator and contingent creation? Or, should we accept the post-Enlightenment philosophical flow (the stream runs to the East) and affirm that all enduring individuals, including God, are "personally ordered societies of occasions of experience" or "societies of momentary events" (4, 5)? Griffin, Hasker, and Rice rightly perceive that the difference in worldviews is radical.

The methodological question itself turns upon the prior, epistemic question, at what point is biblical authority asserted in the development of a coherent worldview? For Griffin, biblical authority is muted at best, because divine revelation would be an exercise of coercive power. The claim of clear and unambiguous communication from God is "undermined by the fact that there have been theological conflicts, rooted at least partly in contrary scriptural passages, about virtually every aspect of Christian doctrine" (255). Griffin does not respond directly to Hasker's point that "if we do not believe that God revealed to Paul what his mission was to be, we call in question everything about that mission, Paul's subsequent life, and his message" (243).

Searching for an Adequate God is informative and timely, especially in light of discussions of open theism that took place during the November 2000 ETS Annual Meeting. It is good to see the Calvinistic formulations of divine immutability and sovereignty brought under renewed critique, though there is some risk that at the 2001 conference (the theme of which is "Defining Evangelicalism's Boundaries") the reaction of the Calvinistic majority will move toward exclusion, not only of openness theists, but of all who affirm

God's perfect foreknowledge of and rule over the future but do not understand his sovereignty in the deterministic way of many of our brothers in the Reformed tradition.

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Roger LUNDIN, Clarence WALHOUT, and Anthony C. THISELTON. *The Promise of Hermeneutics.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999. 239 pp. $20.00.

More books should take the format found in this volume. Rather than a series of co-authored chapters, each of the three authors is allowed to develop his argument in a single essay. Each of the essays could have been easily offered in the form of a monograph, but uncommon restraint has seen these authors say what they need to say and leave it at that. The only problem with such economy is that it naturally elevates the required reading level, since there is no occasion to explain technical terms or loosen up some of the more dense theoretical points. This problem is slightly exacerbated by the fact that the book is sometimes unsure of its audience. The writers vary in their impression of what they should expect of the reader, often leaping between the discussion of rudimentary concepts, making the book feel like a primer, to the complicated implications of assumed arguments.

The Promise of Hermeneutics was preceded in 1985 by *The Responsibility of Hermeneutics*, produced by the same authors as a product of their work as fellows at the Center for Christian Scholarship at Calvin College. Those who read that earlier work will find in this book arguments which are far more developed and which reflect the theoretical maturation enabled by their ongoing discussion as members of the center.

The word "promise" in the title is a significant indicator of what the authors are trying to achieve in this book. "Promise" is not only the expected future results of hermeneutics—the promise hermeneutics holds for us—it reflects also an attempt to gain back something via this kind of hermeneutic. More importantly, it is not simply a reference to an object; rather it represents an essential feature of the hermeneutical process itself. Thus, we find the sort of comment made in Lundin's final point: "Confession is a part of the Christian hermeneutical endeavor because our self-understanding and interpretive skills share in the brokenness of our condition. As readers, we need to be redeemed" (64). Walhout's conclusion similarly draws attention to the hope available through the exploratory (interpretive) process; he gives the last word to Jürgen Moltmann: "In hope, reason becomes productive fantasy. People dream the

messianic dream of the new, whole life that will at last be truly alive. They explore the future's possibilities in order to realize this dream of life" (131). The hermeneutical concept of "promise" attains fuller expression in Thiselton's essay. Promise begins as a key illocutionary force within the text's activity and is thus understood as something which "cannot be isolated from the complex relations to truth and states of affairs" (231). As such, "promise" becomes the occasion for hermeneutical activity and thus is a part of the hermeneutical process itself.

Lundin's essay articulates the relationship between Descartes' radically individualized rationalism and the resultant "orphaning" process that Lundin holds responsible for the nonrelational approach to understanding meaning typical of the enlightenment. In other words, Lundin argues that the placement of the rational self at the center of the scientific process and at the same time disassociating the rational self from a life-story or the "world" of which it is a part was deeply problematic for effective Christian interpretation. The hermeneutical response is, in short, to reject the disconnected rational self and assume a relational (or "intersubjective" to use Thiselton's term) posture towards not only the object of investigation, but also to the world around that object and the history of which both it and the interpreter are a part. Lundin envisages in Descartes's orphans an unnatural tear in the continuum between the subjective self and the complex of which the object of investigation is a part, and thus sees the need for a "healing" to take place to re-enable hermeneutical activity that interacts with that continuum.

Walhout's essay complements Lundin's by moving to a focus on what happens in that continuum. While Lundin's work reveals new connections, Walhout's essay tends to be more of a recontextualizing of an already developed speech-act theory. Walhout's reading of J.L. Austin's work is solid and productive for the project but hardly innovative. It could however function very well as an introduction to Austin's language as activity approach to meaning. Indeed, it is Austin's concept of illocutionary force which ends up, in Thiselton's essay, as the catalyst which gives currency to the project's use of "promise" as a key feature in Christian hermeneutics.

No doubt, this book is a valuable contribution to the discussion of how we begin to think about deriving meaning from the biblical text. Perhaps, what is most important is that it continues to highlight the more important developments that have been brewing in the area of evangelical biblical interpretation. Books such as this reflect the fact that the once central tenet of biblical hermeneutics, that the text holds within itself all that is necessary for generating its meaning, is finally being dislodged from its place of prominence. It has not been that long since essays such as these would have been construed as marginal and even subversive. As valuable as this book is, it probably will not work very well as a class reader for the majority of undergraduate courses, being

rather more suited to advanced or graduate courses in the theory of biblical interpretation. It is definitely required reading for anyone who thinks, writes, or teaches hermeneutics.

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Martha C. SAMMONS. *A Far-Off Country: A Guide to C.S. Lewis's Fantasy Fiction*. Lanham, NY: University Press of America, 2000. 369 pp. $37.50.

This book is the most recent study of C.S. Lewis's *Narnia Chronicles*, space trilogy, and *Till We Have Faces*. What makes this one uniquely useful is that it brings all eleven of these books together into a single study, which includes helpful cross-referencing between them and all of Lewis's other works, theological, critical, and personal. Much of the information provided can be found elsewhere, for example, in Paul Ford's *Companion to Narnia* and Walter Hooper's *C.S. Lewis: A Companion and Guide*. Some is in Sammons's own books, now out of print. However, she has reworked what is available into a new and far more exhaustive analysis. Her apparatus includes five appendices and a bibliography. One appendix is a guide to the Old Solar language Lewis created for the space trilogy. Others are dictionaries of names, places, and creatures in all his fantasy fiction.

The most valuable part of Sammons's book is her lengthy study of Lewis's popular novel, *Till We Have Faces*. Almost everyone I know who has read it for the first time—because of its interweaving of ancient myth and religion, philosophical history, and Christian doctrine—has been stumped by it. It took me five readings to feel like I had a handle on it. However, Sammons's analysis is remarkably insightful and will provide great benefit to those who read it. One of her best analyses is the chapter on "Renouncing Self: The Theme of Love."

Despite its good qualities, Sammons's writing style in this book is pretty wooden, perhaps complementing her role as author of such books as *The Internet Writer's Handbook* and *Multimedia Presentations on the Go*. Also, could someone please tell me why a competent scholar like Sammons can use the ugly (ungrammatical) colloquialism of using "like" as a conjunction, as in "Lewis felt *like* he was shutting something out" (193), or "mistreating aliens *like* he has seen other races" (142).

In any case, this book provides a rich mine of interpretive material for preachers who wish to use their love for Lewis's fiction as amplification for their sermons. But be prepared for some heavy lifting! Fortunately, the table of con-

tents is so well-focused that anyone can do fast flyovers to places they wish to land for specific help.

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Douglas GROOTHUIS. *Truth Decay.* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000. 303 pp. $12.99.

Groothuis is an active and well-published Associate Professor of Philosophy at Denver Seminary. This latest volume deals with the effects of postmodernism on recent perceptions of truth, a truth which Groothuis maintains is objective, absolute, and universal. This is in opposition to postmodernism which to one degree or another sees truth as an invention of the observer. Also, Groothuis seeks to show postmodern influences on the views of noted Christian authors as well.

Truth Decay is written for Christians with a serious interest in and some familiarity with recent philosophical issues. Groothuis shows how postmodernism redefines truth to be a social construct, relative in nature. He traces the historical view of truth as being generally similar to the distinctive biblical view of truth. He continues by showing postmodern influence upon Christian theology and apologetics, arguing that the question of truth is the essence of apologetics (140).

What particularly makes this book worth reading and different from so many others on the same topic is that Groothuis's wide-ranging experience and research into postmodernism informs this work with a broad range of documented resources. As such, it is a good reference to fundamental points of contention between varying views of truth. Postmodernist ideas of truth are explained and illustrated, giving the reader a grasp of the pervasive influence of postmodernism. Groothuis uses the critiques of Foucault (100), Nietzsche (107), and other postmodernists against themselves to good effect, showing the degree to which their own ideas are subject to the same flaws as they so persistently find in others. This important and powerful point is not to be overlooked. In measuring postmodernists by their own standards, Groothuis consistently demonstrates a useful method of argumentation.

However, Groothuis also seeks to demonstrate that postmodernism is creeping into the community of Bible believers. While certainly not as radical as secular postmodernists, Groothuis identifies what he sees as inconsistencies regarding truth by some influential authors. These authors include Alister McGrath (122-124), J. Richard Middleton and Brian J. Walsh (133), and

Lesslie Newbigin (156-157) among others. Many of his points are well made; others, I am not so sure about.

For example, Alister McGrath approaches postmodernism as a theologian. The burden of his work touched on by Groothuis is to show how modernism has set limits on truth which prevents an appreciation of the transcendence of truth, and instead tends to limit truth to the boundaries of one's own understanding. Truth is relational as well as propositional, with McGrath emphasizing the relational nature and Groothuis the propositional. Both authors agree that the issues are complex, and a dialogue between these two around a common reference point would be helpful here.

Groothuis correctly identifies postmodernism as a plurality of viewpoints adaptable to religious as well as to secular situations. Ultimately, the real challenge of postmodernism is that it claims for itself the very position of "truth" from which it seeks to displace God's ultimate truth.

This work will inform those who have an interest in postmodernism. It will challenge those who are firmly committed to the authority of the Bible, yet who have a different perspective of our ability to know and relate to truth (and there are many such individuals). Regardless, Groothuis focuses on important issues. The question, "What is truth?" may not be solved by one more book, but this one will help readers to realize the fundamental issues and the importance of "the truth question." As such, I certainly recommend it.

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J. Philip WOGAMAN. *Christian Perspectives on Politics.* 2nd edition. Atlanta: Westminster John Knox, 2000. 340 pp. $19.95.

