Book Reviews

Elder John SPARKS. *Raccoon John Smith: Frontier Kentucky's Most Famous Preacher*. Lexington, KY: The University of Kentucky Press, 2005. 504 pp. $45.00.

Sparks is a hospital lab technician in a rural community in eastern Kentucky, as well as an unpaid minister of the United Baptist Church, with roots in the Old Time Baptists of the Appalachians. He spent ten years researching *The Roots of Appalachian Christianity: The Life and Legacy of Elder Shubal Stearns* (University Press of Kentucky, 2005), his first publication. In the process of research on Stearns, he uncovered information on Raccoon John, which led to this venture as well.

The first impression one gets from Sparks's work is that he is an iconoclast. He seems to take some delight in the beginning of the volume to point out that John never wore a raccoon cap and that several of his biographers, particularly John Augustus Williams and Louis Cochran, took various liberties with the material, including significant inaccuracies propagated by Cochran. Granted that Cochran's work is a biographical novel, yet Sparks seems to relish opportunities to depict his shortcomings.

This is not to deny that Sparks has written a thorough and detailed treatment of Raccoon John's life and ministry. He goes into great length in depicting the in-house Baptist struggles in Kentucky between the Regular and Separate Baptists. This detail becomes ponderous and even confusing at times. One almost feels the need for a roadmap of names and factions to keep the sides straight. There is no question that Sparks has done a great deal of research. The problem is that because of the detail he has turned up, he seems to want to share it all with us, giving us the background of the background. It is helpful to see all this laid out and realize the context out of which Raccoon John was working, but a more condensed version would have done just as well. And speaking of roadmaps, a couple of maps showing locations of churches and particularly district boundaries would go a long way toward helping bring clarity to the strife-filled story he imparts. One map is too little (66); another is too late (218); both are inadequate.

One also has to wonder about his captivation with the writings of Søren Kierkegaard. Every chapter begins with a Kierkegaard quotation, and in two places he goes to some length to expound on the Danish theologian's insights and perspective.

Sparks also perpetuates the inaccuracy that publishing the *Christian Baptist* made Alexander Campbell one of the richest ministers in America. He produces no documentation to support this, in spite of Campbell's assertion that the magazine barely broke into the black. He references pages in Garrett and Hughes, but these pages contain no information about Campbell's publishing income. In fact, Sparks often tends to cite secondary sources when primary sources are available.

All told, this is a useful volume. The material on Baptist strife in Kentucky is

hard to wade through and makes the reading more laborious than necessary. But his treatment of Raccoon John is fair, even sympathetic, but certainly not hagiographic. The volume is helpful in placing Raccoon John in context, and straightening out some erroneous presumptions. Those interested in Raccoon John will find it rewarding.

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Mark A. NOLL and Carolyn NYSTROM. *Is the Reformation Over? An Evangelical Assessment of Contemporary Roman Catholicism*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005. 272 pp. $24.99.

Noll and Nystrom examine the changing relationship between Roman Catholics and evangelicals in America in the past 40 years, focusing especially on the impact of Vatican II and the discussion forum Evangelicals and Catholics Together. The authors conclude that there are positive signs of better communication and even significant cooperation between Roman Catholics and evangelicals in America.

After a brief survey of the long-standing polemic between evangelicals and Roman Catholics, the authors offer several examples of an altered landscape. This has fostered a more open ecumenical dialogue between Catholics and Protestants (Noll gives substantial treatment to the 15-year official dialogue between Catholics and the Disciples of Christ) that produced surprising agreement on central Christian doctrines (as evidenced in Noll's examination of the Catholic *Catechism*), yet highlighted seemingly irreconcilable differences.

The focus of this assessment of Catholic-evangelical relations is the dialogue instigated by Catholic Richard John Neuhaus and evangelical Charles Colson in 1994 known as Evangelicals and Catholics Together. The authors analyze the four major papers produced by this conversation and outline the response to Evangelicals and Catholics Together from the broader evangelical community. The volume concludes with an examination of the changing political role of Roman Catholicism and its impact on general public and evangelical perceptions. The authors assert that the increasing secularization of American society has driven evangelicals and Catholics to more common ground and sounds a hopeful note in favor of increased communication and cooperation.

This timely discussion provides an excellent overview of the changes in the Roman Catholic Church since Vatican II and fairly deals with remaining problems between Catholics and evangelicals. The emphasis on "cobelligerency" effectively reveals what this author considers to be the most important agreement between Catholics and evangelicals in contemporary American society. Although the volume serves as an apologetic for Evangelicals and Catholics Together, the authors do not minimize the significant differences between the two groups.

There are a few areas in which further clarification and discussion would have been helpful. The authors hinted at the difference between official Catholic dogma and popular understanding and practice, an observation especially important for a

discussion of the role of Mary in Catholic spirituality. They recognized but did not adequately explore the nature of Roman Catholicism outside of America, where the Catholic church has demonstrated much more of an authoritarian stance and little openness to other Christian influence. Their treatment of the recent sex scandals in American Catholicism—a key factor in shaping current evangelical attitudes toward Catholics—seemed more interested in chastising evangelicals for their own moral failures. The authors' characterization of Disciples of Christ as individualistic and democratic as opposed to the corporate nature of Catholic ecclesiology appears at odds with the traditionally high view of the church espoused by the churches of the Stone-Campbell Restoration Movement.

This volume does not really answer the question, "Is the Reformation over?" Its value may be found in its explanation of official Roman Catholic teaching and insightful comparison with evangelical doctrine. This is especially true in the crucial area of ecclesiology, where the authors identify the weaknesses of evangelicals. Some historians within the Stone-Campbell Restoration Movement have characterized Disciples as "free church catholics" and pointed out the "mere Christianity" of Thomas Campbell's *Declaration and Address*. This volume opens a good window for viewing the central question raised by Campbell: can we share common core beliefs while allowing freedom for other teachings considered matters of opinion?

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Garrett J. DEWEESE and J.P. MORELAND. *Philosophy Made Slightly Less Difficult: A Beginner's Guide to Life's Big Questions*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2005. 171 pp. $15.00.

The authors "have attempted to write a readable volume that provides a useful discussion of basic philosophical distinctions relevant for doing theology and for constructing and defending a Christian worldview" (7). They have achieved their goal, but by their own admission many issues are not discussed due to brevity of the volume. It is readable and does provide helpful discussions of basic philosophical issues which directly impinge upon theology and one's worldview.

The volume begins by introducing the value of logic and the nature of valid and invalid arguments. Both formal and informal fallacies are discussed though not comprehensively. However, this is not a weakness. Rather than overwhelming the beginner, the authors succeed in whetting one's appetite for more.

The chapter on metaphysics will challenge the beginning reader. Though the discussion may be only "slightly less difficult," through their practical applications sprinkled throughout this chapter the authors help readers to see the importance of the study of reality. The relevance of this subject for postmodernism (32-33) and for current ethical issues such as abortion and euthanasia (46) demonstrates the real-world value of the study of metaphysics.

Epistemology remains a hotly debated issue in philosophy and theology. After noting the problems with coherentism and classical foundationalism, the authors adopt a version of modest foundationalism. Coherentism's potentially negative

effect on biblical authority is countered by the need for a modified foundationalism to adequately ground that authority (77-78). Obviously, nonfoundationalist theologians (Merold Westphal, John R. Franke) beg to disagree. Citing Westphal, Franke writes (80), "The truth is that there is truth, but not for us, only for God" (*The Character of Theology*, Baker, 2005). However, an unbiblical epistemological deism seems to be at work when truth exists but is largely inaccessible to human beings. In the final analysis, a coherentist understanding of truth fails to provide an adequate reason why Scripture should stand as truth and remain authoritative.

Cognitive and noncognitive ethical theories, along with their many facets, are dealt with in introductory form in chapter four. DeWeese and Moreland spend considerable time critiquing utilitarianism, the consequentialist ethical theory that says to seek the greatest good for the greatest number of people. Given the popularity of this ethical theory in our culture, promoted by people such as Peter Singer of Princeton University, it is important to understand that "the greatest good for the greatest number almost always entails increased harm for a few" (95).

An important discussion of substance dualism and physicalism is carried out in chapter 5. Recent studies in neurophysiology have encouraged naturalistic scientists, and even some Christians, to affirm that a human being is only physical in nature (106). Others, reacting to Greek dualism, have denied that the Bible teaches a dualism of body and soul (spirit) (106). In the face of these challenges, the authors defend both property and substance dualism (107). Their explanations of consciousness, "our basic awareness of the self," and "unity and the first-person perspective" are masterful and convincing for the dualistic perspective. They conclude their discussion of anthropology with a discussion of freedom and determinism. Sound reasons are given supporting their acceptance of the libertarian position in preference to the compatibilist position.

The power of naturalistic assumptions in our culture can be seen in the creationist/intelligent design defeats in school systems around the country. Thus, their chapter, "How Should Christians Think about Science?" is a needed one. They contrast the first-order concerns of empirical scientific research with the second-order claims of philosophical claims about science (133). They accurately note that many so-called scientific claims are not actually scientific at all but rather reflect the philosophy of science held by the scientist. Scientism, "the view that science is the very paradigm of truth and rationality," is critiqued and found to be self-refuting (135). The authors help the reader to sort through the various models for the integration of science and theology.

The authors strongly believe that Christians should love God with all of their minds. They are rightly concerned about the anti-intellectualism so often found in the church. They make a good case for their identification of the major enemies of the Christian worldview now found in North America: scientific naturalism and postmodernism. "Scientific naturalism and postmodernism are arrayed in an unholy alliance against a broadly theistic and specifically Christian worldview" (157). This reviewer does not doubt that Christian theism is at war with naturalism or many manifestations of postmodernism. However, what is not as clear is how scientific naturalism and postmodernism are in an "alliance" given their different epistemological footings.

One of this volume's greatest strengths is its accessibility to the beginning undergraduate student. However, the authors used the word "slightly" in their title for a good reason. Effort is still needed to read and understand the concepts brought out here. Nevertheless, the volume will enable a Christian desiring a greater understanding of the nature of logical thought and sound argumentation to better formulate his or her own apologetic and Christian theistic worldview. Not only that, but the volume, if read by a serious unbeliever, could break down some barriers lying in the way of his acceptance of Christ's Lordship.

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Michael J. SANDEL. *Public Philosophy: Essays on Morality in Politics.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005. 292 pp. $25.95.

To those thirsting for a discerning, invigorating, and accessible discussion of political philosophy and its application to contested moral issues, Michael Sandel's volume comes as a refreshing relief. Unlike the jingoistic tirades on politics by talk radio hosts, Sandel thoughtfully takes on critical issues by engaging in reasoned public argument that asks all of us to attend to community, responsibility, and virtue in our common life. He eschews both the naïve Biblicism of the religious right and a barren secularism as he takes on libertarianism and, more significantly, a contemporary liberalism enamored with value neutrality. Sandel preaches that our "politics cannot be neutral toward the values and ends its citizens espouse" (10).

Sandel is a professor of government at Harvard and the author of *Liberalism and the Limits of Justice* and *Democracy's Discontent* (Cambridge University Press, 1998). One of today's most significant political philosophers, he is differently counted as either a communitarian (though he is somewhat uncomfortable with that label) or a liberal. A reader will easily find conversation with Sandel and seemingly everyone else in the current debate, including John Rawls with his notion of overlapping consensus, Michael Walzer on values and community, and Richard Rorty on excluding religion from the public square (and though uncited, Jeffrey Stout on including religion in public life).

In essays addressing a wide range of topics, Sandel attacks state lotteries and publicly financed sports stadiums while also deliberating on affirmative action, abortion, gay rights, and the wisdom of paying polluters. Rabid partisans on both sides of the abortion debate will probably disagree with much of his analysis of privacy jurisprudence, but both sides might gain from attending to his insightful discussion of privacy. He also attacks the withering corruptions of free market fundamentalism on our common life together. With communitarians, he contends for the role of virtues and values in sustaining a civil society. Unlike Rorty or Rawls, he makes a real place for religious values in public debate. He argues for the priority of the good over the right *as a liberal.* In terms of partisan politics, his arguments serve to draw Democrats back into the values debate over morality in public life. In a way, these pages by a Jewish philosopher channel Robert Kennedy's Vatican II-inspired ghost.

In the spirit of Lyndon Johnson's appropriation of Isaiah's "come let us reason together," Sandel calls for citizens who hold differing values to bring them to the table rather than have some their most significant loyalties methodologically excluded from public debate. In effect, Sandel desires a public deliberation with everyone at the table so that a "thus saith the reverend" from James Dobson or from Christian Reconstructionists does not foreclose further debate.

However much my sympathies may lie with a model of reasoned debate that makes a place for religious and other deeply held sources of values, there are still moments when I think that Sandel is too optimistic about our ability as a society to talk with one another. With a nod to Alasdair MacIntyre, at times I fear that we are becoming so different and separate that our moral discourse merely talks at rather than to our discussion partners. Even as Stanley Hauerwas's call for Christians to live as a faithful community (instead of as citizens of a liberal democracy) resonates with many, still a Christian sense of responsible love and justice continues to call Christians back to public life. If we enter into public debate, Michael Sandel will be there to talk with us in that liberal democracy. His public arguments about important questions remind us that we are not so separate from or unbound to our fellow citizens that we are unable to continue to debate and decide matters with them. This volume is an argument that things are not that far gone yet. These essays will both introduce a reader to Sandel's thought and draw the reader into the practice of public philosophy on several important issues.

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Peter KREEFT and Trent DOUGHERTY, eds. *Socratic Logic: A Logic Text Using Socratic Method, Platonic Questions, & Aristotelian Principles.* 2nd edition. Indianapolis: St. Augustine's Press, 2005. 408 pp. $40.00.

All who have examined the history of education in the western intellectual tradition are aware of the role traditional logic occupied in that era. Regardless of the factors that led to the decline of classical Aristotelian logic, it has been some time since students were required to study logic as such (possibly excluding symbolic logic) on the high school or college level. Those who despair over the nearly complete neglect of Aristotelian logic may now rejoice. Many who have encountered the writings of Peter Kreeft, the populist philosopher, will experience in polished and mature form what they have come to appreciate of the author frequently compared to C.S. Lewis. Like Lewis, Kreeft admits to writing a volume that is a "dinosaur" (ix).

Kreeft joins the ranks of such esteemed logicians as Raymond McCall, Mary Spangler, H.W.B. Joseph, Andrew H. Bachhuber, and Jacques Maritain. He manages to emulate the best of these authors in form and content while avoiding their weaknesses. Kreeft's ability to turn a phrase with his eye for paradox is Chestertonian in style. His knack for making the extremely complex more understandable is admirable. The few in the modern university who have made their way through Aristotle's *Organon* will find much of Aristotle "translated" into current

vernacular and made more accessible to the contemporary student. The author's boldness in logically reflecting on various cultural and social ills is refreshing. Throughout this volume the reader encounters many intellectual treats, including the conviction that "It is time to turn back the clock. Contrary to the cliché, you *can* turn back the clock, and you should, whenever it is keeping bad time" (ix).

