Book Reviews

John Mark HICKS and Bobby VALENTINE. ***Kingdom Come: Embracing the Spiritual Legacy of David Lipscomb and James Harding.*** **Abilene, TX: Leafwood, 2006. 224 pp. $14.99.**

This volume examines the ideas of David Lipscomb and James Harding, two leading figures of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Churches of Christ (a cappella). This book applies the lessons of history to address present concerns. Some individuals and congregations, believing their heritage is "wanting in spirituality," have begun "disassociating themselves from Churches of Christ and seeking spirituality in the greener pastures of Evangelicalism." On the other hand, other individuals and congregations continue to "find their spiritual identity in church practices" (15). Hicks and Valentine believe that the biblical views of Lipscomb and Harding, an overlooked area of church history, point to a third and better way.

Lipscomb and Harding represented a theological position the authors label the Nashville Bible School Tradition. In the early twentieth century this viewpoint was supplanted by the so-called Texas Tradition, led by such men as R.L. Whiteside and Foy E. Wallace Jr. Despite commonalities between the two theological orientations, these men diverged on important issues, particularly their interpretation of the kingdom. Whereas "the Texas Tradition identified the church with the kingdom . . . the Nashville Bible School Tradition maintained that the kingdom was the dynamic work of God in the world that cannot be simply identified with the church." According to Hicks and Valentine, the ascendancy of the Texas Tradition was ultimately a change for the worse. They argue that Lipscomb and Harding speak to the present with a point of view that is "more biblically authentic, and needed in the contemporary church" (19).

Hicks and Valentine use the writings of Lipscomb and Harding, along with relevant passages of Scripture, to survey theological issues that are as vital today as they were a century ago. The Nashville Bible School Tradition urges Christians to live "in the shadows of the second coming" (35), to embrace the ethical teachings of Christ, embodied in the Sermon on the Mount, and to be more countercultural and less focused on defining themselves by worship practices. Lipscomb and Harding viewed God as actively and providentially caring for his people. Harding especially believed that an essential aspect of a God-centered and Christ-centered life was the spiritual communion made possible by the indwelling work of the Holy Spirit, an active agent in the work of the kingdom. The writings of Lipscomb and Harding call churches and individual Christians to emphasize "four great means of grace" (76), Scripture reading, prayer, the Lord's Supper, and ministering to the poor. If contemporary American Christians followed the example of these forebears, they would focus on their citizenship in God's kingdom and not be co-opted by their culture and make patriotism a religious observance. Hicks and Valentine assert that their two subjects argued for freedom of thought and embraced an inclu-

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sive view of fellowship that is a model for Christians today. In making this point, the authors overlook evidence presented earlier in their book: Lipscomb and Harding believed acts of worship and belief in immersion for the remission of sins were issues of fellowship, a view that ironically accords with the branch of modern Churches of Christ that supposedly finds its identity in worship practices.

Hicks and Valentine have produced a thoughtful book that challenges its readers to rethink the direction of their spiritual journey. Though the authors primarily address members of Churches of Christ, their book is of interest to any individual of the Stone-Campbell Movement who wonders if present views of the kingdom are too limited, if churches have become ends in themselves rather than means to an end, promoting God's kingdom in a fallen world.

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Gary BEST. *Charles Wesley: A Biography.* London: Epworth, 2006. 390 pp. £19.99.

Publishing in conjunction with the tercentenary of Charles Wesley's birth, Best has written a narrative biography that attempts to recover the important influence of this lesser-known Wesley brother. Though his subject was known largely for his hymn-writing, Best argues that Charles Wesley's importance was much greater. Charles Wesley, more than his brother John, shaped the beginnings of Methodism through his effective preaching and guiding of congregations. Best argues that at the foundation of these interpersonal efforts was a "man made for friendship."

How Wesley came to acquire this pietistic personality concerns Best throughout this monograph. Best relies heavily upon Wesley's own words to describe his distinctive personality and to place him in the pantheon of Methodism's founders. Wesley's journals, letters, and other writings form almost all of Best's source material in this narrative biography. An unintended consequence of relying heavily on the voice of Wesley is that Best superficially places the events of Wesley's life in their cultural, political, and socioeconomic context.

Best divides Wesley's life into three main parts: early life to conversion, religious life and his contributions to Methodism, and later life filled with health struggles. He places particular importance on Wesley's early life, allowing him to argue for Wesley's influence in the founding of Methodism. To articulate this point, Best analyzes his important role in the establishment of the Oxford Holy Club, which, with its emphasis on common reading and discussion, prefigured Methodism.

Best also narrates Wesley's sojourn in Georgia, where he attempted to settle and minister to a new royal colony. However, he was ill much of the time and had to return to England soon after. Wesley's voyage to America also brought him into contact with a Moravian community. Moravian emphasis on piety and emotion affected many aspects of Wesley's life; Best argues that contact with this Moravian community in Georgia and another one in England influenced Wesley's conversion experience. Best's narrative slows at this point, where Wesley, confined to a sickbed, spent much of his time reading and praying, and in May 1738 had an emo-

tional conversion experience. Wesley's conversion accelerated his pastoral and evangelistic efforts.

Best's narrative is the slowest during Wesley's early years, apparently deeming them most important, and the early focus emphasizes the importance of Wesley in the founding and shaping of Methodism. In the final half of the book Best retells Wesley's marriage, his distancing himself from the nascent Methodist movement, his strong desire to remain in the Church of England, his sickness, and his later death, but it is the early years that are the key.

Best's monograph provides a readable and much-needed treatment of the life of Charles Wesley. Any student of Methodism or the Wesleys wanting a quick introduction to the life of Charles Wesley will benefit from reading this volume. However, Best's account has drawbacks: it contains little new information, relies too much on only the words of Wesley himself, and rarely examines other contemporary sources, like newspapers, which would have provided a more complex picture of Wesley. Furthermore, a richer description of the historical milieu of Wesley's time also would have improved the narrative immensely. Readers will be left wondering about Moravianism or the common experience of an Oxford student. While Best's narrative may not provide much new information to advanced students of the Wesleys, Methodism, pietism, or English religious history, this volume does provide an excellent resource to the general reader looking for a readable introduction to this lesser known Wesley.

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Robert D. LINDER. *The Reformation Era.* Greenwood Guides to Historic Events, 1500–1900. London and Westport, CT: Greenwood, 2008. 225 pp. $45.00.

Robert Linder, distinguished professor of history at Kansas State University, has written a concise, readable, and very helpful guide to the history of the Reformation era. His stated aim was to produce a book that would be useful for high school or undergraduate students writing a term paper.

The chapters cover the general setting of the times before the reformation and separate chapters for the movements led by Luther, Calvin, and English leaders. Chapters on the Anabaptists and the Catholic reformation follow, and then a concluding chapter summarizes.

Several additional features will make this volume especially useful for its intended reader. A five-page chronology of events from 1309 to 1660 precedes the main text. Following the narrative are a few pages of photographs, then 23 biographical sketches of from one to two pages each, in alphabetical order. The next forty pages are devoted to 12 primary documents including of course the 95 Theses, but also excerpts from Erasmus, Teresa of Avila, Menno Simmons, and the entertaining account of John Knox's interrogation by Queen Mary, among others. The book concludes with a seven-page glossary and an annotated bibliography and index.

The chapters on the Anabaptists and the Catholic Reformation provide infor-

mation that is often overlooked in books or courses that concentrate on the *Protestant* Reformation. Linder notes that the term Anabaptist is not ideal; it was given by opponents of the various free-church movements who sought a restoration of New Testament Christianity. He provides a sympathetic portrait of the men and women who followed the radical goal of forming churches based on the free association of followers of Jesus according to the NT. The accounts of the brutal persecution of the radical reformers, coming from both Catholic and Protestant leaders, is quite moving.

Linder does not limit the Catholic Reformation to the Counter Reformation. He describes reform movements within the Roman Catholic Church before, alongside of, and in dialogue with the Reformers. The Catholic Reformation was finally taken over by the Counter Reformation, though.

Linder's narrative style is lively and clear. Technical jargon is at a minimum, and when used, it is explained. Linder does use the German term *Anfectungen* to describe Luther's trials, but he balances that by introducing the term "E-Nail" (Ecclesiastical Nail) to refer to Luther's use of new technology to spread the Reformation.

Linder is aware of current trends in historiography but never gets bogged down in technical details; the end notes point the reader to further literature on such issues. He attempts to be fair to all sides. However, he is a little soft on Luther. He does not mention Luther's atrocious written tirades against the Jews in his declining years (nor his hopeful, early writings toward them). Only this mild hint is included, Lindar noting that Luther "issued scores of books and tracts that both promoted his New Testament theology and attacked his opponents, especially the Roman Catholic Church, Anabaptist radicals, and Jews who refused the Gospel."

Linder notes that only one heretic was burnt in Calvin's Geneva. He does set the torture and execution of Michael Servetus in historical context, noting that heresy was a capital crime under the old Roman law code that was in force everywhere in Europe, and noting that Calvin pleaded with Servetus to leave Geneva and cease promoting his non-Trinitarian views before it was too late—and in the end Calvin pleaded with the leaders of Geneva for a more humane form of execution.

Otherwise the positive effects of Calvin's reform for freedom, civil order, education, and economic progress are noted. Linder observes that Calvin said much less about predestination than later Calvinists, and did not in fact explicitly teach "double predestination."

The only real drawback to this book is the price, which seems a bit steep for its slender size. However, many students may consider the amount of information packed into a small space to be an advantage. Busy preachers may also consider the book a bargain in this respect. It should at least be placed in the libraries of all colleges and high schools. The book is readable and usable for a high school student, but I suspect it will also be useful to many graduate students preparing for their exams.

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James HUDNUT-BEUMLER. *In Pursuit of The Almighty's Dollar: A History of Money and American Protestantism.* Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2007. 288 pp. $29.95.

Money. We all say we need it. Ministers know that as well as anyone. James Hudnut-Beumler, the Dean of Vanderbilt Divinity School, traces the history of church fundraising from the 18th century to present. He charts the changing rhetoric and the shifts from involuntary to voluntary fundraising that led to the spiritualization of giving. Spiritualized giving expanded churches' ministries, ultimately driving the need for larger budgets. Hudnut-Beumler uses books, pamphlets, church buildings, short films, plays, and many other interesting sources to expand our understanding of church finances. He organizes the book around five chapters on church finance and four shorter chapters on labor and buildings.

The book begins with the premise that the Great Awakening's individualism and Church disestablishment transformed churches from public institutions to private ones. Churches that were formerly supported through taxes and pew rents now raised money through voluntary contributions, and a large portion of the minister's role shifted from public servant to fundraiser.

The majority of the book chronicles religious leaders' attempts to raise funds from members who needed nudging. Leaders used religious rationale and biblical precedents to create a language of sacred obligation for giving money thus sacralizing the once secular finances. Due to low and erratic contributions, minister's stressed tithing and systematic giving. In the late 19th century the term stewardship was introduced to further encourage members' giving. Stewardship language transformed from duty to loyalty and finally into responsibility by the middle of the 20th century—all attempts to increase giving to 10% of one's income. In the latter half of the 20th century, competition for members and dollars that emerged with individual, voluntary religion in the 18th century engendered diverse groups and messages. Fundraising became consumer driven and dollars were sought from people in pews, bookstores, coffee shops, and chat rooms with diverse messages that catered to each market. Hudnut-Beumler notes that while rhetoric and tools for fundraising changed, tithing remained the goal.

Minister's salaries and status declined throughout the study. The Great Awakening's primacy of passion over education devalued minister's higher education, and fluctuating markets gradually lowered their salaries to the point that now seminary is the only graduate education that produces negative earning potential. Once the most influential and educated members of society, ministers as a whole ended the 20th century with a fear of falling out of the middle class. Minister's wives, no less, had to deal with their husband's declining salaries while maintaining a certain societal standard with the congregation watching.

While half of all money raised by churches went to minister's salaries, the second largest expenditure was buildings. The chapters on church buildings highlighted the desire for more, bigger, better. Initially buildings were built out of need (fire, growth, etc.) In the early 20th century, buildings grew to serve every purpose of life such as gyms and classrooms, and during the second half of the 20th century buildings were a means of purchasing a desired identity. Churches were built to

look like barns, warehouses, and older establishment churches of a previous age, buying family values, hip urban identities, and prestige.

The book's strength lies in the context it provides for discussing church finances and fundraising. Hudnut-Beumler highlights the changing stewardship language that is so pervasive and ambiguous today. While there are many books that examine the morality of money and five to ten steps to raise money, few tell the history and give contexts to our discussions. This book also uses varied and fresh sources and illumines the human, often awkward feelings ministers felt toward fundraising. The weaknesses include lacking members' responses to and role in shaping fundraising, and a declension model driven by examining mainly mainline churches. The more explosive topic of churches using the money raised, which the Stone-Campbell Movement may realize better than most, would add to this study. These weaknesses aside, I wholeheartedly recommend this book to anyone interested in church organization and finances. It is an excellent book for ministers and churches wanting historical context for giving and tithing, and is valuable reading for seminary ministry classes by framing a conversation about a subject that all ministers face regularly.

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Tom P.S. ANGIER. *Either Kierkegaard or Nietzsche: Moral Philosophy in a New Key.* Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006. 170 pp. $79.95.

Kierkegaard and Nietzsche are among the few philosophers that those outside of philosophy read—due to their literary brilliance and their (at least perceived) existential relevance. Tom Angier's book on these two figures presents two theses: First, it argues that Søren Kierkegaard and Friedrich Nietzsche, though largely thought to be otherwise, are worthy of serious study for those in the analytic tradition—particularly in the area of moral philosophy (that they are "major moral philosophers" (4)). Second, and more interestingly, it argues that Kierkegaard (who predated Nietzsche) anticipated the main contours of Nietzsche's moral philosophy and produced a powerful critique of this kind of philosophy. Beyond these two central points, Angier's book performs some other secondary tasks: He deals with critiques of Kierkegaard's ethical theory put forward by such a prominent analytic philosopher as Alister MacIntyre—defending Kierkegaard from the charge that his version of ethical choice lacks rational criteria. Though this, frankly annoying task (due to the lack of acquaintance to Kierkegaard's corpus in MacIntyre's critique) has been done before, Angier does a fine job. Angier also shows how Kierkegaard anticipates narrative accounts of human behavior, action, and ethics (as in Hauerwas and MacIntyre).

The main point might be summarized as follow: Whereas Nietzsche presents a paradigm of self-creation—where one defines one's own values and meanings—Kierkegaard presents one of self-choice—of choosing (or failing to choose) to be the self that God has created as is described in the progression through Kierkegaard's existence-spheres (the aesthetic, the ethical, and the religious). The critique from the perspective of Kierkegaard's work is that Nietzsche's understanding of life is not realistic—not ultimately possible and thus self-frustrating and ultimately leading to a dis-

integration of the self. For example, in chapter two, Angier shows how (Kierkegaard's pseudonym) Judge Wilhelm's critique of the "aesthetic" lifestyle as ultimately self-frustrating in this volume can be applied, to a large degree, against Nietzsche.

At under 150 pages, this volume has the strength and weakness of its brevity. The arguments are strong, and the interactions between the fine points of these two thinkers is thoughtful and provocative. If a weakness is to be found, I occasionally found myself wanting more—a more full-blooded exposition of Kierkegaard, coming at the issue at hand from the perspective of more texts, etc. for Kierkegaard is presented, I think rightly, as having the superior position. I was left with a fuller picture of Nietzsche's position and the problems with it than with such a picture of Kierkegaard's position. However, this is not at odds with the book's stated purpose which is how Kierkegaard can critique Nietzsche. But again, the book is under 150 pages; when one looks at how much is done (showing the superiority of Kierkegaard to Nietzsche when it comes to moral thought, religion, truth, communication, power, equality . . .) in such brief space, it is difficult to feel cheated—it is a large return for a small investment.

Angier's book has the potential to be valuable and relevant for various Christians interested in contemporary philosophy. It is valuable for those interested in either of these fascinating figures and in thinking about postmodernity—its progenitors, its failings, its potential. This work shows in Kierkegaard a brilliant Christian theistic critique and countervision for the prime forefather of so-called postmodern thought. Such a Kierkegaard can be seen as an alternative to the thus far ascendant Nietzschean postmodernity as nihilist and atheist—a postmodernity that is the apotheosis and self-immolation of modernity's strident autonomy and rationalism. This book can be seen as a further step toward something like a "Kierkegaardian postmodernity"—as Merold Westphal has proposed—a genuinely Christian way of being otherwise-than-modern.

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Denis ALEXANDER and Robert S. WHITE. ***Science, Faith, and Ethics: Grid or Gridlock?*** **Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2006. 190 pp. $16.95.**

Science and religion continues to be one of theologies hottest topics. Dozens of theologians, scientists, and philosophers have proposed hundreds of perspectives on how these two giants of human intellectual achievement are compatible. The interdisciplinary nature of the research project gives rise to an all-too-common problem: members of one field who prove inadequately informed in the others. The offering of scientists Alexander and White, unfortunately, is no exception to this trend.

Their task is one with which I have a great deal of sympathy: "We find that science and Christian faith have a great deal in common in the way they view the material world and the way it works" (xi). That common view of the world is realism (albeit, in science at least, a critical realism which recognizes the incompleteness, fallibility, and theory-laden nature of empirical data). Alexander and White insist (correctly, I think) that the tradition and the current practice of both science

and Christian theology is dominated by an understanding of the world as real, distinct from perception, and susceptible to empirical investigation.

To this shared realist conviction Alexander and White add what they call a "robust theism"—one that does not distinguish between aspects of nature in which God is at work and those in which he is not. Rather, God's providence is seen to permeate the whole of nature. For the Christian, science, religion, and daily living all lend credence to such a robust theism, which affords tremendous explanatory power for all aspects of our lives.

These two building blocks of critical realism and robust theism aid the authors in building a case for the affinity of science and religion that avoids compartmentalization into realms without overlap, which so often passes for compatibility or complementarity in the literature. This approach is, perhaps, the most valuable contribution of the book. It is developed in two major parts, theoretical and practical. The latter section addresses what they call "hot issues for the twenty-first century"—viz., evolution, genetics, and ecology.

This seemingly reasonable division of labor is the basis for the first of two major problems I find with the book. It simply tries to do too much. While both parts contain valuable insight and worthwhile perspective (the information on biological evolution and cloning alone are worth the price of the book), the goal they set is simply too big. Consequently, the careful reader is left with unanswered questions page after page.

But the more serious flaw of the book is its glaring lack of philosophical sophistication. For example, the authors speak of the *objective* world, leaving the impression that the deliverances of science come free of philosophical undertones. In the philosophy of science it is much more common to speak of the *observable* world as the domain of science. While this criticism may seem inexcusably arcane, the same lack of precision arises in much more practical settings. For example, their criticisms of moral relativism and postmodernism (36) are based on inaccurate, caricatured descriptions. Furthermore, since they are practicing scientists, their confusion of science and technology on the one hand (41-42) and math and science on the other (36) damages their overall credibility. And the above constitute only a partial list of their errors and misconceptions.

As intimated above, I find this book useful for the scientific information it offers. However, its too-wide scope and interdisciplinary inaccuracy far outweigh these benefits. For those interested in the conversation between science and religion, I recommend the various works of physicist-turned-philosophically-sophisticated-theologian John Polkinghorne.

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Gerald R. McDERMOTT. *God's Rivals: Why Has God Allowed Different Religions? Insights from the Bible and the Early Church.* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2007. 181 pp. $18.00.

Carrying on the work from his previous book, *Can Evangelicals Learn from World Religions?* (IVP, 2000), in this volume McDermott continues to engage the

question of how churches should view different religions. His premise is that "the biblical authors and early church theologians saw the religions not simply as human constructions but as spiritual projects as well" (11). Examining views from the OT and NT, in addition to some of the early church fathers (Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, and Origen), McDermott seeks to gain some insight for today at the end of each chapter.

Chapter one examines why God has chosen to reveal himself to only a select people and only at certain times (19). After entertaining some of the responses to these questions he quickly moves to the second chapter where he discusses some of the examples found in the Bible of people who held a knowledge of God detached from "the people of God."

Chapters three and four examine the conflicting views in the OT of foreign gods (henotheism, polytheism, and monotheism). McDermott presents four distinct stages in the progression by explaining the differing views of foreign gods through the lens of progressive revelation. He continues his thought as he moves into the context of the NT. Here he contends that the NT language of "powers and principalities," used by Paul, is to be understood as angelic powers in rebellion.

Chapters five through eight focus on the views of four early church fathers. The beginning of each chapter gives a helpful background of the church father being discussed followed by each church father's understanding of different religions. McDermott begins by looking at Justin Martyr's *prisca theologia* (lit., "ancient theology") and the *Logos* in connection to the "pagan" religions (91). In the end he confers with Justin's estimation that God has sowed seeds of truth in the other religions. Next, McDermott investigates Irenaeus's explanation of the religions as being used by God (the divine pedagogue) in the process of bringing people to know him and suggests, in Irenaeus's view, "that God has always been at work in all the religions" (112). In the next chapter, McDermott explains how Clement of Alexandria advocated that God gave other religions in order "to prepare them to receive the gospel" (129). Carefully handled, McDermott asserts that "Clement's suggestions are both helpful and problematic" (131). Origen is the last Church Father McDermott discusses and, in his estimation, Origen is best understood when examining his views of freedom and providence (149). In so doing, McDermott paints a picture of Origen that he later sifts through in order to extract a useful theology.