Philip Wogaman revised his book due to the collapse of the USSR and the Cold War's ending and because of serving at Foundry United Methodist in Washington, D.C., since 1992 as senior pastor to leaders of both major political parties and the First Family. Christian ethics scholars will agree with the author, though, that this book presents nothing new beyond describing five Christian viewpoints about politics.

Wogaman's broad review begins with very adequate definitions of politics, the state, and power in chapter 2, and then describes historical legacies of Christian political thought. This leads into the main section, Part 2 (chapters 4-8), the five "generating centers" of Christian contemporary political thinking. Wogaman labels these as: (1) pacifists and anarchists, (2) liberation theologists, (3) neoconservatives, (4) evangelicals (right and left-wings), and (5) mainstream liberal Christians. He critiques each, although any particular group may quibble with their own description. For example, Wogaman points out that evan-

gelicals insist Scripture is the foundation for Christian thinking but is critical of the Religious Right for contributing action but not generating political thought. In contrast, Wogaman describes mainstream liberal Christians (to which he identifies) as the best center to link the various viewpoints because it advocates government intervention, environmental protection, public safety regulations, disarmament, an increased United Nations' role, and more generous foreign aid.

Part 3 explores the relationship between theological convictions and order, and topics include the political relevance of Christian faith and God's sovereignty. Those unfamiliar with Robert Bellah's *Civil Religion in America* will learn much from his emphasis on Abraham Lincoln. Part 3 includes Wogaman's only extended examination of Scripture, 1 Cor 13:4-7, cleverly used as a normative illustration of Christian political virtues.

Part 4 describes some perennial political issues facing Christians. Regarding criminal justice, Wogaman emphasizes God's grace and rehabilitation. He does not, however, propose any appropriate judgments. As an attorney, I was also puzzled at the lack of discussion about the rule of law, not just in this chapter but throughout the treatment of democracy. Regardless, the ringing point is that democratic states afford the best opportunity for persons, including Christians, to enter into political dialogue and share in decision making.

As a comparative politics professor, I was pleased by chapter 17's depiction of nation-states and their use of sovereignty for national interest. Wogaman asks how individual countries can influence the global community from a Christian perspective, but unfortunately gives no adequate answer. He then unwisely proposes to build on the UN's slim successes to create world government but provides no scriptural or practical advice how it could work and even admits of the impossibility of such due to the world's immense ideological, cultural, and economic divisions.

Readers looking for a "tell all" book by President Clinton's pastor will be disappointed. The President is mentioned about six times (although it is Wogaman's first book since impeachment), and Part 3's section on Christian character and democratic disciplines (231-232) is the main portion in which the President is discussed. He claims the primary emphasis of democratic leadership should involve effectiveness, regardless of ethics. Wogaman maintains that reaction to Clinton's misdeeds should have involved grace and forgiveness; he advocated a Congressional reprimand or censure (though neither have constitutional or legal authority). Wogaman thus puts himself in the illogical position that a poorly performing President could be impeached for behavior similar to Clinton's.

It is disappointing Wogaman made no direct reference to the Declaration of Independence, which declares all men are created equal, that rights come from the Creator, and that people institute government to secure these rights.

Its impact worldwide has been immense, and this document would have been a powerful tool for the book.

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Charles R. TABER. *To Understand the World, To Save the World: The Interface between Missiology and the Social Sciences.* Harrisburg: Trinity Press, 2000. 138 pp. $14.00.

This latest addition to the Christian Mission and Modern Culture series, authorized by the Institute of Mennonite Studies, would appear to pursue the ambitious goal of providing an understanding of the world, while proposing a means to its salvation if one were to judge from the primary title. However, this fine work by Charles Taber of Emmanuel School of Religion is best described by the subtitle and does, in fact, provide a helpful discussion of missiology and its relationship to the social sciences. His primary title reflects the ambition he perceives in the agendas of sociology, anthropology, psychology, economics, and political science.

The thesis of the book is that missiology has drawn historically from cultural/social anthropology to the neglect of the other social sciences, and even this interaction has often been superficial and uncritical. A closer look at the social sciences is proposed not only to provide helpful tools for the formulation of a Western missiology but also because they themselves serve as prime examples of the expression of the modern and postmodern worldviews. In the words of Taber, the social sciences are "symptomatic" of the nature of Western culture.

Taber explores the relationship between the "science" of Christian missions and the social sciences from the perspectives of past, present, and future. Within this rubric are injected challenges to many traditional approaches to missiology which, in the opinion of the author, have tended to be pragmatic rather than ideological. Why, for example, should missions concentrate only on the faraway "non-Christian" cultures when early Christian apologists focused primarily on relating to the societies in which they themselves lived? Other historical issues discussed include the relationship of Christianity to other world religions and the question of lostness, missions and social gospel, and missions and foreign governments.

An important conclusion of Taber's critique of the social sciences is that objectivity cannot be present in studies of societies as it is in the physical sciences. The social sciences are therefore inherently more metaphysical, and their usefulness must be defined as interpretive or hermeneutical rather than as explanatory sciences. Even so, missiology must interface with the social sci-

ences. One of the book's more intriguing challenges concerns the neglect of understanding in the areas of economics and political science on the part of Western missiologists. Ignorance in these areas has resulted in a promotion of free market capitalism which, when applied to Third World realities, results in "the economic version of Darwinism." In this contest of "the survival of the fittest," an unregulated marketplace allows the industrialized West to exploit the peoples of the Third World.

The book concludes with an overview of the issues that arise at the intersection of the missionary task and the contribution of the social sciences. The issues identified include: (1) human origins and human nature, (2) freedom versus determinism, (3) objectivity, (4) cultural relativity, (5) single-cause explanations and premature generalizations, and (6) methodological agnosticism. The compelling conclusion is that human beings can only be adequately understood in light of the reality of God, and the human condition is only adequately addressed by the gospel of Jesus Christ *incarnate* in the modern Christian community.

Overall, Taber has done an extraordinary job of surveying the social sciences, outlining the history of these sciences in relationship to missiology, and raising the key issues that exist between them in a modern and postmodern world. The result is a surprising balance and comprehensiveness that is highly instructive and indicative of the kind of holism that Taber is suggesting for our theology of mission.

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David J. HESSELGRAVE. *Planting Churches Cross-Culturally: North America and Beyond.* Revised edition. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000. 352 pp. $24.95.

On the cover of his second edition, the secondary title, "North America and Beyond" caught my eye. It is true that church-planting ideas from a culturally changing America should be helpful for those who are ministering to churches anywhere in which there is a cultural difference between those starting the work and the nationality of the local congregation.

Hesselgrave fuses biblical principles of church planting with church planting for today. There are several similarities. The book of Acts holds many of those secrets. He begins at Acts 13:1 and continues through this book of history to see these principles. As he introduces Acts, he refers to the "mission of the church" and Pentecost much like those in the Stone-Campbell Restoration Movement would present it, including the subject of salvation and principles of conversion.

Hesselgrave then presents models for today, including the "biblical principles" and "scientific observation," along with "sound thinking." The model he shows of sound missiological sources provides a good balance for effective church planting.

The ten steps for a master plan of evangelism and the "Pauline Cycle" he presents follow a very logical sequence for successful church planting. The part that I like the best is step ten, when "Sending Churches" convene and start the cycle all over again by commissioning missionaries to go out and restart the cycle all over. Unfortunately, we are not currently training new churches to start new churches as this book teaches. If churches ever want to attain healthy growth, they must expect this to take part in the cycle to set the wave of church planting to flood the earth with spontaneous growth around the world.

This book also includes good demographical ideas for planting churches in the right places. He moves from "Primitive" societies to "Peasant" then to "Urban" for church planting.

This book is a must for any church planter and has value for missions and church growth classrooms as well. If one has the older version of this book, there isn't much need to purchase this recent edition, unless you are needing to teach from it. The printing is a thinner typeset, thus changing the page numbers from 462 pages down to 352 pages. The text itself is very similar.

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Joseph GRANGE. *The City: An Urban Cosmology*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999. 251 pp. $19.95.

Roger Greenway has commented astutely on the nature of Christian work in cities with the following: "We cannot expect lives to be changed, city neighborhoods improved, and vital churches established if our labors spring from feeble, even distorted theological roots. The urban missiologist, therefore, must blaze the trail that the missionary practitioner can follow. Workers in the streets will not move ahead as they should unless there are urban missiologists ahead of them, behind them, and alongside them sounding true and prophetic notes."

Grange contributes to meaningful theological reflection on urban ministry with his philosophical consideration of the nature of urban living in this latest volume. As an amplification of his previous work, *Nature: An Environmental Cosmology*, he employs the process philosophy of Alfred North Whitehead and the pragmatic thinking of Charles S. Peirce and John Dewey to analyze the character of city life. Central to his analysis is the assertion that cities cannot be

understood merely in terms of quantitative measurement (size, density, economic production). Rather, they must be viewed as the primary context in which human desires for wholeness are played out. Grange then demonstrates in terms of process philosophy how wholeness is sought, exemplified, thwarted, and promoted in cities.

Grange is Professor of Philosophy at the University of Southern Maine and *The City* is to be viewed chiefly as a philosophy of the city rather than an attempt at urban sociology or urban missiology. The constructs of process and pragmatic philosophy are either delineated or assumed throughout the work. Terminology is often used in the specified meanings of those philosophic schools rather than in their more generalized senses. As a result, those individuals who possess some prior understanding of those philosophies will use this work with the greatest benefit. However, the book has value for those without those prior understandings. Evangelical Christians seeking to develop a biblically based urban missiology will find several images in Grange's work which provide points of contact for further consideration of biblical emphases in regard to the city.

As for images of the city, Grange's survey of historic understandings of city life summarized as: the cosmic city, the city as machine, and the city as organism provide an organizing structure to evaluate contemporary realities and to understand biblical data relating to the city. His suggestion that the importance of cities is best understood in relation to their role in the development of language and his affirmation that urban life is to be understood in continuity with other forms of human settlement hold potential for both broadening and deepening traditional theological understandings.

Regarding images of the church, while Grange's work is not church-centered, it does suggest some interesting descriptions of the role of the church in the city. These are derived largely from his experiences in St. Jerome's Church in the Bronx where his brother serves as parish priest. His images of the church as a place of stillness, as a context in which true community can be enjoyed, as an interpreter of urban life for its members, and as a neighborhood change agent affirm and illumine biblical ecclesiology.

Concerning images of salvation, Grange's repeated affirmation that the city is designed to promote human wholeness interfaces with the biblical development of shalom and its association with biblical cities.

Each of these images suggest that although there may be some distance between the core assumptions of pragmatic philosophy and evangelical Christianity there are points of contact which provide the ground for dialogue and mutual sharing of insight.

The City could be appropriately used as a resource in graduate level classes in philosophy or theology which seek to examine the nature of urban life and

the role of the church in the city. As such it can assist the urban missiologist to blaze a trail that the missionary practitioner can follow.

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Bill TURPIE. *Ten Great Preachers.* Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000. 167 pp. $13.99.

