

Book Reviews

Edward J. ROBINSON. *To Save My Race from Abuse: The Life of Samuel Robert Cassius*, Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2007. 212 pp. \$39.95.

Edward J. Robinson, associate professor at Abilene Christian University, has written a book about a compelling individual who has been largely ignored by the historiography of the Restoration Movement. Robinson's biography covers the life of an African-American Church of Christ preacher named Samuel Robert Cassius (1853–1931). The book is an important addition to the history of the Movement because as Robinson states, "in the milieu of the Stone-Campbell Movement, Cassius stood unique" (48).

Robinson traces Cassius's life beginning with his birth to a slave woman raped by her slave master through his significant early influences, which include a teacher of the Stone-Campbell heritage, to his conversion and his life's work as a preacher among African-Americans. Robinson does an outstanding job of pointing out the historical conflicts which intertwine with Cassius's life. He was born prior to the Civil War, enjoyed the freedom extended by President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation, and experienced the battle of finding legitimacy as an African-American preacher within the predominantly white Restoration Movement.

Cassius worked to evangelize among the African-American population but depended on the benevolence from white congregations. Robinson repeatedly highlights the conflict that this created for Cassius. Cassius was always working for the betterment of African-Americans, but he was limited in his impact due to the challenges of race relations in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Robinson presents Cassius as a man committed to the word of God and to the Churches of Christ (a cappella), but a man with flaws as well. Cassius, like Alexander Campbell in his *Christian Baptist* periodical, had a caustic tongue and pen which occasionally betrayed his anger. Cassius was also like Campbell in recognizing the power of the printed word for the propagation of the Gospel and in the case of Cassius, the increased status of African-Americans as well. Robinson dedicates a chapter to Cassius's magnum opus, *The Third Birth of a Nation*, published in 1920, which displays all of Cassius's views and values.

Robinson's book is riveting but hard to follow. At times, Robinson's methodology follows a chronological format and at other times a thematic format. As a result of his mixed methodology, Robinson is repetitive in discussing various themes related to Cassius; however, this probably reflects Cassius himself since his entire life revolved around a couple of key themes, specifically race relations and the proclamation of the gospel among African-Americans.

Cassius's life spanned significant historical events both in the history of the United States and that of the Stone-Campbell Restoration Movement as well. After living through the Civil War, he was engaged in the battle that occurred in the

Restoration Movement between “loyals” and “progressives” that resulted in the formally recognized split of 1906. He was also always engaged in the battle for improved opportunities for his race. Cassius’s life is worth remembering and worth reading about. Anyone who is a student of the history of the Restoration Movement should read this book, especially in light of the fact that very few books exist that deal with individuals and issues related to race relations.

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Edward J. ROBINSON. *Show Us How You Do It: Marshall Keeble and the Rise of Black Churches of Christ in the United States, 1914–1968.* Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2008. 272 pp. \$39.95.

In this work, Robinson, Assistant Professor of Bible and History at ACU, surveys the ministry and legacy of Marshall Keeble (d. 1968), the dominant figure in twentieth-century African American Churches of Christ (a cappella). Robinson’s approach is to place Keeble into the racial context of the New South, arguing that the key to his success was the ability to deftly navigate the sensitive waters of Jim Crow culture. Despite Keeble’s personal disgust for segregation, his insistence upon the priority of spiritual matters led him into humble compliance with it. In so doing, he secured unprecedented support from white benefactors who were just as concerned with keeping blacks out of their own congregations as they were with saving their souls. Robinson consistently maintains that Keeble’s exclusivist theology won out over his concern for the injustice of segregation and that this approach created a theological imbalance that continues to impact African American churches of Christ to this day.