Chapter nine recaps with a summary all the previous chapters. In an appendix, McDermott explains his decision to make use of the masculine pronoun in reference to God.

The greatest strength of the book is McDermott's ability to present a great deal of ideas from both the OT and NT as well as the church fathers in such a small volume. Additionally, his continual use of footnotes familiarizes the reader with a number of primary documents which may be useful in further study. One of the weaknesses of the book is McDermott's deficiency in connecting with modern scholarship. While he makes considerable reference to primary sources, little reference is made to any of the scholarship on these sources. In addition, it may be beneficial to the reader to consult Hendrik Berkof's *Christ and the Powers* (Herald Press, 2nd ed., 1977) and John Howard Yoder's *The Politics of Jesus* (Eerdmans, 2nd

ed., 1994) when engaging McDermott's understanding of Paul's use of the language of "powers" found in chapter two.

McDermott's volume will be useful in various circles as his examination is written in a form that is both accessible and thought provoking. This work would be useful to the Church at large as well as to world religion or theology classes at both the undergraduate and graduate level.

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Kelly S. JOHNSON. *The Fear of Beggars: Stewardship and Poverty in Christian Ethics.* The Eerdmans Ekklesia Series. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007. 246 pp. $20.00.

If you've been to an urban area lately or kept up with the news, you are aware that a number of cities in the U.S. and around the world have what has been called a "beggar problem." Some have tried to address this growing problem by passing ordinances restricting "panhandling," while others have publicly encouraged their citizens not to give to beggars. As one Midwestern mayor recently insisted, "The panhandlers will go away when the money goes away."

As sensible as such advice might sound to contemporary ears, Johnson's scholarly but highly-readable treatment of the role of begging and voluntary poverty in the Christian tradition might give us pause to wonder whether getting rid of beggars ought to be our highest priority. Indeed, Johnson's book reminds us that voluntary begging and poverty have at times in Christian history been understood—if not always widely embraced—as a kind of prophetic vocation that powerfully challenges conventional assumptions about any number of things, including property rights, the role of productivity in human life, the possibilities of altruism and the limits of sympathy, the nature of humility, one's responsibilities to strangers, and whether "virtuous dependence" is possible, desirable, or simply oxymoronic. Johnson's purposes in recounting the history and contributions of voluntary beggars over the centuries are twofold: first, to show how they offered an important theological critique of shifting economic relations within an emerging market economy; and second, to provide a "valuable foil to changes in the life of the church regarding ownership, particularly the development of the term 'stewardship' and the emergence of classical economics" (8).

Toward those ends, Johnson's opening chapter sketches the varied but often interconnected functions that voluntary begging served in medieval church and society. Here Johnson offers a crucial theological account of why Christians at this time widely considered voluntary begging as a virtuous practice, a view all but completely contrary to contemporary sensibilities. She follows with a second chapter that highlights the critiques, instabilities, and potential hypocrisies of mendicant life, noting along the way how voluntary poverty ironically fostered "a renewed sense of the moral importance of property, the centrality of rights in public discourse, and the market as a pervasive organizational component of society" (51).

Johnson's third chapter traces the development of and shifts within the use of "stewardship" language within the church. Although she concedes that this lan-

guage has often functioned for good, she also convincingly demonstrates how the widespread adoption of this language—and the spiritualization of poverty and humility it entailed—shifted the center of gravity in economic ethics away from the virtuous poor toward holders of property, who are now regarded as "the standard in relation to which the poor will be understood" (98). The following chapter takes up the emerging social theories of Adam Smith and T.R. Malthus, who in different ways both make rational economic exchanges among strangers the norm and thus turn beggars into an irrational threat to the social fabric. By way of contrast, Johnson closes the chapter by briefly narrating the life of the beggar-saint Benoît-Joseph Labre, an 18th-century French pilgrim whose way of life challenged the enlightened economic theories of Smith and Malthus and bore witness to an alternative political order that only makes sense in light of concrete Christian convictions about Jesus, the ends of human life, and the Body of Christ.

Johnson's final two chapters turn to 20th-century discussions regarding poverty and property. Chapter five focuses on the U.S. Catholic bishops' letter on stewardship, the writings of Protestant theologian Douglas John Hall, and the work of recent philosophers (primarily John Milbank) on gift economies. What is most surprising about these contemporary discussions, as illuminated by her earlier chapters, is how they largely (though often unknowingly) reiterate many of the same impasses and problems that plagued previous eras. Not content to leave the discussion

there, Johnson's sixth chapter focuses on the untidy and provocative contributions of a rather unlikely thinker, Peter Maurin, who along with Dorothy Day is widely-regarded as the cofounder of the Catholic worker movement. Through his teachings and example, Maurin offered a glimpse of an alternative Christian social order rooted in a notion of the common good where virtuous dependence and voluntary poverty served an important function. As Johnson writes, "What beggars offer is a flash of an economy not based on fear and evasion of each other's needs, an economy that does not rely on rights as weaponry against the weakness of the human condition and against the needs and demands of others. That flash is painful because the transition from the economy where a beggar is a parasite, morally deformed, or a metaphor for human mortality to an economy where this beggar could be a friend is shocking" (197-198).

Johnson's volume offers an invaluable contribution to current discussions in theological ethics about alternative economies rooted in notions of the common good and the circulation of gifts rather than in impersonal market forces. She also renders an important service by offering us a much more robust history and analysis of the use of "stewardship" language in Western societies and churches. Those wanting a tidy answer to the question of how to respond to beggars on the street should look elsewhere, but readers willing to reevaluate some of their basic assumptions about poverty and property will be richly rewarded by their study of this important work.

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John D. CAPUTO. ***What Would Jesus Deconstruct?*** **Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007. 160 pp. $19.99.**

Caputo has written a challenging book on "the good news of postmodernism for the church." His book may be good news for the evangelical left, postconservatives, and the more radical part of the emergent movement, but it certainly is not good news for conservative evangelicals and more traditional orthodox Christians. Caputo's critique is mainly directed against the distinctively American domestication of Jesus associated with 'the Religious Right.' The book is filled with colorful humor, provocative statements, and many preemptive strikes so that any kind of counterarguments from conservative Christians can be dismissed from the start.

In this postmodern paradigm, Caputo juxtaposes cleverly WWJD, "What would Jesus Do?" with a heavy dose of Jesus as the first deconstructionist contrasting the ethics of the Kingdom of God with the ethics of this world. He masterfully reveals the many subtle ways we try to domesticate Jesus and how Jesus challenges our cultural icons and our propensity towards idolatry. Caputo tries to teach French lessons to American Christians who already have an aversion towards the French, he does so with biting comedy and satire throughout the book. If there is one thing the church needs to learn, it's to recapture Jesus' comedic style of saying things that everyone else was afraid to say. Caputo gives the church a major spanking and hopes they will thank him for it later.

Many in the emergent movement and those outside are sympathetic to concerns of the postmodern youth culture. People are tired of truth being used like a weapon against others, and postmodern philosophy certainly promotes humility and compassion for 'the Other.' Many postmodern-minded Christians also recognize their "social location" when it comes to how they understand scriptural issues as well as a strong proclivity against all forms of violence. But Christian scholars are also concerned about a kind of built in "fuzziness" in too many postmodern claims and their aversion to the hard teachings of Jesus on "hell" and to the church's teachings on "heresy."

In this postmodern quest, a growing number of leaders like Caputo see themselves (contrasted to an old kind of Christianity or one birthed in modernity) as enlightened, compassionate, and inclusive kinds of people. They are liberated and glad they are not like the fundamentalists or conservative evangelicals, the one group everyone can make fun of without guilt. Postmodern people see themselves often as fellow travelers or explorers never arriving at a destination but simply enjoying the journey for the journey's sake.

Many will read Caputo's book with delight and chuckle while never really coming to terms or understanding the philosophy behind his words and critique. One question Christians need to seriously ask about deconstruction and postmodern philosophy is why are Christians utilizing a methodology that comes from French Jewish Atheists? Derrida, Lyotard, Levinas and Focault were all atheists. It is one thing for Christians to learn from their critics, but it's quite another when they are its teachers and tutors.

Witty and catchy phrases occur throughout the book like "deconstruction happens," "poetics of the kingdom," and the "hauntological principle" to name a few. Caputo challenges the reader's self-knowing and for one to think about knowledge in a "different" way. The beginning of knowledge for the postmodern is not "the fear of the Lord" but the concession that "we do not know who we are." There is a beautiful side to identifying with others and placing an image of oneself with others, but this approach is also fraught with danger. It directs the question of the self away from itself as a new center rather than a de-centered self nailed to the cross: "I have been crucified with Christ." This "de-centered center" in Christ now loves others in an even more radical way than deconstructionists can imagine.

Jesus the deconstructionist in Derridian terms opts for "undecidability" and a healthy skepticism for negative theology. But apophatic theology of defining God by what "God is not" is not the same thing as a radical skepticism for God's unknowability. To go even farther, there is much lip service to retrieval of tradition when what is "actually" happening is the ransacking of tradition for one's own personal use. Caputo suggests that Catholics need to become more postmodern, but postmoderns need to become more Catholic.

The Christian postmodernist may give key ideas and people a pass from deconstruction like "justice," "the kingdom of God" and even "Jesus" while non-Christian deconstructionists will wonder and ask why these are exempt from the dismantling tool of deconstruction? One thing both of these groups agree on is the Bible itself must be deconstructed. Too many plays for power and personal agendas and misreading of ancient texts within the Scriptures occur from the postmod-

ern perspective. Caputo only quotes one source in all this and that is the agnostic/atheist Bart Ehrman. One thing postliberals and postmoderns agree on is the Bible does not have to be taken literally to be taken seriously.

This new radical way of approaching Scripture appears arbitrary and contradictory to those who approach the Bible in a more holistic way. One example would be how postmoderns love the story of God's "call" on Abraham's life when God tells Abraham to start walking to a new promised land without Abraham knowing where he was going. But then postmoderns are offended by the Abraham/Isaac story which sounds too much like child-abuse, and they will have none of that! Postmoderns may celebrate diversity and difference but this will come off as problematic and inconsistent for those who take a different perspective.

A catechumen's guide to deconstruction, Caputo presents a hermeneutic of the kingdom of four impossible things—justice, gift, forgiveness, and hospitality. Justice is like a ghost that haunts laws, but one still wonders why justice cannot be deconstructed? Are there not false conceptions of even God's kingdom today? It seems like in all the talk of undecidability and unknowing, Caputo somehow knows what real justice is supposed to look like. Justice issues are laws against immigrants, tax breaks to the wealthy, and not raising the minimum wage. And the dangers and issue of handguns is as plain as the nose on people's faces.

The gift is mad generosity without seeking anything in return. Most giving comes with strings attached and Caputo insightfully challenges the investment mentality where love should be one's guiding principle, not the profit motive. Jesus' radical call of forgiveness is nothing less than forgiving the unforgivable. Raw, unmerited, unconditional radical love or what Caputo calls "the uneconomics of love."

Hospitality is the loving gift that welcomes the unwelcomed. Love is always a risk, and Jesus' kingdom parables reveal the messianic banquet where the uninvited are invited after all. For Caputo, deconstruction is love, and love always means surrendering to "the other." This is all summed up in what he calls "the theo-poetics of the kingdom." God shows himself in weakness or powerlessness. Jesus' compassion for the poor and impatience with hypocrisy reveals the ongoing paradox and series of reversals demonstrated in his parables and his approach to sinners. Jesus uses his power to heal and turns our upside-down world right-side up again.

Jesus' deconstruction brings the politics of the kingdom of God into the power corrupted world of politics. Caputo says, "It is *we* who have made the weakness of God stronger than the power of the world" (88). Caputo seems to fall into the trap of turning God's powerlessness into human power. Christians must usher in the kingdom of God. And if one is tempted to think he is simply speaking of Christians incarnationally living their lives out publicly, he goes on presenting his case that the only way to bring justice and healing to poverty is through liberal democracy and socialism for everyone. But does this not simply hand all power in the end over to the State? Does not the nation-state need deconstructing also?

The issues the American church today, especially the religious right, needs to face squarely are questions of economic justice, militarism, patriarchy, and finally the two large white elephants of abortion and homosexuality. For Caputo, the private charity argument is simply a cover for greed, and the only way to bring true charity and equity in society is not through the church but through the State and

higher taxes. Caputo is against taking the Bible literally, but he does believe that if we took Jesus' Sermon on the Mount literally, it would mean the standard tax rate for Christians should be one hundred percent since the earliest Christians lived a common life of giving everything they had away and sharing everything with one another. Of course one wonders how voluntary sharing in the early church gets translated into mandatory government taxation.

Caputo is right to critique unbridled capitalism with all its greed and materialism, but one wonders how socialism fixes the greed and materialism problem? Caputo wisely critiques things like just wars, preemptive strikes, and capital punishment but does not believe that many evangelicals would agree with him. One might get the impression by Caputo's critique of the religious right that most Evangelicals are conservative Republicans and hard-liners on all these issues. But Evangelicalism is a much more diverse and eclectic group than Caputo gives them credit for.

The Apostle Paul buys into masculine superiority in some texts, so Paul must be deconstructed, but one wonders why "radical" and "re-inventive" are such great postmodernist stances and why does Jesus get a pass in all this? Why not go all the way down the deconstruction process to Jesus, and would an atheist like Derrida really be happy in how a postmodern Christian has employed his deconstructionism?

The Derridian love ethic also takes precedence on the gay marriage and homosexual issue. It does not even matter if the whole of Scripture and Jewish ethics was against homosexuality. For Caputo, Jesus' love ethic trumps everything, even Scripture. Jesus' writing in the sand and sending angry moral crowds away is a powerful image of God's radical forgiveness of sin, but no where does one find quoted the last words of Jesus to the woman, "go and sin no more."

Probably the most troubling and disturbing words by Caputo are his thoughts concerning abortion. Although a postmodernist should be for nonviolence and against every form of violence, especially violence against the weak and the powerless, Caputo opts for the freedom of choice even if abortion is not just. He makes powerful arguments on why the church should follow Jesus' cruciform ethics and the Sermon on the Mount, and yet he sets up so many polarities and liberal democratic principles like opting at times for the conventional wisdom of choosing "the lesser of two evils." Where is this criteria set up by Jesus' sermon much less any scriptural principle?

In the end, it seems like Caputo's Jesus falls into the same traps and problems he is trying to avoid. He speaks against binary oppositions but his book is filled with them from start to finish. He speaks against Constantinian and modern Christianity but uses the categories of the power of the State and rational certainty throughout his book. He argues against scriptural literalism but wants his own words to be taken literally. He rightly chastises the idolatries of the Republican Party and the religious right pointing out the plank in their religious eye while failing to see even a splinter in one's own eye. At the end of the day, one hopes that if deconstruction is going to be used, it follows the motto, "One looks in the mirror first before looking out the window at others."

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Marie A. CONN. ***C.S. Lewis and Human Suffering: Light among the Scholars.*** **Mahwah, NJ: Paulist, 2007. 92 pp. $14.00.**

I would not be shocked to find a new book published each month on the life or works of C.S. Lewis. Lewis is ubiquitously found not only in books but at the movies (whether adaptations of his books or a biopic), television, and conferences. Lewis is one of the most beloved Christian writers of the 20th century. A Catholic theologian, Conn, however, seeks to "demythologize" Lewis by exploring his life of honest suffering—from the death of his mother when he was but a young boy to the death of wife, Joy Davidman, as a mature man. Conn certainly has great respect for the writings and wisdom of Lewis but wishes to avoid the "religious fervor" that many books about Lewis seem to convey. Her goal is to show that the "absolutely committed Christian was also a man who dealt with the doubts and problems common to all of us" (xi-xii).

Human suffering and grief are not always easy topics to discuss. The tendency is to offer either a philosophical work on the meaning and purpose of suffering in a world created by a good and loving God or to offer aid and instructions on working through unnecessary suffering and grief. Conn attempts to do both in this little book. The first half serves as a biography of Lewis focusing upon the tragedies, or, more precisely, the deaths, he faced both before his conversion and after. The second half is an exploration into the question of suffering and grief which comes with the death of a loved one.

We see in this work that the life of Lewis was one not short of grief and at times suffering. Working from *Surprised by Joy*, *A Grief Observed*, as well as the works of several biographers Conn weaves together a brief history of the scholar's life with special emphasis on the tragic events in his life along with his transition from atheism to Christian apologist. Her task is to show that Lewis, both before and after his conversion to Christianity, never had a carefree optimism regarding life and the life-after. Conn writes that in *Dymer*, a work published during Lewis's transition into faith, "Lewis looked at the devastation caused by the war, and questioned the nature of a God who could allow such devastation to occur" (26). Even after his conversion Lewis approached life with a Stoic philosophy. She writes that Lewis believed the purpose of life is perfection, not happiness; it is about contemplation over enjoyment. Conn presents Lewis as a man who took his faith very seriously but never as a means to personal comfort or happiness. She notes that Lewis believed comfort may come, but we must face and go through "dismay before we have a right to the comfort" found in God (38).

In the second half of the book Conn develops her own thoughts on grief using Lewis's works but also employing the thoughts of Harold Kushner and, to a lesser extent, Karl Rahner. With the help of Kushner and the Book of Job Conn briefly sets up the problem of suffering by discussing the dilemma that God is all-powerful, God is just, and Job is a good person, and yet Job suffers. She follows Kushner's lead suggesting "a God who is all-just but not all-powerful may not be able to stop bad things from happening, but can strengthen and console us when they do" (44). This argument has some merit, but Conn does not discuss its nuances. Conn also offers practical advice for the friends and family of those grieving and also for those in mourning themselves. While her advice may seem trite or simplistic, it is

nonetheless useful, reminding us that when we are afraid to say the wrong thing to one who is grieving "an honest approach to grief replies that anything you say will be 'wrong' and everything you say will be 'right'" (62).

I was hooked by the first paragraph of the preface which tells the story of Carrie, a student of Conn's, who dies during childbirth. "Carrie, beautiful, quiet, precious Carrie, had died from complication of child birth. No, that couldn't be right. Women, young women, simply don't die in childbirth, not in America, not in the twenty-first century. But there it was" (vii). This is a powerful story with which to begin a book on human suffering. Conn is gifted in the way she conveys the stories of the book—whether they are her own or those of Lewis. They left me wanting to know more of the story and asking what else happened. The second half of the book which addresses grief directly also left me with questions, most of the time revolving around my wanting Conn to justify her thoughts or fill out the arguments given. In the end the strength of the book may also be its weakness. At only 92 pages the book is a quick read with a fast pace. It covers the life of C.S. Lewis as well as practical advice for dealing with grief. But it leaves the reader feeling like there is much more that needs to be said and explained. It serves to be an introduction to the life of Lewis but at the same time seems to assume the reader is already familiar with the events being discussed. If the book is meant to introduce Lewis and his life then more detail would have been helpful. If the intent is to lead those familiar with his life through the events of his suffering and grief, then greater focus and application of these events would have been valuable. In the end I believe Conn tried to do too much in too few pages.

As it is, the book could serve well for undergraduate classes on death and dying or for classes on the life and works of C.S. Lewis. It may also serve as a companion piece for anyone wishing to understand the life of Lewis in light of his own losses and grief.

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Amos YONG. *Theology and Down Syndrome: Reimagining Disability in Late Modernity.* Waco: Baylor University Press, 2007. 425 pp. $34.95.

If you are looking for a book of advice on making your church building more accessible to the handicapped, keep searching. However, if you want to have your thinking about God, the human race, and the relationship between them challenged by thinking deeply about human disabilities, this is the book for you.

Yong was born in Malaysia into the family of an Assemblies of God pastor. Ten years later his brother Mark was born with Down Syndrome and other complications. For better care for Mark, the family arranged to move to the United States where the diagnosis was made and treatment begun. Yong got his education in the United States, was awarded the Ph.D. by Boston University, and is now Professor of Systematic Theology and Director of the Ph.D. program at the School of Divinity, Regent University, Virginia Beach, Virginia.

I must admit at the outset that my interest in this book is as much personal as it is academic. I volunteered to review it because I wanted to read it. I am a parent

of a man with Down Syndrome. I have watched him mature over his forty-six years, including his baptism and a variety of activities in the church. I have heard him talk about his faith, and I have watched it, albeit no closer to perfection than my own, lived out in his dealings with life and with other persons. Therefore, I was eager to see how a systematician—and a Pentecostal at that—would deal with the theological implications of Down Syndrome and other human challenges.

The initial draft of this book was written during a sabbatical leave from Bethel University funded by a Louisville Institute Faith and Life Grant. It begins with a thorough analysis of the medical, social, and political components of human disability in general and Down Syndrome in particular. The author then turns to his primary interest—the implications of human disabilities for theology. The work is well documented, with forty-two pages of endnotes and a ninety-two page bibliography. It ends with helpful Scripture and topical indices. Each of the nine chapters begins with anecdotes from the author's family and/or quotations from conversations with persons with disabilities or from other writings about disabilities. This ameliorates the clinical tone of some of the early chapters and makes it seem more like an ongoing conversation.