For the lover of preaching this book adds tremendous value to the popular television series, *Great Preachers*, released by Baylor University and seen on the Odyssey Network. This series provided an introduction to a guest preacher, an edited sermon, and an interview with the preacher. The program developed a loyal following of viewers, including preachers. Two factors fed the popularity of this program: 1) preachers need to hear preaching, and 2) most preachers want to improve their skills and believe one of the best ways to do so is by watching great preaching. The book contains complete sermons of ten preachers who were heard on the television series, biographical sketches, and interviews.

SCJ readers should appreciate Tony Campolo's words concerning the importance of baptism and the Lord's Supper. Words of ritual used in these ceremonies clearly point to the centrality of the cross.

Fred Craddock does his masterful job at induction. When one hears or reads one of his sermons, it is difficult to know exactly what he has done, but it works. Somehow you want to hear another one. He, too, introduces features sympathetic to a Stone-Campbell Restoration Movement audience. He addresses this history through a story concerning President James A. Garfield. Craddock masterfully delivers a crushing blow to any concept of health, wealth, and prosperity in connection with Christ.

James Forbes fills the pulpit of Riverside Church in New York City, a church built by the wealth of John D. Rockefeller. The rich tradition of preaching from Riverside Church includes Harry Emerson Fosdick, James McCracken, and William Sloane Coffin. Before James Forbes became Riverside's Senior Minister he was already recognized as one of the great African-American preachers in this country. His sermon is filled with suspense as he discusses the Parable of the Ten Virgins. He concludes with his simple description of the text: "The church is filled with two kinds of Christians, those who 'conk out' and those who don't" (64). Forbes's sermon style is a tremendous contrast to the cadence-style preaching by Gardner Taylor, also included in the book.

Who could edit a book of sermons by great preachers in the twenty-first

century and not include a sermon by Billy Graham? In his sample sermon, his own family members and times at the White House figure prominently, as well as his most used word in all his sermons, "the Bible." He shares Christ early in the sermon and, in his familiar way, carefully explains that salvation is equated with "being born again." Then, of course, there is the commitment time "for hundreds of you to get up out of your seats and say . . . ." Those from Stone-Campbell Restoration tradition may be disappointed—but not surprised—that baptism is not mentioned in the invitation to become a Christian.

Thomas Long, coming out of the distinguished Princeton Seminary tradition, patiently preaches from the Gospel of Mark, sticking close to the text, never venturing very far from the NT lesson. His is an excellent example of good preaching from the lectionary. His sermon speaks of a strong, committed faith that endures the tough times of life. This is certainly a message that meets the need of most people in the church today.

Haddon Robinson and John R.W. Stott both do admirable jobs of presenting expository sermons. One is from the OT and the other from the NT. Since my own educational background strongly emphasized expository preaching, these sermons were my favorites. Both preachers clearly explain what the Scripture means, then add illustration and application. Both are expository sermons at their best.

Those not involved in the Disciples branch of the Stone-Campbell tradition likely have had very little exposure to preaching from women. Turpie chooses one sermon for the book by Barbara Brown, hailed by many as one of the best woman preachers in America. As one reads the sermon, the plot of the story can be heard filling her small church in rural Georgia or the scholastic halls at Yale, where she recently delivered the Beecher Lectures.

William Willimon's sermon, "God's Dysfunctional Family," closes the book highlighting recent developments at Duke University Chapel but appropriate for all.

Having viewed the videos on which this book is based, I highly recommend both the videos and the book as having tremendous potential for developing great preachers.

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Marjorie Hewitt SUCHOCKI. *The Whispered Word: A Theology of Preaching.* St. Louis: Chalice, 1999. 118 pp. $14.99.

Process theologian Suchocki combines six lectures on process thought and

preaching with seven sermons she preached on various themes or "symbols" to introduce a theology of preaching.

Process theology is centrally a theology of the Word. That Word is a "primordial" word, universally given, and directed to our depths. It claims that there is no life or creaturely existence at all apart from the continuous creative word of God. God's creative word inaugurates and supports every microscopic millisecond of our lives. God is everlastingly creative, continuously calling existence into being through an evocative word. God is creator not because God once created but because he is always creating through a word. To exist is to receive a word from God. This word is a "whispered word," meaning that God's revelation does not come to us as a loud, boisterous word calling attention to itself and insisting on its own program but as a quiet, suggestive, inviting word that is felt within the depths of our being. God is said to propose and we dispose, for good or for ill to ourselves and others, first at the unconscious level of our being. It culminates in our consciousness. The word of God does not necessarily direct us to God but to the world, involving us in our world more fully.

The whispered word is not always clearly discerned and so is hidden and supplemented with a revealed and a proclaimed word of God. Jesus is the revealed word of God, but God chooses to become incarnate again through the humble act of preaching. This puts preaching alongside the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper. Preaching is the extension of God's incarnation in the world.

Sermons must include doctrine, the great symbols of the church, so that the congregation may continuously reconfigure its identity as a community in Christ. Preaching theologically is a trajectory of the story of the Christian tradition weaved through symbols. The rich story of text and tradition is thereby open to every new generation, which then becomes responsible for paying attention to its past and adapting these symbols to a new chapter in the never-ending story. Christianity is a tradition that is constantly in the process of transforming itself. Suchocki directs how to preach, weaving the text and tradition into the situation of the hearers. The outcome is a message that God is for us.

The strength of this book is its high view of preaching as a continuous act of God's creative activity in the world and the church. It successfully applies process theology to the contemporary life of the church. The work also serves as an introduction to process theology.

Many of the weaknesses of process theology apply to this book. It applies equal weight to contemporary preaching and to the canon of Scripture. This becomes evident in her sermon based on Eph 1–3, on "The Welcoming God," tearing down the hostilities that divide people through the resurrection. Those dividers include the one between homosexual and heterosexual Christians. All of Suchocki's examples are to the political left. Is this how God speaks to the

world today? She ties herself to political correctness, never referring to God with a gender pronoun. This communicates God as sterile as far as our relationship with God goes, which contradicts Suchocki's intent and makes communication tedious.

Unlikely to become a main text, students of preaching will appreciate this book as a supplement in both preaching and as an introduction to process theology. The theologian, professor, seasoned preacher, and seminary student will appreciate its subtle combination of depth and brevity.

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Jon L. BERQUIST. *Incarnation.* Understanding Biblical Themes. St. Louis: Chalice, 1999. 168 pp. $16.99.

Jon Berquist, academic editor of Chalice Press, has written the inaugural volume for a series "designed to enhance the reader's understanding of our biblical heritage and its relevance to faithful life today" (back cover). Berquist fulfills the series purpose in a manner that challenges the reader on a number of levels. Taking the biblical theme of incarnation he desires to broaden our understanding of "incarnation" beyond the infancy narratives of Matthew and Luke, and beyond John 1 and suggests that God the Father has always been present to people in "flesh and blood." In the OT God was visible physically with flesh and blood. In the Gospels God was visible physically with flesh and blood. Most importantly, today, God is visible with flesh and blood via the body of Christ via the church.

Berquist begins by suggesting that God the Father was incarnate throughout the OT. He accomplishes this by interpreting, in an overly literal way, passages that have traditionally been understood as figures of speech. Passages that have traditionally been labeled as "theophanies" are taken a step further and labeled as "incarnations." For example, in discussing Gen 21:19-20, "God was with the boy [Ishmael]," Berquist says, "God is physically present with Hagar and Ishmael" (24). He continues, "there is no reason to think of this merely as a disembodied, spiritual presence. Instead, it makes more sense . . . to envision that God moved in with Ishmael and Hagar. God lived with them in the flesh and stayed there to make sure that Ishmael grew up well" (24). Berquist says concerning Moses' encounter with God. "God is not a disembodied spirit but a creature of flesh and blood. Moses does not discuss what God's body looks like, but after he sees God in the flesh, Moses is never the same again. There is a reality to God, a physical presence, that is easy for people to forget and ignore" (19). Concerning Gen 1:26 Berquist writes, "God creates humans to

match God. We have the same likeness and the same image. . . . God's body is like our body; our own bodies are both the proof and the reflection of God's flesh" (10-11).

If one can see past these strange and bizarre statements that permeate chapter 1, the rest of the book, aside from various paragraphs, is not so objectionable. In fact one can appreciate Berquist's attempt to make God a present reality in the life of the church. In chapter 2 he anticipates the question, "Why can't we see God now?" The reasons we cannot are because of problems with our own vision and/or we confuse God and people because of the resemblance. Chapter 3 discusses the role of the Spirit in our search to see God.

Chapter 4 discusses times when God's presence (either physical or spiritual) might be threatening. The basic assertion in this chapter is that "the powerful one is incomprehensible and unpredictable" (70). Berquist suggests that, because God is unpredictable, our relationship with God must be "grounded in passion, in care, in the heat of emotion, not the cool of reason. . . . Revelation cannot be the foundation" (71). When our "experience" of God becomes the basis of our relationship with God, it is no wonder that Berquist would judge God as incomprehensible and unpredictable. When the concept of revelation is tossed aside, our own subjective interpretations of how we see God working and where we see God working naturally lead to a judgment of incomprehensibility and unpredictability. In fact, much of the argumentation throughout the book for how God relates to us is based on how we relate to each other. Our relationships with other people become the model for how Berquist interprets God's relationship with us. If God relates to us in a manner similar to how we relate to others, then Berquist is correct in judging God as incomprehensible and unpredictable. Fortunately, because God has chosen to reveal himself, he is comprehensible and predictable (in those areas that God has chosen to reveal himself).

Chapter 5 begins the discussion of Jesus' incarnation, continuing through chapter 7. Readers who have a classical orthodox Christology will find some of Berquist's interpretations of Jesus' incarnation unsettling. Examples include, "it was likely that [Mary and Joseph during their engagement] were sexually active, even though Mary had not moved out of her father's household to Joseph's" (85). "Jesus' role as God's son is not what makes Jesus unique" (88). Jesus is simply another expression of what God has always done by being present to people. For Berquist Jesus appears to have no redemptive role; Jesus is simply another prophet, "Jesus' own description of his work, then from Isaiah 61, is not that Jesus *causes* these changes in human life brought about by the reign of God but that Jesus *announces* them" (96).

The most redeeming portion of the book was the final chapter and the discussion of the Body of Christ, church. Working with the biblical analogy of the church being composed of many parts, Berquist offers an insightful observation

for understanding conflict management. "The ear cannot substitute for a tooth; ears and teeth will always have different functions, different perspectives, competing needs for nourishment. . . . Likewise, in the church, some elements will think of other elements as destructive. Many parts will not understand what the others do and will disparage each other" (142). In summarizing the nature of the church Berquist contributes an insightful option, "The group of believers is the remnant of God's incarnation, the trace of God's presence, the very remains of God in the world" (146).