This volume is organized into four parts. The first examines features of Keeble’s theology and approach to social issues, with special attention given to the missionary society controversy and his relationship with A.M. Burton (his primary benefactor). In keeping with the book’s theme, Robinson here portrays Keeble as the religious equivalent of Booker T. Washington. The second section addresses further Keeble’s theological orientation by demonstrating the close connection between the evangelist and the *Gospel Advocate* publication, and how that bond impacted the churches he established. Keeble’s simple and effective strategy was to receive a “call” from whites in an area who desire to evangelize the local black community. Keeble responds by going to the region, staying with local black leaders (usually of other Christian groups), holding a meeting where he contrasted “denominationalism” with the “pure gospel,” baptizing respondents (but *not* those from the Christian church), establishing a congregation, and subscribing it to the *Gospel Advocate*. Robinson directly attributes the “radical exclusivism” of Keeble’s churches to the influence of the *Gospel Advocate*. The third part chronicles in detail the application of Keeble’s methodology in the South and elsewhere, illustrated adequately with specific examples of his acquiescence to Jim Crow norms, and describes his forged alliances with other preachers such as A.L. Cassius and R.N. Hogan. The fourth and final section of the book concerns Keeble’s legacy, as seen

in his “sons”—the early students of NCI who generally embraced Keeble’s ambivalence to social justice issues—and his “grandsons”—those who accepted the great preacher’s theological vision but rejected his approach to the Civil Rights movement; the latter group included some, such as Arthur Lee Smith, Jr (a.k.a Molefi Kete Asante), who rejected both. The book concludes with a thoughtful epilogue that ponders the future of African American Churches of Christ, giving special attention to the troubling breakdown of the “One in Christ” conferences in 2002. Robinson suggests the way forward must begin with a rethinking of the fundamental dichotomy between social and spiritual issues that Keeble instilled in these churches.

This volume is a well-researched piece of scholarship that expertly handles secondary literature on race and religion as well as important primary sources, particularly from the neglected *Christian Leader* and *West Coast Christian*. The book is open to the charge of needless repetition in places (especially chapter seven), and some may find its central thesis less than convincing. Nevertheless, Robinson’s book is a welcomed addition to the previous studies of Keeble, and its argument deserves the attention of Stone-Campbell Restoration Movement historians and church leaders concerned with the ways racism has shaped North American Christianity.

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George M. MARSDEN. *A Short Life of Jonathan Edwards.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008. 152 pp. \$15.00.

George Marsden’s publication of *Jonathan Edwards: A Life* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003) marked the appearance of the definitive study of the life and work of Jonathan Edwards. In this 615-page volume, Marsden exhaustively explores nearly every aspect of Edwards’s incredible life. The greatest difficulty with Marsden’s study of Edwards, however, is that its size makes it a difficult read for graduate students and a near-impossible read for undergraduate students. To remedy this problem, Marsden has produced a more compact study of Edwards’ life in this volume.

Marsden relies heavily on the research he did for his earlier volume. As the back cover of this book notes, however, “*A Short Life of Jonathan Edwards* is not an abridgement of Marsden’s earlier award-winning study but a completely new narrative.” Nevertheless, one should not expect to find new interpretations of Edwards or fresh discoveries about his life. Marsden’s purpose for this volume is not to re-evaluate his earlier understanding of Edwards but to place his insights about Edwards’s life into a more manageable and student-friendly format. To this end, Marsden’s work is magnificently successful.

Marsden begins his book with a comparison of the contemporary lives of Edwards and Benjamin Franklin. Though no evidence exists to suggest that the two men ever met, Marsden repeatedly draws upon Franklin’s life and activities as a means for placing Edwards within the cultural context of his day. Marsden even

ponders how American history might have differed if Edwards “had remained at Princeton throughout the American Revolution” and “lived as long as his contemporary, Benjamin Franklin, who did not die until 1790” (132). Although Franklin and his political associates are more highly regarded in modern American history for the parts they played in the American Revolution, Marsden contends that eighteenth-century America actually witnessed two revolutions: a political revolution and an earlier spiritual revolution that profoundly influenced the onset of the political revolution. The leaders of this spiritual revolution, according to Marsden, were Edwards and George Whitefield (135-136), though they are seldom recognized as having an influence on the development of the United States.

As Marsden traces the life journey of Edwards from his birth in East Windsor, Connecticut, in 1703 to his untimely death from a smallpox inoculation in 1758 in Princeton, New Jersey, he stresses the impact of the religious awakenings on the course of Edwards’s career. After his conversion in 1721, his graduation from Yale College in 1722, and a few brief ministries, Edwards became the assistant pastor to his grandfather, the noted Puritan leader Solomon Stoddard, in Northampton, Massachusetts, in 1726. Within the next few years, Edwards married Sarah Pierpont and assumed the full pastorate of the Northampton church when his grandfather died in 1729. By the 1730s, Northampton became a center for the revivals of the Great Awakening, with Edwards and Whitefield carrying the revivals to both a wider audience and a greater fervency. The pursuit and defense of the revivals, and of genuine Christian piety, were the motivating factors in the writings, preaching, and activities of Edwards’ life.