In this volume, the reader is exposed to the seasoned scholarly mind behind Kreeft's numerous popular works. Ever-present in this work is a mind that has the ability to instruct, edify, and encourage all in the same paragraph. For those familiar with Kreeft's writings, this volume will be received as the deeper backdrop for much of his earlier works. In fact, many expressions are vintage Kreeft: "No other logic text explicitly sets out to train little Socrateses" (ix).

Another supportive dimension of this volume is that it does indeed develop the skills central to both liberal arts and life. Numerous exercises are found throughout the volume; this will certainly enhance listening, reading, writing and speaking skills. The answers to even-numbered questions and exercises are provided at the end of the volume. A key characteristic of traditional logic from Aristotle through Kant is the ordering and orderly nature of the discipline. Kreeft exemplifies this characteristic in both form and content. The text is exceptionally organized and could easily serve as a college textbook or a self-guided tutorial. Some basic general knowledge of logic would be beneficial before its use but is not necessary in order to gain some real insights from its use.

The volume is divided into 16 main sections with several subsections. Several outstanding sections relate to the practical applications of logic, such as writing essays, speaking, debating, arguing, and reading. An additional perk includes carefully crafted sections, which make the connection between logic and other disciplines including theology, metaphysics, cosmology, ethics, philosophical anthropology, and epistemology.

A wide range of examples of logical fallacies distinguishes this volume from many others similar to it in nature and scope. While many logic texts are limited to several major fallacies, Kreeft provides 49 within seven broader categories. Kreeft even provides tips on using the Socratic method with difficult people, specifically drawing out the theme of Christian charity that flows through the volume. The emphasis on being the servant to the truth and on the "difficult person" is at the heart of Christlike thinking about logic and argumentation. (351).

One danger in working through a text like this is that the reader will never think the same way. Everything from advertisements to sermons is interpreted differently. The argument could be made that the ultimate benefit to be gained from a thorough study of logic is that it is not merely something to study; instead, logic is a way of thinking about everything else.

An all-too-common feature within the majority of formal logic textbooks is that illustrations of valid and faulty arguments are drawn primarily from popular culture. Kreeft provides examples from classics (including the Bible) and great thinkers. Thus a reader is taken away from the ordinary and forced to think with and through unfamiliar material. This cogitative displacement is likely to enhance the thinking skills of many students. In other words, if a reader can follow the argument of Socrates in one of Plato's dialogs or various fallacies in an important work such as

Darwin's *Origin of Species*, then one should have no problem with the logical fallacies of television commercials.

One possible criticism of the volume is the attention Kreeft gives to syllogisms. Again, compared to other logic texts equivalent in scope and length, extended sections treat the syllogistic form. Kreeft considers the syllogism "the heart of logic" (215). He affirms, "Its structure is so simple and perfect that to everyone it is convincing and to some it is even beautiful" (215). A key portion of the volume is also dedicated to what Kreeft identifies as six principals drawn from Aristotle for determining the validity of a syllogism and helpful tools for following an argument. There is ample attention given to Euler's circles, Venn diagrams, enthymemes, and polysyllogisms. In addition, the medieval mnemonic device Barbara Celarent is clearly explained and illustrated.

In the current academic climate, some may find fault with Kreeft's selections of quotes from the classics, and some may quibble over certain exercise questions, but Kreeft's selections are refreshing, edifying, and intellectually challenging. This volume is ideal for a course in logic, philosophy, critical thinking, rhetoric, or a general liberal arts course that focuses on more insightful reading, polished writing, and reflective reasoning. For those looking for the best logic text for the liberal arts, Kreeft's volume is without rival. It would also serve well as a self-directed tutorial in formal logic. The college environment seems to have far too many courses disconnected and unrelated to the traditional core program With an increasingly inhumane humanities and a liberal arts worldview even more enslaved to technique and consumer sensitivities, one can only hope for a course or two right at the foundational level of the university education that draws from the Trivium of the medieval university. If this happens, this text would be an ideal text.

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Philip SHELDRAKE, ed. *The New Westminster Dictionary of Christian Spirituality*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2005. 680 pp. $44.95.

Enough really significant changes have taken place in the field of spirituality since the 1983 publication of *The Westminster Dictionary of Christian Spirituality* (ed. Gordon S. Wakefield) to warrant an entirely new volume of its kind. Like its predecessor, the new dictionary was first published in Great Britain under the title *The New SCM Dictionary of Christian Spirituality* (SCM Press, 2005). Both volumes deserve wide, international distribution, but important additions to the newer work place it in a category all its own.

For example, the 80 pages of introductory essays clarify, describe, and explain both the core values and broad (often fuzzy) margins of the discipline as we have come to know it in the 21st century. (The earlier volume had no such collection.) Included here are introductions to definition, method, and types (Sandra M. Schneiders), contemporary spirituality (Valerie Lesniak), interpretation (Philip Sheldrake), and mysticism (Bernard McGinn). But there are also penetrating comments on the ever-growing awareness of how spirituality relates to multiple life-

venues: culture (James Corkery), world religions (Michael Barnes), history (Philip Sheldrake), liturgy and worship (Susan J. White), psychology and psychotherapy (John Shea), science (Robert John Russell), Scripture (Sandra M. Schneiders), the social sciences (Claire E. Wofteich), and theology (Philip Endean).

Editor Philip Sheldrake's essay, entitled "Spirituality and History," is particularly important in setting the tone for the volume. "Christian spirituality embraces an affirmation of 'history' as the context for spiritual transformation," he writes (38). Citing factors such as radical social changes, the desire to break free from tradition, consumerism, a memoryless culture, and the presumed inevitability of progress, he hints at the devastating effects of both modern and postmodern thought and practice upon spiritual life as we know it. "History," he concludes, is "not incidental to but the context for God's redemptive work" (39). This editorial conviction is clear on virtually every page of the dictionary, whose contents consist largely of articles on the great spiritual movements, peoples, and practices of the church throughout its long and variegated history. Still, there is a highly conspicuous accent on the current climate of spirituality as well.

No single definition of spirituality is pervasive in this work. The academic study of Christian spirituality is quite new (roughly three decades old), and its major proponents are not as yet universally agreed on just what constitutes Christian spirituality. At base all appear agreed that it is the *practice* of Christian faith, particularly as this practice entails a regular and conscious *experience* of God's presence and interaction with practitioners. But there is more. Sandra Schneiders calls attention to important values such as "self-transcendence" and "life-integration," as well as "*holistic* involvement" and a "*commitment to social transformation*," for a valid, contemporary Christian spiritual formation (1-2). Sheldrake adds a believing communal component in his definition: "Christian spirituality embodies a conscious relationship with God, in Jesus Christ, through the indwelling of the Spirit, in the context of a community of believers" (vii).

If no one definition of Christian spirituality is universally accepted, neither is there a single defining method for analyzing it. Schneiders observes three contemporary approaches—historical, theological, and anthropological—which tend to dominate the current context (4-5). Significantly, all three are at work in the dictionary, whose articles include such wide-ranging entries as "Acedia," "Art and Spirituality," "Cyberspace and Spirituality" (a particularly fine entry), "Discernment," "Education and Spirituality," "English Mystical Tradition," "*Imago Dei*," "Inculturation," "Irish Spirituality" (an outstanding contribution), "Homosexuality," "Love," "Postmodernity," "Triple Way," "Vatican II and Spirituality," "Womanist Spirituality," and "Zen and Christianity." Conspicuous attention to important dialogue between Christian spirituality and contemporary hermeneutics (particularly liberation hermeneutics), the social sciences, and world religions is everywhere apparent, but the dictionary retains a strongly Christian and particularly post-Vatican II Roman Catholic flavor (as evidenced by repeated references from many contributors to such formative voices as Sheldrake and Schneiders, as well as Bernard McGinn, all Catholic and each a major contributor to the current shape of Christian spirituality studies). Some articles are written from an historical perspective (many with little formal attention to the discipline of spir-

ituality), others hermeneutical, and still others anthropological, as one might expect. Most are written by scholars of the Western Church (largely Catholic, some Protestant), though there exists a smattering of Orthodox entries as well ("*Philokalia*"). Each entry concludes with relevant bibliography.

Those looking for biographical entries will be disappointed. Where the 1983 dictionary included entries such as "Ignatius Loyola, St." and "Wesley, John," the 2005 dictionary subsumes these men under the movements that followed them. Hence, we now have "Ignatian Spirituality" and "Methodist Spirituality." The strategy works well insofar as it seeks to integrate people with movements and their followers, but important voices for whom no movement has been named (or those whose name does not appear in the movement's name, (John of the Cross and Teresa of Avila) tend to get lost unless users consult the "Index of Names and Titles" toward the end of the volume. John and Teresa are both covered in the article of Carmelite spirituality, as the index indicates, though probably not as extensively as their lives and work are considered in the 1983 edition. Each article is also cross-referenced, thus offering multiple perspectives and additional insight.

Occasional repetition occurs as with any subject-based dictionary. For example, much of Gordon Mursell's article on English spirituality (the Medieval Period) mirrors Joan M. Nuth's comments on English mysticism (in a separate article). On the other hand, a distinct advantage of the movement-based treatment is its attention to grouping important people under a single heading as, for example, Gregory of Nyssa, Dionysius, Meister Eckhart, and John of the Cross are covered thoroughly in the contribution entitled "Apophatic Spirituality" (117). One thus gets a feel for the historical trajectory of their thought, with special attention to the unique contributions of each.

On the whole, this dictionary is quite good. It offers significant improvements over its predecessor, though ideally it would be good to have a copy of each in view of the latter's helpful biographical arrangement. That being said, the chief contributions of *The New Westminster Dictionary of Christian Spirituality* are threefold: (1) its introductory essays set forth the status of the discipline in crisp prose, exposing the reader to the ambitious new agenda of Christian spirituality as it is outlined here; (2) the articles *define* important terms, ideas, and movements and show how each relates to the discipline as it is currently being practiced; and (3) the dictionary provides additional critical resources taking the reader further into the subject matter should he or she wish to go there. While one could hope for a much broader range of Christian traditions represented among the contributors, the articles are generally even in quality. The chief concern is that the dictionary, while Christian, proposes so many Christian spiritualities as to smack of a kind of Christian spiritual pluralism that plays right into the hands of postmodern narcissism. This strikes me as odd in view of the discipline's current focus upon holistic formation. But we must remember that as a dictionary the work is far more descriptive than prescriptive; in other words, it functions quite as it should, merely telling the story of contemporary Christian spirituality *and* spiritualities. And this it does quite well by my estimate.

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Steven PAULSON. *Luther for Armchair Theologians.* Illustrated by Ron Hill. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2004. 224 pp. $12.95.

Steven Paulson and Ron Hill have collaborated to present an informative and entertaining introduction to a pivotal character in church history. Paulson highlights the major aspects of Martin Luther's life and theology and invites readers to graciously understand the life and times of this once obscure German monk, turned reformer, turned leader, who sought to understand and teach faithfully the grace of God.

Paulson begins his exposition of Luther's theology by presenting the critical role of proclamation, or preaching, in the salvation event of humanity. Then he describes the core of what Luther understood to be faithful preaching, which can be summed up in two words: law and gospel. Preaching the law means calling women and men to account for their sins and showing them that in themselves they have absolutely no righteousness; preaching the gospel means proclaiming to those same women and men that Jesus Christ's own righteousness is transferred to them in an act of divine grace. Finally, Paulson demonstrates how Luther understood this transference of righteousness to take place: justification by faith alone.

In chapters 1–8, Paulson presents these three foundational positions and draws them out in greater detail. In chapter 9, he discusses Luther's understanding of the atonement of Christ. In chapter 10, Paulson addresses Luther's belief that the Eucharist is Christ's last will and testament; Paulson describes how it diverges from both the traditional Roman Catholic teaching of transubstantiation and the Zwinglian understanding of the symbolic nature of the Eucharist. In chapter 11, Paulson addresses the freedom of the Christian, explaining Luther's understanding of how a Christian should live in the world as both a sinner who has died to self and a saint vibrantly alive in Christ. Finally, in chapter 12, Paulson concludes the volume with some honorific remarks about Luther's life and work.

An overall strength of the volume is Paulson's ability to help readers grasp the foundational concepts of Luther's theology (chapters 1–3) and then develop those concepts in later chapters. Also, Paulson's use of memorable and witty words and phrases capture key components of Luther's thought; this technique, when combined with Hill's comic renderings, makes Luther's theology more accessible (and perhaps enjoyable for those who consider theology a somewhat tedious field of study).

Regarding the content of the volume, this reviewer would have been interested to learn more about the political rulers of Luther's time and how their sociopolitical relationships may have caused tension between Luther and the Roman authorities. As we know, theology does not exist in a sociocultural vacuum. Therefore, a more in-depth discussion of Luther's sociocultural context would have been appreciated, especially a discussion of how his context interacted with his theological formulations to provide an atmosphere favorable to religious and political dissent that German noblemen could manipulate in order to deteriorate relations with Rome.

A minor editorial weakness occurs when Paulson refers to the incident in which Jesus healed twelve lepers (87) when he in fact healed ten.

Overall, this volume would be an appropriate resource for ministers, students, and interested persons who have little or no familiarity with Martin Luther but wish to get a general introduction without the burden of unnecessary technicalities.

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Sung Wook CHUNG, ed. *Christ the One and Only: A Global Affirmation of the Uniqueness of Jesus Christ.* Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005. 240 pp. $24.99.

Written in response to an age characterized by the advanced consequences of secularization in the developed world, the multiplication of religions in the West, and the exploding globalization of Christianity, this volume has a twofold purpose. It seeks first to reconfirm the absolute uniqueness of Jesus Christ and, second, to demonstrate that Christians are ready to engage in interfaith dialogue as an opportunity for "missional engagement."

Of the volume's 11 chapters, the first six address Jesus' uniqueness from the standpoint of systematic and historical theology.

Elias Dantas discusses the significance of the doctrine of the incarnation for contemporary (postmodern) interfaith dialogue. Characterizing the virgin birth as serving "to convey the reality of the incarnation from one generation to another" (5), he surveys ancient heresies that threatened the delicate conceptual balance within the biblical teaching about the incarnation and the church councils that affirmed that Jesus was fully God, fully man. The first paragraph of the chapter's conclusion eloquently expresses the evangelistic implications of the incarnation and is worth reading for itself. Dantas says, "The incarnation means that unlike all false gods, the true God is not the prisoner of his own spirituality, unable to be God in the human realm" (18).

Clark Pinnock asserts that the answer to what happened in between the two poles of the Apostles' Creed—"born of the virgin Mary" and "suffered under Pontius Pilate"—is necessary in order to understand how Jesus became the most important human who ever lived, "a particular revelation with a universal validity" (23). Pinnock shows convincingly that Jesus did not fit any contemporary religious paradigm and thus confused and threatened his hearers. For example, Jesus called attention to what was "behind" the Law: "Jesus interpreted God's law as if people mattered" (31). Pinnock's tone and phrasing are refreshingly free of standard theological group-speak.