While significant differences in theological presuppositions and method from my own are included in this book, I appreciated the book in its overall aim of reminding me of God's continued presence in the world. The book is easy to read and is not cluttered with citations of secondary literature. However, I caution extensive use of it by those who are not mature and solid in Christian doctrine. Although I disagree with some of the routes Berquist takes along the road, the end he reaches is a message the church today must hear. The biblical story is a story of God seeking to restore a relationship with his creation, and today that relationship with God is expressed through people who have his Spirit living inside of them.

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Edward W. FUDGE and Robert A. PETERSON. *Two Views of Hell: A Biblical and Theological Dialogue.* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000. 228 pp. $11.99.

It has been said that "holiness" has been dropped from the church's vocabulary. It may be true that "hell" has too. The authors of *Two Views of Hell* would most certainly like to see it resurrected. Both contributors have dedicated a significant amount of time researching and writing on the topic. As a member of the Churches of Christ (a cappella), Fudge is a name which many *SCJ* readers may be familiar with. Fudge is a proponent of the "conditionalist" view, which supports the complete annihilation of those sentenced to hell, while his sparring partner, Peterson, holds to the "traditionalist" view of never-ending suffering for the lost.

The book is nothing less than a debate in manuscript form, including arguments and rebuttal. Fudge strikes first in the opening chapters, citing nearly every reference which supports his position. Evangelical readers will of course be comfortable with his style but may find themselves turned off by Fudge's highly subjective rendering of various texts. One may wonder if Fudge is too passionate about the subject (pushy) to be taken seriously. Peterson follows this

opening section with his rebuttal and then his own evidence for traditionalism. In his response to Fudge, Peterson turns the debate on hell slightly toward a debate on hermeneutics, which is one of the book's strengths. For example, the readers may find themselves thinking aloud: Should these particular texts be relied upon in this discussion? Did the biblical writers ever intend to address this question? Isn't he reading a lot into that verse?

To his credit, Peterson takes a more professional approach, using a less dogmatic and more objective tone. He limits his use of Scripture to ten key verses, which is refreshing after the barrage of texts in earlier chapters. He also highlights passages that seemingly require less speculation on his part. In a less helpful section, Peterson surveys the traditionalist views of more than ten Christian notables, including Tertullian, Augustine, and Luther. In his last chapter rebuttal, Fudge reminds the reader that this is not an issue to be decided by the majority (regardless of their fine reputation) but by Scripture itself. Fudge also appropriately concludes the book by encouraging Christians to rethink their beliefs in the immortality of the soul and to consider whether the idea is informed by Scripture or merely by the worldview of distant ancestors.

Two final observations must be made. First, there is certainly no room for the "mystery" of Hell in either presentation. In an effort to steer readers to their own position, neither author claims a hint of uncertainty on the issue. For example, the evidence seems so clear to Fudge that after a brief exposition of a supporting text in the final chapter, he comments, "Why is that so hard to understand?" It is this kind of language that will bother those who are comfortable not having all the answers to questions about hell and how long it will last for those who are sent there. Second, the book never fulfills one of its stated purposes to "completely answer" questions, such as: "What difference does it really make if I adopt traditionalism or conditionalism?"

In a nutshell, the book lacks practical implications that many *SCJ* readers might like to see. Ministers, for example, will find very little contemporary relevance to pass on to their parishioners. On the other hand, seminarians and scholars who do not have time to read the two books on hell by Fudge and Peterson (over 700 pages combined) will appreciate the book's conciseness.

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Willem A. VANGEMEREN, ed. *A Guide to Old Testament Theology and Exegesis: The Introductory Articles from the* New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999. 235 pp. $16.99.

When the word "guide" is applied to a text, it is usually understood to refer to something that offers basic information and instruction. To some degree, Zondervan's *Guide* fulfills this role. Ten articles (each by a different author), all reprinted from the *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis* (NIDOTTE), treat issues of linguistics, textual criticism, historical and literary analysis, and theology (two essays per topic) as they apply to OT studies. However, the quality of the detailed guidance provided by this *Guide* varies widely.

The high points of this volume are V. Philips Long's essay on historiographical method, Philip E. Satterthwaite's brief catalog of Hebrew narrative techniques, and John H. Walton's principles for productive word study. The contributions by Long, Satterthwaite, and Walton stand out because they are the most accessible to the widest reading audience, Walton's article, in particular, being the most accessible to nonspecialists (including beginning students). All three assume less about what any potential reader might already know of the field, and thus they explain themselves more carefully than some of the other articles do. These three articles are also the least overtly evangelical. They avoid some of the more forceful evangelical claims in the book, and thus commend themselves to a broader theological spectrum of readers.

Peter Cotterell's article on linguistics and discourse analysis falls well short of accessibility to nonspecialists. Although parts of the article, especially the section on lexical semantics, are quite good, Cotterell is not careful to define technical terms like "anaphonic," "cataphonic," and especially "cotext," (which readers may mistake for a misspelling of "context") upon first using them. Similarly, Elmer A. Martens's article on OT theology sometimes seems to be little more than a catena of one-sentence descriptions of the work of past OT theologians. Martens's free use of terms like *Gestalt* and *Zeitgeist* does not quite reach the level of Cotterell's jargon but may be confusing to nonspecialists nevertheless.

Some of the essays press certain evangelical claims too forcefully. In so doing, they threaten to alienate readers who might otherwise benefit from these articles' methodological and theoretical insights. Eugene H. Merrill, for example, makes almost outlandish claims for the OT's "self-presentation." The OT, he says, "presents itself as an expression of the mind and purposes of God" (65) and as "the Word of God, not the words of human beings" (69), but these positions simply cannot be substantiated from the OT itself. Discrete portions of various OT books might claim such status, and maybe even entire biblical genres could meaningfully be said to do so (e.g., the prophetic "messenger

speech" form). For Christians to affirm the OT as "the Word of God" is a theological claim of great significance, but to affirm that the OT, as such, claims this status for itself is simply false.

Bruce K. Waltke's article on textual criticism combines both the best and the worst of the volume. The article provides readers with a profitable overview of the OT manuscript tradition and the kinds of errors and revisions that give rise to the need for textual criticism in the first place. Yet, Waltke's claim that "the Holy Spirit also superintended the selection of the MT recension" (62) goes far beyond the available evidence (and students of early Christianity will find it historically implausible); further, his suggestion that textual critics should actually *ignore* the shorter readings of the Septuagint in books like Joshua and Jeremiah—an entire family of textual witnesses—for purposes of reconstructing the "original text" strikes me as quite odd.

Throughout the volume, and apparently as a matter of editorial policy, a number of words are awkwardly replaced by abbreviations. "Hebrew" is always abbreviated "Heb.," "verb" becomes "vb.," "noun" appears to become "nom.," and so on, although no table "decoding" these abbreviations is given. Some of the abbreviations go beyond the awkward to actually become confusing; "G" is the abbreviation for "Greek" in this volume, not for *Grundstamm*, which would make much more sense in an OT *dictionary*. In fact, it is ironic that the articles in this volume—in which the contributors so often stress the importance of context for the meanings of words, utterances, and discourses—have been removed from their own originary context (NIDOTTE) and packaged as if they could stand alone. In fact, Vanhoozer's article (subtitled "What's Theological about a Theological Dictionary?") seems out of place in a stand-alone volume, as do the musings in several articles about the value and appropriate use of a theological dictionary.

One other shortcoming needs to be mentioned. Several of the contributors—notably Kevin Vanhoozer, Tremper Longman III, Peter Cotterell, and the editor, Willem VanGemeren—decry various aspects of "postmodern" and "deconstructive" approaches to textual interpretation. In many of these declamations, however, the actual character and content of such approaches are misrepresented, sometimes grossly. Space does not permit a thorough discussion here, but Cotterell's repeated grouping of Stanley Fish and Jacques Derrida together (once adding Paul de Man into the mix) as representatives of "deconstructive nihilism or . . . Reader-Response theory" (136), and Longman's claims that deconstructionists deny the existence of "a Transcendental Signifier," that is, God (Derrida actually posited the absence of a transcendent *signified*, not a transcendent *signifier*—a vast difference), are but two examples.

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Roland E. MURPHY. *Proverbs.* Word Biblical Commentary. Nashville: Nelson, 1998. 306 pp. $34.99.

A new study by Roland E. Murphy is always a welcome addition to the scholarly literature on Hebrew wisdom literature. This volume in the Word Biblical Commentary series is no exception.

As with the other volumes in this well-received series, this one provides Murphy's own translation of the book treated. Murphy's textual notes throughout the commentary are extremely helpful. The translation itself is one of the most notable features of the commentary. Murphy argues (in the introduction and in an excursus on translating proverbs) for a translation strategy that preserves the terse "flavor" of the Hebrew sayings. Accordingly, he proposes to offer a translation that is "as literal as possible, while still being intelligible" (xxix). In particular, Murphy proposes to represent Hebrew verbless clauses by splicing together English phrases using various forms of punctuation, rather than following the more common practice of inserting forms of the verb "to be" as smooth English syntax normally demands. Thus "Her ways, pleasant ways, and all her paths, peace! She, a tree of life to all who grasp her; happy those who take hold of her" (Prov 3:17–18). He also preserves Hebrew word order at the expense of typical English syntax, as in the characterization of parental teachings as "a gracious wreath on your head, they" (Prov 1:8). Yet Murphy is strangely inconsistent in applying this approach. In some sayings he rearranges the Hebrew word order and supplies "being" verbs where none appear in the Hebrew text. Thus "For the devious are an abomination to the Lord, but the upright are in his confidence" (Prov 3:32) instead of "For an abomination to the Lord, the devious [one]; the upright, his confidence," which would better comport with Murphy's argument. In the "Excursus on Translating Proverbs," Murphy asks, "Can a program such as is proposed here really be carried through the entire book of Proverbs?" (253). He clearly thinks the answer is "Yes," and in a number of passages this approach seems to be quite successful in this volume. Nevertheless, the related question—"*Has* a program such as is proposed here really *been* carried through the entire *commentary*?" must unfortunately be answered, "No."

The comments themselves are careful and judicious, as one would certainly expect from Murphy. But it is in the excurses—which occupy the final sixth of the book's length—that this volume really shines. Here Murphy takes up such topics as the fear of the Lord, the power of speech, wealth and poverty, retribution, theological dimensions of the wisdom literature, the personification of "Woman Wisdom," and the relationship of Israelite wisdom literature to similar literature from other ancient Near Eastern contexts. Murphy skillfully balances an account of the characteristic features of the sayings in the book of Proverbs with an appreciation for the variety and subtlety of thought reflected there. Murphy's excurses show with specificity and great persuasive power

"[w]hat a mistake it is to deem the sages simplistic!" (264). All scholars working on the book of Proverbs could benefit from visiting and revisiting the excurses in this volume.