The greatest weakness of this volume may also be the greatest strength of the book. In his effort for brevity and reader friendliness, Marsden leaves the reader seeking additional explanation and a deeper analysis of various aspects of Edwards’ writings, life, and career. To such readers it would be advised that you look to Marsden’s earlier study of Edwards in which many of these topics are fully explored. This volume, however, is the best available overview of Jonathan Edwards’ life that could be easily incorporated into the graduate or undergraduate classrooms.

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Mark WEEDMAN. *The Trinitarian Theology of Hilary of Poitiers.*
Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae 89. Leiden: Brill, 2007. 219 pp.
\$139.00.

Writing over two hundred years ago about fourth-century Trinitarian debates, Edward Gibbon wryly noted that “furious contests” roiled the church over a single diphthong. Gibbon was referring to the debate between those who believed that the term *homoousios* (‘of the same substance’), enshrined in the creed of Nicaea, best characterized the relationship between the Father and Son, and those who preferred instead the term *homoiousios* (‘of a like substance’). Hilary, bishop of Poitiers, a Pro-Nicene theologian and the subject of Weedman’s stimulating monograph, became convinced at some point in his career that the theological sensibility that

gave rise to the offending diphthong was largely consonant with the Pro-Nicene theological platform. While Hilary gave theological terms their due, he also gave evaluative weight to the web of theological beliefs that forms the matrix of those terms.

This volume is a helpful guide to understanding Hilary's relationship with Homoiousian theology in general and with Basil of Ancyra, one of its principal exponents, in particular. Hilary believed that the Homoiousians could be conscripted for the Nicene cause, which during Hilary's episcopate was being seriously challenged by the party of the Homoians, who eschewed language of substance (*ousia*) altogether with respect to the relationship between the Father and the Son. Weedman is particularly at pains to demonstrate from Hilary's own corpus that his exile in the Greek east effected a fundamental shift in his thought, thanks in large part to his contact with the thought and/or writings of Basil of Ancyra. According to Weedman, the exiled Hilary was forced to revise his Trinitarian theology as he became increasingly aware of the threat to the Nicene cause represented by the Homoians on the one hand and of the potential polemical value of Homoiousian theology on the other.

The first half of Weedman's book consists of a reconsideration of the historical context of Hilary's early writings. Weedman charts Hilary's dawning cognizance of Homoian theology and the counter-Homoian resources available in Homoiousian theology through a chronological survey of Hilary's writings, from *In Matthaeum* up to *De Synodis*. By the time of the composition of the latter text, Hilary's appropriation of Homoiousian thought for anti-Homoian polemical purposes had begun in earnest, an appropriation that would entail the abandonment of certain traditional Latin categories and the adoption of motifs of an Homoiousian provenance.

In the second half of the book Weedman delineates Hilary's mature Trinitarian thought as found in the *De Trinitate*. In this work Hilary employs and adapts theological categories that had theretofore not figured prominently in his thought, such as 'name' and 'birth.' Weedman maintains that there are even signs of Hilary's theological development in the course of the composition of the *De Trinitate* itself. For example, in *De Trinitate* 12 Hilary stresses the infinity of God the Father in an unprecedented way, in order to obviate the Homoian charge that the very imputation of the concept of birth to the Son implies his temporality. In this way Weedman depicts Hilary as a flexible and resourceful thinker who is keenly sensitive to the polemical context in which he theologized.

Weedman mounts a convincing case for his central thesis that Hilary's exile in Phrygia, and the knowledge that he gained of Homoiousian theology thereby, constitutes a watershed moment for the development of his thought. While Weedman admirably acquits himself of the burden of his central claim, it must be noted that the title of the book is somewhat misleading, inasmuch as from it one would expect some kind of account of Hilary's view of the Holy Spirit; as it is, the book is almost exclusively concerned with Hilary's construal of the relationship between the Father and the Son. Furthermore, Weedman himself rightly notes in his conclusion that Hilary's thought "resists the easy systemization into traditional categories such as 'Trinity,' 'Christology,' and 'Soteriology.' For Hilary, these subjects are indistinguishable from one another, and they need to be explained together" (201-202).