Graham Tomlin addresses problems raised in skeptical responses to Mel Gibson's "Passion of the Christ." The key question, he says, is whether the symbol of cross has been so compromised by historical associations with abuse and power issues that it is counterproductive in a pluralistic culture. "Is it just another oppressive truth claim in a world which has seen too many of these already?" (60). His answer is that biblical and historical explanations of the cross of Christ (his discussion of Luther's theology of the cross is particularly compelling) represent a theology "which subverts the will to power and replaces it with a will to love" (61).

Gabriel Fackre offers a lyrical commentary on the NT's affirmation of the resurrection. In a beautifully developed piece he argues that the resurrection is the validation, announcement, and application of the threefold claim about the uniqueness of Jesus in John 14:6. He writes, "The singularity of Jesus Christ among the religions of the world is the reconciliation achieved, the revelation granted, and the redemption sealed" (77-78).

In his chapter on Jesus as the unique Revealer of God, Mark D. Thompson avers that our picture of God is diminished or even obscured by pluralism, noting that in the OT pagan religions were never looked at as alternative approaches to a

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genuine knowledge of God. His assessment of the NT perspective is similarly straightforward: "The exclusive claims of Jesus cannot be excised from the gospel message without doing damage to its basic structure. They are neither incidental nor tangential" (104). In my opinion, this chapter is the high-water mark of the volume in its clarity, precision, and fidelity to Scripture. Calling for a recovery of the concept of idolatry, he asks, "Why *must* (*dei*) the Son suffer for some if his suffering is not necessary for others to reach the same destination? What must we say about God if he decrees and endures the humiliation of incarnation and the cross and yet this is just one way among many?" (105).

Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen attempts to give the lie to the notion of "rough parity" between Christian and non-Christian views of God by presenting a trinitarian understanding of the theology of religions. He states, "Incarnation is geared toward universality. Particularity is for the purpose of universality, not exclusion. Therefore, Christian faith has always been a missionary faith" (128).

Chapters 7 through 11 fulfill the editor's aim to demonstrate the readiness of Christian intellectuals to engage in interfaith dialogue in the service of missional engagement.

Unfortunately, Ellen T. Charry conducts the engagement at the expense of Christianity's rational and ethical integrity. In a chapter that assesses the history of Christian-Jewish relations, Jews are consistently portrayed as hopeless innocents before the advancing cruelties of Christianized society. "For Christians, Jews were simply another segment of the phalanx of errors to be vanquished in order to proclaim the gospel" (138). According to Charry, if only our Christian forebears had possessed a postmodern sensibility concerning the folly of absolutist thinking, relations with their Jewish neighbors would have been spared their persistent failings, and the lives of countless Jews would have been spared. A sketch of the epistemological differences between Judaism and Christianity is oddly clichéd: "Jews think in the concrete historical terms of Scripture, while Christians think in the spiritual terms of Greek philosophy" (140). Charry is a gifted prose stylist, but often her tone is cynical and dismissive of Christian history, hardly an inducement to missional engagement. In this respect her chapter is strikingly different from all the rest. (It also is distinguished from the others by having no footnotes, only general references.)

Paul S. Chung explores similarities and differences between Shinran Buddhism and Luther's concept of justification. The chapter is meant to be an example of a "fusion of horizons" (a postmodern locution), a hermeneutical process that enables Christians "to witness their uniqueness, to get into dialogue with mutual humility and openness, and finally helps to enrich and renew each tradition before the future of God" (177). However, such vague language leaves the reader unclear as to whether it advances missional engagement.

Ng Kam Weng compares Islamic and Christian teachings and identifies points of tension. His chapter is a fine, workmanlike example of the sort of presentation one might hope to hear at a Muslim-Christian conference.

K.K. Yeo convincingly argues for the compatibility of Confucian ethics and Christian soteriology. His point is not that NT theology needs supplementing, but that the connection is a way of contextualizing Christian witness in China.

The volume's editor, Sung Wook Chung (Asst. Prof. of Theology at King College), pens the concluding chapter. It discusses points of contradiction and contact between Christianity and Buddhism (especially the "Pure Land" tradition), with suggestions for evangelistic (he insists on the word "missional") dialogue. It is an orderly, thoughtful, and practical piece.

I found every chapter of this provocative volume interesting and profoundly relevant to the current debate regarding Christianity and other religions. Not all readers are likely to share the authors' views in every particular, of course; Fackre's "postmortem evangelism," Pinnock's skepticism about the Gospels' birth narratives, Kärkkäinen's discernment of the activity of the Holy Spirit within non-Christian religions spring to mind. But teachers should find the wide range of evangelical perspectives to be a valuable classroom resource and an effective tool to provoke reflection, discussion, and study.

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Wayne GRUDEM. *Evangelical Feminism: A New Path to Liberalism?* Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2006. 272 pp. $7.99.

The author, Research Professor of Bible and Theology at Phoenix Seminary in Scottsdale, Arizona, has published prolifically in support of the "complementarian" position on male and female relationships and ministries. This volume builds upon his article "Is Evangelical Feminism the New Path to Liberalism? Some Disturbing Warning Signs," *Journal for Biblical Manhood and Womanhood* 9.1 (Spring 2004) 35-84.

Grudem's thesis (Introduction) is that those who embrace "evangelical feminism" (egalitarianism) are undermining biblical authority and following a path that leads to liberalism. He describes theological liberals as "those who reject the idea that the entire Bible is the written Word of God and is truthful in all it affirms" (23). He intends to show that evangelical feminists have adopted approaches to Scripture that have been used in liberal Protestant denominations to move gradually down a slope from ordination of women to using "mother" language for God, to approval of homosexuality which, he writes, "is the final step along the path to liberalism" (249).

Part II briefly describes 15 ways in which evangelical feminists undermine Scripture or deny its authority. Here are the titles: (1) Saying That Genesis Is Wrong; (2) Saying That Paul Was Wrong; (3) Saying That Some Verses Found in Every Manuscript Are Not Part of the Bible; (4) "Later Developments" Trump Scripture; (5) "Redemptive Movement" Trumps Scripture; (6) Is It Just a Matter of Choosing Our Favorite Verses? (7) Can We Just Ignore the "Disputed" Passages? (8) Does a Pastor's Authority Trump Scripture? (9) Teaching in the Parachurch; (10) Tradition Trumps Scripture; (11) Experience Trumps Scripture; (12) "Calling" Trumps Scripture; (13) "Prophecies" Trump Scripture; (14) Circumstances Trump Scripture; and (15) Calling a Historical Passage a Joke. Grudem's general approach is to quote or cite one or more evangelical authors who reach differ-

ent conclusions about particular texts than he does, thus showing that these authors deny the "truthfulness" or "authority" of these respective texts.

Part III deals with "evangelical feminist views based on untruthful or unsubstantiated claims" (153). Here Grudem disputes the claim that some of the "problem texts" relative to women and men are limited in their application, based on situational or contextual realities. One example is the effort to account for the women's silence texts of 1 Cor 14:34-35 and 1 Tim 2:11-15 on the basis that the women in view were being disruptive to worship, were too uneducated to offer authoritative teaching, or were teaching false doctrine. He surveys recent research on the understanding of *kephale* ("head") as meaning "source," instead of "authority," affirming that there are no examples in Greek literature where *kephale* means "source without authority." He devotes seven pages to the meaning of the rare verb *authenteo* in 1 Tim 2:12, countering the suggestion that it refers only to violent or abusive uses of authority.

Part IV raises the question "Where is evangelical feminism taking us?" His answer is that it leads ineluctably to blurring of male and female distinctions, the use of female language for God, and finally approval of homosexuality.

Grudem speaks directly to many "evangelical feminists" he describes as personal friends (Stan Gundry, Jack Hayford, Walter Kaiser, Roger Nicole, and Grant Osborne). He warns them that, although they have not embraced liberalism, if their students follow the questionable interpretations these friends have adopted, they will go even farther than their teachers and will abandon the truth of Scripture.

Grudem issues some important correctives to ill-supported answers to difficult questions. His critique of the widespread embrace of female terms to refer to God is, I believe, generally on target. With the best will in the world, we cannot simply turn similes about God's actions like crying out "like a woman in birth pangs" (Isa 42:14) into permission to pray to God as "our Mother in heaven." After all, we do not call the apostle Paul a woman because he wrote to the Galatians that he was "in the anguish of childbirth" (Gal 4:19) or to the Thessalonians that he was "like a nursing mother" (1 Thess 2:7) among them.

In many cases, however, Grudem simply bypasses or oversimplifies the real difficulties we have in understanding texts that have confounded the best minds for centuries. Quite often it is not, in fact, either the truthfulness or the authority of Scripture that is in question but simply different ways of reading or understanding the texts under discussion. For example, Grudem insists that anyone who reads Genesis 1–3 as other than a straight, literal, historical account is denying the truthfulness of Scripture. And one must insist that to attempt to understand why Paul forbade some women to speak in the assembly in 1 Cor 14:34-35, although he had no problem with Corinthian women praying or prophesying in the assembly (1 Cor 11:5) and counted many women as "co-workers" is not an exercise in liberalism. Similarly, the implication that Eve's disobedience (1 Tim 2:12-13) forever disqualifies all women, no matter how competent, faithful, and effective, from ever preaching or teaching men, is by no means obvious. Grudem's approach is simply to disqualify all interpretive strategies but the ones he embraces as undermining the authority of the Bible. Similarly, the enormously complex history of the transmission of Scripture, including its translation into the languages of the world, is vastly

oversimplified when one can, without explanation, refer to the content of the Bible as "words that God said."

In short, Grudem is probably "preaching to the choir." Readers who do not question such broad characterizations as "Bible-believing scholars," "theological liberals," "evangelical feminists," and the like will probably find the volume congenial. Readers used to a more nuanced, contextually sensitive, and exegetically driven approach to Scripture will find much lacking here. Although the issues dealt with are important to college and seminary libraries, Grudem's larger works will probably be better resources for exploring these concerns than is the present volume.

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David F. WELLS. *Above All Earthly Powers: Christ in a Postmodern World.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005. 353 pp. $25.00.

This volume is fourth in a series in which Wells describes the intersection of postmodern American culture and American Evangelicalism.

For Wells, the aftermath of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, reveal a critical weakness in (post)modern American culture, namely its inability to describe and understand the reality of evil (to say nothing of actually dealing with it.) September 11th brings to the fore three issues with which Christians today must grapple. First is the malaise that has beset American culture since the attacks. Beneath the surface, in terms of real and lasting change, America today is little different from what it was before September 11th, in and out of the church. Second is the reality of our increasingly diverse world. September 11th has made us aware of the various types of Islam, not only in the Middle East but also in the American Midwest. Our religious landscape grows more complex by the minute. Third is the impotence of American Christianity. The American church is good at marketing and packaging, but after September 11th she has shown herself not to possess the spiritual gravitas necessary to deal with the horrifying reality of evil. "Evangelicalism . . . is simply not very serious any more" (4).

The volume is organized in two major sections, plus an introduction and a conclusion. In the first major section (comprised of chapters 1 through 3), Wells deals with the first two of the above issues. How has today's Christianity reached this point? How is the postmodern world changing, and how do these changes affect believers in the 21st century?

Wells's theological work proceeds from the conviction that theology needs to address both internal questions (what the church has said and should say about theological issues) and external questions (how theology confronts and engages the culture around the church.) His method for cultural criticism works on two levels, describing both social processes and the intellectual processes and ideas that lay beneath the social processes. His argument in this section centers on three fundamental Enlightenment dogmas: the disappearance of God, the disappearance of human nature (by modern standards, neither the existence nor the nature of God,

nor any universal view of human nature should be appealed to in moral discussion), and the Enlightenment faith in human omnicompetence.

In regard to the second Enlightenment dogma (the disappearance of human nature), Wells notes that several paradigm shifts have taken place. Central is the shift from describing morality in terms of virtues (which are universal and eternally valid) to values (which are personal and contingent.) Accompanying this shift is a shift in describing the goal of moral development. Whereas once this goal was described in terms of character (which—again—is universal and eternal), now it is described in terms of personality (which is thoroughly utilitarian and—again—personal and contingent.)

Through the remainder of the volume (chapters 4 through 6), Wells addresses the impotence of American Christianity. How can we more effectively deal with our postmodern world? He analyzes the current spiritual confrontation in terms of its parallels with another confrontation from church history: the second-century confrontation with various brands of Gnosticism. Wells's prescription for a more serious Christianity, one that is able to confront our postmodern world with the cross of Christ, begins with the church fathers' approach in their confrontation with Valentinus and Marcion.

This volume is a piercing critique of postmodernism and Evangelicalisms' inadequate and impotent responses to postmodernism. It is an excellent volume, well-written and soundly reasoned. Wells's analysis of postmodern icons, from Douglas Coupland to *Seinfeld*, is piercing and on point. He turns phrases beautifully, and some of his insights are stunning. For example, regarding the popular conception of spirituality as a journey: postmodern spirituality is indeed a journey, but the travelers on that journey are not pilgrims, they are tourists with no desire to commit. They aren't looking to buy, "they are just passing through" (133). His critique of the megachurch movement is sharp, as is his critique of the Emerging Church; particularly worth noting is his interaction with Brian McLaren. A quirk of the volume, however, is that Wells's interaction with McLaren (and Neil Postman, and John Franke) is relegated to the footnotes (and ignored in the index!).

This volume should be required reading for ministers, professors, teachers, and other thinking Christians who work the frontlines of our clashing cultures.

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Andreas KÖSTENBERGER, ed. *Whatever Happened to Truth?* Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2005. 176 pp. $15.99.

Postmodernism is essentially a loss of confidence in the objectivity and knowability of truth. As these four essays, first presented as plenary addresses at the 56th Annual Meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society, delineate, a postmodern view of truth honors neither the written nor incarnate Word of God. Andreas Köstenberger provides a detailed introduction and focusing epilogue, and shows in the first essay that John's account of Pilate's arrogant and cynical question is historically accurate; it coheres well with the Johannine portrayal of Jesus as judge,

king, and witness to the truth; it reveals Pilate as seeking to avoid the truth in order to preserve his position; and it presents truth as ultimately Christocentric, and even "inextricably linked to the cross" (47).

In "Truth and Contemporary Culture," R. Albert Mohler observes that Enlightenment rationalism and naturalistic materialism invited the postmodern view of truth as merely socially constructed. Postmodernism challenges the truth as objective, the gospel as metanarrative, and the text as the locus of meaning. Though Mohler does not mention Kant's epistemic "turn to the subject" as the fountainhead, he notes that in today's culture of therapy, "the critical epistemological question is shifted from 'What is true?' to 'What makes me feel good?'" (61)—even in our theologies of self-esteem. In such a culture, authority is eroded and morality is discarded. However, postmodern antifoundationalism and antirealism are untenable, and it is God's revelation that "brings us out of hermeneutical and epistemological nihilism" and must be "our epistemological principle, the ground of all our claims to know what is really real and truly true" (70).