Part I, "Anticipating Down Syndrome and Disability," includes two chapters, the first of which ("Introduction: Narrating and Imagining Down Syndrome and Disability") establishes the theological method used in the book and the general understanding of human disability. Yong labels his method "pneumatological imagination," which he defines as "an epistemic posture shaped in part by the biblical narratives of the Holy Spirit and in part by the Christian experience of the Spirit." (11) He has described this method more thoroughly in his earlier book, *Spirit-Word-Community: Theological Hermeneutics in Trinitarian Perspective* (Burlington, Vt.: Ashgate, 2002). Chapter 2 ("The Blind, the Deaf, and the Lame: Biblical and Historical Trajectories") surveys attitudes toward human frailty and genetic abnormalities in the Bible and church history.

Part II looks at "Down Syndrome and Disability in the Modern World." Chapter 3 surveys scientific approaches and understandings. This survey can awaken memories of pain in us who have lived through the changes in scientific understanding (and labeling) of the intellectually challenged over the past fifty years. Yong argues that mental disability is actually a modern phenomenon, since it was only with the increase in education and technology that such distinctions appeared to be important. Chapter 4 attempts to deconstruct disability as a social and political definition by challenging the categories of normal and abnormal or subnormal. Who does the categorizing and on what basis? These questions need to be asked, and the implications of the answers should be scrutinized carefully, since stigmatization is a serious issue. Chapter 5 puts disability into the contexts of "feminist, cultural, and world religious perspectives." (117) These are complex issues, and we are always in danger of, on the one hand, romanticizing liberation movements and non-Western cultures and religions and, on the other, demonizing them for their lack of sophistication. Yong does a remarkably good job of remaining balanced in his analysis.

Part III, "Reimagining and Renewing Theology in Late Modernity: Enabling a Disabled World," turns to the theology that is Yong's primary interest. In chapter

6 ("Reimagining the Doctrines of Creation, Providence, and the *Imago Dei*") Yong tackles the tough questions having to do with the fall of humanity and original sin, providence, the existence of evil, the incarnation of Christ, and the meaning of the crucifixion. Here is some heavy going. A good example is Yong's analogy of four fences (Chalcedon on the incarnation). His four fences pertaining to disability and providence are:

> First, God's will is *not* arbitrary; hence disabilities are neither merely accidents nor are they directly intended by God. . . . Second, God's sovereignty and human freedom are *not* mutually exclusive. This means that insofar as there are things that we can do to minimize incidents of disability, we need to take responsibility for such actions. . . . Third, God's will is *not* opposed to the laws of nature. . . . [T]he regularized process of genetic variation and recombination makes possible creaturely diversity in general and human diversity in particular. . . . Fourth, God's will is not to produce two classes of human beings, whether the saved and the damned, or the healthy and the sick, or the whole and the disabled. This is not to deny that there are differences among people, but to say that God wishes all to be saved and whole. (168, italics in the original)

Yong's theology is matched by his anthropology. There is nothing simplistic here, but the nature of the human being arises (emerges) out of relationships. Again a quotation is better than a summary:

> [H]uman souls are emergent from and constituted by human bodies and brains without being reducible to the sum of these biological parts. Similarly, human communities are emergent from and constituted by human persons without being reducible to the sum of these individuals. Finally, I am suggesting, the relationship between God and human beings is a further but definitive emergent level of reality that involves and is fundamentally constituted by our embodiment and our interactions with others and the world, but is irreducible to the sum of all these parts as well. (188-189)

This line of thought leads naturally to a consideration of the nature of the church, which is the focus of Chapter 7, "Renewing Ecclesiology." This chapter leans, more obviously than in earlier chapters, on the work of two people: Jean Vanier and his L'Arche community on the one hand and the theologian, Stanley Hauerwas, on the other. Yong points out that Hauerwas's ecclesiology "was shaped by his service during the 1970s–1980s on the Board of the Council for the Retarded of St. Joseph County, Indiana." (199) He moves in this chapter from theory to practice as he considers initiation and catechism, baptism and eucharist, and liturgy and discipleship. He insists that ministry should be not only to the retarded, but more importantly, with or even by the disabled. He leans heavily on his charismatic or pneumatological approach, showing how the Holy Spirit works through all sorts of people in and on behalf of the church.

In Chapter 8 ("Rethinking Soteriology: *On Saving Down Syndrome and Disability*") Yong turns to a consideration of salvation as "the transformative work of the Spirit of God that converts human hearts from lives of sin, estrangement, and inauthenticity to lives of peace, wholeness, and reconciliation between human beings and God." (229) The concept of wholeness is where he focuses most of his attention *vis a vis* Down Syndrome and other disabilities. The questions surrounding the

issues of healing and curing, especially of genetic aberrations, are dealt with extensively. He points out that in many cases there is a close connection in the mind of the disabled person between the disability and his/her identity. If a genetically determined disability were cured, either by genetic tinkering or by a divine miracle, how would that affect the person? Such a condition is different from a broken limb. Down Syndrome and other similar conditions are inseparable from the personality.

This brings us and the book to a consideration of the end times, in Chapter 9 ("Resurrecting Down Syndrome and Disability: Heaven and the Healing of the World"). What about heaven? The assumption of most believers is that the "no tears" promise means that everybody in heaven will be like us "normal, healthy" people. One of the people Yong quotes (from yet another book) says, "'Will I be retarded when I get to heaven?' The parents answered that she would not. There would be no sickness, no pain. Everybody would be perfect. To this she responded, 'But how will you know me, then?'" (259) This question should give theologians of the eschaton something to chew on for nearly that long. If the marks of Christ's wounds were still visible on his resurrection body, should not the marks of all our suffering go with us into eternity? Yong does not attempt to give a definitive answer to such questions, nor do I; but they do tend to deconstruct many of our assumptions about the afterlife.

That is what pondering over this book will do for the reader—guaranteed. It will deconstruct many assumptions and begin the process of "reimagining" new and better ways of thinking about God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, creation, sin, salvation, and the eschaton. I found a number of ideas I would like to discuss further with the author and several that I have basic disagreements with him about. However, I highly recommend the book for anybody dealing with profound disabilities, for ministers, for professors of religion, and for seminary students who are open to some challenging thinking.

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Jack COTTRELL. *Power from On High: What the Bible Says about the Holy Spirit.* Joplin, MO: College Press, 2007. 550 pp. $36.99.

This volume is a well thought-out book with catchy blurbs, two useful indexes, and scriptures that stand out by helpful formatting. Cottrell, Cincinnati Christian University's highly respected systematic theologian, explores the basic doctrines concerning the Holy Spirit thoroughly (his person, inspiration of Scriptures, regeneration of sinners, sanctification of saints, and equipping of servants). He also gives bold, well-argued answers to all the controversial questions about the Spirit's working today. His answers are as controversial as the questions.

So, for instance, he states: "I have reached the conclusion—not easily, I assure you—that all truly miraculous events that occur in Pentecostal, charismatic, and third-wave circles have been and are being caused by demonic spirits working through unsuspecting people" (471). Significantly, a publishers' note indicates that not all of College Press's staff agree with what Cottrell says the Bible says about the Holy Spirit (429).

Predominantly this book presents a sustained critique of many important Augustinian doctrines about the Spirit: 1) original sin, 2) total depravity, 3) conversion of sinners by direct working on sinners' minds, 4) illuminating disciples by supplying additional knowledge of God's Will, 5) authenticating the Bible's truthfulness, and 6) witnessing to the believer's security in Christ.

Cottrell believes that many Reformed theologians, because they misinterpret the effects of Adam's Fall, are misrepresenting how the Holy Spirit works before and after conversion. He argues that the Holy Spirit works on the sinner in conversion only *indirectly* (by means of the Word) but works *directly* in the believer's life, regenerating and empowering it. He defends prayer for the lost because God can intervene providentially (but not coercively) in their lives to bring about salvation.

As to charismatic gifts operating today, both cessationists (the position Cottrell holds) and "continuationists" (Cottrell's term) will benefit from analyzing his many exegetical and theological studies. Cottrell strictly holds to the doctrine of *sola scriptura*: only God's revealed and inspired inerrant Word has the authority to answer doctrinal questions and adjudicate theological debates. As a result, he believes that God's objective Word outweighs all subjective emotions and mystical experiences believers may claim today.

While critiquing several traditional positions of the Stone-Campbell tradition on the Spirit (like the view which reduces the power of the Spirit to the truth of the Word), Cottrell continues to defend the view that the "perfect" in 1 Cor 13:10 refers to the completed canon. That is why he argues that some charismatic gifts of knowledge (like tongues and prophecies) are no longer needed today.

God's Word reveals that something unprecedented happened on Pentecost. The *new* is that God poured out the long promised Holy Spirit on all believers (the "Baptism with the Holy Spirit"). Speaking in tongues (Acts 2:4), that served merely as a validating sign that Jesus had at the same time empowered the Apostles as he also promised (Acts 1:8; John 14–16), should not replace this gift of the indwelling Spirit (Acts 1:5; 2:38-39; John 4:10-11; 7:38) as the primary meaning of Pentecost. For Cottrell, the Baptism with the Spirit is Jesus' ongoing, initial, and universal ministry to all believers and happens at the occasion of water baptism (1 Cor 12:13). The invisible Baptism with the Spirit and visible water baptism are two aspects of the one Christian baptism (Eph 4:5).

While perhaps too demanding in places for college students, Dr. Cottrell's book will be very helpful to ministers, seminarians, and scholars. It will not change all minds but will definitely challenge all!

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Sarah COAKLEY and Kay Kaufman SHELEMAY, eds. ***Pain and Its Transformations: The Interface of Biology and Culture (Mind/Brain/Behavior Initiative).*** **Harvard University Press, 2007. 439 pp. $49.95.**

Appreciative readers of John Castelein's recent *SCJ* article on neuroscience and the soul (*SCJ* 10.1) will find reading this volume to be profitable as well. Reading

John Polkinghorne or Francis Collins (or Daniel Dennent for that matter) on the relationship of science and religion engages one with a sustained specific argument on the relations between the two endeavors, but Coakley and Shelemay's volume takes the next step and provides an exercise in working out that relationship. Born from the papers at a conference on pain from Harvard's Mind/Brain/Behavior Initiative, the editors have woven together contributions from a spectrum of scholars with the interactions presented by responders and discussions among the participants. The well-edited discussions among the participants are the valuable contributions of the book. The format sets a respectful tone among the participants and models an encouraging manner for conducting interdisciplinary debate with the sciences.

The scope of discussion of pain is impressive. Broadly, the book mediates a discussion between those who approach the topic from the "bottom up" as (reductive) physicalists and those who approach it from the "top down" making room for perspectives of the social sciences and humanities. The contributions by Arthur Kleinman, Clifford Woolf, and Howard Fields illustrate the scientific dialogue. In addition to the hard biological science of pain, there are discussions of ethics, ritual, literature, and painting that situate pain in a broader cultural context. Acknowledging the current progress by molecular biology in identifying the mechanism of pain, these collected essays also hint at interdisciplinary conversations that bring the two approaches together. As Coakley notes, "our particular sensitivity to pain, and the anxiety that attends it, is not simply a matter of genetics, physiology and circumstance, vitally important as these are, but also one of learned 'hermeneutics': the way we *interpret* our pain is all important for the mode of our suffering of it" (1-2).

While her work can be a demanding read, Coakley (formerly of Harvard, now of Cambridge) is a creative liberal and feminist theologian whose valuable work is often interdisciplinary. Her work takes Christian spiritual practice seriously and she has also engaged an interdisciplinary conversation relating theology to evolution. This project creditably reflects many of these concerns.

Theologian Coakley, biblical scholar Jon Levenson, and philosopher Nicholas Wolterstorff ably represent the Jewish-Christian tradition in the debate. However musicologists, anthropologists, Buddhists, as well as psychiatrists, molecular biologists and others make the spectrum of debate remarkable. Levenson's brief summary of suffering in the Jewish tradition is especially insightful. Coakley also perceptively describes the intensification of pain in the Christian tradition of the Carmelites as she focused on spiritual practice in the practice of theology.

While it directly appeals to the medical community, this work represents cutting-edge interdisciplinary scholarship and would be appropriate in graduate or seminary classes that relate theology to the sciences generally or to medical practice. It also might be of some interest to scholars of pastoral practice.

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James K.A. SMITH. ***Who's Afraid of Postmodernism? Taking Derrida, Lyotard, and Foucault to Church.*** **Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006. 156 pp. $13.00.**

This is the first volume of a proposed series, edited by Smith, on the church and postmodern culture. Smith sets his course early in this work by stating that the goal of the series is, "to bring together high profile theorists in continental philosophy and contemporary theology to write for a broad, nonspecialist audience interested in the impact of postmodern theory on the faith and practice of the church" (9). In this particular volume Smith calls upon three key postmodern philosophers, he calls "the unholy trinity of Parisians" (143), (Derrida, Lyotard, and Foucault), to seek and find a truly postmodern way of faith that he calls radical orthodoxy.

In this work, presented originally as a series of lectures at Schaeffer's L'Abri, Smith lays out his methodology in a "Schaefferian strategy" by suggesting that he deals with postmodernity through a philosophical lens, and then reinterprets it for laypersons. His primary assumptions about these postmodern philosophers are simple. First, these philosophers and their philosophies have been reduced to "bumper sticker" application without understanding the larger context of their thought, and, secondly, that some of the claims of these philosophers have a "deep affinity with central Christian claims" (22) which will be helpful in recovering some ancient aspects of radical orthodoxy.

The majority of the work lies in the examination of Derrida, Lyotard, and Foucault's "catch phrase" philosophy. Smith examines key phrases from all three figures and then shows how the academic world, and the Church have slighted their original intent. Derrida's phrase "nothing outside the text" is interpreted by Smith as, "everything is interpretation; interpretation is governed by context and the role of the interpretive community . . . this entails abandoning the modern notion of objectivity and embracing a central theme of postmodernism: interpretation goes 'all the way down'" (54). Lyotard's early definition "incredulity towards metanarratives" was, at one time, the essential definition of postmodernism. Now, some twenty-eight years later, it has been tossed about, examined, critiqued, misquoted, abused, and, Smith argues, radically misunderstood. Lyotard, according to Smith, is speaking about legitimacy within the context of truth claims suggesting that *all* truth claims must be subject to the same criteria. In the end Smith argues alongside of Lyotard that, "criteria that determine what constitutes evidence or proof must be game relative: they will function as rules only for those who share the same paradigm or participate in the same language game" (70). The most taxing of the efforts put forward is Smith's application of Foucault's theories on discipline and control. Smith, correctly, I believe, argues that Foucault is not really a postmodern at all but a radical modernist liberal who must be "turned on his head." That is to say, our culture needs to understand his critique of the world we live in, but not fall prey to his theories of discipline and punishment.

Though Smith spends the bulk of this short volume helping us to reinterpret the fathers of postmodern philosophy, it is the subplot that deserves the most attention from the reader. In each section that deals with a philosopher there is critique of the modernist church, empathy for the "emergent" and "emerging" church, and a call for a return to ancient practice and understanding ala the late Robert Webber's notion of "ancient futuring." The radical orthodoxy that Smith calls us

to is an out-of-hand rejection of *all* modernist notions and philosophy. Key to understanding this is his emphasis on rejecting Cartesian epistemology and its outdated notions of objective truth, scientific knowledge, and autonomous human reason as legitimating every paradigm that touts truth claims and wields power to undermine the masses. Smith argues that a neo-Augustinian or Thomistic epistemology may better serve the postmodern ethos—especially the church which he calls to "remember" that though it is both, and at the same time ancient and future it is also "one, holy, and catholic" church. Smith's radical orthodoxy is a clarion call to refute modernistic solipsism, rethink the philosophical foundations, ecclesiological practice, and the inherent narcissism that plagues these views. It is a call to remember the ancient, which, in turn, will propel us into the future.

Smith writes in a very readable style. His approach is postmodern in itself, illustrating the introduction and each philosophical problem through the lens of popular cinema, which allows him to introduce the critical philosophical concepts and analyze the film's content. The strength of Smith's work is his ambitious interpretation of postmodern philosophy and how it can be used to correct modernistic tendencies at work in both the modern and emergent church ethos without throwing the proverbial baby out with the bathwater. His postmodern, and postfoundationalist work in the area of epistemology is helpful but does not go far enough in helping us to construct a truly functional postmodern way of knowing. He regards the emergent movement as a corrective in ecclesiology but also guards his radical orthodoxy against the flaws that he sees within their theology and practice. He is critical of Carson's appraisal of the emergent movement but also notes that McClaren and Burke need to rethink some aspects of their proposals. His closing application pages, where he describes, in detail, a radically orthodox worship service, are inviting and a bit unsettling at the same time—including elements that would be a stretch for any Restorationist. The appendices, an annotated bibliography, and a section on "online resources," are both insightful and helpful but fall *far* short of being comprehensive and are one-dimensional in scope. It may also be noteworthy that Smith omits American postmodern philosophers, like Rorty, who, though not a key figure in the early development of postmodernism, must be considered essential for understanding the postmodern ethos in the U.S.

Although I highly recommend this volume to seminary students, teachers, those with interest in postmodernism, the church, and postmodernity, I do so with some reservations. Smith makes clear that he is writing for a "broad" and "nonspecialist" audience, but I fear that the average student or pew sitter would struggle with the level of philosophy introduced in this book: at its core it deals with academic elements and therefore is better suited to those with academic backgrounds. However, to relegate this volume to the ivory tower libraries of the strictly academic would be a great disservice to the church and the struggling minister who could glean much from these pages that would help them along this transitional ecclesiological sojourn from what has been to what will be.

A lengthy paragraph appears in the application section that critiques denominationalist practices but it has implications as well for those in the Stone-Campbell Restoration Movement:

> Sectarian versions of evangelical identity tend to see themselves as relatively new inventions . . . or recoveries of the "true" faith and "New Testament principles" . . . they tend to have an air of having just dropped from the sky . . . but claim to give us the only authentic version of Pauline Christianity. While trumpeting notions of recovering truth . . . they are characterized by deep forgetting . . . these versions of Christianity are more interested in being "holy" and "apostolic" than in being "catholic"—as if these traits could be separated (132).

Though Smith does not "call us out" by name or by practice I wonder if a movement birthed in unity and the "restoration of the ancient order of things" could have much to learn from the postmoderns about the missional, incarnational catholicity of the church?

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J. Andrew KIRK. *Mission under Scrutiny: Confronting Contemporary Challenges.* Minneapolis: Fortress, 2006. 244 pp. $20.00.

J. Andrew Kirk understands the imperative of viewing Western culture through missiological eyes as set forth in Lesslie Newbigin's timely *Foolishness to the Greeks* (Eerdmans, 1986). Selected by the *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* as one of the "Fifteen Outstanding Books of 2006 for Mission Studies," this volume tackles the tough issues defining our increasingly secular society. Formerly a theological educator in South America, Kirk recently retired as director of the Center for Missiology and World Christianity at the University of Birmingham. His current book continues the discussion raised by his earlier work, *What Is Mission?* (Fortress Press, 2000).

Kirk believes that "each generation of Christians need to select and focus on those aspects of mission which are most pressing in its moment of history" (ix). He highlights nine issues facing the church, including the authority of Scripture, conflict and violence, dialogue and pluralism, and the centrality of evangelism. The book begins with a discussion of how our context of secular freedom erodes the church's ability to communicate truth. Even so, the church is called to denounce idolatry and injustice while announcing the hope of a new creation through God's direct action (20).

Chapter two makes the case that secularism shares many of the characteristics of religious faith, having a message, an experience, a community, and a historical tradition. Therefore, Christianity must enter into a missionary dialogue with secularism, using practical expressions of care, compassion, and community which flow from faith in Jesus Christ. We must not capitulate to secularism's demand to make religion strictly a private matter.

The growth of the church in the majority world means that the average Christian today lives in the midst of oppression, conflict, poverty, and powerlessness. Kirk highlights Latin America and calls for a prophetic and holistic response. It is appropriate that this chapter follows chapters on conflict and violence. The testimony of the church in Latin American is that the poor are the most authentic

interpreters of the text and that the Scripture contains a message of continuing revolution. It is ironic that "in some Western nations the church is strongest in the most affluent areas, whereas in the global South the church is growing fastest among the poorest of the poor" (164). The economic and political context indicates that the church really is the community of liberated people and Jesus Christ is the only true liberator.

Though most missiological texts today discuss contextualization, few devote chapters to same-gender sexual relations. Kirk suggests that this issue is a classic case of the tension which exists for the Christian faith between the gospel and culture and so penetrates to the heart of missiological reflection (172). He examines the issue, taking the reader through the process of exegesis, interpretation, and pastoral practice. He aptly criticizes the media's use of such loaded terms as "homophobia," "bigotry," and "fundamentalist." Kirk concludes that "formal acceptance by the Church of homo-sexual relationships will severely jeopardize (its) missionary vision and vocation" (200).

The final chapter of the book, with its catchy title, "Mission post everything," calls the church to radical discipleship: following, listening, and serving, together with a chastened evangelism that is courteous, gracious, and considerate. Kirk believes that we are to engage the secular society in which we live. Ours is a task whose motivating drive must be to reach out to non-Christian friends and neighbors. Our churches should be dedicated to expressing an authentic pattern of community life. In the face of affluence, the marks of the missional church must include simplicity, frugality, and sharing (63).

This volume is prophetic and deserves a place in the library of any who wish to undertake serious intellectual and practical engagement with our culture.