This admission makes the title (which in fairness may reflect the dictates of Weedman's editors) that much more discomfiting.

The highly specialized nature of the subject matter, along with the steep price tag, ensures a narrow readership for this volume. However, graduate school and seminar libraries would be well-advised to procure a copy of this book, which makes a significant contribution to our knowledge of the complicated but fascinating story of fourth-century theology. Fourth-century Christians of every theological stripe were united by the conviction that human language about God and Christ really does matter, and to the extent that we twenty-first-century Christians share that conviction, we would do well to take seriously studies like this one, however arcane its object of inquiry may seem at first blush. One may choose to profess no creed but Christ, but in this very profession is embedded a vexing question: precisely who is Christ?

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Sabine DRAMM. *Dietrich Bonhoeffer: An Introduction to His Thought.* Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2007. 258 pp. \$19.95.

Works on the life and writings of Dietrich Bonhoeffer are not in short supply. Some emphasize his theology while others his life and, specifically, his resistance to Germany's Nazi regime. Dramm's focus in this volume is much broader. Dramm suggests her book negotiates the relationship between Bonhoeffer's "biography and theology" but it is much more than that. Bonhoeffer's political, philosophical, and sociological thoughts are uncovered even when dealing with more theological subjects. In chapters devoted to "God," "Jesus Christ," and "The Holy Spirit" Dramm often reveals more of Bonhoeffer's philosophical and sociological thinking than simply theological.

Dramm skillfully uses and interacts with many sources both primary and secondary. Three chapters are devoted to Bonhoeffer's principal writings but she also weaves together many of his works throughout the book. The goal is to stitch together Bonhoeffer's life and thoughts in such a way that one cannot be properly spoken of without the other. At times the book is theology focused, carefully investigating Bonhoeffer's thoughts, while at others it reads like a detective novel, using various letters written to and by Bonhoeffer, seeking to uncover Bonhoeffer's role and thoughts about the German resistance group.

One of the more interesting parts of the book was the chapter entitled, "And the Jews?" in which Dramm explores Bonhoeffer's thinking on, not merely Judaism but the modern Jews of Germany. What was termed, "the Jewish question," began as a struggle in the Evangelical Church to decide what it would do regarding Christians of a "Jewish extraction," but it quickly grew into a larger question. Dramm paints a picture of a courageous Bonhoeffer who very early on takes up the cause of the Jews. In 1933, the year the National Socialists came to power, Bonhoeffer, an Assistant Professor at the University of Bonn, prepared a lecture for church pastors entitled "The Church and the Jewish Question." Even though this

document reflected some anti-Semitic verbiage common to German Lutheran Christians of the time, it also reminded the Evangelical Church that it has an “unconditional obligation to the victims of each and every social order, even when they are not part of the Christian community” (166-167). Most powerful is when Dramm recounts Bonhoeffer’s call for the church not merely to bind “the wounds of those who have been run over by the wheel but of thrusting oneself between the spokes of the wheel” (167). The chapter continues by noting Bonhoeffer’s various words and actions in support of the German Jews. Dramm notes that while Bonhoeffer’s response to the “Jewish Question” was perhaps slower than many today would have liked, he was a Christian who nonetheless “suffered the most from the fact that the church during those years thought only of saving its own neck” (172).

Dramm traces Bonhoeffer’s “world come of age,” the idea that the world is moving away from religion and into secularization and autonomy. An idea Bonhoeffer does not lament but welcomes. Bonhoeffer challenges the apologists who attack this “world coming of age,” suggesting to do so is senseless for it is like asking an adult to return to puberty, bad manners because it is abusive “to burden human beings with their own shortcomings,” and un-Christian because they mistake Christ for a kind of religiosity” (209). Dramm suggests that Bonhoeffer “was the first theologian to consistently welcome secularization instead of complaining about it. He accurately diagnosed the world’s break with ‘God.’ Nevertheless, he never feared that in this world, with all its apparent goodness, God Himself might have broken with the world” (211). The “God” from which the world was breaking away from was not the God of Jesus Christ however. Dramm writes that the “God” that was being rejected was a “super-power” God “engendered by and corresponding to man’s fantasies of omnipotence and dwelling far beyond all worlds” (211). Bonhoeffer’s “theology of coming of age” requires that we live “as if there were no God” but we acknowledge this in the presence of God. God is not the super-power from a distant heaven but is, according to Bonhoeffer as found in his *Letters and Papers from Prison*, a God who “allows Himself to be crowded out of the world and onto the cross; God is power-less and weak in the world; it is precisely in this way and only in this way that He is ‘with us’ and helps us” (213).