In "Truth, Contemporary Philosophy, and the Postmodern Turn," J.P. Moreland sharply rebukes postmodernism on several counts. Postmodernism criticizes the concept of truth as correspondence with reality as arising from "Cartesian anxiety," when (in reality) the concept is metaphysically grounded (81). Postmodernism fails to distinguish between psychological objectivity (the complete absence of bias) and rational objectivity (accurate epistemic access to the thing itself), and between "an especially extreme form of Cartesian foundationalism" (84) and the more modest and resilient forms which now constitute the dominant philosophical position. Postmodernism also fails to distinguish between propositions and sentences as truth-bearers, so as to hold that the limitations of language restrict or deny human access to truth, and between perception and intentionality, so as to hold that the perceiving subject's access to the external world is blocked and distorted by his or her "community and its linguistic categories and practices . . . One cannot get outside one's language to see if one's talk about the world is the way the world is" (90). Moreland points out that such confusions and assertions are self-refuting, and that epistemic confidence is vital to our responsibility "not only to impart and defend truth, but to impart and defend knowledge of truth and, even more, to impart and defend knowledge of truth as knowledge of truth" (92). Thus postmodernism is "a form of intellectual pacifism that, at the end of the day, recommends backgammon while the barbarians are at the gate. . . . [P]ostmodernism is . . . the ideology that undermines its own claims to allegiance. And it is an immoral, coward's way out that is not worthy of a movement born out of the martyrs' blood" (92).

In the thought-provoking essay, "Lost in Interpretation? Truth, Scripture, and Hermeneutics" (revised and extended from the original address), Kevin J. Vanhoozer first surveys the postmodern impact on biblical interpretation ("Never mind the balm, is there no bedrock in Gilead?" 97). He defends the evangelical views of truth as correspondence and inerrancy as grounded in the text (rather than in modern views of truth and language) against criticisms by Raschke and other emergent evangelicals, yet finds the propositionalist approach, which reduces hermeneutics to inerrancy, too narrow. He then presents the biblical text as God's

theodrama: "the words and deeds of God on the stage of world history that climax in Jesus Christ" (109) and "what we should say and do in response" (110).

Scripture is characterized by the unity of divine action and by the plurality of its testimony, so that its theodramatic correspondence is complemented by its cartographic correspondence: the Bible is both a script and an atlas, "a collection of book-maps that variously render the way, the truth, and the life" (113). Vanhoozer notes that "[m]y approach to theology—call it 'postconservative'—does not deny the importance of cognitive content, but it does resist privileging a single form—the propositional statement—for expressing it" (119). Additionally, a postconservative theology "affirms a plurality of normative points of view in Scripture, each of which is authoritative because each discloses a particular aspect of the truth" (162). Thus the literal sense of Scripture is the literary, theodramatic sense, and right interpretation exercises not only the analytical power of reason but the synthetic power of imagination: "One can state that 'God is good' in a proposition, but it takes a narrative to 'taste and see that the Lord is good'" (122), and "the correspondence that ultimately counts in biblical interpretation is not simply that of sentences but of oneself" (123). The ultimate purpose of Scripture, then, is "to draw us into the drama of redemption, into the life and action of the triune God, so that we can be faithful yet creative actors who glorify God in all that we say and do" (128).

Together these essays bring into clear focus the contrast between biblical and postmodern epistemologies; they also point toward fields in need of further plowing. Mohler's echo of Carl Henry, in his affirmation that "[r]evelation—the inbreaking of the transcendent, sovereign God into our finite and fallen world—must be our epistemological principle, the ground of all our claims to know what is really real and truly true," (70) raises several questions concerning the relation of human knowledge to general as well as special revelation. For example, does not the polemic wall of knowledge as grounded in revelatory activity risk becoming an imprisoning wall that isolates a belief structure from external accountability?

Finally, the various forms of foundationalism, upon which many evangelicals rely for their defense of the objectivity and knowability of truth, will fall short as long as the foundation is understood to be materially constituted. The foundation of our God-given ability to know is formal, not material, consisting of basic rational principles (not basic beliefs) that obtain in the mind as well as throughout creation (God the *Logos* is the Architect of both the mind and the world), and by which the mind is able to acquire objective knowledge of both creation and, through the things that are made, the Creator. Kant was correct that knowledge is the product of reason and experience together, yet his denial of God's work of creation as the ground of epistemic objectivity enabled the pernicious skepticism of his "Copernican revolution"/"turn to the subject" to rise to dominance throughout the later modern era and crest in the postmodern wave now washing over western thought and culture.

Whatever happened to truth? As these essays note, it is not that truth has gone out of existence or failed us. Of course not; all truth is grounded in the One who remains faithful, who cannot deny Himself. Western teachers of the Word allowed the concept of the *Logos*—as the One apart from whom nothing came into being that has come into being—to fall into obscurity. The Enlightenment's subsequent

displacement of the divine *Logos* by human *logos* as the ground of truth and knowledge precipitated the collapse of the epistemological pillar of western thought, and postmodernism is essentially a culture standing disoriented among the crumbled ruins. The epistemological pillar, together with its metaphysical and ethical counterparts, can be restored only through a deeper and clearer understanding and proclamation of the *Logos*, not only as our incarnate Lord and risen Savior, but as the One in whom all things stand together.

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David E. FITCH. *The Great Giveaway: Reclaiming the Mission of the Church.* Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005. 263 pp. Paper, $14.99.

This volume's subtitle, "Reclaiming the Mission of the Church," suggests a work in missiology, and in the broadest sense this is accurate, for this study does relate to the mission of the church within North America. However, what Fitch primarily offers is a study in ecclesiology, in which he seeks to reclaim a more biblical understanding and practice of the church in the North American context. As such, this volume represents another in a growing number of studies of the church in North America, as middle-class Christianity is now shifting attention from "worship wars" to conflicting understandings of the role and nature of the Church in society. At issue is the extent to which (if at all) the North American church should be formed and informed by insights and methods borrowed from broader culture. Specifically, Fitch identifies four "modern maladies" that have infected the North American church: big business, parachurch organizations, psychotherapy, and consumer capitalism. According to Fitch, these cultural forces form the church's self-understanding and ministry in unhealthy, even lethal, ways.

The thesis of the volume is that "evangelicalism has 'given away' being the church in North America" (13). This giveaway has been accomplished through the surrender of large portions of the church's mandate to institutions exterior to the church, and through the compromising of the church's mission to the extent that it is no longer recognizable.

This thesis is developed in eight chapters, each identifying a basic characteristic of the church that Fitch argues is being compromised in the current North American context. These threatened aspects of the church's life and identity include success, evangelism, leadership, worship, preaching, justice, spiritual formation, and moral education. A conclusion that argues for a return to the most basic practices of the church seeks to summarize and apply the discussion.

A particular strength of this volume is that the author is both a practicing pastor (Life on the Vine Christian Community, Long Grove, IL) and a formally trained theologian (Ph.D., Northwestern). Fitch is then to be commended for his solid biblical and theological scholarship that is animated from his vast congregational experience. Each aspect of the evangelical church of which he understands it to be compromised is discussed within its current cultural context, then compared and contrasted with biblical standards. This is a typical evangelical approach to cul-

tural critique, and Fitch is largely effective in applying this method to assess the North American church. The chapters on leadership, preaching, and justice are especially fresh and much needed.

Even so, two omissions from the volume are glaring. First, the North American church that is discussed is clearly the white, middle-class, suburban reality that many within it assume to be synonymous with North American evangelicalism. Indeed, both the North American church that is described and the cultural characteristics that are decried are representative of "middle America." This doesn't as much negate the volume's conclusions as it does insulate them. One wonders if the problems that are identified are more products of affluence than of broader North American culture. It would have been helpful and refreshing if the author had at least acknowledged that his is a study of one aspect of the North American church, instead of implying that the affluent church *is* the totality of the church!

A second omission is much more basic to the study. Fitch desires that evangelicalism in North America be re-formed in order to address the challenges of postmodernity. However, it can be argued that evangelicalism itself is a product of modernity, and that with the passing of modernity, the category of "evangelical" is no longer meaningful nor relevant. A full discussion of this issue would have been beyond the parameters of this volume, yet it also would have been helpful for the author to acknowledge his awareness of the historical and theological bonds between evangelicalism and modernity, and how this link might necessitate the passing of evangelicalism along with modernity in the wake of postmodernity.

In spite of these shortcomings, this is a useful volume for undergraduate and introductory graduate courses in the theology of the church and the study of church in affluent North American society.

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Phillip Charles LUCAS and Thomas ROBBINS, eds. *New Religious Movements in the 21st Century.* New York, Routledge, 2004. 376 pp. $34.95.

This volume is unlike previous efforts examining new religions. It is sweeping in its geopolitical scope, addressing important issues facing new religious expressions in their political, legal and social contexts. The editors, both specialists in the area, have compiled 21 chapters that are the contributions of a host of scholars who, like themselves, have a keen interest in new religious movements. Most chapters are heavily influenced by sociological and political perspectives. There is little attempt to offer normative evaluations of the groups discussed. Doctrine and structure are not specifically addressed.

The volume's content is organized into regional areas covering Western Europe, Asia, Africa, Australia, Russia and Eastern Europe, and North and South America. A concluding section considers major themes of globalization and terrorist violence as well as the future of new and minority religions. The volume is introduced by Tim Robbins, who provides an overview of major themes and issues that follow.

Chapters are all high-quality, scholarly, and well-written. If there is a particular

limitation to the work, it is the brevity of information offered on several complex subjects. This is compensated for by excellent and extensive bibliographical data.

Drawing on the global arena, the volume wrestles with more than the typical cults that most North American Christians would be aware of. While groups like the Jehovah's Witnesses are considered, the volume, as the title suggests, is chiefly concerned with new religious movements that might be seen as deviant, radical, and sometimes dangerous. Several authors provide useful analyses of anticult movements, their history, limitations, and legal struggles. The difficulties anticult crusaders have had in gaining legal and professional acceptance of concepts like "mind manipulation" and "brainwashing" are discussed in several articles.

At the same time, this volume notes the dilemmas faced by "non-established" religions such as unregistered churches in China. Christian minorities in Muslim lands as well as trends in some Orthodox areas (Russia for example) to restrict the legal status of nontraditional churches are also addressed Similar situations in the West (France, Germany, and Belgium), where people sometimes fear for public safety and the loss of individual freedom are also explored. Consequently, contributors frequently attempt to analyze issues of religious freedom. They clearly realize that some new religions are dangerous, having proven vehicles of social and political instability. Thus appreciation is expressed for government action against groups like Al Qaida. However, the issue of balancing the right to free expression and the need for public order is never far from the editors' minds.

The entire discussion of new religions is set within the context of globalization, where rapid communication has heightened the ability of cults to spread their message while also allowing anticult activities to go worldwide as well. This situation promises the birth of even more new religions while older groups fight for greater recognition and rights, advancing agendas that governments and societies in general may not always appreciate.

This volume could well be required reading for college or seminary courses on world religions, sociology of religion, or religion in today's world. Ministers who want a "rest of the news" perspective to many aspects of today's rapidly changing world ought to have a copy.

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Amanda Millay HUGHES, ed. *Five Voices, Five Faiths: An Interfaith Primer*. Cambridge: Cowley, 2005. 125 pp. $14.95.

As the title suggests, this volume is a collection of five essays, each introducing one of the world's major religions and authored by a practicing adherent of that religion. In order of presentation (as well as the historical order of the founding of these religions, according to the editor), we encounter a Hindu, a Jew, a Zen Buddhist, a Christian, and a Muslim—Americans all—each explaining the basic tenets of their respective faiths.

The five essays vary in their quality and depth of insight into the respective religions. Given the fact that each author was allotted only 20 pages to introduce a

major world religion, one must expect the essays to be selective and limited with regard to their subject matter. The brevity, combined with each author's pluralistic outlook—a sort of rush to nonjudgment as it were—lends itself to a misleading presentation of the views.

Professor Anantanand Rambachan's essay on Hinduism blurs important distinctions among religious traditions that are often given this designation. Indeed, the reader comes away with the impression that Hindus are committed to a sort of *panentheism*, as he cites a hymn in the Rg Veda that "states that while God pervades the universe by a fourth of God's being, three-fourths remain beyond it" (3). He fails to tell his readers that he himself is an adherent of Advaita Vedanta, Shankara's 9th-century philosophy of absolute nondualism. On Advaita, Brahman is the only existing being, so that the observable world of *samsara* around us is actually an illusion due to *avidya* or ignorance. Further, Brahman is literally "propertyless" according to Advaita Vedanta, so that no properties—from personhood to power to goodness—apply to "him." The Advaitan concept of Brahman is a far cry from any theistic conception of God, and readers may be misled by the theistic overtones of Professor Rambachan's use of "God" to refer to Brahman. Though the Hindu doctrine of *ishtadeva* and the corresponding doctrine of diverse *margas* or "approved ways" "has enabled Hindus to think of the world's religions in complementary and not exclusive ways" (7), the absolute monism of Rambachan's own view entails that, while theistic belief may be instrumental as a stepping-stone to the truth of Brahman, it is little more than a useful fiction.

Yaakov Ariel's essay on Judaism emphasizes Jewish culture and practice and decidedly de-emphasizes doctrine. We learn something of Hanukkah and Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur and Purim, and of the cultural shift from the priestly class to a lay priesthood, from temple to synagogue, but precious little about what Jews believe about the Creator—or the Messiah.

Patricia Phelan tells us something of the Buddha's early life and original teachings, including the Four Noble Truths and the Noble Eightfold Path. The latter, with its practical emphasis, gets the most attention, and she steers clear of the metaphysical implications of, say, the Buddhist doctrines of "dependent origination" and its corollaries of *anitya* (impermanence) and *anatman* (no-self). After nodding in the direction of the other Buddhist traditions of Theravada and Mahayana, she settles into a discussion of her own Zen practice.

Editor Amanda Millay Hughes, an Episcopalian, emphasizes the confessional nature of Christianity, and opens her essay with a statement and brief exposition of the Nicene Creed. She nicely articulates an orthodox account of such doctrines as the Trinity and incarnation, and, importantly given this interfaith context, the ontological transcendence of God ("God is fundamentally *other than* any created thing or being," 75). She affirms the universality of sin and the need for forgiveness, but says little to nothing about the atonement itself. She does, however, offer the exclusivist claim that "Christians believe that all human life needs the redemptive action of God in Christ Jesus" (79). This does not sit well with the pluralist motivation behind this project, as one of her collaborators points out in the Q&A section. Rambachan asks, "How do you relate [this claim] with the reality of different religions?" (88). Hughes' reply is evasive. She notes that exclusivist thinking

engenders "dark judgments about other religions" and confesses, "it is hard to give a definitive answer to your question" (88). The *non*definitive answer that follows urges the need for love and the universal "desire to live in harmony," and concludes with an appeal to "mystery." I'll return to her dilemma momentarily.

Amy Nelson, a self-described "white, educated, American-born" convert to Islam, explains the basic tenets of her faith. Allah has no cohorts, and "there is no god but Allah" is the cornerstone of Muslim faith. She explains the exalted view that Muslims take of Mohammed and of the Q'uran. And we learn something of the five pillars of Islam: monotheistic belief itself, prayer, fasting, alms, pilgrimage. Many post-911 readers may hope to learn whether Islam is, after all, a peaceful religion. But for a couple of oblique references to "popular western conceptions" (111) of Islam, little to nothing is said in either the essay or the Q&A section to dispel the alleged misconceptions.