One typesetting irregularity besets the introduction, where Hebrew words and the diacritical marks in the accompanying transliterations are printed in a halftone pattern rather than in solid black. More troubling, some of the diacritical marks do not print properly; for example, the Greek letter *mu* appears—overstriking a Hebrew character—wherever a macron is required. In the very few instances where Hebrew terms are transliterated outside the introduction, such errors fortunately do not occur.

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Anthony J. DIEKEMA. *Academic Freedom and Christian Scholarship.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000. 214 pp. $22.00.

"Book-writing professors may marvel that a former college president would—or could—write a book, especially one that meets a real need." This "forward" quote (ix) by a professor "who, by [his] president's own count, wrote him the greatest number of memos of criticism," is actually a fond praise to the former president of Calvin College, who "seemed to us less our boss than, well, our servant partner" and has indeed written a book that meets a real need.

With a more than 200-item bibliography based on a year-long research sabbatical concluding his presidency, Dr. Diekema has written perhaps the most thorough analysis of academic freedom ever—certainly from a Christian perspective. His nearly 50-page appendix concerning Calvin's situation, as well as numerous personal anecdotes scattered throughout the book from his twenty-year presidency there (1976–1996), makes the book's rigor all the more readable. In his words, "This book is a personal, interpretive, and didactic treatise on academic freedom through the eyes of a practitioner . . . meant to incite as much as it is to inform" (xiii-xiv).

Diekema divides his comprehensive study into six parts: 1) introduction to the issue of academic freedom, 2) the search for definition of academic freedom, 3) threats to academic freedom, 4) academic freedom in the context of worldview, 5) proposed academic freedom policies for a Christian college, and 6) reflections toward an ethos of academic freedom. Despite the extensive bibliography of this "tortuous literature," the author finds "no dominant or common view of academic freedom" (7). His own definition is a two-part, two-page extended essay too long to quote here but which may be summarized as

the "fundamental right in the academy to pursue truth" (7). He correctly concludes that academic freedom is integrally related to the biblical notion of Christian freedom.

Diekema's most important contribution to this discussion is his argument in chapter 4 that academic freedom is always anchored in a worldview, Christian or otherwise. He rightly observes on this point that "there is no value-free inquiry anywhere, including the academy" (64). Consequently, discussions about academic freedom by such groups as the American Association of University Professors that fail to account for worldviews are "extraordinary fallacies," that ignore the "ethical and moral space" in which academic freedom lives "in a community of scholars" (52).

Diekema's "modest proposal" for a solution to the problem of academic freedom is his call in chapter 5 for a "kind of Socratic oath" between instructors and institutions: "Compatibility of individual faculty worldview and institutional mission is the most critical factor in protecting and promoting academic freedom" (80-81). His proposal actually entails eight components that place an important focus on the principle of a mutual "covenant" or "oath" between the scholar and the school. Since his book is directed toward Christian colleges and universities, the author assumes that "one perspective or worldview may have a privileged place in the discussions on campus, but that it is not the only one present," and proposes that it should be "critiqued and evaluated for its value and truthfulness along with any other perspectives on life and thought" (115). He concludes that the school's "mission must be the ultimate guide" (129).

Diekema aptly summarizes his contribution to this discussion this way: "I believe there is more need for covenant than contract in the search for truth" (91). He sees such a covenant as a way of freeing faculty to pursue truth in all areas and to heed once again "the call to arms for rigorous and bold Christian scholarship" set forth by Abraham Kuyper more than a century ago: "There is not one square inch of this universe about which God does not say: 'It's mine.'" (112).

This book will help faculty and administrators reclaim that mandate. I know it has helped me as an academic dean in rethinking our own faculty handbook to make it less of a contract and more of a covenant in pursuit of academic freedom and Christian scholarship (and Col 1:17-18).

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SCJ 4 (Spring, 2001): 107–158

Wendy COTTER. *Miracles in Greco-Roman Antiquity: A Sourcebook for the Study of New Testament Miracle Stories.* The Context of Early Christianity. New York: Routledge, 1999. $23.99.

Wendy Cotter, C.S.J., is Associate Professor of Scripture at Loyola University, Chicago, Illinois. Her book is among the first in a Routledge series edited by David E. Aune on the Greco-Roman background of nascent Christianity. This volume is an anthology of ancient Greek and Latin texts, in English translation, that discuss or present "miracle stories."

Cotter writes, "miracle stories as we call them, were plentiful and popular in the Greco-Roman world," and she distinguishes "miracle stories" from "nature's freakish wonders . . . genetic anomalies, or nature's strange and inexplicable phenomenon" (1). By "miracle stories," she refers to "those narratives in which a wonderful rescue or salvation of someone takes place by the overturning of 'the canons of the ordinary' through the intervention of a deity or hero" (2). Cotter has chosen "the first century as a median, a chronological center for the sources" (6), though the sources she includes range from 900 BC to the fourth century AD. Cotter, following Bultmann, divides miracle stories into four classes: 1) Healings, 2) Exorcisms, 3) Raisings from the dead, 4) Nature miracles.

In addition to Greco-Roman romances, histories, and philosophical treatises, Cotter's survey includes Christian and Jewish pseudepigrapha and apocrypha as well as select Rabbinic and Patristic texts. As one might suspect, Cotter's emphasis is on Asclepius, Heracles, Jesus, and Apollonius traditions, though she also includes some surprisingly fresh texts as well (particularly those traditions surrounding the Roman emperor). She also briefly addresses the problem of nebulous boundaries between "miracle" and "magic" or "miracle" and "medicine/folk custom," though she never offers much resolution. As a fundamental source-book of texts, the immense value of *Miracles in Greco-Roman Antiquity* to beginning students and scholars should be readily apparent as a beginning resource on this subject.

However, this volume should not be anyone's final stop. By design, a sourcebook "flattens" historical and geographical differences between texts and traditions and should always be consulted with a specialist's dictionary and atlas in hand. "Antiquity" may become a mine from which to extract any "relevant" data without close attention to relevance; Cotter's never-clearly-defined "Greco-Roman Antiquity" is but one (albeit major) illustration of this problem, though she's hardly alone in this imprecision.

This volume, like most source books, is frequently open for criticism on what it leaves out, whether in original texts or in explanatory notes. For example, while Cotter seeks a "chronological" center in the first century, her texts actually span more than 1300 years and come from vastly different cultural (and even linguistic!) communities. Christian and Jewish sacred texts (including

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Rabbinic materials, apocrypha, and pseudepigrapha) are rarely dated, and no geographical provenance of any text—Christian, Jewish, or otherwise—is provided. Oddly, a text by Howard Clark Kee inexplicably is included as an ancient source (23). Some texts and traditions are given highly debatable dates. For example, Apollonius traditions are uniformly ascribed to the first century, even though no text or evidence of Apollonius exists until Philostratus's biography in the third century. She provides scant discussion of any iconographic or epigraphic materials (whether numismatic, sculptural, funerary, or others). Bibliographies of secondary or critical works on each passage (and, more distressing, of critical Greek or Latin texts or even English translations) are not provided, though a general—albeit short—bibliography is at the end of the book.

Like most source books, this volume is also open for critique on why and how editors have chosen the texts included. Though Cotter clearly defines what she views as "miracle," she does not defend her definition nor articulate where the boundaries of ancient science, superstition, and folklore intersect or diverge. Further, would, for example, Philo, Philostratus, Plutarch, or Paul agree on any definition of "miracle"? Would ancient writers have been careful or consistent in their separation of magical and the miraculous? Indeed, some voices, particularly Philo and his treatment of Moses traditions, seem to blur lines repeatedly. If there was uniformity, it was that "superstition" was what "other, gullible people" believed. Reading Cotter, one is struck with the question "*can* an anthology of Greco-Roman miracle stories be assembled at all?"

Miracles in Greco-Roman Antiquity is offered as "a basic text for a graduate course on miracles in the Greco-Roman world" (7). It will, quite easily, serve to introduce both data and methodological issues. Yet, while Cotter has surely written a significant, basic introduction, scholars and students of the socio-literary context of the NT should use her research carefully.

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Richard V. PEACE. *Conversion in the New Testament: Paul and the Twelve.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999. 397 pp. $25.00.

The Apostle Paul's conversion to Christianity is often viewed by most evangelical Christians as the paradigm for conversion. Paul's conversion was born from an experience with the resurrected Lord on the road to Damascus. His decision to follow Jesus was swift and precise. Peace reexamines Christian conversion and challenges the notion that everyone's conversion to Christianity must be as instantaneous as Paul's. Peace argues that conversion is more a process than an event.

Using Mark and passages in Acts, Peace compares the conversion of Paul

with the conversion of the Twelve [disciples]. He uncovers three characteristics common to all of these conversions: (1) insight, where the potential convert recognizes his or her true standing before God; (2) turning, a turning *from* Satan's way and a turning *to* God's way; and (3) transformation, where his or her life has been radically transformed because of Jesus.

Peace's work is divided into three parts. Part 1 discusses "The Experience of St. Paul." In it he examines the accounts of Paul's conversion from Acts. The author explores the above three characteristics as they were manifested in Paul's conversion. The nadir of this work is found in this section in chapter 3. Peace cites three experts who have researched "mystical experiences" to explain what really happened to Paul on the road to Damascus. The research is beneficial and insightful but is overdone.

Part 2 outlines "The Experience of the Twelve." Peace shows how the above three characteristics of conversion unfold in the lives of the Twelve. He understands Mark to be primarily about the good news of Jesus but secondarily a book about the conversion of the Twelve to become his disciples. In this section Peace focuses on the latter. Using the different titles of Jesus, the author outlines the progression of the disciples' understanding (faith) of Jesus. In Mark, the disciples begin by calling Jesus "Teacher" and end by calling him "The Son of God." Peace separates Mark into six units with each unit containing a specific name for Jesus and how the disciples understood him.

Part 3 discusses "Evangelism." Building on the information of sections one and two, Peace reexamines our understanding of evangelism. He examines the more common methods of evangelism and shows how most methods are based on the paradigm of Paul's conversion (as an event). For example, the "altar call" or "invitation" that is commonly given after evangelistic sermons reflects this common belief that Christian conversion is an event. In this section Peace challenges us to rethink our evangelistic methods so that they reflect the model of the conversion of the Twelve, which he argues, is more common, rather than the conversion of Paul.

For *SCJ* readers who accept baptism as fundamental to conversion, this work is lacking. However, Peace does emphasize the life-changing processes that must accompany any serious conversion to Christ, to which any fundamental Bible student would agree.

This work has few footnotes within the text, which allows for easy reading. It includes Scripture, author, and subject indexes. It also has a helpful appendix containing word studies of words used by the NT authors dealing with the subject of conversion. Its practical nature makes this volume most valuable for ministers and evangelists.

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Daniel B. WALLACE. *The Basics: An Intermediate Greek Grammar*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000. 334 pp. $29.99.