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Robert E. WEBBER. *The Divine Embrace: Recovering the Passionate Spiritual Life*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006. 282 pp. $16.99.

The late Robert Webber's current volume, the fourth of five books in his Ancient-Future Series, is a continuation of his fine contributions to Christian scholarship. After an introduction defining the Christian spiritual life and outlining the contents, the book has two sections entitled "The Crisis" and "The Challenge." The four chapters of "The Crisis" overview church history highlighting specific contributions and challenges of three historical eras and the current age to personal spirituality. In the process, Webber incorporates numerous theological concepts, describes multiple persons who left their imprint on the practice of spirituality, and addresses various worldview implications. A reader familiar with these topics will find the first section reads quickly but cannot be skipped as it is foundational to understanding Webber's points in the second section. For readers not as well-versed in these topics, Webber gives sufficient background information and explanatory text to close any knowledge gaps. Webber frequently quotes from each era's writings allowing the primary sources to speak for themselves.

"The Challenge" forms the core of the book. Webber utilizes a compare and contrast mechanism which is apparent in the chapter titles: God's Story, My Story, His Life in Mine, My Life in His, Life Together. In God's Story, readers are encouraged to read the Bible "not for bits and pieces of dry information, but as the story of God's embrace of the world told in poetic images and types" (128). Webber goes on to describe several typologies found in the Bible. The chapters My Story and His Life in Mine focus primarily on the importance and meaning of baptism and the importance of leading "a baptized life." Although readers may not agree with all of Webber's statements, this section provides numerous excellent points to ponder.

The final chapters, My Life in His and Life Together, address those topics which readers expect to encounter when reading a book on spirituality, namely spiritual disciplines, worship, and the role of the church. Webber draws from the Rule of St. Benedict to demonstrate the importance and give principles not just for practicing the spiritual disciplines, primarily prayer, study, and work, but also for keeping a vow to live the baptized life and encounter Christ in all things. Turning to the church, Webber does not mince words describing what he sees as a crisis in the church and in worship today and the corrective measures churches should take.

Webber includes "A Summary for Reflection and Conversation" at the end of each chapter. These summaries would be useful for group discussion of the text and to return to the book at a later time. Webber's tone throughout the book is frequently conversational as he includes personal reminiscences, quotes from personal email, and occasional student assignments. Yet the endnotes are substantial and the bibliography gives readers considerable ideas for future study.

This volume should be highly considered as a text for spiritual formation courses. In addition, it would be useful as a text or recommended reading for a senior seminar or capstone course at the undergraduate level or as an introductory course at the seminary level due to its tight integration of key theological, historical, and worldview concepts and emphasis on living out these concepts in daily life. Many will find this volume a useful resource for preparing sermons or teaching on developing personal spirituality. A highly motivated small group would find this work a challenging and convicting study.

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Amy Laura HALL. ***Conceiving Parenthood: American Protestantism and the Spirit of Reproduction.*** **Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007. 452 pp. $32.00.**

Family life issues have captured the attention of Christian thinkers in America across the theological spectrum from Focus on the Family to Don Browning's critical familism. Into this often controversial arena, this volume enters as a thoughtful and theologically passionate entry that is as important as anything published in the ethics of family published in the last two decades. A theological ethicist at Duke University, Hall sensitively and powerfully reads cultural history concerning Methodists in 20th-century America, as a window generally into mainstream Protestantism, by examining popular and church-related publications and other media.

Through the pages of Methodist magazines and journals like the *Ladies Home Journal*, Hall reads to us a story of American domesticity that takes us through germ-free homes, breastfeeding versus the corporate breast of infant formula, eugenics, the atomic bomb, and the human genome. In telling these stories she unrelentingly reminds readers that these stories that dominate culture focus on white, middle-class, healthy, master-race like families and that other families exist who are not white, not middle class, and not physically perfect. Throughout this wonderful book, Hall calls readers "to rearticulate the grace that should have recognized *other people's* children as blood kin and as of incalculable worth" (17). The Down's syndrome child, the black or latino infant, the poor child—they are all our children, at least if we are in baptized into the body of Christ.

At times, Hall's prose is demanding, but often her words are beautiful, engaging, and even hinting at kerygmatic. With well more than one hundred photos and illustrations, her argument and her readings are sophisticated and sensitive.

Hall seeks to speak first to a predominantly white mainline church, and there first to women in the church. However, as an attorney in public service seeking to hear her work in a more public setting, I would have asked two more things of her effort. First, a more thorough tying of her argument to ways American Christians have bound themselves to our consumer economy would have made her argument even more powerful. Second, a brief but more straightforward argument for the gospel as practiced in Christian community and baptism as that which should shape Christians as they bring children into this world would have given her argument a more direct witness against our culture—but perhaps that would have been too direct for her. However, Hall is a Kierkegaard scholar, and perhaps (not unlike Fred Craddock's appropriation of the Dane in *Overhearing the Gospel*) she only read the story of parenthood in America to us (with occasional asides on the gospel), not to give us answers, but so the hymns she put at the beginning of each chapter would indirectly bring the gospel to bear on readers. When we wallow in captivity to our culture sometimes we can only find the gospel with a bit of the soft touch—Hall lets us convict ourselves.

While the feminist Hall acknowledges a bit of a pro-life undercurrent to her argument, her book will raise significant questions for more mainline feminists as she questions the family choices parents (and women) make and for the conservative pro-family crowd who breed family, patriotism, Christianity, and capitalism into a curious not-so Christian beast.

While Hall focuses her analysis on Methodism, the culture Protestantism that infects all three streams of the Stone-Campbell Restoration Movement could profitably be examined in light of this valuable work. For Churches of Christ (a cappella), Richard Hughes, *Reviving the Ancient Faith* (Eerdmans, 1996), begins to recognize the cultural captivity of one stream of the movement that could be extended with Hall's analysis of family life in a less mainstream setting. A similar analysis for Disciples of Christ might fall between the Methodists and Churches of Christ (a cappella).

Hall's powerful work would be a welcome addition to the readings of upper division undergraduate or seminary classes in ethics, family studies, or even Ameri-

can church history. This volume establishes Hall as a Christian ethicist who speaks with a voice well worth hearing.

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Lynn S. NEAL. *Romancing God: Evangelical Women and Inspirational Fiction*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006. 264 pp. $49.95.

Neal acknowledges that her original intention in this writing project was to investigate the plots and prescriptions of evangelical romance novels giving special attention to gender depictions, historical descriptions, and evangelical prescriptions. Instead, Neal's inquiry led her to examine the imagined women reading the fiction and those who write it; to look at why this genre is attractive to them, and to determine what if any impact it has on their religious life.

Beginning with a historical overview of the development of evangelical romance novels, Neal discovers many reasons why women are attracted to this genre. Some of these attractions are quite predictable: the women find the reading pleasurable for both the escape and entertainment it provides. Yet deeper study reveals that much more lies behind these women's devotion to fiction.

Their reading choice helps these women demonstrate and maintain their religious identities as evangelicals and transports them from the fringes to the center of evangelical life. Through their reading of evangelical romance novels many women find a form of ministry by women for women, develop a network of community with other women who share their devotion, and discover a greater sense of the sacred romance that is possible with God.

Neal's investigation successfully accomplishes her goal; she clearly unfolds why evangelical romance novels are attractive to many women and shapes their faith. Yet she also acknowledges that the practice of reading these books is not for everyone and can be a barrier to women in some circumstances. Throughout the book, Neal challenges critics, especially scholars and ministers, to stop dismissing individuals who find spiritual sustenance in this genre and to strive to better understand both their spiritual needs and devotion. Yet her challenge is one that many will find easy to disregard.

Evangelicalism itself is difficult to define as Neal admits in her introduction. Definitions frequently focus more on central beliefs instead of on the inevitable struggle to live the faith in everyday, ordinary life. This tendency to "neglect evangelical practices, elevates the church over the home, and as a result obscures women's lives and the audibility of their voices" (10). Equally challenging is the inevitable tension of evangelicals, and most Bible-believing Christians, to live "in the world but not of it." This tension, according to critics, leads to the production of "lamentable sentimental piety, as well as substandard, formulaic art" (99). These propensities to obscure women's lives/voices and to bemoan the mediocrity of evangelical art make it unlikely that scholars and ministers will give much attention to Neal's work, and that is regrettable.

Overall, this book was not easy to read. The topic is not one that naturally attracts many (not even a woman devoted to serving other women), and at times Neal's writing seemed pedestrian and repetitive. Yet even with these difficulties, this volume proved to be a work that caused deeper reflection and greater appreciation for the author's efforts.

Although Neal's stated purpose is not to help readers better understand the evangelical mind-set, she accomplishes just that. Her discussion of evangelical theological aesthetic throughout the book, but especially in the epilogue, makes this work one that enhances understanding and provides good material for meaningful dialogue. Those in the Stone-Campbell movement who think of themselves as evangelicals and those who do not would benefit from reading Neal's book.

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David CRUMP. *Knocking on Heaven's Door: A New Testament Theology of Petitionary Prayer.* Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006. 345 pp. $22.99.

David Crump has put together the best single volume available on the NT Theology of prayer, which in the NT is petitionary prayer. Crump summarizes this book as approaching "the theological and practical questions raised in petitionary prayer by studying the relevant New Testament evidence" (16). As a book on prayer, it engages the NT on an unusually deep and satisfying scholarly level, being well versed in contemporary synoptic analysis and second Temple Jewish sources, which are his strength. Yet the book has a significant devotional quality that might attract committed lay readers. It is hard to find a more convicting example than the older lady characterized by praying (248); this fired me to try the same in miniature.

Crump summarizes the chapters accurately on page 16, so I will begin the paragraphs with these: "Chapters 1–2 examine the NT passages that highlight the pivotal role of faith in effective petition." He nicely develops the cursing of the fig tree, and with a mustard seed of faith the disciples will be able to move *this mountain* of the Temple as a curse and replaced the house of prayer with the disciple community praying in faith. Following Mark, chapter 2 especially unpacks that all things are possible for the one who believes.

"Chapters 3–4 investigate the parables of Jesus that focus on persistence in answered prayer." Nice synoptic analysis for persistence and repetitiveness in asking in prayer.

"Chapters 5–7 study the Lord's Prayer, Jesus' paradigm for faithful petition, highlighting God's eschatological design for the world and how divine intent can coexist with the invitation to 'present your requests to God.'" He has a particularly satisfying development of the Lord's Prayer in second Temple Jewish parallels and context. This is the strongest section of the book!

"Chapter 8 uncovers the characteristically Johannine perspective on human petition and divine sovereignty." The strength of this section was on asking in the Lord's name. I was a bit surprised that he did not develop some form of

Schweitzerian or Merkabah mysticism to explore the intimacy of divine interpenetration and relationality in the prayers in the gospel of John.

"Chapter 9 excavates the petitionary prayers of the early church, at least as they are portrayed in the book of Acts." Delightfully practical in providing patterns to imitate in corporate prayer. A little surprising that with his repeated sovereign emphasis these prayers (as in Acts 4) were not enflamed with more sovereign reminders. Because God is sovereign, he is the one to whom we are to pray.

"Chapters 10–12 grapple with the complexities of apostolic petition and intercession as they are worked out in Paul's ministry as church planter and letter writer." The richness of gracious blessing, especially in the longer blessings of Paul's letters, is briefly developed but more depth would not have exhausted these rich theological sections of the NT. These are great models to imitate in prayer for a Bible class. He includes a nice discussion about praying with groaning and in the Spirit, though more could be said on the Abba Father intimacy, and Pauline mysticism.

"Chapter 13 explores the uniquely ethical perspective on the hindrances to Christian petition discovered in the General Letters and the book of Revelation." There is a very practical reminder from 1 Peter that improper treatment of one's wife can hinder prayer. Likewise James's prayers are practically dealt with, though his point (on p. 267) of covenant blessing and curse could be strengthened by citing Deuteronomy 28:12 and 24. Such an inclusion would strengthen an aspect of Elijah's righteousness as claiming the very curse or blessing promised by Yahweh.

"Finally, chapter 14 synthesizes the numerous observations arising from these biblical materials in order to construct a normative theology for petition today, including the complex interrelationships between personal faith, persistence, divine sovereignty, and individual requests."

Crump seems unusually haunted by the Gethsemane prayer, for it becomes a Jesus' lived metaphor of unanswered persistent prayer, discussing it on pages 54-57, 142, 145, and 255-258. On page 54 note 47 he dismisses too quickly a view fronted by Blaising that what was being requested by "take this cup from Me" was not don't let Jesus die but after taking the cup of God's wrath, let him be resurrected. Consider that "heard" means a positive answer to prayer and as such would fit better in the synoptic context with Jesus repeatedly predicting that he would be killed, and better in the Hebrews context for his effective piety to aid us through his prayers (Pss; Heb 5:7; 1 John 5:14-15). Though I think he rightly expands this Hebrews prayer reference to probably more than one instance in days of Jesus' life, it, however, does come to a head in the Gethsemane prayer.

The book includes an extended tension of a biblical encouragement to pray to the Sovereign and the frustration that prayers don't always get answered affirmatively. Crump's form of Calvinism identifies that God determines major aspects of salvation and life but allows many things to be determined by our human participation in prayer or rebelliousness (295), though he cites Aquinas' *Summa Theologiae* 2a2ae Q. 83.2 affirmingly with its more extensive determinism within Thomistic compatabilism (293). The Gethsemane prayer becomes a metaphor for his understanding our lack in unanswered prayer. Chapter 4 ends reflectively epitomizing this tension, losing a friend repeatedly prayed for to the ravages of illness, "Trapped between a spiritual rock and an eternal hard place, would she continue

to believe in the ancient Gospel promises of a Father who saves each of our tears in his bottle, of a Savior whose coming will redeem all our waiting? I fear that my visitor was teetering on the precipice, ready to let go of prayer as she slowly toppled into the darkness. When the Son of Man comes, will he find her praying? I pray that he will." (89). Will you be praying? Crump's volume can help you to be praying and more intelligently and fervently as well.

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David CRUMP. *Knocking on Heaven's Door: A New Testament Theology of Petitionary Prayer.* Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006. pp. 345. $22.99.

David Crump has fruitfully combined the disciplines of biblical exegesis and pastoral application producing insights for scholars, students, pastors, prayer leaders, and pray-ers. The most important and unique aspect of this volume is the inviting way Crump forces readers to consider the formulation of their theology proper formed, informed, and reformed in both exegesis and in the act of prayer. In this volume, Crump has delivered a text successfully exploring the texts of the NT with the exegetical tools of the academy and present the findings to two audiences: the academy and those disposed to prayer and spiritual disciplines. Both audiences walk away enlightened and encouraged.

Crump builds his theological perspectives beginning with the Synoptics where he reaches important conclusions on the nature of faith and prayer. He then moves to a review of the Lord's Prayer, examining the basis of Christian prayer as relationship with the Father and the Son and our intercession. Crump then explores Pauline theology and practice of prayer centered on the discussion of the impact of eschatology upon on our prayer life. In each of these sections, Crump spends three chapters in exegesis with a few pastoral notes and provides a summary chapter of his findings. Before tackling the Pauline corpus, Crump also explores John and Acts, devoting a chapter of study and reflections to each book. The last two chapters examine the General Epistles and Revelation and an excellent, albeit short, overall summary. Throughout the work Crump outlines the tensions inherent to prayer including to our human perspective on the sovereignty of God and the effectiveness of humans interceding from their own free will, the here and yet-to-come nature of the Kingdom of God, suffering and prayer, and the nature of our relationship to God and the effects it has upon our prayers.

Three notes for *SCJ* readers. First, a small critique of this far-reaching, complex work. Crump rightly notes in the exploration and summary of Acts that most petitionary prayer took place as a community. This thread of thought was left dangling and did not find its way back into Crump's analysis. No discussion was given to Pauline prayers becoming corporate when they were read and the role of the community in prayer is sadly missing the final summary chapter. Secondly, a theological gap warning for many *SCJ* readers. Unavoidably, much of Crump's discussion centers on God's sovereignty and his interaction with his children's prayers. *SCJ* readers may become sidetracked upon the emphasis and space devoted by Crump,

a Reformed theologian, to the issue of sovereignty. However, the reading is illuminating, and *SCJ* readers will find a very refreshing look at theodicy, sovereignty, and a balanced treatment of the issue in the summary from a thoroughly biblical perspective. Thirdly, *SCJ* readers will walk away desiring more input from Crump. The final summation chapter is excellent, but more instruction from the discoveries and discussion from the exegetical work leave more room for critique of the present church's practices and patterns, views of suffering, eschatology, and pastoral responsibilities for developing prayer conforming to the NT.

All *SCJ* readers will do well to incorporate the pattern of Crump's work into their own prayer lives and into their teaching, preaching, and discipleship practices. This is simply an excellent text displaying how exegesis should affect the praxis of the church. As such, I highly recommend this volume for use with upper-level undergraduates considering their philosophy of ministry and graduate students. I also recommend this book for pastors to consider the way they pray, but also the way they teach their congregations how to pray. I believe this book would be a good discussion piece for churches with multiple staffs with a senior minister discipling and encouraging the others in their prayer lives and in the role of prayer in their ministries. This volume would also be a welcomed text for advanced discipleship groups, especially pastoral prayer and support groups. Crump's work is a must-read for prayer and worship leaders. Crump's insights into and acquaintance with the American prayer movement integrated with superb exegetical work should aid prayer and worship leaders further their practice and modeling of prayer in public.

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Ronald J. ALLEN. *Thinking Theologically: The Preacher as Theologian.* Elements of Preaching. Ed. O. Wesley Allen Jr. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2008. 96 pp. $12.00.

As part of the Elements of Preaching series from Fortress Press, Ronald Allen has contributed this volume. The purpose of the series is to help preachers "construct a sound homiletical foundation in a conversational manner" (vii). Allen sees his role for this book as inviting preachers to "name a particular theological family that inform(s) them, to consider the outcomes for preaching, and to think critically about that family's strengths and limitations in relationship to preaching" (1). For such a small, introductory book, Allen's work is cut out for him.

This volume divides itself into four distinct parts. Part One, chapters 1–3, discusses how one's theology helps shape one's preaching. Included in this section is a synopsis of ten historic traditions that have intersected with the preacher's own theological perspectives. Exposure to these historic traditions helps aid the critical thinking of the preacher and shows what assumptions are present in preaching (9). After Allen offers a theological synopsis of these historic families (Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Anglican, and Lutheran), he links a particular denomination or sect to these represented families. Part One ends with a discussion of the Enlightenment's affect on contemporary theology and preaching, which serves as a backdrop to the theologies discussed throughout the book (17).

Part Two, chapters 4–6, builds on Part One by exposing the reader to theological traditions arising from and being influenced by the Enlightenment (23). Allen succinctly captures Friedrich Schleiermacher and Rudolf Bultmann's Liberal Theology for helping liberate congregations from Enlightenment attitudes (24). He demonstrates Paul Tillich's mutual Critical Correlation of how the biblical language and symbols have lost their rhetorical effect (29). He also shows how Alfred North Whitehead's Process Theology focuses on the Christian message relating to "becoming" (37).

In contrast to Part Two, the next section (Part Three with chapters 7–10) covers theologies that have reacted against the Enlightenment (43). Evangelical Theology, a generic term applying to a variety of core values (44), is used for fundamental thinking of inerrancy of the Bible along with the conviction that universal truths are evident in Scripture (44-45). Neoorthodox Theology, as proposed by Karl Barth, Emil Brunner, and Reinhold Niebuhr, acts as middle ground between the Liberal Theology of Schleiermacher and Bultmann which bridges to the Postliberal Theology as proposed by Hans Frie (49) and later by Charles Campbell. Part Three ends with discussions of three general and broad theologies (Confessional Theology, Radical Orthodoxy, and Theologies of Otherness).

Part Four concludes this volume with discussions of two final theologies that arise out of culture's context. They are referenced under the broad headings of Liberation and Ethnic Theologies.

This volume accomplishes its role as an introduction to the varied theologies that drive contemporary preaching. The book's effectiveness is capturing such vastly different and complex theologies. This volume has a "Cliff Notes" flavor to it; a good summary of a variety of theological perspectives that affect preaching. Certainly, volumes could be written on these theologies, and with each chapter's conclusion a brief bibliography is included because "it is clear that more must be said" (viii). If the reader disagrees with some of Allen's depictions, Allen's strokes are broadly made yet clear enough for a general picture of the specific theology he has painted. I found a sharper understanding of my own theology, and was intrigued by how he classified preaching and theology from my own religious heritage, Churches of Christ (a cappella), though I did not necessarily fully agree with his assessment. Others within their own religious heritage may feel the same, because these views are "representative not exhaustive" (1).

From a pragmatic standpoint, one helpful portion of the book was a preaching segment. Each chapter included a discussion of how these theological perspectives carry its theology into the pulpit; here is how this group might preach a sermon (1). The test-case Allen uses is Luke 17:11-17, giving consistency to the varied perspectives on the same text. So, Allen shows how each theological family might view and preach from Jesus' raising the widow's son.

This volume is a brief but excellent survey of the theologies that drive contemporary preaching. I recommend this book as an introduction to preaching for beginning students who need help clarifying their own theological perspective. The book is also a handy reminder for seasoned preachers to better understand their own theology and how it affects their preaching.