This volume is motivated by the desire to "live amicably" with those whose beliefs are different from one's own, to "live with and value fundamental differences" (xiv), and to find "common ground" for interfaith dialogue (xiii). These are noble aspirations, all, I suppose. But the concerns go beyond a desire for harmonious coexistence. We are told that mere "tolerant forbearance" implies (arrogantly, I take it) that one is in a "position of privilege" that is not enjoyed by the other. Indeed, we are to avoid "unproductive dogmatic debate" (xv) and are urged to "do more than tolerate difference—we can honor it as part of the richness of human experience" (xiv). "Celebrate diversity," as they say. Hughes quotes approvingly from an essay on religious pluralism by a Christian pastor who bubbles that "the Christian calling allows him to sing his song to Jesus 'with abandon . . . without speaking negatively about others'" (xvi). Though she once subscribed to the mandate to make disciples of all people (xvii), now, "as a middle-aged woman," she "reflects more deeply" on Jesus' "new commandment" to love one another. Her advice to the adherents of the different traditions these days is "hold onto the truths you have received" (xviii). One might draw the conclusion that somehow the Great Commission and this "new commandment" are mutually at odds. One might also be a child of the times.

Hughes' dilemma in attempting to answer Professor Rambachan's question is symptomatic of the pluralistic perspective that motivates projects such as the current volume. She wishes to affirm her own Christian faith while commending other competing traditions as "sacred truths." She wishes to "sing her song to Jesus without speaking negatively of others." Her trouble arises from a simple point of logic. To believe something *just is* is to believe that it is *true*. And to believe that it is true entails believing that its denial is false. The Islamic version of monotheism requires that the Christian doctrine of the incarnation is not only false but blasphemous. The Advaita Vedantan doctrine of *Nirguna* Brahman entails the falseness of all varieties of monotheism. There just is no sense in which all of these competing doctrines may be said to be "true," at least not in a way that does full justice to the sense in which *actual believers* (as opposed to Religious Studies scholars) take their doctrines to be true. To believe *anything* is to believe that lots of other things—even doctrines that are cherished by fine people—are false. If tolerance means never

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thinking that those cherished beliefs of others are false, then, necessarily, no one is ever tolerant.

I do not recommend this volume as a text for the college classroom, especially at a Christian college. Win Corduan's *Neighboring Faiths* (InterVarsity, 1998) is much more thorough in its exploration of the various traditions, is evenhanded despite being written by a Christian philosopher, and lacks the confused pluralistic outlook of the present volume. Harold Netland's *Encountering Religious Pluralism* (InterVarsity, 2001), written by a former student of Professor John Hick, is a healthy antidote to the perspective of Hughes' work, and is a fine text for the classroom. Scholars who wish to understand the perspective of religious pluralism itself should bypass this volume and go directly to Professor Hick's *An Interpretation of Religion* (Yale, 2005).

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Chad Owen BRAND and R. Stanton NORMAN, eds. *Perspectives on Church Government: Five Views of Church Polity.* Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2004. 368 pp. $19.99.

In a rather lengthy introduction, editors Brand and Norman first cover the importance of polity and then review the major historical turning points in polity from Church History. Stan Norman, Associate Professor of Theology at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, recounts how he categorizes church tenets into three areas in his classes. Those areas are dogma, doctrine, and belief. He states that his Southern Baptist students place church polity into the categories of doctrine or belief but never dogma. Norman does not give the reader a hint as to where he personally stands. The editors do a fine job of reviewing the importance of polity to the church stating that polity touches church life in areas such as offices, membership, discipline, and ministry.

The main body of the volume consists of five chapters written by separate authors, offering a diverse set of perspectives.

Each author presents a thorough treatment of his assigned subject. At the end of each chapter, each of the other four authors write a brief critique. This is a very interesting and beneficial feature of the volume. Regrettably, the editors let the chapters and critiques stand as they are without summarizing them or treating the reader to their own thoughts. The volume abruptly ends with the fifth chapter.

All five authors affirm that the NT teaches that the early church was congregationally governed. The authors appear to admit that the NT precedent is that churches in that time were led by a plurality of elders. Several authors believe that congregational government is essential. For various stated reasons, only one author (James R. White) thinks the plurality of elders model is essential. One author states that the precedent regarding church polity in the NT is not important. He asserts that the NT was not intended for such specific purposes. Daniel L. Akin believes in the congregational model but then asserts that there is "flexibility" on leadership. Practically, he would say, the single-elder-led church model works; therefore, it is

not wrong to use it. Akin also mentioned, speaking of the early church, that he found it hard to believe that multiple house churches in the same city would each have a multiplicity of elders.

This work is very useful to the person who seeks to better understand the various leadership and governance models in the church today. While the reader may not fully agree with all of the presented conclusions, Brand and Norman have compiled a volume that is most useful to the upper level undergraduate or the seminarian.

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Charles JONES. *The View from Mars Hill: Christianity in the Landscape of World Religions.* Cambridge: Cowley, 2005. 207 pp. $14.95.

In this volume, Jones embarks on an historical journey to discover how Christians have dealt with religious diversity. The challenge for professing Christians has always been how to live in the midst of and in relationship to other religions. What we discover is that the world of the NT is not our world. As the landscape of diversity changed, the posture of the church changed as well.

Because of the realities of the postmodern world Jones provides specific definitions that clearly mark the boundaries of the discussion. For his purposes, "religion" includes any frame of mind that derives both meaning and motivation for action from outside the human realm. "Religious diversity," then, is the various "ways in which human beings look to reality to find truth, values, and motives" (7) These definitions are helpful since concepts and practices of religion have proliferated beyond more traditional definitions.

Jones notes that in ancient times religious diversity was not the same as it is today. Religion was understood, in some cultures, to be the defining reality of complete civilizations, such as Judaism and Islam. In those ancient worlds, diversity was not a topic to be discussed in order to prompt dialogue. Religiously monolithic societies would not tolerate such diverse beliefs and practices. One of three responses was appropriate: elimination, containment, or expulsion. Such responses are not compatible in today's postmodern world.

The challenges before Christian communities include two opposing tendencies: openness and integrity. How open can one be and still maintain the integrity of one's faith? The author walks through broad historical categories, looking at the impact of religious diversity: on early times, the age of exploration and the European enlightenment, and our modern period. The ancient world was more cohesive, while our world is one where immigration has brought world religions to our street corners.

After the historical journey, the author considers theological and practical challenges. He discusses four distinct responses to religious diversity: exclusivism, inclusivism, pluralism, and parallelism. Very briefly, exclusivism is the view of Christianity over and against other religions, denying any salvific efficacy of other religions. Inclusivism acknowledges the possibility of salvation without converting

to Christianity, but often in spite of rather than because of the other religion. Pluralism, because it acknowledges the limitations of religious traditions, attributes validity to all walks of faith. Parallelism emphasizes that each religion must be taken seriously within its own context. Parallelism suggests that one cannot say that other religions are wrong (exclusivism), or that one contains more truth while others contain some truth (inclusivism), or that all religions are partially right (pluralism). One of the strengths of the volume is the author's careful critique of each response to diversity. His analysis would be a useful resource to scholars and prompt healthy discussion in a university setting.

The genesis of this conversation is a response to rigid, uncaring missionaries in the past, many in the 19th century. While Christian missionaries reflect the whole spectrum of responses to religious diversity, the volume would be strengthened if a contemporary picture of missions practices would have been included, acknowledging that missions philosophy has moved beyond 19th-century practices. Missions seeks to learn and be in dialogue while maintaining the integrity of faith in Christ. This tension is seen as necessary rather than to be avoided. Referencing more thoughtful and incarnational approaches in missions today would have enhanced and added to the validity of the conversation.

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Mary E. HESS. *Engaging Technology in Theological Education: All That We Can't Leave Behind.* Lanham, MD: Rowan & Littlefield, 2005. 157 pp. $22.95.

Traditional theological education must engage with and respond to the mass media culture from which our students come, and in which they and we must minister today and tomorrow. The influx of technology requires faculty and students to reflect theologically, pedagogically, and practically about its implications, applications, and challenges. Mary Hess, in her series of essays, starts from the above premise and provides a set of frameworks to collaboratively explore the use of technology in theological education.

Hess observes up front that "most religious education now takes place in contexts other than those controlled or even designed by religious institutions" (1). Hess wonders, for instance, how many people (even church members) get more theology from TV and movies, rather than from church teaching. In the prevailing culture, media interaction and control are often highly valued over passive reception. Hess proposes that seminary faculty find ways to adjust their teaching from transmissive models (primarily delivering content and information) to transformative (fostering engagement and practice with the material and the surrounding world).

The chapters in this volume explore issues related to technology and teaching and include discussions about creatively using technology (1) to build communities of learning that extend beyond the physical and temporal limits of classrooms; (2) to adjust to the growing population of nontraditional students coming to theolog-

ical education; (3) to allow continued presence in ministry while pursuing theological education (rather than classroom-based disconnection), and (4) to adapt our presentations and discussions to those who are more literate in media than in history and philosophy.

Hess is by no means a conservative theological scholar. She approaches her subject from a combination of deconstructionism, feminism, and critical media studies. For some, these orientations will prevent her from even obtaining a hearing.

She writes with the technical language of her fields of study. This can sometimes challenge a reader unfamiliar with the specialized work upon which she has based her discussion. While this initially presents some level of difficulty, it helps orient the reader to new perspectives and languages related to this field of study. There is a benefit in having to reflect multiple times upon the issues she presents.

On the positive side, Hess argues persuasively that electronic technologies are not inimical to theological education. If used wisely and with appropriate application, they can enhance our engagement with and understanding of a media-rich world.

Her alternative perspectives and years of experience provide a variety of vantage points for examining and exploring dangers and possibilities in our media-rich society. We cannot compete with Hollywood or Madison Avenue. We owe it to our students and church members, though, to understand what they are selling (materially as well as philosophically) and their implications for life and faith in the 21st century.

Teachers who struggle with the use of technology in education will find it profitable to wrestle with Hess's perspectives on the issue. In the process they will refine their views of teaching and learning and the role of technology in the academic exchange. Ministers serve members and communities that are increasingly media literate and demanding. Hess provides insights into how the church and its leaders can relate to people who are more literate in media than in traditional texts. Like Paul in Athens, they can then start where people are and bring them to Christ in culturally appropriate ways. Finally, scholars who want to communicate their field of study in terms this generation grasps will find Hess's work worth pondering. She acknowledges the power of print-based academics. At the same time, her volume is a call to take what has been learned in print and find ways to engage students with that knowledge through the new media at our disposal today.

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Richard R. LOSCH. *The Uttermost Part of the Earth: A Guide to Places in the Bible*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005. 260 pp. $16.00.

Richard Losch, an Episcopalian priest retired from St. James' Church in Livingston, Alabama, writes to introduce students of the Bible to specific places of the biblical world. From the start, Losch downplays his own purpose; he intends the work "to be nothing more profound than a collection of information for the curious" (ix).

To accomplish this modest task, Losch presents a series of 77 discrete essays. The first serves an introductory function (for approximately half the volume's contents): he offers a brief overview of the history of Israel/Palestine/Jordan from the earliest time to the present. This is followed by alphabetically-arranged presentations that offer "the stories" of specific sites, regions, and features (ix). A majority of these "stories" introduce multiperiod urban sites attested at some point in Scripture (Bethel, Capernaum, Jerusalem), although this is not true of all (Masada, Sepphoris, Petra, Qumran). A few, such as Galatia, Galilee, and Goshen, are broad regions. One, Calvary, is a specific feature. Still others, such as the Valley of Jehoshaphat and Armageddon, are revealed to be "sites of the mind": literary or symbolic visions that exist apart from the ground itself. All told, more than half (45) are located within the territorial sphere of modern Israel/Palestine/Jordan. Turkey weighs in as a distant second, with 10 entries, followed by Greece and Mediterranean Islands (six), Syria and Lebanon (six), Egypt and North Africa (four), Iraq (three), and Italy (one). This last "story" belies its size; Losch's comments on Rome easily double those given to any other topic in the volume (including the historical introduction) and occupy more than one-eighth of his entire presentation. This is consistent with an observed trend that favors NT interests. The excessive attention given to Rome—coupled with the shallow presentations of Bethphage, Cana of Galilee, and Nob—raises the question of rationale behind Losch's selections.

An eclectic approach makes a single-sitting read of this volume difficult. The reader is apt to drift in and out, finding good, basic information that is clearly written, but it is joltingly arranged and held together only by a thread of biblical interest. Some footnotes attempt to bring integration to the task, but these are rare and unsuccessful.

Understandably, Losch does not have time to dillydally with excessive details. His vocabulary and style are appropriate for a general audience and square with his purpose. Still, specialists may quibble with his glossed presentation of complex issues such as the pharaoh of the Exodus, large numbers in the OT, site identifications, and even modern realities such as the claim that modern Palestinians descend from ancient Canaanites (10). What appears to be a casual mix of theory and tradition becomes particularly troubling in light of the larger goal "to encourage" readers "to seek more information" (ix). If this is truly the case, references to primary sources must be given and a bibliography must be offered.

Presentations do include some discussion of excavated remains, however, these are diluted and mixed with biblical interpretation, local traditions, theological observations, and extrabiblical citations (again, minus references). Locator maps in the back of the volume place presented sites as a black dot on an empty map; no other graphic helps (such as site plans) are available to assist the presentation. A pronunciation guide and index is offered.

Losch provides a helpful reference work with *The Uttermost*. However, for "a collection of information for the curious," a good Bible dictionary is a better buy.

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Leo. G PERDUE. *Reconstructing Old Testament Theology: After the Collapse of History*. Overtures to Biblical Theology Series. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005. 399 pp.

In 1994, Leo Perdue provided a substantive review of the state of OT theological studies in his work, *The Collapse of History* (Fortress). With this present work, he surveys the burgeoning interest in this area of study, expanding the scope of the study to include more marginal voices. After rehearsing the ongoing discussion regarding the place of history in the enterprise and the possibility of impartial objectivity in the discipline, Perdue surveys and assesses the impact that insights gained from a variety of ancillary studies have had upon the discipline of OT theology.

Perdue ably details the centrality that "context" has come to play in these discussions. Each of his major subject headings reflects the dominance of context in current OT theological studies. His sections include: "From Eurocentric History to Voices from the Margins: Liberation Theology and Ethnic Biblical Interpretation;" "From Exclusion to Inclusion: Feminist Interpretations of History;" "From History to Rhetoric: Feminist, *Mujerista*, and Womanist Theologies;" "From Jewish Tradition to Biblical Theology: The Tanakh as a Source for Jewish Theology and Practice;" "From History to Cultural Context: Postmodernism"; and "From the Colonial Bible to the Postcolonial Text: Biblical Theology as Contextual."