This volume is an abridgment of his *Greek beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* previously reviewed in *SCJ* 1 (Spring, 1998): 127. While *Beyond the Basics* has been criticized as too massive and too difficult for undergraduate Greek students (and perhaps even graduate students), *Basics* both surpasses earlier intermediate grammars and makes more accessible Wallace's insightful study of the Greek NT.

Basics follows the same basic structure as *Beyond the Basics*. After a brief introduction to the language of the NT, it contains two major sections: Syntax of Words and Phrases and Syntax of the Clause (including conjunctions and conditional sentences). The work ends with a subject index/cheat sheet, which lists the usage categories from the previous descriptions of syntax, and a Scripture index. Although similar in arrangement, *Basics* has omitted much of the content from *Beyond the Basics* (almost 500 pages). The preface (15) lists the kinds of material which have been removed: some categories which rarely appear in the NT, most of the more than 800 exegetical discussions from *Beyond the Basics* (still a few of these remain, even if condensed), many additional biblical examples listed with the various categories of usage, the bibliographies at the beginning of each chapter, most discussions on textual variants, and other advanced material and detailed discussions. *Basics* retains many categories of usage and most of the charts and tables from Wallace's earlier work. Also, each part of *Basics* is cross-referenced to the corresponding pages in *Beyond the Basics*.

Like the larger work, the present volume has more strengths than can be listed in this brief review. Wallace has used effectively the acCordance computer software (marketed by the GRAMCORD Institute) to provide more (and often better) examples of categories than other intermediate grammars. The sections which are usually entitled "Key to identification and clarification" offer clear and helpful suggestions for distinguishing one usage from another (see the descriptions of the dative categories of association, manner, and means or the discussion of the attendant circumstance participle). Also, Wallace frequently supplements these sections with charts and tables which visually illustrate the discussion at hand (see the charts in the presentation of the article or the tenses).

Since the book has many commendable features, one finds it difficult to identify significant weaknesses. As intermediate Greek classes will more often use the book, one might wish that Wallace had indicated more clearly the frequency of certain syntactical usages. While he does mark the common occurrence of some categories with an arrow, perhaps Wallace could have ordered the listings by their frequency or, at the least, noted the approximate frequency of certain usages. For example, even though the most common use of the infinitive in the NT is complementary, it is listed last among the adverbial uses

of the infinitive (259-260). Wallace often makes a statement, such as "This usage is common in the NT" (57), which makes the reader wonder just how common the particular usage may be. One suspects that Wallace knows but wonders why this awareness has not impacted either the ordering or the description of the usage categories.

Without question, *Basics* is an excellent Greek grammar. It will serve well the needs of teachers and students in second-year Greek courses (both undergraduate and graduate), quite possibly better than any other intermediate grammar!

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Marianne SAWICKI. *Crossing Galilee: Architectures of Contact in the Occupied Land of Jesus.* Harrisburg: Trinity Press, 2000. 249 pp. $23.00.

Crossing Galilee is a book that should not have been written. Sawicki proposes that Jesus studies may be advanced by giving attention to an "archaeology of the mind," or cognitive "artifacts," which are not only real, but identifiable, and retrievable within textual sources and the material record. Whether such a goal is possible or not remains to be seen. One thing is clear however: Sawicki does not achieve it.

Key to understanding the outline of the book are the metaphors of "crossing" and "grounding." Using a "spatial template" that identifies the dynamics of containment, release, and redirection, Sawicki examines "artifacts" as diverse as jars, thresholds, texts, land, temple, water, and family. Her discussion is articulate, long on theory, short of fact, intuitive, inductive, yet well-arranged. The strength of the book lies not in the presentation of any new data, but in the creative arrangement of that data.

Unfortunately, this creativity often lends itself to a potent and writhing mass of assumptions, overstatements, generalizations, and particulars, for example: "John the Baptist positioned himself astride the river (Jordan), turning its water back into a vehicle of divine governance of the land and turning the tourists away from Antipas (4). One wonders what tatters of the book could possibly remain, or indeed, if an "archaeology of cognition" could function at all, apart from the use of metaphors. A musing of a different order asks how much more valuable this book might have been if the publisher had insisted upon some form of academic accountability; an annotated bibliography is helpful, but is no substitute for proper footnotes/endnotes and credits.

Sawicki's suspicion that she will provoke both archaeologists and biblical

scholars is a safe bet (12). Her archaeological data is popular and secondary at best. Among that which is presented, some serious omissions and distortions are noted. A consideration of *tabun* use in the ethnographic record of Palestine would enhance Sawicki's understanding of ovens and cookfires. Her presentation of architecture is limited and could be filled in by excellent examples in neighboring Syria and northern Jordan (Umm el-Jimal, Tabaqat Fahl). Finally, it is beyond belief to imagine a presentation of movement in Galilee which includes "women's potential and kinetic energy" but does not include a discussion of road systems, much less a readable map. Obviously, Sawicki imagines a Galilee crossing of a different order, one which finds its locus of meaning less "on the ground" and more "in the attic" of sociological theory. In this, *Crossing Galilee* slips into a mode that is not only provocative but driven by concerns that sound strangely contemporary.

Readers of the *SCJ* will recognize a familiar agenda in the proposals that Jesus was conceived when Mary was raped by a pillaging Roman soldier, that his "defective male" status explains why he never married (and perhaps why he *had the ability* to look at his world *differently*), that his ministry was informed, crafted, protected, and distributed by women of means and innovation, and finally that the larger message of Jesus and the church is tied to "pushing the envelope of indigenous labor and gender practices" (196). Ironically, Sawicki challenges "those who read sociology too reverently and texts too suspiciously" (67).

In short, I am relieved that the publisher sent an unbound page proof of this book for review. I do not feel compelled to find room for it in my library. Readers of *SCJ* will probably feel the same way.

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Bruce J. MALINA. *The Social Gospel of Jesus: The Kingdom of God in Mediterranean Perspective*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000. 178 pp. $19.00.

Bruce J. Malina, Professor of New Testament and Early Christianity at Creighton University in Omaha, Nebraska, is well known for the social-science perspective he brings to biblical studies. The thesis of this book is that the Bible is misunderstood if one's reading is not grounded in an understanding of the social systems from which its documents arose.

With this in mind, Malina tackles the tricky subject of the kingdom of God. The bottom line for Malina is that the death of Jesus shows that his proclamation of the kingdom of God was politically motivated by certain crises current

in his society and was not at all "spiritually" based. The problem is that modern interpreters have read back into the term ideas from their own social setting, thus distorting its meaning in first-century Palestine. According to Malina, the problem Jesus confronted was a malfunctioning or nonfunctioning political system. Unlike other parts of the Roman Empire, Israel's aristocratic elites failed to serve as patrons for their fellow Israelites in favor of expanding their own positions. In addition, the elite increasingly engaged in extortion and oppression of fellow citizens. Rich and powerful patrons typically helped those below them, but in Israel the opposite was true. Jesus' political response to this situation is that God would be their patron and helper.

Jesus, Malina argues, proclaimed a kingdom and looked at God as Father, proclaiming "a political, political religious, and political economic theocracy to Israel." Jesus was very much aware of Israel's political problems and his solution was wrapped up in the kingdom of God with God as the patron and Jesus as his agent on earth. In the view of Malina, Jesus was a disciple of John the Baptist and learned his insights about Israel's social situation from him. Jesus then gathered around him a few men who shared his views of the political crisis. Essentially, the disciples were a "political action faction," and the movement Jesus launched was a social movement. Later, members of the "Jesus movement" distorted the original meaning and turned it into what Malina calls a "domestic religion." With Paul and others who later bought into the "resurrected Jesus" ideology, the original political impact was lost, being transformed into a religious association.

One of the obvious strengths of this work is the firm lesson it teaches on the dangers of reading our own culture back into the Bible. However, this is a double-edged sword for Malina. The major weakness of the book is the filtering of biblical data through the social-scientific approach. The Jesus who emerges is not the traditional Jesus of the Gospels. Rather, he is a political opportunist who sees himself as God's right-hand man. In Malina's hands, Jesus is a non-Messianic political operative whose followers later mistakenly impose a religious understanding onto his political agenda.

SCJ readers will agree with Malina that we need to get back to the historical Jesus, but most will not agree with the Jesus that emerges from his analysis. The large amount of detailed social-science analysis (much of it seemingly tangential to the issue at hand) will definitely put off the general reader. Those who read the entire book will gain excellent perspectives on how the social-scientific approach to biblical studies works. For the less tough, read the last chapter and get the gist of his argument.

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David P. MOESSNER, ed. *Jesus and the Heritage of Israel: Luke's Narrative Claim upon Israel's Legacy.* Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press, 1999. 395 pp. $40.00.

This collection of essays is the first volume of a projected series, to be edited by Moessner and David L. Tiede, setting forth what the editors characterize as an emerging scholarly consensus that Luke-Acts presents Jesus as the true heritage of Israel, the fulfillment of God's promises to Israel, and so Israel's legacy to the world. Contributors to this volume are mostly members of the Society of Biblical Literature's Luke-Acts Group; also included are a few European scholars active in the corresponding section of the Society for New Testament Studies.

The essays fall into two main sections, the first on the prologues and the second on broader matters. This second section includes discussion of perennial issues in the study of Acts, including the speeches, the significance of the shipwreck narrative, the abrupt ending, the delay of the parousia, and the place of Israel. Betraying its origins in the SBL's Lukan seminar, many of the essays are preoccupied with comparisons between Luke-Acts and other Jewish or Hellenistic literature. Those who keep up at all with Lukan research will therefore not be surprised to see Loveday Alexander discussing the Lukan prologues and their nearest relatives, Carl Holladay and Gregory Sterling comparing Acts to the fragments of Hellenistic Jewish historians, or Richard Pervo raising the question of the genre of "Luke and Acts." In this respect, much of this collection consists of reiteration or refinement of research and conclusions published previously by the contributors.

One might think, then, that the book proffers a single theme but lapses into the contributors' established interests, or that it rehashes already well-defined positions without breaking new ground. Although such a characterization is fair to a degree, Moessner has directed his contributors to something more. The book claims a consensus around the proposition that Luke and Acts function together to persuade readers to understand Jesus as the fulfillment of Israel's divinely mandated destiny. Indeed, these essays demonstrate that consensus, albeit through often widely different means. Alexander, for instance, argues persuasively that even though the prologue to Luke's Gospel makes no direct reference to Israel's heritage, its appeal to an established tradition "fulfilled" anticipates the ensuing narrative that breathes the very air of Israel's biblical expectations. Similarly, Daniel Marguerat contends that the enigmatic ending of Acts uses Israel's scriptural traditions, as interpreted throughout both volumes, to reverse the reader's understanding of Paul's imprisonment (and death?) from judgment on the messenger to judgment on those who rejected his message. Likewise, Holladay points to the informal summarizing of biblical history by the Hellenistic Jewish historians as an explanation for the discrepancies between Stephen's historical summary and the LXX.