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Ben J. KATT. *The Power of Persuasive Preaching*. St. Louis: Chalice, 2006. 133 pp. $13.59.

Four hundred years after Aristotle defined rhetoric as "the art of persuasion," the Apostle Paul proclaimed, "We try to persuade men," (2 Cor 5:10, NIV). The established link between the power of persuasion and preaching remains yet elusive for many tasked with weekly homiletical invention accompanied by the resultant expectation of changed lives.

In this volume, Katt has sought creatively and inductively, through the medium of fictional narrative, to foster the preacher's enhanced understanding of persuasive communication which engenders spiritually changed lives. Reminiscent of Calvin Miller's, *The Sermon Maker* (2002), Katt's work finds differentiation from Miller's fictional text in Katt's particular focus on the building of persuasive influence.

Katt's underlying goal, namely to feed and facilitate the becoming of a passionate communicator of the gospel, one who moves listeners to action, shapes each of the text's seven chapters. The text's central character, Tim, begins on a quest to seek a mentor who will guide him on a path to greater persuasive power in his preaching. In the first chapter, Tim encounters that mentor, Art Lincoln, proprietor of a professional speakers' training program, a man with a background in offering motivational real estate seminars. This fictional persuasive speech mentor, Mr. Lincoln, and his conversational advice, has been obviously brought to page by a commingling of some of the real-life experiences of Ben Katt himself and Ben's father, Arthur Katt, a one-time well-respected professor of speech and homiletics with Cincinnati Christian University. Chapter one serves as the professional introduction between fictional characters Tim Hartmann, the preacher, and Mr. Art Lincoln, the speaker trainer and Tim's new found mentor. Chapters two through seven each center around a conversation between Tim and primarily Mr. Lincoln, conversations accompanied by eclectic gastronomic props, yet all associated with persuasive art in the service of preaching, in relation to such matters as rapport, delivery, style, construct, and personal preparation.

The reader would be best encouraged and served to discover and explore the appendix first. In the appendix, entitled "Tim's Notes," Katt dispenses invaluable clues which inform, not only principles of persuasive preaching, but especially the fictional narrative. In the appendix, Katt informs the fictional narrative through the interpretation of the key discussions of each of the second through seventh chapters, discussions led by the text's main fictional character, the preacher, Tim. Additionally, in the appendix, Katt informs the praxis of persuasive preaching in general by offering observations, principles, and insights gleaned from his own experience in persuasive preaching and persuasive communication.

Though informative, the claims of and explanations of persuasive technique in the appendix would be better served by appeal to practitioner and scholarly resources, both to reinforce the strength of Katt's observations and to serve any reader desiring further study. That lack of appeal to any trusted texts or authorities in the field of preaching, public speech, human communication theory, rhetoric, or business communication remains a glaring weakness for anyone desiring more.

This fictional narrative, readable and interesting, would be appropriate as assigned additional reading in an upper-level undergraduate course or in any sem-

inary course in advanced preaching. As well, any preacher who prefers to learn inductively might discover in Katt's text a source for increasing one's persuasive power come the sermonic event. Katt draws from a deep well of experience as a minister, professional speaker, entrepreneur, and consultant. For the minister seeking to increase persuasive potential, This volume may well provide some valuable nuggets of rhetorical treasure.

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David FLEER, and Dave BLAND, eds. *Preaching Mark's Unsettling Messiah.* St. Louis: Chalice, 2006. 188 pp. $15.99.

This volume is a collection of essays and sermons that grew from the May 2005 Rochester College Sermon Seminar in honor of Fred Craddock and applying the "New Homiletic," which he founded, to Mark's Gospel. Notably, Craddock himself provides two essays, as does New Testament scholar and former Lady Margaret's Chair of Divinity at Cambridge University, Morna D. Hooker. A host of other scholars and pastors also contribute to the volume.

The overall attractiveness of this collection of essays is the manner in which it weds academic concerns and pastoral concerns. Craddock and his New Homiletic advocate following the text closely and attentively while preaching it. Following his succinct introduction to the New Homiletic ("The New Homiletic for Latecomers"), this particular seminarian was wondering why his Master of Divinity did not include more, or any, study on Craddock and this homiletical model that fits so well with detailed exegesis. Another strength of the book is that the various chapters build upon one another. For example, Jerry Taylor's sermon on Mark 6:14-29 builds upon Hooker's insights into the Markan narrative and its relationship with Greek dramas. Such efforts underscore all the more the attempt to wed NT scholarship and homiletics. As one smaller but significant positive, I applaud the efforts of a Stone-Campbell school in hosting a conference whose proceedings then appear as an academic book. May other institutions follow their lead.

One obvious and early weakness of this study is that footnote references are not always correct. For example, on page 2, footnote 2 references the Markan fig tree intercalation. In the endnotes, this is actually footnote 3. Similarly, page 5 includes a footnote 10 whose contents in the endnotes actually refer to footnote 9. The information to which footnote 10 refers does not appear anywhere in the endnotes. These, however, are minor editorial issues. A more significant issue is a fundamental assumption of the study: "Mark is the first Christian preacher, and his gospel the first sermon" (3). Insofar as this assumption reflects the evangelical conviction that the primary storehouse of sermonic material is the text itself, it is harmless and admirable. However, more recent scholarship on the emergence of the Gospel texts, with Mark typically being seen as the first writer to take this innovative step, has suggested that Gospels are conscious adaptations of the *bios* genre of literature. That is, the editors and contributors to this volume may view Mark as the first preacher, and his text as the first sermon, but it is unlikely that Mark himself con-

ceived of his task as such. Rather, Mark seems to have been involved in the more sophisticated task of creating a new genre or sub-genre in the literary scene, a *euangelion*. The suggestion here is that, alongside of seeing Mark's text as "sermonic," we should also see it as a bold step in both Christian and book history.

Admittedly, however, the editors of this book did not set out to discuss Mark's literary innovation, but rather the New Homiletic. They accomplish this task and also honor the deserving Fred Craddock. It will be very useful for courses and private study in homiletics.

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Leland RYKEN and Philip Graham RYKEN, eds. *The Literary Study Bible.* English Standard Version. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2007. 2016 pp. $49.99.

This volume aims to be a "reader's guide" that leads its readers directly into the text, "rather than (being) primarily a reference book about the Bible," like more conventional study Bibles (vii). The commentary it does contain "focuses on the literary features of the Bible, as distinct from historical, cultural, or linguistic features" (vii). Although the editors see these other features as complementary and not unimportant (xiv), this volume gives the Bible's literary qualities a certain priority because, "there is no meaning without the form in which a piece of writing is expressed" (vii).

The twofold expressed goal of this volume is to make the Bible "reader friendly," and to show how literary analysis helps one better understand it (xvii). The "critical apparatus" it provides to accomplish these goals include: highlighting the human experiences found in the text; identifying the genre(s) of a passage; naming archetypes and motifs; commenting on style and rhetorical patterns; making occasional observations on artistry; and showing the unity and flow of passages in relation to themselves, in relation to the books in which they appear, and in relation "ultimately to the Bible as a whole" (xii). In order to accomplish this last three-part objective the editors, in blocked passage headings, supply virtual summary paragraphs outlining the main points of the flow of the content of the passages that follow (esp. for the epistles), in addition to indicating the passages' literary forms. And, although interpretations are inevitable in this type of exercise, the editors seem to display a fair amount of restraint with respect to contested doctrinal content. For example, by mentioning only what Ephesians 2:8 clearly says, that one is "saved by grace through faith," rather than deciding whether or not faith itself is a gift, the editors do not needlessly involve themselves in deciding these types of contested issues. However, this does not mean that they provide too little information either. For example, although the editors understand Revelation to exhibit a seven-part cyclical structure, a view most consistent with an amillennial perspective, when they introduce chapter twenty they mention all three of the main possibilities for interpreting the millennium. They seem to have struck a good balance.

In addition to the blocked passage headings, "the introductions to each of the books of the Bible provide a roadmap that points out what a reader most benefits

from knowing about the book that follows" (vii). Accordingly, they vary slightly from book to book. However, generally they include a short summary statement of "the book at a glance," a description of the book's overall genre, a very general outline chart of the book that correlates its content with its various literary forms and its major themes and theology, and a brief statement of how the book fits into the larger story of the Bible as a whole (The editors understand the Bible to be a unique literary anthology unified by a Christocentric story of salvation history metanarrative, xiv). Other noteworthy features this volume includes are an informative preface, a very thorough introduction, wherein the editors, amongst other things, define and defend their literary approach, and an eighteen-page glossary defining literary genres, literary conventions and terms, and story types.

The crucial test, of course, for this volume is whether or not it has matched the correct literary forms to their passages. This is crucial because what can be said of genres, that they "have their own methods of procedure and rules for interpretation" (x), is true for all literary forms. This is a more complicated problem when contemporary or foreign literary forms are applied to ancient biblical texts. This problem is lessened, however, when the ancient and modern categories are sufficiently similar, or even "identical." Although one may not agree wholeheartedly with every description and match of literary form by this volume, still one finds considerable similarity when one compares its literary categories and matches with other informed sources such as: David Aune's *The N.T. in Its Literary Environment* (Library of Early Christianity; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1987); James Bailey and Lyle Vander Broek's *Literary Forms in the New Testament: A Handbook* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1992); Brent Sandy and Ronald Giese, Jr.'s *Cracking Old Testament Codes: A Guide to Interpreting the Literary Genres of the Old Testament* (Nashville: B & H Publishing Group, 1995); William Klein, Craig Blomberg, and Robert Hubbard's *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation: Revised and Expanded* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2004); and John H. Walton's *Ancient Israelite Literature in Its Cultural Context: A Survey of Parallels between Biblical and Ancient Near Eastern Texts* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1989). This similarity holds true both for the larger genres (epistle, narrative, poetry, prophecy, wisdom, etc) and for the smaller "subgenres" and literary forms (diatribes, lament psalms, oracles, parables, paraenesis, story types, types of parallelisms, etc).

My only major criticism of this volume has to do with the appended "daily reading plan." The twofold goal of this volume is laudable and complementary when the application of the literary approach helps one "develop habits of reading that make our devotional reading more substantial than it often is" (xvii). Unfortunately they can also be at cross purposes. This reviewer considers the "daily reading plan" in its current configuration—where one reads daily in four categories (Psalms and Wisdom, Pentateuch and History, Chronicles and Prophets, Gospels and Epistles), a net minus rather than a plus. I do so because it fragments the books, letters, etc. into daily disconnected portions. It is an unfortunate irony that just two paragraphs preceding the statement "one of the greatest gifts of the literary approach to the Bible is that it enables readers to grasp a passage as a literary whole" is the announcement that this volume's format has divided the text "into units of a length that invites devotional reading day by day" (ix). It is also indicative of how much

of our culture has traded simple devotional (and often merely pietistic) reading of the Bible for more serious study.

As for pairing this volume with the ESV translation, this seems to me an appropriate choice because the ESV seeks to be a "literal translation" with an "emphasis on literary excellence" (xx). A more literal translation is a good idea for a *study* Bible, and readability and a certain level of literary quality (Dr. Leland Ryken served as literary stylist for ESV as a member of the translation oversight committee) are appropriate for a "reader's guide" Bible.

This volume should make a great reading Bible, and a good addition to a minister's library. It is also a valuable resource, and should be recommended as a textbook, for non-Christian college and high school teachers, and their students, who, since the landmark *Abington School Dist. v. Schempp*, 374 U.S. 203 (1963) Supreme Court case, can still teach the Bible from a literary standpoint without violating the First Amendment. Also, because of the importance of its literary emphasis, this volume would serve well as an important second study Bible for students of all ages. Unfortunately, it simply leaves out too many features that one comes to expect from a more conventional study Bible (charts, commentary footnotes, detailed outlines, historical introductions, parallel verses, maps, etc) to be recommended as a first or sole study Bible.

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Lee Martin McDONALD. ***The Biblical Canon: Its Origin, Transmission, and Authority.*** **3rd ed. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2007. 546 pp. $29.95.**

Earlier editions of this work appeared in 1988 and 2005. R. Timothy McLay of St. Stephen's University provides a seventeen-page excursus (224-240). McDonald has also edited a volume on the canon with James Sanders (*The Canon Debate*, Hendrickson, 2002). The basic premise driving McDonald's canon research has been a willingness "to challenge unsubstantiated claims about the origins of the Bible" (xv), for which we can be grateful. A decade of progress in the publication of primary and secondary sources necessitates this third edition. In spite of considerable rewriting, McDonald's previous conclusions remain largely the same. One exception concerns the Muratorian Fragment, which he now considers most likely a late-fourth-century eastern document (xviii, 369-378).

McDonald's preliminaries include helpful clarification of elusive terms. "Scripture" concerns "the divine status of a written document that is accepted as authoritative in the life, mission, worship, and teaching of a community of faith" (54). Refining the use of "canon," McDonald adopts the terminology of G.T. Sheppard ("Canon," *Encyclopedia of Religion*, Macmillan, 1987) and speaks of "Canon 1" and "Canon 2." The former refers to "an authoritative voice in written or oral form that was read and received as having the authority of God in it" (55). "Canon 2" refers to "when the books of the Bible were fixed or stabilized" (55).

The preface states the driving concern of the book's OT section: "the first followers of Jesus never received from him either the notion of a closed biblical canon

or any listing of the books that belonged to it . . . the process of canonization was not complete until the fourth and fifth centuries . . ." (xvi). I suspect most *SCJ* readers reject the notion of a fixed canon by the early first century. Nevertheless, the reminder is helpful that not only many in the pew, but also some influential scholars, hold such a position. McDonald devotes considerable space to challenging the arguments, for example, of Roger Beckwith, David Freedman, and Sid Leiman.

The NT section accepts the broad chronological outline of Albert Sundberg: 1) rising to scriptural status, 2) grouping into collections, 3) forming set lists of authoritative literature (243-244). Though McDonald's NT material surpasses that of the OT, it does not make significant gains beyond, for example, Metzger's model treatment (*Canon of the NT*, Oxford, 1987). An arguable exception is chapter thirteen; in addition to discussions of several early lists (364-384), McDonald helpfully orders the material by NT document as well (384-399).

A general observation is that the book is especially redundant. Both style and structure contribute to this redundancy, resulting in numerous unnecessary pages. More importantly, the book suffers from a not infrequent lack of precision.

Sometimes this lack of precision concerns clarity of expression. So, for example, McDonald wrongly and unintentionally implies that the modern order of biblical books follows the order of Athanasius (355). Elsewhere he makes the confused statement that textual criticism has revealed that John 21:15-17 is not original to the Fourth Gospel (357, cf. 8). He curiously calls the canonical Gospels second-century "pseudonymous literature" (257, the subsequent paragraph makes a more balanced claim).

McDonald attributes the above inaccurate claim about the Gospels to "many scholars," and thereby demonstrates another category of lack of precision—representation of sources. At one point we read that F.F. Bruce "insists" on a particular view of Luke 24:44, yet the corresponding footnote states Bruce was undecided on the matter (93). Elsewhere McDonald presents Bruce as a proponent of "the completeness of the Hebrew biblical canon by the time of Jesus" (97). In fact, however, Bruce says no such thing (Bruce, *Canon of Scripture*, 1988, 28-32, contra McDonald, 96-97, notes 60 and 62).

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Donald K. McKIM, ed. *Dictionary of Major Biblical Interpreters.* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2007. 1106 pp. $55.00.

McKim has selected about a hundred biblical interpreters for articles. Most of the articles take up between three and eight pages. The authors of the individual articles followed basically the same format in each article, but were apparently allowed to vary somewhat. In most of the articles, the pattern is broadly as follows: ***Life***, in a brief summary; ***Context***, in which the religious, cultural, intellectual, and political times of the author are very briefly summarized; ***Interpretive Principles***, in which how the scholar approached the text is discussed; ***Significance***, in which the lasting (or *not*-so-lasting) significance of the scholar is discussed.

At the end of each article is a very helpful bibliography, which is divided into two sections. The first section lists some of the most important works *by* the interpreter. The second section lists some of the most helpful studies *about* the interpreter. In addition to the articles on major interpreters, there are also helpful articles on biblical interpretation throughout the church's history. These six articles comprise the first one-hundred pages of the book. The book is made more useful by three indexes: one for persons mentioned in the articles, one for subjects, and one an index of the articles themselves.

This book has lots to like. In a few pages concerning an interpreter that I thought I knew well, some interesting new facts and intriguing perspectives emerged. For example, concerning W.F. Albright, we read, "By eleven he already knew that he wished to become a biblical archaeologist but feared that by the time he grew up, everything would have been discovered." Suddenly, an austere greatness is supplemented by a poignant humanity. In addition, I found intriguing biblical interpreters of whom I knew nothing. The article on Louis Cappel (1585–1658), of whom I was not aware, on the Hebrew vowel points stimulated my thinking on this matter, and sent me to the bibliography to learn more.

One great strength of the articles is the section on context. Too often, students are told of the works of great scholars but with no background to connect students with the larger world of their times. Thus, the impression is given of a kind of vacuum-packed, individually wrapped scholarship. The context sections in this book help to overcome this pitfall.

Another strength of the book is the careful cross-referencing system that links readers to relevant articles on other interpreters. Thus, in the entry on Martin Luther, the name "Augustine" has an asterisk before it to refer readers to that interpreter who influenced him.

One weakness of the book is almost inevitable: It does not include many scholars who have had a profound impact on biblical interpretation. For example, where are the great Jewish interpreters of the Old Testament? Apparently, the Word "Christian" should have preceded the phrase "Major Biblical Interpreters" in the title, as the preface seems to make clear. Yet, in view of the debt Christian scholars owe to Jewish scholars, one wonders if the omission of Jewish interpreters is not unfortunate.

Readers can always find fault with dictionaries regarding articles that should have been included. *SCJ* readers will note the absence of articles on Alexander Campbell, J.W. McGarvey, Robert Milligan, and Lewis Foster. McKim is definitely in the Reformed tradition, and biblical scholars from that tradition seem to be well represented, although many of the best and most influential interpreters from other traditions are also included.

The preface frankly acknowledges that the book is by no means exhaustive, and the title suggests the same. McKim does not claim that his work is *the* dictionary, nor does he claim that he has selected *the* major interpreters. He recognizes the limitations of his own work, and challenges others to fill in some of those limitations. Hopefully, this excellent piece of work will encourage others to do precisely that.

McKim and the contributors to this volume have done a wonderful service to the Christian community. Every library and seminary should have this volume on

their reference shelf. Pastors and scholars who can possibly afford it should have it on their shelves as well. It gives biblical scholarship a human face, and shows us not only the mind but also the heart of biblical scholarship.

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Joseph A. FITZMEYER, S.J. *The Interpretation of Scripture: In Defense of the Historical-Critical Method.* New York and Mahwah, NJ: Paulist, 2008. 153 pp. $18.95.

This collection of previously published, revised essays aims to "reveal how the Bible . . . has come to be read," primarily by Catholic exegetes (an observation rather than a criticism). Fitzmyer provides a resource for those situations in which "a fundamentalistic [*sic*] reading of the Bible has the potential to cause trouble, or where the historical-critical method of interpretation has been found suspect" (vii).

The first essay briefly adumbrates the shifting place of the Bible in Catholic life and theology during the 1900s. In the light of Vatican II, the Catholic Church has clarified (and transformed) the relation between Scripture and Tradition, authorized the translation of the Bible into contemporary vernaculars, even "in cooperation with the separated brethren" (13), and explored the "'actualization' of the written Word," which anchors the Bible's significance for today in the texts' original meaning (I use the singular advisedly; cf. "*the* literal sense . . . ascertained by the historical-critical method" [14; my emphasis]) without limiting that significance to their original meaning.

The second essay examines the relationship between biblical scholarship and the Church through the lens of the controversy sparked by Schökel's article, "Where Is Catholic Exegesis Headed?" (1960). Fitzmyer's point, that "the fear that the Scripture scholars of the world are undermining the faith has appeared before in the history of the Church" (33) without *actually* undermining that faith, is certainly relevant for Stone-Campbell scholars and ministers alike.

The third essay comments on "The Biblical Commission's Instruction on the Historical Truth of the Gospels," which Fitzmyer calls "the first official statement of the Catholic Church that openly countenanced [form criticism] and frankly admitted the distinction of three states of tradition in gospel material" (38). Though the *Instructio* relates primarily to form- and redaction-critical analysis of the Gospels, Fitzmyer raises pertinent questions regarding the concerns of ecclesiastical structures (Catholic or otherwise) and professional exegesis.

The fourth essay raises complaints against historical criticism (mostly, though not exclusively, from fundamentalist and conservative corners) and proceeds to offer a *précis* and *apologia* of that method. Fitzmyer roots historical criticism in the biblical text itself (72-73), and he notes the ecumenical consequences between Catholicism and "other Christian Churches," who, despite their salient differences, now employed "the same kind of interpret[ive]" tools to read the Bible (73).

The fifth essay takes its cue from "non-confessional" approaches to the Bible to ask, "How, then, does one interpret the Bible in the Christian faith community?"

(77). As in previous essays, "Christian faith community" is primarily but not exclusively the Catholic community. Fitzmyer filters his answer through the Biblical Commission's *The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church*, 1993. He provides (yet) another *précis* of historical criticism (77-81), relates that method to other critical approaches (81-83), and again discusses "actualization" (83-84).