In each section Perdue repeatedly engages such key theological topics as the relationship between past and present in OT theology, the dynamic between unity and theological diversity, the epistemological dynamics, the role of the descriptive vs. the declarative in OT theology, and the place of hermeneutics in OT theology. However, unlike James Barr (*The Concept of Biblical Theology*, SCM Press, 2003), Perdue attempts to provide both the strengths and weaknesses of the particular approach. Perdue notes that each contextual analysis must grapple with such tensions as: history vs. literature; subjective vs. objective epistemologies; idealism vs. materialism; political vs. apolitical analyses; absolutism vs. relativism; and inclusion vs. exclusion of noncanonical texts.

Perdue not only selects the major players to critique in each section, but also deftly attempts to present as sympathetic analysis as possible. He only deviates from this approach in his analysis of radical postmodernism. In this case, the smug unwillingness of these interpreters to affirm any validity to the insights of others leads Perdue to remove them as serious discussion partners in the dialogue. At the conclusion of his work, Perdue offers his own tentative proposal of how OT theology might proceed. He starts with an obvious, yet sometimes forgotten opening premise: God should remain the central focus of all theological thought and work. He then suggests that the tendency to opt either for history or for the text should be resisted; historical critical method and literary analysis must remain fitful conversation partners. Similarly, the OT theologian should refuse the temptation to engage the discipline solely as a descriptive or a constructive enterprise. Rather, while the descriptive analysis is certainly the first step methodologically, it is indispensable for one wanting to articulate constructive contemporary conclusions. In like manner, faith and reason must also be kept in dialogue with each other. Perdue concludes:

> Theology seeks to understand God, not simply as a part of a compendium of knowledge, but rather as a means of achieving, however imperfectly, a relationship that determines self-identity within the locations in which humans live and carry out their search for meaning. . . . If they are carried out with skill and hard thinking about life in the cosmos and in the human world, then there can only be a good end. (352)

Leo Perdue has provided students of OT theology a most valuable work. A close reading of this volume not only provides the reader with a wealth of information regarding current theological thought spanning the spectrum of OT studies, but also enables careful readers to enrich and nuance their own theological programs.

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James K. HOFFMEIER. *Ancient Israel in Sinai: The Evidence for the Authenticity of the Wilderness Tradition*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2005. 336 pp. $45.00.

The companion volume to Hoffmeier's groundbreaking *Israel in Egypt* (Oxford, 1997), his newest effort is another sign of the rise of evangelical scholarship in the last twenty years or so. Unlike evangelical authors of the past who based their reasoning on hidden or overt presuppositions, Hoffmeier engages the evidence in a fair and open fashion and dispassionately addresses alternative theories. The fact that Hoffmeier, a professor at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, has written two volumes supporting the historical authenticity of the Exodus and Wilderness traditions and is published by Oxford University Press is another sign of the maturing of evangelical scholarship and of the increasing openness of mainstream publishing to carefully researched and well-articulated works, regardless of the author's background

Hoffmeier begins with the biblical evidence that later portions of the OT consistently and persistently presume an earlier wilderness experience for the nation (ch. 1). He then surveys the history of religions approach to these narratives up to the current impasse with postmodern skepticism (ch. 2). He suggests a "phenomenological approach" as a way forward surveying: the terrain and climate of Sinai (ch. 3), recent archaeological discoveries in the Sinai which explain the route Israel took when coming out of Egypt (ch. 4), including a fairly specific location for the crossing of the Re(e)d Sea (ch. 5), the general location of Mt. Sinai (ch. 6), the number of Israelites (ch. 7), and the evidence through ancient Near Eastern parallels for the possibility of the law being revealed at such an early date (ch. 8). An especially helpful chapter is the discussion that names are either clearly attested as being of Egyptian origin or can plausibly be presumed to be so (ch. 10). Equally insightful is the astonishing number of parallels between the Tabernacle described in Exodus (often presumed to be a late idealization of the postexilic source P) and Egyptian artistic and craft traditions and building practices (ch. 9). Hoffmeier concludes:

> What we have shown is that the geography of the exodus has itself been clarified, thanks to new data from North Sinai. The details of travel and life in Sinai

> as the Torah presents them square well with what is known about Sinai. The tabernacle makes sense as a mobile sanctuary for a people on the move, and prototypes from Egypt closely parallel to the tent-shrine of Exodus. In the structure of the covenant, literary parallels with treaty documents from the second half of the second millennium B.C. best correlate with Exodus 24ff. and Deuteronomy; first-millennium treaty documents are entirely different and cannot account for the pattern used in the Torah. It was also demonstrated that a surprising number of words used to describe objects in the tabernacle and garments worn by the priests were of Egyptian etymology. Similarly, a surprising number of individuals of the exodus and following generations had Egyptian names. If the Israelites had not been in Egypt, how do we account for these elements? Surely a writer from the mid-first millennium B.C. in Judah or Babylon would not have known these Egyptian terms, let alone refer to Egyptian cities (i.e. Rameses) that had been abandoned centuries earlier. (248)

The volume is full of helpful information. For example, Hoffmeier debunks the current popular theory that Sinai was actually in modern Saudi Arabia on the eastern bank of the Red Sea's eastern extension, the gulf of Aqaba, and not in the traditional site in the southern portion of the Sinai peninsula. Hoffmeier notes that today's Sinai was regarded as part of Arabia in the ancient world (thus Paul's allegory in Gal 4:25) and that the amount of time available for Israel's travel from the crossing of the Re(e)d Sea to Sinai and the distance caravans could travel in the ancient world precludes a location across the Sinai in modern Saudi Arabia.

While I highly recommend both of Hoffmeier's volumes, I do have some concerns. Hoffmeier deals with the difficulty of the census numbers in Numbers 2 and 26, opting for the theory that the Hebrew *'eleph* means "clans" rather than "thousand." Unfortunately, he does not attempt to explain how later scribes misunderstood this and treated them as real numbers (see Num 2:32; 26:51 where the numbers are added up as though literal). While Hoffmeier's discussion of the theories which relate the structure of the covenants in the Pentateuch to either the earlier Hittite treaties or the later Neo-Assyrian ones is informative, in my judgment his account fails to take the narrative context seriously enough. At times the rather broad parallels which do exist seem to be imposed in specific detail upon the biblical text. For example, Hoffmeier makes much of the order of the curses preceding the blessings in suzerainty treaties while the order is reversed in Leviticus 26 and supposedly Deuteronomy 28. He follows Kitchen in suggesting a confluence of influences from the early Mesopotamian law codes (e.g., Hammurabi) and the early Hittite treaties. But in fact, Deut 27:15-26 has 12 curses (something Hoffmeier fails to mention) followed by blessings in 28:1-14, which are followed in turn by more curses in 28:15-68. This fits neither pattern and shows a tendency toward parallelomania. An explanation based on narrative analysis seems more likely.

Other than being a tad too closely wedded to Kenneth Kitchen's debatable theory of the earlier Hittite suzerain-vassal treaties (rather than the later Assyrian ones) providing the best background parallels to covenants in the Pentateuch, Hoffmeier's volume is a goldmine of background information and argues forcefully that the traditions concerning the wilderness period are not based on myth, no matter how theologically motivated the documents as we have them are. Oh, that

the popular level apologists would use such works in their presentations rather than claiming too much with too little research and making assertions with too little foundation to be credible in a postmodern world of minimalists and skeptics!

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John J. COLLINS. *The Bible after Babel: Historical Criticism in a Postmodern Age*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005. 201 pp. $18.00.

Collins has written a valuable volume for student and scholar. As the title indicates, he surveys the last three decades of biblical studies, carefully examining the various postmodern paradigms that move beyond Ernest Troeltsch's historical-critical approach to the OT that has been in use for a century. This method has been invaluable, but since the 1960s, biblical scholarship has moved out of the seminaries into secular universities. This move introduced scholarship to a large range of different voices and perspectives. The study of the Bible became more and more only an academic exercise. This move also coincided with the rise of postmodernism.

Collins surveys these developments and approaches in five chapters. He first briefly sketches the traditional, post-enlightenment method, defines postmodernism, and describes two postmodern movements: deconstruction and ideological criticism. Each makes contributions to modern study, but also each has serious implications.

Chapter 2 covers the "Crisis in Historiography." Postmodernism calls into question any possibility of writing history since we are dependent on what texts tell us and do not have access to the past. Collins critiques what he calls the extreme right perspective of Provan, Long, and Longman (*A Biblical History of Israel*, Westminster John Knox, 2003, see *SCJ* 8.2:299-302), and also K. Kitchen, and the extreme left perspective of minimalists like Philip Davies and Nils Lemche. He accepts Lemche's dictum that the OT is not a primary source for the history of Israel. Instead he opts for the centrist position of Bill Dever and Israel Finkelstein, who use archaeological evidence to support some OT history. In this way he thinks the biblical tradition can be upheld even though much of it cannot be salvaged. This means that the stories of the patriarchs, the exodus and the conquest are myths, but that beginning with the judges we are on more sure ground.

The middle three chapters examine in turn liberation theology, feminist and gender studies, and recent studies in Israelite religion that point to Yahweh having a consort. The surveys in these chapters are well done and should be read by everyone who wishes to be current in OT studies. Collins has read widely and makes difficult issues understandable.

In the last chapter, Collins provides his own suggestions by asking the question, "Is a Postmodern Biblical Theology Possible?" Collins believes the OT has abiding significance for the modern world, but that to understand what the significance is, one must also take into account the developments in modern biblical studies and listen to other voices. Collins opts for a theology grounded in OT ethics, and especially the "concern for the other" that shows up in the texts. Collins thinks this is

a universally recognized value and is the place to start. Collins believes with this starting point one can value the biblical texts through a more skeptical and self-critical approach and work to pursue a consensus.

Though Collins does not accept the extreme left conclusions of the minimalists, one wonders where the thin line is that separates him from them. He questions why Dever fulminates so much against the minimalists since he shares their assumptions. One can ask the same question of Collins. Do not the minimalists represent the logical end of the post-enlightenment project in biblical criticism? Though Collins has read Provan and others, in my opinion he has not taken seriously their critique of modern historical criticism, nor their challenge of why interpretations of archaeological finds should be privileged over tradition.

As a guide to the current state of OT studies, this volume is indispensable. Collins' study brings to the foreground the serious challenges modern biblical studies pose for those who believe a text-centered interpretation is still possible and that the Bible is more than a time-conditioned search by humans for God.

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Paul J. KISSLING. *Genesis Volume 1.* The College Press NIV Commentary. Joplin, MO: College Press, 2004. 392 pp. $32.99.

Kissling's first volume on Genesis covers Genesis 1–11. He begins with a 66-page introduction to the entire book of Genesis, 20 pages of which are bibliography. The rest of the volume is the commentary proper, including excurses on various key topics scattered throughout. This review will focus on three facets of the introduction. The commentary proper will be reviewed by means of examples from it serving to illustrate these facets.

First, the bibliography consists only of English works. However, those that are included represent a wide range of views and more works are referenced throughout the work. Both theological conservatives and liberals are represented, including Jews and Christians. Further, Kissling consults works that cover a wide time span. In terms of Jewish writings, he consults ancient works in English translation or in the secondary literature, going as far back as the Old Greek and Targums. He does not consult ancient Christian works (the series does not intend to cover the history of interpretation); however, he does consult works from the Reformation onward.

Second, the topics treated are relevant for today. He treats the usual matters of purpose, theology, authorship and composition, historical setting, and structure (of the whole book with a focus on chapters 1–11). Additionally, he deals with ways of reading Genesis: canonically, historically, poetically, theologically, and "sensitively." The latter is of particular interest (21-22). By sensitively, Kissling means understanding Hebrew literature from the author's perspective. This applies to both liberals, who often misjudge the text because of their preconceptions about how the book should have been written, and to conservatives, who sometimes read into the text things that are not present in the mind of the writer to answer questions the book was not designed to answer. This practice is well illustrated in his treatment

of the genealogical lists of Genesis 5 (241-249, including excursus). He discusses the numerical deviations between the Masoretic Text, Septuagint, and Samaritan Pentateuch and demonstrates that genealogies in the ancient world did not function as they do in the modern world.

Third, one of the most refreshing characteristics of the introduction is that from the very beginning, Kissling is open about his approach to the book. In his acknowledgment to his home congregation (11-12) he admits that many of them will not agree with everything he concludes about Genesis, but expresses the hope that his passion for Scripture will be evident and that they too will see it as able to speak to us today. Of all the matters in Genesis 1–11, perhaps the most controversial is origins. Kissling lists and critiques the various views (34-42), rejecting both the atheistic/deistic views and the forced interpretations of much of the young earth position, and favors intelligent design concluding basically that Genesis does not tell us the age or manner of formation of the universe, but only the who (God brought it into existence) and the why (God's purpose for mankind). It would be a tragedy, if a conservative reader ignored this work, simply because he disagreed with Kissling's view of origins.

In keeping with the broad audience intended by the series, Kissling's work is not technical. The lay Bible student will find the text meaty, but readable and beneficial. Though Hebrew text does appear, it is accompanied by English transliteration and a translation nearby in the context. The preacher will benefit from this up-to-date treatment as a valuable guide in sermon preparation. Those who know Hebrew will better understand the occasional discussions based on Hebrew language. The scholar will not find detailed technical discussions, which are beyond the scope of this level of commentary series. However, the comments on the text as it exists are worth reading.

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J. Alec MOTYER. *The Message of Exodus: The Days of Our Pilgrimage*. The Bible Speaks Today. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2005. 327 pp. $16.00.

This is Motyer's fourth contribution to this long-standing series published by InterVarsity and edited by Motyer himself (OT), John Stott (NT), and D. Tidball (Bible Themes). Motyer previously published in this same series *The Message of Amos: The Day of the Lion* (1974), *The Message of Philippians: Jesus our Joy* (1984) and *The Message of James: The Tests of Faith* (1988). Motyer, who was formerly principal of Trinity College, Bristol, England, is also known for a longer and a shorter commentary on Isaiah (1993 and 1999, respectively).

According to the editors (9), the purpose of the Bible Speaks Today series is a practical one: to expound the biblical text in such a way as to elucidate its relevance and application for today. Most commentaries focus exclusively on what the text meant, whereas this series seeks to explain what the text means while being faithful to what the text meant. Thus this volume is a preacher's and layman's commentary,

not a scholarly and technical commentary. The material in this volume began, in fact, as a series of sermons in 1974 and 1985 (10), and the original sermonic structure is discernible in much of the volume, as occasional scholarly and technical comments have been added below or following the exposition. An exception to the practical nature of this commentary is Motyer's frequent observation of chiastic or similar structuring of the material in Exodus that is more of interest to scholars than to laymen or preachers.

In accord with the series' purpose, Motyer has chosen not to address in detail critical questions concerning the authorship, historicity, and unity of Exodus. The whole issue of the Documentary Hypothesis and its supposed J, E, D, and P strands is ignored save for Motyer's remark that he does not find the hypothesis convincing (11) and a few footnotes and "additional notes" here and there where Motyer points out weaknesses in the hypothesis (83, 138-140, 154). His introduction to the volume is thus a literary-theological introduction rather than a historical-critical introduction.