Nearly absent from these volumes is the kind of speculative reconstruction of "the Lukan community" that characterized redaction-critical studies until relatively recently. This augurs well for the future of Lukan studies. Focused sharply on the contours of the text as seen against the backdrop of the Greco-Roman literary environment, these essays contain little conjecture about matters that lie beyond the scope of solid inquiry. If this trend continues, Lukan scholarship may make actual progress in understanding the text.

Another absent topic, this one less fortunate, is Luke's appropriation of Israel's Scriptures, the OT. One essay by William Kurz discusses "promise and fulfillment," but little is said here or elsewhere about how Luke understands the Scriptures in order to see them as fulfilled in Jesus. Because this understanding is absolutely central to the concept that this book seeks to lay out, the omission is frustrating. One could have hoped for a refinement of some of the work in Craig A. Evans and James A. Sanders' *Luke and Scripture*, for example. Later volumes in the series may address this lacuna.

This book will be useful for all with an interest in current Lukan research. It should prove particularly helpful for graduate students embarking on their own research, as it lays out many of the most important and productive lines of current inquiry. Too technical to be used as a textbook or a resource for most church, college, or seminary teaching, it ought to be read carefully by all who write books for those purposes.

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O. Wesley ALLEN, Jr. *Reading the Synoptic Gospels.* St. Louis: Chalice, 2000. 160 pp. $14.99.

Allen has provided the reader with an uncluttered introduction to some basic tools for exegesis. Though he doesn't address the synoptic problem in particular, he does include tools that are relevant to narrative sections absent in the epistles. Readers will find that these techniques are useful for other parts of the Bible as well.

For the newcomer to biblical interpretation the book's great strength is its brevity. His stated objective is not to be exhaustive but rather "to narrow the gap between the Church and the Academy" (4) by introducing methods used in the academy and accessible to beginning students of exegesis. One academic assumption that may be disconcerting to some readers is his unqualified acceptance of Q and the primacy of Mark. For the beginning student, it would be helpful to know that there are other, even older, assumptions concerning which gospel came first.

Each chapter is thorough enough to provide adequate explanations, yet enticing enough to encourage further reading, which he provides after each chapter. His explanations are clear and uncomplicated, and he avoids or explains enough technical jargon to promote ease of reading. He has also greatly simplified his explanations by applying each method of interpretation to a single passage of Scripture, Matt 12:46-50. This removes some of the clutter by allowing the reader to concentrate on only one passage. However, a final chapter in which he summarized his concluding exegesis would have been helpful. It is not altogether clear how he expects the exegete to piece together all the conclusions from previous chapters into one united interpretation. In fact, Allen seems to believe that there may not be a conclusion to be drawn.

Though he warns against reading the text only for "what it means to me," the mistake of imposing one's own personal meaning on the words of Scripture, Allen insists that every reading of Scripture is somewhat subjective. A summation of his findings on the text in question might have demonstrated how these tools might help the reader rise above his own subjective interpretations. Allen does not assume that the purpose of these exegetical methods is to discover the truths expressly stated in the biblical passage and to overcome the personal prejudices of the reader.

In particular, Allen's last chapter on reader-response criticism reinforces the need for a summary chapter. Correctly noting that readers sometimes construct their own meaning *out of* the text rather than discovering the meaning *in* the text Allen could have done a more thorough job of explaining how to prevent this by summarizing his own findings on the passage in question. Simply acknowledging as he does that readers are prone to their own prejudices and subjective meanings could leave students reading his book wondering whether he could ever arrive at any objective truth. Allen clearly doesn't believe that "any interpretation is a valid interpretation" (125), but fleshing out the entire process and demonstrating how to avoid such subjective interpretations would make it easier to recommend this book to beginning students.

Some discussion relating to the philosophical assumptions of certain techniques of interpretation along with a summary chapter demonstrating how these methods draw some exegetical conclusions would have been a helpful supplement to this introduction.

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Virginia WILES. *Making Sense of Paul: A Basic Introduction to Pauline Theology.* Peabody, MA: Hendricksen, 2000. 160 pp. $16.95.

Making Sense of Paul could best be described as a journey in making sense of words, as Virginia Wiles defines many important Pauline terms in an intriguing way. In doing so, she often challenges the reader to pause and reflect on one's understanding of Pauline theology. For this reason alone, the book is worth reading.

Wiles explains Paul's theological framework by reflecting on three important issues which impacted his thinking: his Jewish background, the Greco-Roman culture he lived in, and his call as an apostle of Christ Jesus. In part one of the book, she describes Judaism and elaborates on the meaning of two terms ("righteousness" and "law") which are foundational concepts with Paul. Though both are often thought of with negative connotations ("He is so righteous!"), Wiles points out that both have very positive implications. For instance, she notes that righteousness "is a covenantal term" which "is ultimately a description of a healthy relationship" (30). Law is God's gift which provided guidance for Israel, thus enabling them to keep their righteous relationship (covenant) with God. Wiles says that Paul "extends and elaborates" (42) on these terms after he encounters Christ.

In the second part of the book, Wiles reflects on how Paul "used the language of his tradition in order to make sense of his Greco-Roman context" (48). In this section, the two key terms she focuses on are "sin" and "death." Drawing from both Greek and Pauline writings, she concludes that "original sin" makes perfect sense as humanity has an infectious disease. She says that the disease is one of the mind, as "apart from God humans are unable to think clearly or correctly" (52). In fact, sin even causes us to misperceive God's intentions toward us. Thus, we become hostile toward him, unable to live in right relationship with him. The result is death, which Wiles defines rather engagingly (70, 77, 152). Additionally, she provides an interesting discussion of how the law actually failed to solve the problem of sin and death.

Part three addresses the roles of Christ, grace, the cross, faith, hope, and the ministry of the Holy Spirit which works among the community of believers. Wiles says that Paul understood Jesus as the revelation of God's gracious righteousness, which in turn fixes the sin problem that forgiveness (offered with the law) could only patch. In other words, only grace offered in Christ Jesus can truly justify! Through Christ, "Our misperception is shattered, and we are free now to commit ourselves in faith to live together as God intended" (138).

Although I like many of the author's conclusions, some also disturb me. Most bothersome is that Wiles only ascribes seven NT letters to Paul. This causes me to wonder if her theological understanding of Paul's work is balanced. She also consistently refers to Paul's "view," "thought," or "under-

standing." This alone would not be troubling, except that in her introduction she implies that it is okay to disagree with Paul's reflections as "you can claim your own different experience in strengthening ways" (5). All of this leads me to wonder what she truly means.

The strength of the book is threefold. First, Wiles provides a holistic approach to understanding Pauline theology within a limited amount of space. Second, she laces the book with outstanding illustrations. And last of all, she will cause you to think. She says the book was written to help undergraduate students. However, I would not recommend assigning this to an undergraduate unless the professor was willing to spend some class time to discuss it.

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Luke Timothy JOHNSON. *Reading Romans: A Literary and Theological Commentary.* New York: Crossroads, 1997. 224 pages. $24.95.

This is part of a commentary series entitled, Reading the New Testament, edited by Charles H. Talbert. The effort is made in this series to understand *how* the author communicates as well as *what* the point of the text is. The goal is then to relate the how and the what to the milieu of the NT writer's day, specifically the Christian, Jewish, and Roman thought-worlds. The goal, according to Talbert, is to "treat the New Testament texts as religious documents whose religious message needs to be set forth with compelling clarity" (ix). Statements such as this presuppose that the NT possesses a higher value than other writings. Though Johnson clearly respects and values the NT, this respect, for him, does not equate to Paul's view of his own writings (1 Cor 2:13; 7:40; compare 2 Pet 3:15-16). Two illustrations of his approach are found in his handling of Rom 1:24-27 and 13:1-9. Johnson's discussion of these passages follows Paul's teachings, except where he has trouble agreeing with him (34-35; 189-191).

Johnson, Professor of Religious Studies, Candler School of Theology, Emory University, approaches Romans from the perspective of a Roman Catholic. Thus, his view of a number of topics discussed in Romans is colored by this perspective. At the same time, however, he makes some contributions that are distinctly his own and not necessarily tied to his Catholic commitment. In line with the objectives of this commentary series, he does enable the reader to better understand *how* Paul communicates his message as well as helping the reader to understand the *what* of that message. Refreshingly, Johnson does take serious consideration of the text and tries to be a responsible exegete of it. His

goal is that the contemporary reader of Romans experience, as closely as possible, the epistle as the first readers experienced it (3).

Johnson's view of Romans' purpose is that it "was generated less by a crisis in the Roman church than by Paul's own plans" (6). Paul was planning to go to Spain and he needed the financial backing of the Roman Christians for this endeavor. This understanding of Romans's purpose helps, Johnson says, "to make sense of chapter 16, which otherwise may appear as an odd appendix" (7).

Romans 1:17 is perhaps the key text of Romans. Significantly, though Johnson notes some of the biblical aspects of meaning of "the righteousness of God," he does not list, as a possibility, the "gift of a right standing before God." Similarly, in what may be the most controversial section of his commentary, Johnson understands the phrase *dia pisteos Iesou Christou* (3:22) as referring, not to one's faith *in* Jesus Christ but to the faith that Jesus Christ himself possessed as he lived and died in faithfulness to God's will. Johnson says that "the implication of this translation is that Jesus' human faith is the means of the revelation of God's righteousness" (59). Grammatically, this interpretation is possible but Johnson's understanding of *dia pisteos Iesou Christou* may also be influenced by a quasi-universalism. He writes that "if saving faith meant faith *in* Christ, then Paul would logically be back in the same position against which he is arguing" (63). A few lines later he writes that "certainly it would be inconsistent with Paul's whole argument to claim that one had to be Christian in order to have access to God—for then God could neither be truly one nor truly fair" (63). Johnson never fully develops this line of his thinking but it truly runs counter to John 14:6 as well as Peter's statement in Acts 4:12. It also reflects a profound misunderstanding of the nature of God's justice and grace. God, indeed, can be fair in judging those who have never heard for they have sinned against the light they have had (1:20-21; 2:14-16).

Romans 5 is seen as the heart of Paul's argument about "how God's righteousness revealed itself by making humans righteous by a free gift" (92). Johnson's discussion of baptism (Romans 6) as a participation in the death and resurrection of Christ is handled very well. He writes, "through their baptism 'in Christ,' we learn, they have passed from a way of living defined by the reign of sin and death, into one defined by the 'newness of life' (6:4) that comes from God in a 'new creation' (2 Cor 5:17; Gal 6:15)" (98). Johnson summarizes 11:26 by saying that the "endpoint of 'salvation' is the restoration of Israel as God's people" (172). He understands salvation in Romans more in the "social" sense than in an individual sense (26).

Throughout Romans, Johnson identifies the motif of "idolatry" as that which Paul is fighting against (31ff., 177). At times, his use of this motif seems forced. On the other hand, Johnson's focus on God is very consistent with Paul's emphasis in this epistle.