The sixth essay discusses the problematic nature of biblical interpretation—evident even in the interpretation(s) of earlier biblical texts in later texts—and explains the four senses of Scripture: the literal, spiritual, fuller, and accommodated senses. Fitzmyer's discussion here is careful and precise, which further highlights the difficulty in separating (and, frequently, legitimizing) these four "senses of Scripture."

Fitzmyer ends with an *encomium* to Raymond Brown, S.S., and some "Concluding Remarks."

Fitzmyer provides a helpful articulation of historical-critical methodology and ably defends its ongoing relevance for biblical exegesis. Though he excessively privileges historical criticism, this is, perhaps, attributable to (1) his status as a first-rate exegete of an earlier generation, and (2) his broader conception of "historical criticism," which includes almost every other critical perspective of which Fitzmyer approves. His ecclesio-centric prescriptions for biblical scholarship will strike some as odd, either for being unashamedly rooted in and constrained by faith (for "nonconfessional" critics) or for being unashamedly Catholic (for non-Catholic critics). But Fitzmyer's meditations on historical criticism's relevance for theology, ecclesiology, and ministry are, *mutatis mutandis*, appropriate for readers from any Christian tradition, not least Stone-Campbell traditions.

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Eugene H. MERRILL. *Everlasting Dominion: A Theology of the Old Testament.* Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2006. 682 pp. $39.99.

Merrill, distinguished professor of Old Testament studies at Dallas Theological Seminary and distinguished professor of Old Testament interpretation at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, is the author of numerous books and articles and has taught OT for over four decades. The back cover of this volume describes the volume as Merrill's magnum opus and in the preface Merrill describes the task of biblical theology as one requiring the knowledge acquired through study of several other disciplines. If it is possible to be prepared to write a theology of the OT, Merrill is up to the task.

Merrill has included in the introduction a brief history of the biblical theology movement, a defense for a new work in the area, a statement of his presuppositions, and a description of his method. The book is structured according to four major sections. Part One, "God: His Person and Work," describes characteristics of God and the interaction of God with creation. This section is arranged topically rather than textually and is thus more akin to the approach of a systematic theology than a biblical theology. This first section is important to the later sections as it provides for the reader Merrill's understanding of God's nature and purposes, which is key

to Merrill's program as a whole. Part Two, "Mankind: The Image of God," is where Merrill's theology assumes an approach more like one expects in a biblical theology as Merrill here begins to follow the biblical narrative, mostly in its canonical order, beginning with the creation accounts in Genesis 1–2, moving to the fall narrative and the results of sin in creation. Merrill then moves to God's plan for redemption, and the creation of the nation Israel and its role in God's redemption plan. Part Three, "The Kingdom of God," begins with discussion of some aspects of society and religion in biblical Israel through a study of the concepts of kingdom, sacred space, and covenant. The section then moves to a discussion of the nations as they resist God's kingdom and the responses of the prophets to the nations. This section also includes discussion of divine and human kingship in the psalms. Part Three continues with chapters on God's relationship with Israel as it is defined in the Mosaic Covenant. The ensuing chapters in Part Three follow the narrative of the Deuteronomistic History (Joshua–Kings; Merrill includes Ruth) and the Secondary History (Chronicles–Ezra–Nehemiah; Merrill includes Esther). Part Four, "The Prophets and the Kingdom," is a study of the prophets in their suggested historical order, beginning with the eighth-century prophets, moving to the later preexilic and exilic prophets, and concluding with the postexilic prophets. Part Five, "Human Reflection on the Ways of God," discusses the psalms and wisdom literature. The book ends with a concluding chapter in which Merrill returns to his theological premises, methodology, identification of a theological center to the OT, and thoughts on the Old and New Testaments of the Christian Canon.

The two most important issues that the introduction addresses are Merrill's identification of a center for OT theology and his method of organizing the theology historically. These two methodological issues impact the shape of the entire work as well as its conclusions. Merrill identifies Gen 1:26-28, a text known by many as the "creation mandate," as the theological center of the OT, Merrill sees in these verses first and most importantly the theme of the sovereignty of God. The verses also introduce the theme of God's creation of humankind as God's image, present to represent God and to rule over creation. The concept of kingdom is thus a vital element of Merrill's theology. Covenant is also important since Merrill identifies Gen 1:26-28 as a covenant text, taking the form of a royal grant (239). In the conclusion of the book, Merrill even refers to the verses as "the covenant mandate" (644). Merrill's OT theology is thus a covenant theology.

Merrill's identification of Gen 1:26-28 as the center for his theology of the OT opens the door to several opportunities for discussion. First, is it possible to organize the diverse materials of the OT around a single center? Merrill is not the first to try. Second, is Gen 1:26-28 really a covenant text? Not all biblical scholars will agree with Merrill here. Third, if one agrees that Gen 1:26-28 is a covenant text, has Merrill overcome the criticism that covenant theologies deal primarily with God's particular relationship with Israel, but not sufficiently with God's universal relationship with all of creation? If Gen 1:26-28 is a covenant, it is indeed established with all of humankind, not just Israel, and defines the relationships among God, humankind, and the rest of creation. Thus it is a covenant that addresses God's dominion over all of creation.

The other major issue Merrill addresses in the introduction is his decision to organize his theology according to a chronological approach. Merrill plainly states his assumption that the narratives of the OT are historically reliable and on the basis of his understanding of progressive revelation he presents the narrative of the text as a chronologically developing revelation of God. Merrill's decision to give priority to chronology over canon results in his neglect of the concerns that the formation and shape of the canon bring to OT theology. Though he does briefly discuss the theology of the deuteronomistic history (464), he does not explore the theology of the Pentateuch, the plausibility of a theology of the twelve Minor Prophets, or an intentional organization of the Psalter. In fact, the discussion of the psalms includes no discussion of order or shape, instead offering some observations on forms and some topics present in the psalms. This neglect of canonical concerns is a weakness in Merrill's methodology that weakens his resultant theology of the OT.

Another weakness Merrill's OT theology shares with other covenant theologians is a lack of serious reflection on the wisdom literature. Merrill's position is that the wisdom literature functions as a kingdom ethic for the people of God. Merrill does not explore the connections between wisdom and creation theology. Whether he does so intentionally or not, Merrill minimizes the role of wisdom in biblical theology.

One criticism that will be more of an issue to some readers than others is Merrill's continued use of "man" and "mankind" in his references to humankind. Many readers would anticipate more gender-inclusive language in an academic work.

These critical comments regarding Merrill's work are not intended to devalue his contribution to the field or to challenge the validity or quality of his work. The value of Merrill's OT Theology as with the works of other scholars is in the doors that are opened for ongoing and new conversation. This volume is a good addition to the libraries of pastors who are interested in exploring the many approaches to study of the OT. The volume is a good text for upper-level college courses, and seminary courses in OT theology. Old Testament theology is a neglected but valuable resource to the churches of the Stone-Campbell movement as they continue to work through issues of the authority and applicability of the OT for the church. Eugene Merrill's contribution to OT theology deserves a place in this discussion.

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Timothy M. PIERCE. *Enthroned on Our Praise: An Old Testament Theology of Worship.* NAC Studies in Bible & Theology. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2008. 319 pp. $19.99.

What is worship all about? The answer will vary greatly depending on whom you ask. A worship leader, pastor, artist, student, theologian, and an average church member will probably give very different answers. But Pierce of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary offers a helpful volume with the intention of bringing clarity and focus to the discussion of worship, specifically through the lens of worship in the OT.

Those looking for practical help with specific issues related to contemporary music-driven worship will be disappointed here. Rather, Pierce's intention is to offer an overview of worship in the OT, focusing primarily on the biblical material and extracting theological principles along the way. He states, "The purpose of this book is not to propose a specific style of worship (the topic will barely be broached) but to suggest that the relational God who is presented in the Bible has expressed who He is and how our relationship with Him should manifest itself in worship" (3).

Contemporary worship is not always known for theological depth and reflection. Although there have been encouraging developments in recent years, there is still much work to do, and Pierce's book is a helpful (although very dense) addition to the literature on worship theology. But why a focus on the OT? Pierce answers, "Simply put, there are elements about mankind's relationship to God that we cannot find anywhere except in the OT. Consequently, such essentials, if we realize and implement them, will positively affect the way we worship the God we serve today" (6).

The book is divided into five chapters, each exploring a section of the OT and its relationship to worship: 1) The Primeval Prologue: Relationships in Worship; 2) The Pentateuch: Foundations of Worship; 3) The Former Prophets: Patterns of Worship; 4) The Latter Prophets: Attitudes in Worship; and 5) The Writings: Expressions of Worship. Each chapter explores the worship themes in the respective sections of the OT. For example, the chapter on the Pentateuch surveys the following major themes: the nature of God, sacred space, sacred time, atonement, and the sacrifice. Each chapter also concludes by showing how the NT reflects or expands the themes of the chapter.

This volume has several strengths that make it a valuable resource for anyone wanting to seriously study biblical worship. The book is very well-researched and thorough, and one of the few books to systematically study worship in the OT. Discussions about worship usually focus on personal or cultural preferences, and worship leaders, pastors, and church leaders will be well served by deepening their study of this critical area of ministry and scholarship.

In addition, the book clarifies potentially confusing topics related to OT worship. When discussing the purpose of the Sabbath, for example, Pierce says, "In a very real sense, the idea of the Sabbath pulls humanity out of its self-interest and striving. It presses people to find contentment in the idea that God is ultimately in control and does in fact provide for the needs that too often they find themselves attempting to fulfill on their own during the work week" (71). This is a simple and applicable summary of the purpose of an OT practice that holds an important principle for Christians. At various points throughout the text I was impressed with Pierce's ability to "cut to the chase" and offer a helpful word for us today. In his discussion of idolatry within the historical books he offers the following insight: "The very words of God in Num 7:89 coupled with a shared history of events . . . reflect that the use of the ark and presence of God were indeed a significant memory on which Yahweh expected his people to rely. But a memory that has dethroned God becomes a tradition that enthrones man" (122). This is a great insight that offers application for our own worship traditions.

The book is not without its weaknesses, and two in particular deserve mention here. First, the book would be stronger and have broader appeal if more attention

were given to application. At many points in the reading Pierce communicates a mountain of information about a topic, but only offers a molehill's worth of reflection on how the material applies in a practical sense. The book is at its weakest when it gets bogged down in laborious linguistic and exegetical details without a clear summary and explanation of how these matters impact worship in a practical, tangible way. For example, Pierce spends thirteen pages discussing the etymology of Hebrew words associated with "atonement." While no one can deny the importance of atonement in biblical theology, the discussion should be much more concise and tightly focused. This is typical for too much of the book. At many points Pierce includes lots of information but fails to concisely summarize the discussion and tell us why the information matters.

This is related to my second criticism of the book: a writing style that is sometimes clunky and unclear. This volume is geared more toward a college and seminary audience (and interested pastors and church leaders) than the average Christian. But this does not mean it should be a chore to wade through the text. There is a great deal of very valuable content in the book, but this is the "slowest" book I have read in quite some time. I often had to re-read a sentence or paragraph several times to fully understand what Pierce was saying. This is not because of the difficult content, but because the writing style often does not flow very well. Better editing would have allowed the text to flow more smoothly, and would make for a better reading experience. John Maxwell once elaborated on the difference between a teacher and a communicator: "A teacher takes something simple and makes it complicated, and a communicator takes something complicated and makes it simple." Maxwell may overstate the case a bit, but there is a nugget of truth here. The unnecessarily complicated writing style of this volume often means that it doesn't communicate as well as it should.

Despite these shortcomings, this volume will be valuable for several groups of people. Anyone in an academic setting who teaches worship theology will find a good deal of food for thought. The book is well-suited for graduate courses in worship or theology, but is probably too difficult for all but the brightest undergraduate students. A familiarity with Hebrew will be helpful, but is not necessary. Any pastor or church leader interested in worship, or who is teaching and preaching on worship, will find lots of good content. Worship leaders in particular will be blessed by insights that will deepen their ministry and leadership. Although the book is not an easy read, it is a treasure trove of great information for anyone willing to dig. In general, anyone in the Stone-Campbell Restoration Movement who has interest in biblical worship or theology will find something valuable here.

The slogan of the *Stone-Campbell Journal* suggests that we should be "thinking things through." This is especially true of anyone who leads or teaches worship, an area where theological thinking is sometimes left behind. Those who are willing to mine the depths of this rich yet dense volume will come away with a clearer picture of biblical worship and a renewed commitment to help lead others in that process.

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Richard S. HESS. *Israelite Religions.* Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007. 432 pp. $34.99.

Richard S. Hess, professor of Old Testament at Denver Seminary, examines extrabiblical (material culture and inscriptions) and biblical evidence for the religions of the southern Levant in the Iron Age (c. 1200–586 BC) and locates features that might be distinctive of the religions of Israelites and Judeans. Hess carefully draws a distinction between theology, which emphasizes what the Bible suggests should be believed, and religion, which is more concerned with what ancient Israelites actually did believe. The plural form of the title is instructive. Hess defines religion as "the service and worship of the divine or supernatural through a system of attitudes, beliefs, and practices" (15).

The book features twelve chapters. The first is an introduction and the last offers a series of concluding statements. Chapters two and three offer a history of approaches to the study of religion and Israelite religion in particular. Chapters four and five survey pre-Israelite, West Semitic religion in Syria, Egypt, Palestine, and Jordan. Chapters 6–7 focus attention on the Pentateuch, chapter 8 on the United Monarchy, chapters 9 and 10 on the Divided Monarchy, and chapter 11 on the Exilic and Postexilic eras.

The book is well written and clear. Chapter summaries are especially helpful. The book exhibits meticulous scholarship. The reference list is fifty-four pages long! Forty-three photographs, three maps, and three drawings enhance the presentation. Additionally Hess supplies eight personal translations of ancient texts which are featured in the narrative. The content of this book will overpower the undergraduate, but would serve the graduate student and scholar well.

Hess concludes that ancient Israel was home to a variety of religious beliefs and practices that developed from earlier West Semitic beliefs and practices attested in Bronze Age archives and cult centers. This inheritance is visible in temple architecture; in the use of figurines, altars, incense burners, and the sacrificial system; in the "mating" of the chief male deity with a female consort/wife; and in the use of priests, prophets, and royalty in religious performances. In a sense, though, the religion of ancient Israel emerges as a distinctive set of practices and beliefs. Above all there is the exodus tradition, as well as the emphasis on Yahweh as the sole deity and his intolerance of other gods and goddesses.

Hess believes that the Kuntillet Ajrud Texts (c. 800 BC) provide "the major catalyst for a revolution in our understanding of the beliefs of the Israelites during the monarchy" (283). These texts suggest that Yahweh had a wife named Asherah and he had children, all of whom were members of the divine council that was worshiped in ancient Israel. "Yahweh has become a member of the pantheon of Iron Age Palestine" (283; also 13).

Hess believes that the monarchy incorporated examples of polytheistic worship. Close to the ends of both kingdoms, Israel and Judah, there is an apparent increase in domestic cult activity, perhaps reflecting a movement toward the worship of a variety of deities. The kings' devotion to other deities and these populous practices are, however, at odds with the almost 100 percent usage of Yahweh as the sole theophoric element in the Judean personal names of this period. Was Yahweh perceived as the national deity, while the Baals were the local, fertility deities?

I am convinced that this volume will serve as a valuable resource in the discussion of the academy for a long time.

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J.G. McCONVILLE and Karl MÖLLER, eds. *Reading the Law: Studies in Honour of Gordon J. Wenham.* Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies 461. New York: T & T Clark, 2007. 319 pp. $140.00.

This book is a festschrift for the well-known British evangelical OT scholar, Gordon J. Wenham who retired from teaching at the University of Gloucestershire in 2005. Wenham is a prolific writer, widely known for his two-volume commentary on Genesis (1987, 1994), as well as solid commentaries on Leviticus (1979) and Numbers (1981). The bibliography at the end of this volume lists seventeen other books that Wenham has either authored, coauthored, or edited, along with eighty-seven articles and essays written by him. Wenham was also active as a mentor of Ph.D. students. The editors of this volume, McConville and Möller, along with six other of its contributors were students of Wenham, either at Gloucestershire, Cheltenham, or the Queen's University, Belfast.

The book is loosely organized around "reading the law" in honor of Wenham's research interest in the Pentateuch. Its eighteen essays deal with aspects of the law in the Pentateuch, the Prophets, and the Writings, though some in the latter categories are at best loosely connected to the theme of law.

David J.A. Clines' "Being a Man in the Book of the Covenant" gives a feminist analysis of maleness in Exodus 20:22–23:33. J.G. McConville, "'Fellow Citizens': Israel and Humanity in Leviticus," tries to show that Leviticus's vision of Israel was inclusive and non-nationalist. Nobuyoshi Kiuchi, "Commanding an Impossibility? Reflections on the Golden Rule in Leviticus 19:18b," provides an exegesis of the command to love one's neighbor as one's self. Jacob Milgrom argues in "The Case for the Pre-Exilic and Exilic Provenance of the Books of Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers" that the Priestly Code (P) and the Holiness Code (H) date to before the Babylonian exile, but were edited during the exile.

Ronald E. Clements and Thomas Renz provide word studies: "The Meaning of *tôrâ* in Isaiah 1–39" and "Torah in the Minor Prophets" respectively. Raymond Westbrook, "The Trial of Jeremiah," provides an analysis of legal procedures used to win the acquittal of Jeremiah in Jeremiah 26.

Karl Möller provides a hermeneutical reflection on the king's commitment to observe the standards of God's law in "Reading, Singing and Praying the Law: An Exploration of the Performative, Self-Involving, Commissive Language of Psalm 101." Robin Parry, "The Ethics of Lament: Lamentations 1 as a Case Study," seeks to show how laments can be a rich resource for contemporary theological ethics. H.G.M. Williamson, "The Torah and History in Presentations of Restoration in Ezra-Nehemiah," shows how the author of Ezra-Nehemiah considered the law central to an understanding of the restoration of Judah under Ezra and Nehemiah.

Craig G. Bartholomew, "The Theology of Place in Genesis 1–3," approaches

the early chapters of the Bible through the prism of place. T. Desmond Alexander, "The Regal Dimension of the *tôledôt-ya'aqôb*: Recovering the Literary Context of Genesis 37–50," argues the redactional structure of Genesis 37–50 shows an interest in royalty. R.W.L. Moberly, "On Learning Spiritual Disciplines: A Reading of Exodus 16," seeks the significance of the story of the manna within the Christian Canon. Robert P. Gordon examines the message and purpose of Genesis 1–2 in "The Week that Made the World: Reflections on the First Pages of the Bible."

Richard Hess's essay, "Going Down to Sheol: A Place Name and Its West Semitic Background," is a study of the West Semitic underworld deity Shuwala whose name may be connected to the Hebrew term Sheol and the personal name Methushael (Genesis 4:18). Alan Millard, "The Tablets in the Ark," examines Exodus 24:12 in its Near Eastern covenant context. Pekka Pitkänen, "Memory, Witnesses and Genocide in the Book of Joshua," takes the biblical command for Joshua to destroy anything not compatible with Yahwism as an illustration of the proclivity of humans to force their views and visions against others who may not be compatible with them. J.W. Rogerson, "Toward a Communicative Theology of the Old Testament," traces Old Testament theology to late eighteenth- and nineteenth-century German historical criticism and argues that it continues to have validity because the Old Testament addresses human dilemmas integral to modern existence.

All in all this is a worthy set of essays collected in honor of a very worthy scholar.

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Mark Allen HAHLEN and Clay Alan HAM, *Minor Prophets, Vol. 2: Nahum–Malachi*, The College Press NIV Commentary. Joplin, MO: College Press, 2006, 582 pp. $32.99.

In this addition to the OT portion of the College Press NIV series, Hahlen and Ham, colleagues at Dallas Christian College, have given a thorough exposition of the final six prophetic books, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi.

The volume follows the format of previous volumes with an introduction to each book, an outline, a selected bibliography, and then verse by verse comment. Each introduction includes a section on authorship, historical background, date, literary features, theology, and message. Connections between each book and the New Testament are included in the theology section. The authors also begin the commentary with a general introduction that includes the usual comments plus an extended discussion of "The Function and Foundation of the Prophets," and a lengthy "Historical Background" section. Portions of this latter section are then repeated in the introduction to each book.

The authors write for the "general Bible reader and others doing in-depth biblical research." Their aim is to "close the distance between the biblical audience and contemporary readers."

This commentary is the product of intense research and years of teaching experience. It has many strengths. The outlines of each book are helpful, showing the

structure and coherence of the text. The position on the date and background of each book is firmly in the conservative camp, but other positions are given a fair, nonpolemical hearing. The reasoning for positions taken is carefully laid out. The format of introducing each section with an overview and attention to the form of the section is helpful. Within the comments there are copious cross references to antecedent texts in the OT, especially to the Pentateuch and the major prophets. The authors show clearly that these minor prophets are firmly grounded in the Mosaic covenant as covenant mediators, trying to draw the people back to God. The authors also provide extensive grammatical insights into the text and comments on the meaning of a word both in the text and elsewhere in the Old Testament. They are not afraid to correct the NIV when its translations seem deficient. The various eschatological passages in the prophets are interpreted within their context and the close attention to language and symbol provides a helpful guide through some difficult places.