Those looking for a critical commentary on Exodus will be disappointed in this volume. Motyer puts scant effort into relating the events of Exodus to Egyptian history and geography, and there is no attempt to identify the Pharaoh of the exodus, no mention of the Hyksos, and no discussion of the date of the exodus. Motyer devotes a mere two paragraphs concerning the Red Sea (or Sea of Reeds) and the route of the exodus, remarking that many of the locations are uncertain and some commentators prefer the rendering Sea of Reeds (in reference to an extension of water north of the Red Sea) to the traditional rendering (171). Motyer does correlate the signs and plagues to Egyptian mythology (77-78, 110, 116-118), though these observations are mostly in the notes rather than the body of the exposition. More generally, the commentary is too brief to address many of the exegetical issues. This is particularly noticeable in the laws where Motyer's treatment is especially sketchy and incomplete.

Those, on the other hand, looking to this commentary to find material for the widely neglected art of expository preaching or for devotional insights will be richly rewarded. Motyer is largely successful in making the book of Exodus speak today. I used Motyer's notes on the call of Moses (Exodus 3–4) in conjunction with a sermon I was preparing, and even though I had done considerable study of the passage already, I found Motyer helpful in enriching my own message and making it more practical. Although this is not a scholarly-critical commentary, Motyer has clearly grappled with the Hebrew text in preparing his expositions, and thus his expositions are grounded on a scholarly analysis of the text. Thus this volume can be recommended to preachers and others looking for the practical relevance of Exodus.

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Craig A. EVANS. *Ancient Texts for New Testament Studies: A Guide to the Background Literature*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2005. 539 pp. $34.95.

This volume is a major expansion and revision of the author's earlier work

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Noncanonical Writings and New Testament Interpretation (Hendrickson, 1992). It also serves as companion to the volume by Kenton Sparks, *Ancient Texts for the Study of the Hebrew Bible* (Hendrickson, 2005). Here, Evans introduces those who aspire to study the NT to the vast range of literature that has an impact on or a close connection to it. He provides summaries of and bibliographies for these ancient texts. The bibliographies typically contain the texts in their original languages, English translations, surveys, commentaries, and critical studies.

The volume contains an introduction, 12 chapters, and six appendices. The introduction surveys the writings presented in the volume, discusses their value for NT studies, and presents a method for using them. In the first 11 chapters, the work presents summaries and bibliographies for OT Apocrypha, OT Pseudepigrapha, Dead Sea Scrolls, versions of the OT, Philo and Josephus, Targums, rabbinic literature, NT Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, early church fathers, gnostic writings, and other writings (Greco-Roman authors). A twelfth chapter offers examples to illustrate the value of these writings for NT exegesis. Of the six appendices, most important may be the considerable list of NT texts that quote or allude to the cognate literature or that contain similar ideas. Also, helpful is the appendix listing parallels between the NT Gospels and the pseudepigraphal gospels. Of the indices included, the index of ancient writings and writers offers a useful means for locating the discussion of a particular author or title in the volume.

Compared with the earlier *Noncanonical Writings*, this volume provides a substantial expansion of more than 150 pages. Four chapters account almost entirely for this increase. Further description and bibliography are offered for the OT Pseudepigrapha; also added is an expanded discussion of the Pseudepigrapha and the NT (70-73). Because of the increased number of scrolls published since 1992, the number of Dead Sea Scrolls included is over three times larger. The chapter now lists the contents of the Discovery in the Judean Desert series, the official publication of the Dead Sea Scrolls (83-86), arranges the summaries of the Dead Sea Scrolls according to cave (89-149), and adds a discussion on the topic of "Paul and Qumran" (151-53). The chapter on the Targums provides additional bibliography, extra examples comparing the Targums with the teaching of Jesus (203-207), and entirely new sections on the relation of the Targums to Matthew, Luke-Acts, the Fourth Gospel, and Paul (207-213). The chapter on Other Writings adds brief sketches of over one hundred Greco-Roman authors and their writings (287-298) and summaries of miscellaneous written material, including papyri, inscriptions, coins, and ostraca (306-327).

Evans's volume is an extremely valuable reference work. While other volumes may offer more detailed introductions to a smaller corpus of literature (Larry Helyer, *Exploring Jewish Literature of the Second Temple Period*, InterVarsity, 2002, and George Nickelsburg's *Jewish Literature between the Bible and the Mishnah*, Fortress, 2005), none are more extensive in their coverage of the major literature cognate to the NT. Frankly, every NT student and scholar should own and use this volume.

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Robert B. STEWART, ed. *The Resurrection of Jesus: John Dominic Crossan and N.T. Wright in Dialogue*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2006. 220 pp. $18.00.

This volume originated in the inaugural Greer-Heard Forum at New Orleans Baptist Seminary in Spring of 2005. The format was for two widely respected (and widely published) NT scholars to engage in a dialogue on the topic of the resurrection of Jesus. Each scholar made an opening statement, then discussed points of agreement and disagreement. The remainder of the volume consists of responses by seven other presenters (and one essay is included by Alan Segal, who was not able to be present).

N.T. Wright restates points made in his formidable work, *The Resurrection of the Son of God* (Augsburg Fortress, 2003), and notes six decisive ways in which he understands that the resurrection of Jesus modified the Jewish expectation of resurrection on which Christian understanding was initially grounded. He then considers the NT references to Jesus' raising and postulates that a historical event, understood in the context of Jewish apocalyptic hopes, is the most adequate explanation for the beginning of the Christian movement.

Dom Crossan in his initial presentation insists upon distinguishing between "mode" (how the resurrection can be described) and "meaning" (the implications that a resurrection faith brings). He concludes that the "meaning" question is the most important, and perhaps the only one where a secure answer can be obtained. (A final appendix by Crossan is also very valuable for its clear and careful statement of his view.)

In the subsequent dialogue, both participants point to areas of agreement (often overlooked as people line up as fans behind one or the other). These include the vital importance of a broader eschatology, of which Jesus' resurrection is only a part, and an inherent political dimension implied by that resurrection.

Craig Evans, who has published frequently on the Gospels, gives a cogent and very useful summary of the points made by Wright and Crossan in their many published works. This brief essay provides a context for appreciating the two major presentations.

Robert B. Stewart examines the hermeneutical approaches of Wright and Crossan and explains how their divergent views on the resurrection is closely tied to their views on how one interprets texts generally (and the Bible specifically). A similar essay by R. Douglas Geivett, "The Epistemology of Resurrection Belief," also explores the philosophical commitments and assumptions of the two authors and how these impact their understanding of resurrection.

Gary Habermas, "Mapping the Recent Trend toward the Bodily Resurrection Appearances of Jesus in Light of Other Prominent Critical Positions," offers a useful summary of the last few decades' discussion about the role of resurrection appearances in discussing the resurrection (that is, is an empty tomb essential or a distraction in speaking of the resurrection of Jesus?

Alan Segal's essay, "The Resurrection, Faith or History," was not presented at the conference but is a valuable addition to the volume. It is most useful for broadly staking out the issues involved in the topic, and is very clear in its organization and thought. Segal insists upon a view of history that does not treat Christian claims (especially of the resurrection of Jesus) any differently than claims by other

religious communities. He suggests that faith and history are distinct fields of discourse, and that to join them misunderstands (and misuses) both.

Ted Peters' essay, "The Future of the Resurrection" broadens the discussion beyond Wright and Crossan and also adds an emphasis on the importance of the resulting community that is based on the resurrection.

Because this volume draws from a dialogue held at a traditionally conservative seminary, it is no surprise that most essays reflect greatest appreciation for a traditional Christian teaching on the resurrection. However, the questions raised by scholars who do not share those traditional views are treated fully and fairly. It really seems as if all involved are committed to understand fairly and appreciate those with whom they may disagree on this crucial topic.

This collection of essays is clearly designed for an informed readership, but most are not so technical as to preclude use by nonacademics. (The interesting essay on "The Gospel of Peter" by Charles Quarles is more specialized.) The volume will be of great interest to seminarians who belong to faith communities which emphasize the Bible as the controlling guide for faith but who are also willing to hear from scholars with very different commitments. I believe a patient, and careful reading of all of them will be very useful in helping ministers and teachers understand both why and how the resurrection of Jesus is being discussed by scholarship today.

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George J. BROOKE. *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament.* Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005. 314 pp. $40.00.

This collection of 16 essays represents the author's work on the Scrolls from 1989 to 2003. He divides the collection into three parts: Part One—consisting of five articles—he has named "Generally Illuminating." This section includes titles such as "The Qumran Scrolls and the Study of the New Testament" and "Jesus, the Dead Sea Scrolls and Scrolls Scholarship." Part Two is entitled "Particular Scrolls Illuminate Their New Testament Counterparts." The six contributions in this section include for example "The Temple Scroll and the New Testament" and "Luke-Acts and the Qumran Scrolls: The Case of MMT." Part Three ("The Scrolls and the Gospels: Mutual Illumination of Particular Passages") consists of five studies including "Songs of Revolution: The Song of Miriam and Its Counterparts" and "The Wisdom of Matthew's Beatitudes."

Throughout the collection the author is careful to position himself in between what he considers the extreme views. Some maintain that Jesus was an Essene and that the Jesus Movement was nothing more than an adaptation of Essenism. At the other extreme, others have argued that there is no relationship at all between the Qumran scrolls and early Christianity. Brooke selects, however, the third way. He does not argue for identity of the two movements but "neither can the differences force us to dismiss [the similarities between Christianity and Qumran] as insignificant" (262). He repeatedly appeals to a shared Jewish tradition as the explanation for similarities between the scrolls and early Christianity (8, 13, 65, 77). Further,

Brooke holds to what some call the consensus view. That is, he concludes that the site at Qumran was occupied by a religious sect (as opposed to its being a villa or military fortress) and that the religious sect is "almost certainly to be associated with the Essenes . . ." (xv, 19).

The author's mastery of the sectarian scrolls from Qumran has enabled him to listen to the NT in new and creative ways. I offer two examples (one positive and one negative). His essay, "From Qumran to Corinth: Embroidered Allusions to Women's Authority" (195-214) seeks to explain an obscure NT text (1 Cor 11:10) by defining a Hebrew word more precisely. Scholars have puzzled over the word *rqm* in 4Q270 in the sentence, "Mothers do not have *rqm* in the congregation." Brooke suggests that the word meant a piece of embroidered cloth that was associated with priestly status. This piece of cloth had an extended meaning of "authority." He then compared the Qumran text with the text from 1 Corinthians and especially the Greek word *exousia*. As at Qumran, a piece of cloth (in 1 Corinthians, a veil) carried with it a connotation of authority. The authority enables a woman to assume her proper place of worship in the presence of angels.

Yet not all of his essays are convincing. I consider "4Q252 and the 153 Fish of John 21.11" one of those. The author quotes a section of the Qumran text commonly known as the *Commentary on Genesis A*, which is retelling the story of the Flood. The text says that at the end of 150 days the flood waters decreased. Then three days later the ark came to rest on Mt. Ararat. Brooke adds 150 and 3 and decides that this text has some symbolic connection to John 21:11 and the 153 fish caught by the disciples. Further, 153 is the triangular number of 17 (1+2+3, etc.). In Genesis 8:4 the ark comes to rest on the 17th day of the month. Because of these connections and a few others, the author concludes that the 153 fish in John 21:11 represent the baptized who have been brought safely through the water.

This collection is most helpful in its discussion of a large number of Qumran texts. It will engage the reader in the debate and can facilitate learning about many of the documents. As an attempt to illumine the NT, however, it may fall short.

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April DECONICK. *Recovering the Original Gospel of Thomas: A History of the Gospel and Its Growth.* London, NY: T & T Clark, 2006. 288 pp. $55.00.

This volume was written to address the origins and development or stratification of the Gospel of Thomas. DeConick begins with a chapter on her methodology, which is a fresh insight into the analysis of the Gospel of Thomas.

According to DeConick, "when [literary methods and outside disciplines] are welded with [the] old historical methods, in my opinion, we finally have the necessary models and tools to examine the traditions within and across texts even in cases where we are not dealing with direct literary dependence or intertextuality"(5). The resulting methodology involves a combination of oral-formulaic theory and communal memory theory; DeConick's proposal of the rolling corpus stratification depends heavily upon the latter.

DeConick then explores previous attempts to understand Thomas, including the literate, oral-literate, and redaction models, describing both their insights and their shortcomings. Next DeConick proposes her rolling corpus model wherein she proposes that "such a new paradigm of reading Thomas would mean that the sayings in the Gospel of Thomas represent different moments in its history and might be read as memories of practices and conflicts which arose over time *within* the community"(62). Accordingly, DeConick devotes an entire chapter to establishing the criteria by which to determine earlier sayings from later sayings as well as to determine why the later sayings were accrued. Some of the criteria include the development of discourses, formation of interpretative clauses, and coherence to characteristic vocabulary.

In part two, after stripping away layers of later accruals, DeConick finds what she calls the kernel Gospel which she places c. AD 30–50. This kernel Gospel consists of five speeches of Jesus (113). DeConick spends the next two chapters comparing these five speeches with, in particular, the Pseudo-Clementine corpus, as well as other texts from the Second Temple period, including the Dead Sea Scrolls, 1 and 2 Enoch, 4 Ezra, Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs, and others in order to denote their similar mystical worldview and apocalyptic natures (129). Significant to DeConick's stratification model, however, is the fact that "these mystical ideas . . . took on a life of their own, after the Fall of Jerusalem Temple, once the Thomasine Christians felt the impact of the 'delayed' Eschaton. With the collapse of their teleology came a reformation of their apocalyptic thought" (154). Indeed, it is for this reason that the kernel Gospel of Thomas accrued latter sayings. Given that the latter accruals "represent an accumulation and reinterpretation of remembrances of Jesus' words which have been accommodated to the present experiences of an early Christian community" (160-161). The main thrust of DeConick's rolling corpus model is that "Thomas would be read as a repository of communal memory containing not only early and later traditions but also the reformulations of these traditions based on the contemporary experience of the community" (161). Thus, as the Thomasine community grew and experienced conflicts and crisis, so Thomasine memory of Jesus grew in order to account for their present communal experiences. In the third and final section, DeConick addresses the remaining accruals in Thomas and the community's experiences of the Thomasine Christians that lead to those accruals.

Overall, DeConick convincingly argues for the rolling-corpus model of stratification. The major obstacle to DeConick's model is not her methodology nor her application, but is the fact the majority of scholars are determined to view Thomas as a Gnostic work, as opposed to DeConick's Jewish mystical reading. (For DeConick's reading of Thomas as Jewish mysticism see *Seek to See Him: Ascent and Vision Mysticism in the Gospel of Thomas,* Brill, 1996.) The other major concern would be the one-document-per-community fallacy. DeConick's rolling-corpus model is highly dependent upon the community's ever-changing perspectives and experiences, which seems to assume that the Gospel of Thomas was the only Gospel text for this community. Even though DeConick correlates the Thomasine Christian experience with the experiences known to have occurred in other Christian communities, such as the death of the eyewitnesses, DeConick's stratifi-

cation seems to assume that only Thomas, as the sole document for this community, accrued sayings of Jesus to account for the present experiences of the community, and that this did not occur in the other Gospel accounts.