Johnson, throughout his text, furnishes bibliographic references that will help those doing deeper research into Romans. In addition, he provides rhetorical background to Paul's literary approach in an effort to help the reader understand how Paul is developing his thesis. He is serious about understanding the text of Romans, notwithstanding his occasional reluctance to submit to that understanding. Therefore, his commentary is quite insightful in a number of passages. A bibliography and index of Scripture references at the end of the book would make it more useful. Due to the lower view of biblical authority and quasi-universalism which Johnson appears to espouse, this reviewer cannot recommend the book as a primary text for Bible college or seminary. However, the book can be recommended as a helpful resource in conjunction with other commentaries.

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Jerry W. MCCANT. *2 Corinthians*. Readings. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999. 195 pp. $23.75.

With this slim volume on 2 Corinthians, McCant, Professor of Greek New Testament, Point Loma Nazarene University, adds another helpful volume to this unique commentary series, which in recent years has produced commentaries on Genesis, 1 Chronicles, Hebrews, and Revelation. In stark contrast to the increasingly common 1000+ page commentaries, these commentaries do not try to do everything. Rather in a paragraph-by-paragraph approach, they emphasize an analytical "reading" of the text with sensitivity to literary context. McCant, in particular, focuses on Greek rhetorical features of 2 Corinthians. His major thesis, that Paul is not offering a self-defense but rather parodies such an approach, cuts against the grain of the most common, contemporary views of 2 Corinthians.

Though certainly academic in approach, this volume should not scare off novices. McCant overworks the word "parodic," but he does define it as well as other technical words he invokes, like anaphoric (repeated), encomiastic exemplar (a praiseworthy example), lachrymose (tearful), prodiorthosis (advance justification), litotes (a literary form of understatement), and euphony (repetition of words or sounds at the end of at least two sentences). He is capable of a good turn of phrase, "gospel hawkers," "many-splendored metaphor," and "rock-bottom poverty." He also provides visual aid to help the reader understand complicated issues and rhetorical features.

Like more recent commentaries which approach 2 Corinthians rhetorically, McCant regards efforts of early critical scholars who regarded 2 Corinthians

as a stitching together of multiple sources to be largely unsubstantiated and quite rightly on the defensive today. Approached rhetorically, the letter comes off as coherent and unified, including chapters 10–13, as well as genuinely Pauline, including 6:14–7:1.

His discovery of satire, sarcasm, and parody in 2 Corinthians is recognized by most others. However, McCant's thesis that the entire letter of 2 Corinthians should be approached as parody of a self-defense rather than any kind of genuine defense is unusual and worth pondering. His anchor for this approach is 2 Cor 12:19, where, at the end of Paul's entire argument he asks, "Have you been thinking all along that we have been defending ourselves to you?" McCant asserts that this biting question subverts everything Paul has said from defense to accusation. It's the Corinthians who are really on trial. For the most part, I agree with McCant. However, he loses me when he goes on to assert that since there is no real defense, there must not be any real accusers or opponents (17-18). This does not follow. Paul's refusal to defend himself in any traditional manner may certainly be his way of exposing the illegitimacy of his opponents to assess his apostleship, but it does not necessitate that there are no opponents, especially since the text refers to them (3:1-3; 11:13; 12:11).

Besides the defense of his thesis as the text unfolds, McCant is capable of offering fresh analysis along the way. For instance, in analyzing 6:4-10 he makes the telling observation: "Every time in 2 Corinthians that Paul wishes to make a negative comment about self-commendation, he places the pronoun before the verb (3.1; 5.12; 10.12,18). When he speaks positively, either of the Corinthians' self-commendation (7.11) or of his own (4.2; 6.4), he places it after the verb" (55).

Although McCant does not interact with other commentaries with regularity, he does so at critical junctures. Disagreement with others is normally handled tastefully but consistently negative posturing toward Ben Witherington and his socio-rhetorical approach to 2 Corinthians is surprisingly out of character. Regular quotation of Greek and Roman authors like Plutarch, Seneca, Euripides, Isocrates, Xenophon, Cicero, and Demosthenes, among a host of others offers unique and refreshing color to the comments.

I recommend this volume to libraries and 2 Corinthians enthusiasts. It makes a refreshing alternative to others on the shelf.

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Charalambos BAKIRTZIS and Helmut KOESTER, eds. *Philippi at the Time of Paul and after His Death.* Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press, 1998. 87 pp. $16.00.

Four papers presented at a symposium on "Paul and Philippi" at Kavala in May 1993, the ancient Neapolis, form the content of this book. The first two essays examine the development of Philippi over the centuries and the chronology of its archaeological evidence in order to highlight the differences between the Hellenistic, early Roman, and later Christian periods. The second set of papers attempts to juxtapose the archaeological evidence with a critical reading of early Christian literary evidence. The archaeological evidence suggested that in the fourth and later centuries Philippi was a center for pilgrims honoring Paul's martyrdom. Helmut Koester and Allen Callahan, both of Harvard, searched early literature for a tradition of Paul's martyrdom in Philippi rather than in Rome.

The first essay is very helpful for the Bible student who wants a quick refresher course in the early history of Philippi. Of special interest is the discovery of an inscribed tombstone, which is the first attestation outside of the Acts of the Apostles of the presence of Jews in Philippi.

The second essay, by Bakirtzis, notes that Philippi as it now stands bears little relationship to the Philippi that Paul visited in 49/50 AD. The agora and most other structures were built long after Paul. The focus of this essay is an octagonal church built in about 400 AD. He concludes that the church was dedicated to Paul's memory and the "legend that Paul was buried in Rome is a later one for which there is not historical evidence."

The third essay, by Koester, examines Paul and Philippi in the NT and other literature. He argues that his death took place in Philippi and not Rome. While admitting no hard evidence for his position, Koester says that 1, 2 Timothy strongly support his hypothesis. In particular, he argues that in 2 Tim 4:13 Paul instructs Timothy to "bring the coat I left in Troas with Carpus." Koester notes that Philippi is not an impossible place for his final imprisonment, and if Timothy is coming from Ephesus to Philippi, Troas, where Paul left his coat, was on the way.

Like Koester, Callahan, in the final essay examines the literary evidence pointing away from Rome as the site of Paul's martyrdom. He argues that the martyrdom of Paul in Rome in several noncanonical books, such as the Acts of Paul, "is clearly a product of early pro-Rome propaganda."

Readers will find much to commend in this book. It contains up-to-date information about Philippi and much of this can be used in preaching and teaching. Charts and several plates make the archaeological discussion more understandable. The book, while technical at many points, is clearly written and the eighty-seven page length makes it a fairly quick read. Two good indexes also add to the value of the work.

The book does have some weaknesses, however. A consistent problem is the push to make Philippi the site of Paul's death. I came away with the feeling that "Yes, the evidence for Rome is weak," and "Yes, much of the evidence is contrived." I will even say "Yes, Philippi could have been the site." However, more balance and caution by the authors is needed. I would like to have heard them say, "Yes, Philippi also had a vested interest in touting itself as the site of Paul's death, more prestige, more money from pilgrims, among others." Some readers will not appreciate the treatment of the NT by Koester and Callahan. Koester's view that Philippians consisted of several letters is very problematic and many scholars today reject it. Callahan's low regard for the historicity of Acts will not win him many points with *SCJ* readers either.

This book is valuable, nonetheless, as a background source on Philippi and gives a new twist on the place of Paul's martyrdom. Preachers and motivated Bible students will find this work helpful and deserving of a place in their study. Although not just for scholars, they probably will enjoy it the most.

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Douglas MOO. *The Letter of James.* Pillar. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000. 271 pp. $28.00.

Fifteen years ago, in 1985, Doug Moo, now Blanchard Professor of New Testament, Wheaton Graduate School, published what has become recognized as a solid, evangelical commentary on James in the popular Tyndale New Testament Commentary Series (Eerdmans). In the Pillar series, which has volumes on Matthew (Leon Morris), Romans (Leon Morris), John (D.A. Carson), and now 1, 2, 3 John (Colin Kruse) and James, Moo is able to beef up his attention to Hellenistic-Jewish background, theological issues, and difficult/controversial passages, as well as update his bibliographic interaction. Moo has not changed his views on key issues. He still holds the author of the epistle to be James, the Lord's brother, the date to be mid-40s (before the Apostolic Council), the recipients to be Jewish-Christians scattered from Jerusalem, the genre to be wisdom literature (in a broad sense), and the theme (or "central concern") to be wholehearted commitment to Christ (based primarily on 4:4-10). He views the structural rationale of James to be far more pronounced than Dibelius acknowledges but pulls back from endorsing Davids's three-tiered, recurring theme, approach.

Moo makes several valuable observations in the commentary. First, in responding to the challenge of E.P. Sanders's covenantal nomism, he ponders the possibility that despite a general understanding of God's grace in first-cen-

tury Judaism, the more legalistic picture which held sway in scholarship pre-Sanders may have characterized specific groups within the culture. Relevant to James, influence on a segment of early Jewish Christians could have lead to the misunderstanding or misappropriation of Paul's doctrine of grace, to which James likely reacts in 2:14-26. Second, regarding 1:5, he suggests that God's integrity, rather than "finding fault," is the key point. Third, regarding 2:22, he highlights James's stress on the mutual cooperation of faith and works in relating to God. Fourth, regarding "justify" in 2:24, he contrasts Paul's perspective as "initial declaration" and James's as "ultimate verdict." Fifth, regarding 3:5, he proposes that James may have in mind a brush fire, more topographically compatible with Palestine, rather than a forest fire. Sixth, regarding 3:8, he acknowledges that complete control of the tongue is impossible.

Although he does not do much contemporary comment, one of Moo's best points is when he chastizes unsuccessful faith healers who charge their patients with lack of faith. Rather, as Moo notes regarding 5:15, the onus for lack of healing must fall on the one praying not the prayee.

One of the strengths of this commentary is the caution with which Moo proceeds in his task. At times, however, one wishes more assertiveness of Moo's position, whether this be regarding the objector's quotation in 2:18 or the noble name's allusion to the rite of baptism in 2:7. Moo's caution does spur him to deal more carefully than most commentaries with mirror imagery in 1:23, the literalness of "kill" in 4:1, and the translation of 4:5. However, I think he too readily dismisses Laws's view in 1:23, fails to notice the common depiction of slander as murder in Jewish wisdom literature (including Proverbs) in 4:1, and offers a false choice between only two alternative translations of 4:5 when others are viable, including the longing of the human spirit for God as depicted in Ps 42:1 and 84:2.

These concerns are indeed minor compared to the great value this commentary will prove to be for its readers. Not only is it well balanced regarding historical, lexical, textual, background, and theological issues, it is friendly to general readers. Comments on words and phrases are in English and transliterated Greek. Interpretive discussions often are couched in terms of both classic and contemporary versions, including the NIV, REB, NJB, NASB, NEG, TEV, and KJV. Bullet points and outlining are used to give visual aid to complex discussions. This is a good commentary.

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