One example of their careful method is the comments on the controversial text, Zechariah 14. The attention to grammar, word meanings, and antecedent Scripture leads the student through the text and its dependence on prior prophetic texts so that its eschatological message becomes clear. The authors demonstrate well how reading texts within the biblical context provides a much better and more nuanced understanding than some modern methods that ignore this important principle. Examples could be multiplied.

In my opinion the commentary also has some weaknesses that detract from its value and unfortunately may make it difficult for some of the intended audience. General Bible readers will probably not understand all the comments on Hebrew grammar in the commentary. The habit of listing all the meanings for one word and including long lists of texts where the word occurs elsewhere in the OT interrupts the flow of the commentary. This information could have been put in footnotes. The use of present verb tenses in the historical background sections is very disconcerting to me, especially so when used in the context of the exegesis. Some of the form-critical discussion may be beyond the general reader as well. Quotations from the NT are covered in the introduction but sometimes no mention of the NT quote appears in the comments (see on Zech 9:9). Although one objective was to help bridge the gap between the Bible and the modern audience, few observations fulfill this objective. One exception was a long footnote on the significance of tithing in Mal 3:10 for the NT and the church. Stylistically there were a few awkward phrases. There is one historical misstatement: "nearly two decades after Judah's exile" (344) must mean "two decades after the return from exile."

However, these few shortcomings will not prevent serious Bible students from benefiting from this commentary.

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Mark A. CHANCEY. ***Greco-Roman Culture and the Galilee of Jesus.*** **Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series 134. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005. 304 pp. $96.00.**

In this work, a sequel to the author's *The Myth of a Gentile Galilee* (Cambridge:

Cambridge University Press, 2002), he continues to rebut the notion that Galilee was thoroughly Hellenized in the time of Jesus.

Chancey divides his task into seven chapters plus a conclusion. Chapters 1 and 2 provide an historical overview of Galilee. Chapters 3 and 4 describe the building activities in the first centuries BC and AD and in the second and third centuries AD respectively. Chapter 5 details the inscriptions discovered in Galilee and chapter 6 recites the evidence from the coins. The author concludes his argument with a chapter on art forms in Galilee. He adds a short conclusion and an appendix listing all of the names from Galilee during the time of Jesus.

Chancey's central thesis is that the profound Hellenization of Galilee began in the second century AD when the Roman army had more of a presence there (226). From the second- and third-century material remains one can discern a marked change in architecture, coinage, inscriptions, and art objects. But even then the Hellenization was most prominent among the urban elites. As the author advises, in considering the question of Hellenization, the historian must ask about geography (because some parts of Palestine were more Hellenized than others), chronology (because the intensive Hellenization in Galilee began in the second century), and class (because the elites were more Hellenized as a whole than the village peasants; 225).

To some extent Chancey is correcting Hengel's magisterial work, *Judaism and Hellenism*, or at least, a faulty reading of Hengel (129-130, 156, 163, 225). Yet, Chancey is not maintaining that first-century AD Galilee, the Galilee of Jesus, felt no influence from Hellenization. As he advises, it is not a matter of *if* Galilee was Hellenized but of *how much*. It is the "how much" that he believes has been greatly exaggerated by some historians and interpreters of the Gospels.

One question that directly relates to the study of the NT is how widely Greek was spoken in the Galilee of Jesus. The author concludes that no evidence exists that Greek was widely known. Thus, Jesus did not need to know Greek to travel and to work as a carpenter. Second, those who argue that the hypothetical source Q was written in Greek in Galilee in the mid-first century AD may have a problem (163-164).

This is an impressively researched book. Chancey has done a thorough job of collecting reports on excavations, coins, and inscriptions to chisel out his own portrait of the state of Hellenism and Romanism in the Galilee of Jesus. He has in the process positioned himself to be a major participant in this debate for some time to come.

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Jennifer A. GLANCY. *Slavery in Early Christianity*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2006. 216 pp. $22.00.

In this paperback reprint of a hardback first published in 2002, Jennifer Glancy provides a significant advance beyond previous studies of Roman slavery in the New Testament by S. Scott Bartchy, Dale B. Martin, and Albert J. Harrill. She carves out

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her own space in that field by criticizing NT interpreters for downplaying the pernicious, dehumanizing character of slavery in the Roman Empire. She reveals the vulnerability of the bodies of slaves to the abuse of their masters, especially as objects of their sexual domination.

Chapter 1 examines the ancient rhetoric of slavery that identified slaves as bodies. Slave bodies were vulnerable to penetration, abuse, and exploitation by their owners. Glancy shows that sexual use of female and young male slaves was widespread and describes many other examples of abuse of slaves. She discusses the metaphor of slavery as spiritual bondage in both Epictetus and Paul. Both minimized the physical significance of slavery and recommended that slaves should not try to change their circumstances. Although Paul promoted the dissolution of slave-free distinctions in Gal 3:28, his use of slavery imagery in Galatians 4 reveals his inability to follow through on those insights.

In chapter 2, Glancy focuses on the experiences of slaves and slaveholders in Paul's churches. She offers evidence that sexual exploitation of slaves was widely accepted in Roman culture and questions whether the sexual obligations of slaves to their masters would have created obstacles to their participation in the Pauline churches. She observes that Paul did not explicitly condemn sexual relations between slaveholders and their human property. In fact, in 1 Thess 4:3-6 Paul may be suggesting that the men use slaves as morally neutral outlets for their sexual desires. She raises similar provocative questions about 1 Corinthians 5–7. She suggests that, because Paul commanded the churches to expel anyone who committed *porneia*, slaves whose owners insisted on using them sexually would not be allowed to participate in the church. She concludes that "Paul's silence about the plight of sexually exploited slaves could be construed as evidence that he perceives their (compelled) behavior to place them outside membership in the Christian body" (68).

In chapter 3, Glancy discusses the boundaries between slave and free, which become prominent in four situations: when free people become enslaved; when slaves were sold; when slaves escaped; and when slaves were manumitted. She provides interesting details about these practices and discusses how this information informs interpretation of 1 Cor 7:21 and the Letter to Philemon.

In chapter 4, she focuses on the use of slavery imagery in Jesus' sayings, especially in the parables. She chastises NT critics for denying that many of these characters are slaves and for overlooking or minimizing the violence committed against slaves in these stories. She is especially critical of their attempts to view slavery as a type of patron-client relationship because they ignore the fact that slaves were considered bodies to be used by their masters according to their whims. In discussing these passages, she provides many insights about the role that household slaves played in that world.

In chapter 5, Glancy discusses the instructions about slavery in the household codes of the NT and later Christian writings. She considers them in the context of slave morality in ancient sources. She also considers how the presence of slaves and slaveholders would affect the life of the churches.

Glancy's book succeeds in raising the awareness and sensitivity of interpreters to the often overlooked role that slavery plays in the NT. All readers would benefit from her descriptions of various aspects of ancient slavery. However, her exege-

sis of particular texts, especially the Pauline passages, may not convince many readers, especially when it is based on speculative arguments from silence. This aspect of the book may be of more interest and usefulness to the scholar than to the minister or layperson.

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Alan P. STANLEY. *Did Jesus Teach Salvation by Works? The Role of Works in Salvation in the Synoptic Gospels.* Evangelical Theological Society Monograph Series. Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2006. 436 pp. $42.00.

If the subject of Faith and Works catches the reader's attention, then Stanley's volume, an adaptation of his doctoral dissertation done at Dallas Theological Seminary, offers a far-ranging resource for consideration. Stanley, is a teacher at Mueller College of Ministries in Queensland, Australia.

The volume is well-researched, well-presented with numerous tables illustrating the author's various points, and the text is supported with copious footnotes. The book sports a large bibliography with both subject and Scripture appendices. In twelve chapters Stanley covers "The Role of Works in Salvation in Church History," "The Role of Works in Salvation in Judaism," "Salvation in the New Testament," eternal life, discipleship, endurance, and judgment, all in relationship to salvation. As one can see, this is not a simple presentation of Jesus' teaching, but one that covers most issues that affect the understanding of "works" in relation to salvation.

The church history chapter gives the reader an overview of the subject including the recent evangelical debate concerning "Salvation-discipleship." When Stanley deals with Judaism, E.P. Sanders' "Covenantal Nomism" is mostly in view, though also included is a brief look at grace and works in Judaism. These two chapters give a broad sweep of issues, and take up a full third of the book.

One of the strengths of Stanley's book is the word studies. Words for "works" and "salvation" in their various forms and with their various synonyms are thoroughly examined. He also studies these in their various contexts, giving attention to the different NT books. Stanley's conclusion on works is, ". . . works are assorted activities, good and bad, performed by people that invariably demonstrate before God the nature of their internal condition. It is therefore not the works by themselves that are important but rather the condition of the heart they reflect" (133). With salvation, Stanley makes the point that it should be seen as "pilgrimage" rather than a point in time.

The strengths of this book are also some of its weaknesses. At times Stanley seems to be throwing too large a net, trying to do too much with too little reflection. The voice of Jesus in the synoptic Gospels is never heard on its own, but always in relationship to a myriad of other voices. An example of this occurs when Stanley summarizes Gospel material while quoting Phil 2:12 and follows with an excursus on Zane Hodges' view that the Rich Young Ruler missed out on discipleship not eternal life (208). The many helpful footnotes sometimes turn into rabbit

trails not germane to the subject at hand. There are exegetical leaps, as when he says, "What then does it mean to be perfect? . . .: perfection is a synonym for eternal life and a requirement for entry into the kingdom" (201).

Stanley's handling of Scripture lacks sophistication, with little attention to the critical issues related to the NT documents (particularly the Gospels). This also raises the question of Stanley's audience. Much of the discussion is practical and intramural, speaking to debates between evangelicals, while some of it is quite technical, with untranslated Latin and copious use of Greek. The transition from dissertation to book clearly poses some problems. Having said all this, Stanley's book remains a good read, with critical material to chew on and much to agree with. It would be an excellent volume for any scholar's bookshelf. Those of the Stone-Campbell Restoration Movement will be especially appreciative of his carefully crafted conclusions. Stanley says in effect that salvation and repentant-faith-deeds are much more nuanced and complex than is generally thought. One's deeds matter to God, and even relate to one's pilgrimage of salvation.

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John Dominic CROSSAN. *God and Empire: Jesus against Rome, Then and Now.* New York: HarperCollins, 2007. 257 pp. $22.95.

Crossan, a historical Jesus scholar, has written a volume that builds on several of his previous works: *The Historical Jesus* (1991); *Who Killed Jesus?* (1995); *The Birth of Christianity* (1998); *In Search of Paul*, with Jonathan Reed (2004); and *The Last Week: A Day-by-Day Account of Jesus' Final Week in Jerusalem*, with Marcus Borg (2006). His understanding of parable is developed in *The Dark Interval: Towards a Theology of Story* (1975). His definition of "parable" in his earlier work drives much of the thought in this volume.

This volume illustrates an interesting blend of modern and postmodern thought as Crossan develops his argument. He moves from being a critical scholar to accepting paradoxes without attempting to prove or disprove either side. He relies heavily upon biblical scholarship, yet is not afraid to step into a new direction. He tends to utilize information from social research to illuminate both text and artifact as he builds his case step-by-step. He exhibits a tendency to discard or explain away data that does not fit his model, yet he allows the narrative rather than lexical or grammatical concerns to drive the thought process.

Crossan gives the reader many items of background for the NT period, as he creates the setting for each part of this volume. These include artifact discoveries, politics, Roman theology, and etymologies of certain words. He notes that Caesar's titles are identical to those ascribed to Christ and given to Caesar earlier than to Christ. He moves from background to interpretation and illustrates how Matthew and Luke both "counter" Rome's claims in their respective narratives concerning Christ's birth. He shows how John the Baptist, with his baptizing, "counters" those who are collaborating with Rome. He points out that Jesus' entry into Jerusalem "counters" Rome's entry into Jerusalem, and that Paul's statements

about Christ "counter" Caesar, himself. These efforts combine to undermine the influence of the Roman "monopoly on interpretation," or the Roman narrative theology, and indicate "high treason" in the eyes of Caesar and his subordinates. Crossan contrasts "peace through victory" with "peace through justice," Rome with Christ, Herod with Christ, violence with nonviolence, and imperial civilization with nonviolent civilization. He attributes the growth of Christianity to a nonviolent social revolution begun by Jesus and continued by Paul.

Many readers may be uncomfortable with Crossan's many comparisons of the Roman Empire with the United States, which he suggests requires social change.

SCJ readers who consider themselves to be of a conservative slant may also be uncomfortable with Crossan's conclusion regarding the necessity of the substitutionary atonement of Christ. He does not see that Christ's death was a substitutionary atonement, but that his primary purpose on earth was to overturn Rome's influence and ultimately all imperial civilization. He opens the argument by analyzing the word "sacrifice." He defines it as "sacred" as opposed to a substitution. His illustration supporting this is of a firefighter who rescues a girl, only to die himself (140). The illustration does not support the argument very well since the firefighter died instead of the little girl. Countering Rome does not have to be Christ's primary purpose in order for it to be a real and valid purpose. The point could be argued the opposite way: Christ's primary purpose was to be the substitutionary atonement and countering Rome was a necessary element for bringing about the atonement.

This volume's simplicity of language makes it readable to a wide readership, yet the many references to artifacts and texts allow it to be used by biblical scholars as well. The intensity with which Crossan holds the reader's attention also makes this volume hard to set down. He makes many interesting observations especially concerning those portions of text which most Christians may "take for granted." In these instances Crossan provides a fresh understanding of the reason for their existence. This work is sure to spark debate and to challenge the thinking of many Christians. This volume is useful in a seminary setting or small group discussion setting and provides stimulus for discussion.

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Richard A. HORSLEY. *Scribes, Visionaries, and the Politics of Second Temple Judea*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2007. 262 pp. $24.95.

This volume focuses on three Jewish writings: Wisdom of Jesus Ben Sira, *1 Enoch*, and Daniel. Horsley, a prolific author, mines these texts for information about the political dynamics and social conditions of the period of history following the return from the exile through the period of Hellenistic imperial rule. Although this work lies somewhat outside of Horsley's field of NT studies, it provides a thorough and up-to-date review of current research on these three texts and the sociohistorical situation in which they were written. It summarizes what Horsley has learned from his involvement in Society of Biblical Literature groups on Wisdom and Apocalypticism in Early Judaism and Early Christianity and the Sociology of the Second Temple.

This book reflects Horsley's usual interests in sociology and politics. He applies sociological analysis to these texts but not in a simplistic way. For example, he shows how Gerhard Lenski's sociological analysis of agrarian societies cannot be applied uncritically to second-temple Judea (53-62). Where recent sociological research can inform the background of these texts, he utilizes it skillfully, but he refuses to force the texts to match the research.

In the process of this sociohistorical analysis, Horsley provides insight into orality, literacy, and the role of scribes during this period. He summarizes current discussions about the genres of "wisdom" and "apocalyptic" and reveals the artificial nature of the boundaries that have been placed around these genres. He also casts doubt on the previous consensus that these were the dominant ideologies in Jewish society.

In his introduction, Horsley notes the difficulty of organizing such "a wide-ranging approach that considers the interrelationship of the political-economic structure, the historical background and crisis, and the cultural resources and circumstances" (9). He does not quite succeed in achieving his goal of "an intelligible sequence of analysis." The organization and flow of the chapters are somewhat obscure, but the information provided in each chapter makes up for the disjointed nature of the overall structure.

He organizes the book into nine chapters. In chapters 1 and 2, he sketches the history of Judea that led to the production of the Enoch literature, Daniel, and Sirach. He examines the social dynamics caused by the Persian political policies (ch. 1). The struggle for Palestine between the Ptolemies and Seleucids exacerbated the political and social conflicts in Judea (ch. 2).

In chapters 3 and 4, Horsley analyzes "the social relationship and relative roles between the Jerusalem scribes and the priestly aristocrats in control of the temple-state" (10). In chapter 3, he utilizes the book of Sirach to reveal the political, economic, and religious structures of Judean society. He describes the dynamics of power relations between the rich rulers and poor peasants on the one hand and between the rulers and the scribes on the other hand. In chapter 4, he focuses on the scribal traditions in Mesopotamia, Egypt, and Judea to show that scribes functioned as intellectual retainers of the rulers. This information suggests that scribes in Judea would have been committed to preserving Judean cultural traditions, a devotion that brought them into conflict with aristocrats who collaborated with imperial rulers and assimilated imperial culture.

In chapters 5 and 6, Horsley summarizes recent research on orality and literacy. His analysis of the Dead Sea Scrolls suggests that the "biblical" books were still in a state of development during this period and they "commanded only a relative authority among many other texts" (11). Chapter 6 also provides a helpful summary of four types of wisdom: mantic, cosmological, instructional, and reflective.

In chapters 7 to 9, Horsley focuses attention successively on Sirach, *1 Enoch,* and Daniel. These books reveal how the learned scribes suffered political and cultural pressures caused by "the escalating crises of conflicting aristocratic factions in Jerusalem under imperial rule" (12).

Although the focus of this book may appeal to a narrow range of readers, those who are interested in these topics will benefit from Horsley's overview. The book's

length (206 pages of text) is deceptive because the type size is very small (which will strain some readers). Each page is dense with information and analyses that will be new to many readers who do not specialize in these subjects.

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Matthew A. ELLIOTT. ***Faithful Feelings: Rethinking Emotion in the New Testament.*** **Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2006. 301 pp. $19.99.**

In this book, Elliott seeks to reverse what he sees as predominantly negative opinions within the church regarding the role of emotion. His thesis is that emotion is God designed and serves an important function in the life of the believer.

He begins by examining various theories regarding the nature of emotion, using the debate between cognitive and noncognitive views of emotion as the framework. Elliott provides the reader with a brief history of both views as well as an introduction to significant theorists who espouse each position. At issue is the question of whether or not emotions are in anyway connected with reason, with intellectual assessment. The author comes down on the side of the cognitive approach. He argues that emotions have objects. However, the object of emotion must not be limited to material things. The object of emotion may be some sort of activity or experience. Emotional response to an object is the result of an evaluative process regarding that object. It represents a judgment. Emotions impact every aspect of one's life: communication and social interaction, memory and learning, work and performance. Because emotions reflect judgment, they can be used effectively as tools of self-examination. How one responds to the object of emotion indicates the value he or she places on the object. Thus, evaluating one's emotional responses can be very revealing regarding important personal issues such as morals, ethics and beliefs. The remainder of the book is an exploration of the question of whether or not the NT reflects a view of emotion that coheres with the cognitive view.

Before focusing on the NT, Elliott examines how emotion was viewed in the larger context of the first-century Greco-Roman world. He finds evidence of both cognitive and noncognitive beliefs in the literature and writings of philosophers (such as Plato and Aristotle). He does not suggest these writers possessed fully formed, comprehensive theories in the modern sense. He merely argues that there is evidence that these writers and philosophers held beliefs about emotion that were in line with these modern theories. However, their positions were often uncomplimentary so that it is not possible unequivocally to place any one of them in one camp or the other.

Elliott next examines Jewish views of emotion as reflected in their culture and writings. The righteous and the wicked are differentiated by what they feel. God is portrayed as a being of emotion who is moved by love, jealousy, and wrath. By the second temple period, Elliott discerns the influence of Greek philosophy in Jewish views toward emotion.

In the next two chapters Elliott engages in a lengthy analysis of emotion in the NT. The first (chapter 4) examines love, joy, and hope; the second (chapter 5), jeal-

ousy, fear, sorrow, and anger. It is his conclusion that, while there has been a shift to a cognitive approach to emotion in psychology, such a shift has been absent from NT studies. His work in this area is meant to overcome this deficiency. He concludes that the NT authors do, indeed, generally write about emotion from a cognitive perspective. As such, emotions serve a positive and necessary function as they provide a faithful reflection of what we believe and value.

As one who has long distrusted emotions, this reviewer was moved to reconsider his stand and open himself to a perspective on emotion that sees them as a useful and necessary gauge of one's value system. How one responds (or even does not respond) in some visceral fashion to the stimuli of the world certainly must be a reflection of the values (or lack there of) placed on those stimuli. For this, I am indebted to Elliott's presentation.

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Kenneth E. BAILEY. *Jesus through Middle Eastern Eyes: Cultural Studies in the Gospels.* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2008. 443 pp. $23.00.

The title says it all. This book results from a lifetime of NT scholarship and teaching carried on in the Middle East, allowing the author to look at the Gospels through a nonwestern hermeneutical lens. Bailey, an Anglo-American who spent his childhood in Egypt and forty years teaching in Egypt, Lebanon, Israel, and Cyprus (10, 11, 421), deliberately looks at selected Gospel passages as Arab Christians, Copts, and other middle easterners do.

For Bailey, looking at Jesus in this way involves three perspectives. First, he analyzes the stories and events of the Gospels from a cross-cultural perspective. Like Bruce Malina and others, Bailey portrays the Middle Eastern world as a cluster of honor/shame cultures where a communitarian approach to life trumps individualism. He describes how Jesus' deeds and words would have struck his contemporaries, and he explains why people did and said what they did in response to Jesus. Such an approach risks creating anachronisms as if the world of the Gospels completely resembled the Middle East of Bailey's time. However, Bailey avoids this trap by not claiming too much. Instead, he focuses on long-term cultural traits that have not changed in millennia and may never change (248-249). He appears at his best when he describes ancient customs that he personally saw played out in his own time (29, 243, 357).