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John NOLLAND. *The Gospel of Matthew: A Commentary on the Greek Text.* New International Greek Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005. 1481 pp. $80.00.

Serious students of Matthew's Gospel will be hard pressed to find a recent commentary on the Gospel that is more responsive to and responsible with the massive amount of research on Matthew than Nolland's commentary. Known for his three-volume commentary on Luke (Word Biblical Commentary, Nelson Reference, 1989), Nolland now applies his exegetical skills to the study of Matthew in this latest addition to the New International Greek Testament Commentary series.

The commentary is undoubtedly influenced by the historical-critical method as well as by redaction criticism, but Nolland acknowledges that his work is intentionally more eclectic methodologically than was his commentary on Luke. Readers will appreciate his commitment not to subject his exegesis to a narrow focus that is controlled by one method. While he appreciates the value of structuralists, social science, reader-response and feminist approaches to interpreting Matthew, in the end Nolland opts for those methods that highlight more clearly the "inner logic" of the text. Deconstructive hermeneutical agendas are dismissed.

What is immediately impressive about this commentary are the extensive bibliographical lists. Not only does it begin with nearly 50 pages of a general bibliography of works related to Matthean studies written since 1980, but each section of Matthew is also introduced with a list of six or seven sources since 1980 that specifically focus on that section. Additionally, the volume ends with another bibliography (almost 200 pages) that lists resources written prior to 1980. After a general bibliography of pre-1980 volumes is provided, other pre-1980 resources are given under sectional divisions of Matthew's Gospel (chapters, verses). The massive bibliography makes this commentary an ideal source for anyone wishing to investigate further both the past and current scholarship on Matthew's Gospel.

Nolland states that his primary concern is with the story Matthew's author wants tell. He sees the author of Matthew as a conservative editor of the material he inherited. According to Nolland, those who preserved material about Jesus did so with the intention of connecting their audiences with what actually took place and therefore felt some restraint when adapting and using their sources.

Nolland is confident that Matthew's Gospel also demonstrates that the author was skilled rhetorically. Indebted to the contributions of narrative criticism, Nolland attempts to unfold how Matthew invites its readers to encounter the narrative world that it creates.

Surprisingly, the Gospel is dated by Nolland as pre-70. This certainly runs counter to the conclusions advocated by the majority of Matthean scholars, but

Nolland's case for a pre-70 date of writing will be persuasive to many. His view regarding the provenance of the Gospel, that it was probably intended for a Greek-speaking Jewish audience that lived outside of Palestine, appears justifiably cautious and solid.

The commentary demonstrates a tremendous knowledge of the world of Second Temple Judaism. This will aid readers in gaining perceptive insights into how Matthew's story of Jesus may have been understood by a Jewish Christian audience.

Those who can work confidently with the Greek text will benefit most from this commentary, but knowledge of Greek is not absolutely necessary since most Greek words are translated. It is a resource tool of few parallels that will become immensely valuable for seminary students, preachers, and others who intend to do careful exegetical work on Matthew.

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Craig G. BARTHOLOMEW, Joel B. GREEN, and Anthony C. THISELTON, eds. *Reading Luke: Interpretation, Reflection, Formation.* Scripture and Hermeneutics Series, vol. 6. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005. 484 pp. $39.99.

The Scripture and Hermeneutics Seminar is an annual consultation of scholars that first met in 1999. Its purpose is to promote the reading of the Bible as Scripture in order to hear God speaking to us through it. Each year a volume is published based on the consultation. This volume is the sixth of a projected eight volumes.

This is the only volume of the series that focuses on a particular portion of Scripture. The theme of the volume is using Luke-Acts to show how one might "engage the Scriptures for *interpretation, reflection,* and *formation,*" . . . ultimately "to tune our ears to the voice of God" (449). It is a worthy goal, although many of the contributions do not contain any elements that seem to distinguish them as specifically listening for God's voice (for example, Marshall's and Nolland's articles, which are nonetheless quite useful).

Most of the contributions in the volume are from well-known scholars on Luke-Acts or the Gospels, or from apparent members of the Seminar who have contributed to other volumes in the series. The volume is framed by excellent introductory and concluding essays by editors Anthony Thiselton and Joel Green, respectively. Thiselton sets the essays within the framework of the history of Luke-Acts scholarship. Green proposes some general guidelines for reading Scripture as God's word.

The remainder of the volume is divided into four sections. The first contains articles defining Luke-Acts by Joel Green, David Wenham, and David Moessner. There is also a response to Wenham by Scott Spencer. Green uses Luke's interpretation of Israel's Scriptures as a guideline for our own biblical hermeneutics. Wenham's article approaches a standard introduction of authorship, purpose, and date. Moessner connects Luke to ancient rhetoric.

The second section contains articles by Howard Marshall, John Nolland, and Michael Goheen that seem to be linked only by not belonging to the other sections. Stephen Wright responds to Nolland. Marshall's article is a helpful inquiry into how literally one should take some of the political or military language in Luke 1–2 or the apocalyptic and eschatological language in Luke 17 and 21. Nolland interprets the Prodigal Son parable. Goheen advocates a missional hermeneutic for reading Luke.

In the third group, each essay focuses on a theme in Luke's work. Max Turner writes on pneumatology, Scott Hahn on ecclesiology, Charles Scobie on "the journey motif," and Craig Bartholomew and Robby Holt write on prayer. Turner's article on the Spirit is an excellent overview. Bartholomew and Holt's articles on prayer are particularly exemplary with respect to the volume's emphasis on reading Luke as God's word to us. It calls for prayer as an important component of Christian hermeneutics.

The final section contains articles on reception history and theory. François Bovon writes on "The Reception and Use of the Gospel of Luke in the Second Century" and Andrew Gregory, who has written a dissertation on the topic, responds. Heidi Hornik and Mikeal Parsons contribute a treatment of two paintings of Lukan scenes, one by Leonardo and the other by Caravaggio. Their chapter is part of a three-volume project they are publishing on art that illuminates Luke.

This final section of the volume will be of interest primarily to scholars, but the other sections would be useful in the college or seminary classroom and even for the minister.

The volume also has useful scripture, names, and subject indices.

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Ben WITHERINGTON III and Darlene HYATT. *Paul's Letter to the Romans: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004. 421 pp. $36.00.

Ben Witherington III, Professor of New Testament at Asbury Theological Seminary, is one of our era's more prolific producers of studies of NT themes and books. In my opinion, his most significant works so far are his socio-rhetorical commentaries on NT books (Mark, Acts, Galatians, the Corinthian correspondence, and soon 1 and 2 Thessalonians). In the current volume, Witherington has made an important contribution to what is already an unmanageable library of works on Romans.

Following a relatively brief introduction to Romans, the commentary proceeds in chapters comprised of a fresh translation, commentary, excurses of varying lengths on hermeneutical issues, and application thoughts designed to be helpful for preachers and teachers, some of which were written by Hyatt. The sequence of chapters themselves is organized around the author's analysis of the rhetoric of the epistle: Epistolary Prescript and Greeting, Exordium and Narratio, Propositio, Arguments one through twelve, Peroratio, Good News Heading West, and A

Letter of Recommendation and Reconciliation. The volume closes with three helpful indices: Modern Authors, Biblical References, and Other Ancient Writings.

The strength of this work lies in the author's impressive knowledge of the ancient rhetoricians. Numerous references to and quotations of Quintillian, Aristotle, Epictetus, and Seneca ground the volume in classical rhetoric, while citations of Josephus, Philo, Rabbinic writings, and Qumran documents illustrate the thought of Paul in the context of first-century Judaism. In addition, much of Witherington's rhetorical analysis is supported by comments from the church fathers, especially 1 Clement, Ignatius, Chrysostom, and Origen.

This makes for interesting reading for one who, like me, finds rhetorical analysis helpful when applied to NT texts carefully and consistently. Not only does this approach aid in our understanding of documents like Romans, it also gives glimpses of Paul as a preacher who could communicate the gospel in both Jewish and Greco-Roman cultural settings. I would like to have seen more application of rabbinic midrash (both *haggadah* and *halakha*) as Jewish rhetoric in chapters 4 and 9–11; but Witherington does show close connections with Pseudepigrapha and other Jewish writings at those appropriate points.

There are, of course a few places in the volume where I found myself disagreeing with Witherington. For example, he states that "The term *apostolos* means a 'called out and set apart person." (31) He gives no citation for this definition, which conflicts with the more generally understood "sent-out one." Commenting on Rom 6:4, he writes, "Baptism throughout this segment is correlated with burial and death, not with resurrection and new life" (158). This conclusion is brought into question by the very verse it is based on—a verse in which the resurrection and newness of life follow immediately (as a *hina* clause) the mention of burial and death. In addition, there is a glaring lapse in the translation of 4:5, which reads, "But to the one not working, but believing in the righteousness of the ungodly." (117) Witherington contradicts this translation in his commentary on the verse, where he says, "Paul speaks of the God who *sets right* the ungodly." (125, emphasis mine) Both the context of reckoning righteousness and the syntactically parallel statements in verses 17 and 24 demand the understanding of the commentary, as opposed to that of the translation.

These are, of course, minor complaints about a work that I find exceptionally helpful. I would highly recommend Witherington's work on Romans to students and preachers who want to understand, as we all should, the epistle in its historical and rhetorical setting.

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Marianne Meye THOMPSON. *Colossians and Philemon.* The Two Horizons New Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005. 287 pp. $20.00.

This commentary has the virtue of remaining accessible to a wide range of readers while laying out interpretive alternatives and briefly giving reasons for the con-

clusions it reaches. Thompson carries well the difficult task of brevity while supporting positions she takes on various critical and exegetical issues. She also helps readers see what is (or is not) at stake in the discussion of critical issues.

Against the current trend in NT studies, Thompson argues that Paul wrote Colossians. She recognizes the arguments on both sides of the question and takes her position knowing that it is not as secure as some might wish. Thompson recognizes the importance of the specific setting of the letter and works to interpret the letter in that setting. She is also careful in her identification of the teaching Colossians opposes. As in so many places, she takes a position and works from it but does not claim too much certainty about her conclusions. In this, her work is a model of good exegesis.

Thompson is equally careful in defining the issue at stake in Philemon. She notes the problems with understanding precisely the situation of Onesimus and the request of Paul. Such careful attention to the historical setting and contextual meaning of these letters is particularly important because of the nature of the series in which the commentary appears.

The "Two Horizons" series seeks not only to interpret the letter in its original context, but also to use the results of that exegesis to inform systematic theology. After the exegesis of each letter is completed, there is extensive discussion of what they may contribute to theology today. Thompson finds a christological focus in the theology of Colossians, noting that it constantly uses agent language to speak of Christ in relation to God. Colossians' theology, she argues, has Christ as the one who integrates all of reality and brings together creation and redemption. She finds a theology that is closer to the later Trinitarian formulations than many readers of Colossians perceive in the letter. Thompson also finds more futurist eschatology in Colossians than many interpreters find.

Thompson tackles the question of how Colossians fits with the Pauline theology of the undisputed letters (of which she ventures an outline) and finds it compatible, even if focused in a different way. Thompson's discussions of the theological value of Colossians venture into modern and postmodern questions, including those that involve the value of a metanarrative and the tension between pluralism and Christian claims about salvation being in Christ. She notes that the world is no more pluralistic now than it was when Paul and other NT writers formulated their claims about Christ. She also discusses implications of Colossians for ecclesiology and ethics.

Thompson sees important issues of ecclesiology and even eschatology (the creation of the new humanity in Christ) raised in Philemon. She also addresses the fact that the NT does not directly oppose slavery. She concludes with reflections on how one uses Scripture today when developing theological and ethical positions as Christians.

Thompsons' careful exegesis and theological reflections will serve all readers well. She does not engage in extended debate about technical exegetical points, but her work often mentions such issues and her positions take account of those debates. While exegetes will come to different conclusions in some places, her views offer a solid reading of the text. Her theological reflections will appeal more to conservative readers, but her positions are expressed in ways that can engage others.

Pastors, Sunday school teachers, and seminary students will all benefit from this fine commentary.

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Perry L. STEPP. *Leadership Succession in the World of the Pauline Circle.* New Testament Monographs 5. Sheffield: Phoenix, 2005. 227 pp. $22.50.

Many of the divisions that separate Protestantism from Roman Catholic and Orthodox churches are rooted in disagreements regarding apostolic succession. In this revision of his Baylor University Ph.D. dissertation Stepp, Associate Professor of Biblical Studies at Kentucky Christian University, offers an academic response to those who claim that no ministry is valid that cannot be traced back to the apostles in a direct chain.

Chapter one is introductory in nature outlining goals, methodology, and a short history of the debate.

In chapters two and three, Stepp surveys ancient texts that describe the function of succession. His database includes over 60 ancient Mediterranean texts taken from Greco-Roman sources from before AD 200, which not only mention succession between people but also focuses on the function of what that particular succession achieved. He also shows in these chapters how ancient Greco-Roman and Jewish and Christian texts basically used the idea of succession in the same way. He finds that succession stories functioned similarly across the milieus and had common textual and typological features. Stepp notes that a major difference in the Greco-Roman texts and the Jewish and Christian texts is that in the latter, God is usually seen as the initiator and guide of succession, instead of fate, providence, the predecessors or some other factor.

Chapters four and five cover succession in the Pastoral Epistles, and the sixth chapter provides a conclusion regarding succession in these texts. Here the author suggests that Paul's departure and the issues this raises are central themes. The focus of the discussion by Stepp is how the Pastoral Epistles utilize succession to meet the challenges raised by Paul's coming death. The last chapter lists broader conclusions and further implications of the study.

This volume contains important suggestions for understanding Christian ministry. Stepp shows convincingly that the pastoral epistles do not support the understanding of apostolic succession currently held by churches with an episcopal organization. What the Pastoral Epistles show is not the passing on of an office but rather the succession of tradition and task. In addition, Stepp argues that "ordination" in the Pastoral Epistles does not imply an unbroken chain of laying-on-of-hands but rather emphasizes God's choosing of Paul's successor through prophecy and the successor's continued faithfulness and godly life. Faithful ministry stands in the stream of succession going back to the ministry of Jesus Christ and does not derive its authority from hierarchy, office, or title but rather from the calling of God.

This volume is a welcome addition to the debate over apostolic authority and ministry. This is a detailed, well-argued volume containing a wealth of information

that no one interested in the subject can afford to neglect. Stepp's arguments should give those holding to apostolic succession reason for pause. There is room, however, to quibble at several points (for example, see the discussion on Timothy's authority over the eldership, 144) but those in the Stone-Campbell Movement will find this volume to be an excellent source of information, although not an easy read. Bear in mind that this monograph is a revision of the author's Ph.D. dissertation and as such contains technical language that may be difficult for laymen to understand. However, with some effort the reader will be rewarded with a first-class treatment of apostolic succession, and the volume is highly recommended for those teaching courses in ministry and leadership development.

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