The second perspective Bailey brings to the study of the Gospels comes from ancient eastern Christian writers. Some, like Ephrem Syrus, the West knows. Others, like Ibn al-Tayyib of eleventh-century Baghdad, or Hibat Allah ibn al-'Assal, a thirteenth-century Copt, have not influenced Western scholarship to any great degree (12-13). At every opportunity Bailey weaves their insights into his studies of the Gospels.

The third perspective comes from modern Christian scholars from the Middle East. Bailey frequently cites Matta al-Miskin of the Coptic Orthodox Church and Ibrahim Sa'id, an Egyptian Protestant (13 and throughout). While not as numer-

ous as their fellow scholars in the West, such writers lack nothing in insight into the text.

The present book contains a selection from Bailey's life work. Its thirty studies deal with Jesus' birth (four studies), the Beatitudes (two studies), the Lord's Prayer (four), "dramatic actions of Jesus" (three), Jesus' dealings with women (six), and Jesus' parables (eleven studies). Several of the studies represent shorter versions of previously published work (261, 298, 309, 332) or, occasionally, a longer version (239). Much of the work is new to print, some of it coming from transcriptions of the author's recorded lectures (9). He prefers Luke's Gospel, followed closely by Matthew's. Two of the studies come from John and none from Mark.

Does Bailey do what he set out to do? Yes, indeed. Although some of his insights do not require "middle eastern eyes" (59, 201), he often illuminates the text through cross-cultural analysis, notably in his treatment of Zacchaeus (175-185). He finds chiastic structures nearly everywhere in the pericopae he analyzes, calling the structures "ring composition" (175-176) or the "prophetic rhetorical template" (290, 355). His work, though useful for professional scholars, should not prove difficult for college-educated readers. This book should become a standard tool for years to come.

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Mark L. STRAUSS. *Four Portraits, One Jesus: An Introduction to Jesus and the Gospels.* Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007. 560 pp. $58.99.

This volume is a comprehensive introduction to the Gospels and Gospel study and has four main parts. Part One introduces the Gospels by focusing on genre and methodological approaches. Part Two concentrates on the historical, religious, and socio-cultural settings of the Gospels. Part Three treats each of the four Gospels, highlighting peculiar and shared themes. The final section of the book, Part Four, focuses on the Historical Jesus and Historical Jesus research. Strauss writes as a confessional Christian with the aim of producing "a text which is both methodologically critical and confessionally evangelical" (19). Various readers will see this as either positive or negative, but Strauss proves throughout to be a cautious scholar who treats historical and theological issues (and problems) equally.

The strengths of this study are numerous. In its capacity as an introduction, the study provides break-out boxes that reiterate main points with succinct statements, or treat more fully a topic that was only mentioned in the main text. It also offers a plethora of photographs that illustrate the discussion. These include images of, for example, ancient coinage or bas-reliefs, as well as modern-day images of biblical locations. These devices, which aid the beginner, should not, however, overshadow the manners in which Strauss's study proves equally helpful to the more advanced reader. He includes footnotes for the main discussion and bibliographies at the end of sections, both pointing to further reading for the interested student. Strauss also presents various key ideas in NT scholarship and the scholars associated with those ideas. Note, for example, his discussion of the historical Jesus quests

(348-378), which also provides portraits or pictures of scholars, and also the chart of key scholars on (371).

The most glaring weakness of Strauss's study is its price tag, given the target audience to be freshmen and sophomores in undergraduate courses.

Nevertheless, one must also note that this volume is worth its price, as no other introduction to Jesus or the Gospels provides everything it does. Students receive an excellent introduction to both the Gospel texts and the ideas and figures that have shaped how those texts have been understood. It is here highly recommended as ideal for the undergraduate and graduate classroom, especially in confessional contexts.

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Craig A. EVANS. *Fabricating Jesus: How Modern Scholars Distort the Gospels.* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2006. 204 pp. $19.00.

Evans writes in his preface, "*Fabricating Jesus* is a book that takes a hard look at some of the sloppy scholarship and misguided theories that have been advanced in recent years. I am appalled at much of this work. Some of it, frankly, is embarrassing" (14). He later laments "lot of nonsense comes from scholars. We expect tabloid pseudoscholarship from the quacks, but not from scholars who teach at respectable institutions of higher learning" (16).

Evans identifies a variety of influences that have contributed to the "pseudo-Jesuses" produced by this sloppy scholarship. These include: "(1) misplaced faith and misguided suspicions, (2) cramped starting points and overly strict critical methods, (3) questionable texts from later centuries, (4) appeals to contexts alien to Jesus' actual environment, (5) skeletal sayings devoid of context altogether, (6) failure to take into account Jesus' mighty deeds, (7) dubious use of Josephus and other resources of late antiquity, (8) anachronisms and exaggerated claims, or (9) hokum history and bogus findings" (16).

Each of these influences receives a chapter in the book, with #3, questionable texts, receiving two chapters. In the concluding chapter, Evans identifies seven topics he considers important to understanding Jesus and the movement he founded. The seven important topics are: "(1) Jesus' relationship with the Judaism of his day, (2) Jesus' claims, (3) Jesus' aims, (4) the factors that led to Jesus' death, (5) the resurrection of Jesus and the emergence of the Christian church, (6) the nature of the New Testament Gospels, and (7) Christian faith as part of the Jewish story" (222). These eleven chapters are followed by two Appendixes. Appendix 1 is entitled "Agrapha: Free-floating sayings of Jesus." Appendix 2 is entitled "What should we think about the *Gospel of Judas*?"

The greatest strength of the book is the careful manner in which Evans identifies and refutes the "sloppy scholarship" that has caught the attention and support of books, films, and the popular media. He is not afraid to mention by name such scholars as Robert Funk and the Jesus Seminar, and James Robinson. He also mentions Robert Price and Bart Ehrman. In addition, he takes on Dan Brown and *The da Vinci Code*, and all the authors, legends, and hoaxes that contributed to this

recent phenomenon. In each chapter, as he carefully debunks the fabricators and fabrications, he leads the reader to the conclusion that the Gospels are authentic and reliable witnesses of the life and ministry of Jesus—in fact, they are the most reliable witnesses of Jesus. His final paragraph reveals his goal throughout:

"The true story of the historical Jesus is exciting and inspiring. The true story may well be an old story, but it is by far more compelling than the newer, radical, minimalist, revisionist, obscurantist and faddish versions of the Jesus story that have been put forward in recent years. Ongoing archaeology and ongoing discovery and study of ancient documents will continue to shed light on this old story. These discoveries may require an adjustment here and there. But thus far these discoveries have tended to confirm the reliability of the Gospels and disprove novel theories. I suspect that ongoing honest, competent research will do more of the same" (235).

Evans acknowledges the book is written in a popular rather than scholarly manner. This should give the book a wider appeal. Footnotes are kept to a minimum and are included at the back of the book. In addition, sources for further reading are also listed at the back of the book. Even so, the reader is aware that Evans could undoubtedly list multiple footnotes and sources for what he writes. He demonstrates his familiarity with both canonical and noncanonical writings of early Christianity. He is also familiar with the social and religious history and customs of first-century Judaism and is able to portray Jesus within that milieu. The book can be easily read and understood by undergraduates, seminarians, Sunday school teachers, scholars—actually, by just about anyone who wants to understand and refute modern day fabrications of Jesus.

One aspect, however, of Evans' presentation that will not sit entirely comfortably with evangelical readers. He denies the inerrancy of Scripture even as he affirms the reliability and authority of the Gospels. In his chapter on "Misplaced Faith and Misguided Suspicions" he writes, "By *misplaced faith* I mean placing one's faith in the wrong thing, such as believing that the Scriptures must be inerrant according to rather strict idiosyncratic standards and that we must be able to harmonize the four Gospels. If our faith depends on these ideas, especially in rigid terms, then scholarly study may well lead to a collapse of faith" (21). He then uses both Funk and Ehrman as examples of former fundamentalists who may have lost their confidence in the Bible because of "brittle fundamentalism." He concludes this idea with these words, "I repeat: The truth of the Christian message hinges not on the inerrancy of Scripture or on our ability to harmonize the four Gospels but on the resurrection of Jesus. And the historical reliability of the Gospels does not hinge on the inerrancy of Scripture or on proof that no mistake of any kind can be detected in them" (31). At times in the book, even when he is affirming the reliability and authority of the Gospels, Evans seems to have no more reason to accept the truth of the Gospels than "it does not make sense that they made this up." He echoes the reasoning of the Jesus Seminar; he just does not reject as much as they do.

Even so, the book has great value for evangelicals. Not only does Evans demonstrate that good scholarship is on the side of Scripture, his seven topics in chapter eleven provide a fine overview of the issues that must be understood and addressed in Christology.

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Jan van der WATT. *An Introduction to the Johannine Gospel and Letters.* London: T&T Clark, 2007. 151 pp. $19.95.

Amid what the author acknowledges as an overwhelming volume of publications on the Johannine Gospel and letters, van der Watt sets out to familiarize readers with the major issues and methodologies of Johannine research. After an introductory chapter on structure and purpose within John's writings, the longest single chapter is devoted to a theological analysis of the Johannine literature. Van der Watt introduces the reader to John's conceptions of reality, christology, salvation, and mission. He then goes on to examine the Gospel and letters' relationships with the OT and Synoptics. Van der Watt briefly explains methodologies involved before examining questions of possible influence and dependence. In this and other sections he summarizes the history of scholarly consensus with particular emphasis on the mid-twentieth century through the present. This volume next explores issues of composition and redaction. Questions of authorship, occasion, date, provenance, and recipients are also addressed; Van der Watt reviews the sweep of scholarly efforts to answer these questions from the early church fathers onward. He shines light on trends while reminding the reader—with examples—of how one's answer to certain of these questions necessarily affects answers to others. He also helps readers see the importance of these introductory issues by explaining their effect on practical interpretation. In general van der Watt takes a balanced approach to critical issues, and he seems to favor a somewhat conservative but critically sound approach. The final chapter covers socio-religious influences on the Gospel and letters. Van der Watt explores the evolution of scholarly opinion from Bultmann to the present while favoring the case for predominantly Jewish influences behind the Johannine writings.

Van der Watt succeeds in summarizing a great deal of material without bogging down in detail. He also shows a talent for explaining basic terms of biblical scholarship without disrupting the overall flow of the topic at hand. In short, the book is helpful in summarizing issues of Johannine scholarship while remaining accessible to those with no background in the terminology or methodologies of biblical studies.

One shortcoming is that too little attention after the first chapter is given to 1-3 John, particularly in the chapter on interrelations with other documents. If this volume has a more substantial weakness it is in its description of a Johannine Christology. Van der Watt lays substantially more emphasis on textual descriptions of Jesus' subordination to the Father than on those expressing the essential unity of Father and Son—as, for example, in the Gospel's *ego eimi* ("I am") passages. When van der Watt does address these *ego eimi* occurrences, it is primarily through a single excursus and a section that puts more emphasis on Jesus' being "with God" than being God himself (46-47). While the author's Christology appears to be orthodox, this volume has a tendency to designate Jesus as the Son while referring to the Father simply as God (35, 37). In fairness to the author, however, he notes that a thorough discussion of christological issues is beyond the scope of this volume (47).

Van der Watt demonstrates a gift for covering a lot of ground while illuminating that ground clearly, concisely, and engagingly. He also succeeds in showing

how issues typically associated with scholarly study have an impact on practical issues of interpretation. Overall, this is an excellent introduction to Johannine studies for students or for congregational ministers seeking an acquaintance with the trends and overall sweep of Johannine scholarship.

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Richard J. CASSIDY. *Four Times Peter: Portrayals of Peter in the Four Gospels and at Philippi.* Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 2007. 154 pp. $15.95.

Employing narrative criticism, Cassidy interacts with each Gospel, intending to show how Peter advances the plot of each and to bring to light new perspectives on Peter as a result. Next to Jesus, Peter is the second leading character in each Gospel. "As a consequence, any study of a particular Gospel that treats Peter only within the larger group of Jesus' disciples will inevitably fall short in its effort to chart the plot of that Gospel" (2).

Cassidy begins with a brief summary of narrative criticism, including examples of how it can affect the reading of the Gospels. He highlights the importance of characterization, plot, setting, and structure to an adequate apprehension of each Gospel. He also emphasizes his commitment to analyzing each Gospel in isolation from the others for the purpose of this book, "as though it were the only gospel existing in the world!" (5). Therefore, "the principal approach to any scene portraying Peter [is] to determine how this scene fits with the overall story of Jesus (and Peter) that this *particular Gospel* is unfolding" (5).

Cassidy then proceeds to examine each Gospel in a very deliberate fashion, considering four main topics for each: (1) the future-oriented character the Gospel, (2) the portrayal of Jesus and his mission, (3) the presentation of the larger group of disciples, and finally (4) the depiction of Peter. In the final chapter, he conjectures how the Gospels and their presentation of Peter might have been received in a Roman colony such as Philippi, concluding that the presentation of Peter in the Gospels is essentially positive and that Peter would have been viewed in a positive light by early Christians who read the Gospels.

A handful of helpful insights are scattered throughout this work. For example, discussing the interaction between Jesus and Peter at Caesarea Philippi recorded in Mark 8:29-33, Cassidy observes that the rebuke "get behind me Satan" "can be interpreted as a stern admonition to Peter to return to his foundational calling" of following Jesus (25). He also shows the prominence of the words "savior" and "salvation" in Luke's Gospel, which enables us to read it well. A worthwhile insight appears when Cassidy suggests that the phrase "From that time Jesus began . . ." provides the structural key to how Matthew has organized his presentation of Jesus (58).

Unfortunately, the insights are too few and far between for this book to be of much use. There is a lot of summary of biblical texts with very little synthesis. The commitment to treating each Gospel in isolation from the others leads to a lot of repetition; passages dealt with in his treatment of Mark are re-treated with signifi-

cant overlap in his handling of Luke and Matthew. In the end, this book is too superficial for scholarly use and too pedantic for homiletical use.

Even the discussions about Peter contribute nothing substantial to our understanding of him. Cassidy's major thesis is that each of the "four evangelists presents a fundamentally positive portrayal of Peter" (12); and his conclusion is that "*each Gospel* provided its readers with significant reasons for viewing Peter favorably" (127). But does not the average person in the church who has read the Gospels already know that? And by Cassidy's own admission, the discussion of the reception of the Gospels at Philippi is little more than conjecture. As such, it offers little of value. Perhaps in a seminary course on Peter or the Gospels this book could work as a supplementary text, but I would not recommend it.

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Bruce J. MALINA and John J. PILCH. *Social-Science Commentary on the Book of Acts.* Minneapolis: Fortress, 2008. 243 pp. $29.99.

In the latest installment of the Social-Science Commentary series, Malina and Pilch undertake a study of the book of Acts. Their stated purpose in this volume is "to understand how a first-century Israelite audience, the minority group located in the majority non-Israelite city of Ephesus, understood the narratives written by Luke" (1). Malina and Pilch believe that the problem of anachronism has plagued most interpretations of Acts. Specifically, they contend that "eighteenth-century Enlightenment beliefs, such as separation of church and state, of bank and state, eighteenth- and nineteenth-century sense of history and history writing, a Romantic sense of individualism and story, and the values of the Industrial Revolution and twentieth-century principles of science in the service of technology" have all derailed modern interpretations of Acts (6). The authors believe that the interpretive lens of the social-sciences holds some promise for remedying this problem.

Malina and Pilch set the stage for their reading of Acts as a "high-context document" by stating their guiding presuppositions. These include the claims that Luke-Acts "is meant not for outsiders but for members of a specific Jesus group," "is an occasional writing," "was not written for missionizing or proselytizing," "is not theological in content, purpose, or scope," that "the stories of Jesus and the Jesus group in Luke-Acts are meant . . . to make sense of the experience of those hearing the story" and "are focused on what the God of Israel gives to faithful Israelites by means of Jesus," and "Luke-Acts was written by and for fourth-generation Jesus group members who wished to know about the first-generation experience that accounted for their fictive kinship groups deriving from Paul and rooted in Jesus" (9-11). This volume is organized much like a traditional commentary. It consists of an eleven-page introduction, the authors' outline of Acts, and "textual notes" that treat pericopae of varying sizes. For each textual unit, the authors identify particular "reading scenarios" or vital first-century Mediterranean social constructs that are keyed to a glossary where each reading scenario is explained in significant detail (185-237). The entries cover concepts such as conflict resolution,

fellowship, group formation, kingdom of God, limited good, and patronage; they average almost two pages in length. The commentary is accented with photos that help situate Acts within its geographical and socio-historical setting.

The greatest asset of this volume is its programmatic association of reading scenarios that explain first-century Mediterranean cultural phenomena with appropriate texts in Acts. Malina and Pilch are disciplined in their focus on the primary text, interacting very little with the work of other interpreters. This is a refreshing departure from the trend of increasingly bloated commentaries that seem to devote endless verbiage to secondary sources. But this leaves unsubstantiated the authors' sweeping claims of widespread socio-historical ineptitude that is characteristic of "most interpretations of Acts" (6). The reviewer is especially unconvinced by the authors' claim that Luke-Acts is concerned only with what the God of Israel has in store for faithful Israelites living as minorities among Israelite Jesus-deniers. In support of this reading, the authors maintain that the phrase "to the end of the earth" in Acts 1:8 refers merely to the coastal cities of the Mediterranean seashore (22-23), that Cornelius is likely an Israelite (75-82), and that Acts 28:28 does not envisage the Gentiles' acceptance of the Israelite kingdom of God and the Israelite Messiah but rather, a non-Israelite group that forms "an appreciative audience or cheering section when they see what Yahweh God does for those of divine election" (180). This is one example of where the authors' limited scope seems to have become a liability.

Even if readers remain skeptical of some of the authors' claims, this volume is still a valuable complement to more traditional commentaries on Acts. Some readers of *SCJ* are likely to view the authors' methodology and conclusions as reductionist but even those who do will discover that Malina and Pilch offer an important perspective filled with information and insights that promise to illumine Acts as the Church's Scripture for preaching and teaching. Undergraduates, seminary students, and ministers who are uninitiated in the field of socio-scientific interpretation will find this to be an especially helpful and accessible resource.

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David LULL. *1 Corinthians.* Chalice Commentaries for Today. St. Louis: Chalice, 2007. 169 pp. $24.99.

Associate Professor of New Testament, Wartburg Theological Seminary, Lull updates and expands the earlier 1 Corinthians volume by William Beardslee in this series. The series aims to employ contemporary biblical scholarship to help pastors understand today's challenges. To this end the format employs paragraph-by-paragraph commentary that focuses on interpretation rather than strict exegesis with sections of "reflections" for every chapter or groups of chapters. Lull's comments on the whole display a depth of understanding about 1 Corinthians along with thoughtful application.

Lull's position on the dating of 1 Corinthians at AD 54 and its historical context as arising from information from Chloe's people, questions from an official let-

ter from the church, and more information from the bearers of that letter is traditional. His perspective on how to interact with the text of 1 Corinthians will raise the eyebrows of some *SCJ* readers. Inspiration, says Lull, is found in "the interaction of people in community" (2). Thus, the Christian community today should read 1 Corinthians as a dialogue between Paul and the Corinthians, a dialogue into which we should enter. The result will be that Paul via the text of 1 Corinthians is not alone the inspirational authority. Rather, it is the community, then and now, providing a fluid rather than static sense to inspiration.

The commentary observes Paul's investment in the power of the Christian community at a number of points. Generally, though Paul interacts with their official questions, he usually throws the answer back to them and the conscience of the community (5). Often what he observes as the problem in Corinth are premature resolutions from one quarter of the community without adequate reflection from the whole and dialogue between disputing positions (25). In tandem with this Paul does not regard the Spirit's work in the community as a "finished process" (27). Rather, it is fluid within the maturation of the community. The sacred power of the community, the guidance of the Spirit, and the authority of the apostle do merge in decisive action though, epitomized by the excommunication of the man flaunting his sexual relationship with his fathers' former wife in 1 Corinthians 6 (49).

Lull's awareness of current trends for interpreting 1 Corinthians appear occasionally, as when he correctly observes that probably only two parties had arisen in Corinth (17) and that Paul's comments in 1 Corinthians 7 "portrays marriage as a meeting of two equal partners" (65). Lull's value for congregations who nurture charismatic gifts as offering a crucial diversity within the church is the practical outcome of viewing 1 Corinthians 12–14 as on whole supporting such practices (128-129). Surprisingly, Lull takes a minority but defensible position that the head covering of 1 Cor 11:5-7 is the woman's own hair coiffed on top of her head (97).

SCJ readers may be surprised to read of Lull's assumption, common in critical circles, that the Book of Acts cannot be relied upon for historically accurate data, for instance, regarding the Apostolic Decree (78), and that Paul did not write Colossians or Ephesians (87), though both of these are very incidental to Lull's valuable comments. They will be much more repelled by Lull's formidable effort—covering an out-of-proportion, eight pages—to diffuse 1 Cor 6:9 from condemning homosexual practices, both exegetically and in contemporary, practical terms (53-61).

Despite the warnings, ministers, students, and church teachers for the most part will derive great value and benefit from reflecting on the insights of this well-written, brief commentary as they prepare their sermons and lessons on 1 Corinthians.

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