While the book is an introduction to Bonhoeffer, it is not an introductory text. Dramm assumes the reader is familiar with the likes of Ernst Troeltsch, Max Weber, and Karl Barth, assumptions that could trouble less experienced readers. Readers hoping for a clear explanation of some of Bonhoeffer’s theological offerings may also be disappointed. Some of Bonhoeffer’s more difficult subjects such as “religion-less Christianity” are addressed but with less depth and clarity than hoped for.

The strength of the book is its depth as an introduction. Dramm reviews not only Bonhoeffer’s classic works, *Ethics* and *The Cost of Discipleship*, but also his doctoral thesis *Sanctorum Communio* and professional thesis *Act and Being*. It is also clear that Dramm is not only an admirer of Bonhoeffer but a true scholar of his thought who can lead the reader through several aspects of his life and work with depth but also brevity when necessary. The book would work well for advanced undergraduate students or in a graduate class.

It is interesting that over the years both the right and the left have claimed

Bonhoeffer as one of their own. Dramm does not choose sides in this discussion but merely asks, “Bonhoeffer: Is he sand or oil in the gearwheels of theology and the church?” (3), which is a fitting question to begin her book as well as to end this review.

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John H. ARMSTRONG, ed. *Understanding Four Views on Baptism*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006. 222 pp. \$14.99.

According to Armstrong, the purpose of this volume is to provide a balanced presentation of four distinct views on baptism among conservatives of the Protestant tradition. Though admittedly not all-inclusive, Armstrong’s choice of the Lutheran, the Reformed, the Baptist, and the Christian Churches/Churches of Christ traditions brings together a breadth of theology and tradition not often found in one brief volume. The complexity of the issues surrounding baptism is evident in the disparate views the authors hold on the subject.

Southern Baptist theologian, Thomas Nettles, and Christian Church/Churches of Christ scholar, John Castelein, offer two variations on immersionist traditions. Nettles states clearly that there is no inherent efficacy to baptism. Rather, it is an ordinance by which a believer in Jesus Christ is initiated into the church. Baptism symbolically pictures the historic salvation event, the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. Baptism also depicts the act of faith whereby believers unite with Christ’s atonement, confessing that Christ’s death was in their place. Castelein, in contrast, asserts that God acts in baptism. In baptism God cleanses sin, incorporates believers into Jesus Christ, and instills in them the Holy Spirit. God’s sovereign grace is the sole cause for salvation, faith is the instrument of salvation, and baptism is the occasion and marker of salvation. Both Nettles and Castelein emphasize the importance of bringing faith to the font, and each rejects the idea of baptismal regeneration. Both scholars survey the uses of *baptizo* in NT Greek. Each concludes that immersion is the NT mode of baptism and that the candidate for baptism is an adult believer.

Reformed theologian Richard Pratt and Lutheran scholar Robert Kolb present two views from Reformation traditions. Pratt describes baptism as “the sacrament of the covenant of grace.” As such, baptism is a means of grace. Baptism is effective because divine grace is conferred by the Holy Spirit through baptism. However, the preaching of the Word is primary, the sacrament secondary. For Kolb, baptism saves. Baptism is a continuation of God’s salvific act of Creation. Luther’s followers attest to the “regenerating power of God’s Word in baptismal form.” For Lutherans, the priority is the active Word of God; written, oral, and sacramental. Both scholars draw parallels between baptism and circumcision. For Pratt, the analogy between baptism and circumcision attests to the unity of the covenant of grace. Pratt speaks of infant baptism in terms of initiation into the covenant community. Kolb emphasizes the infant’s need for regenerative grace.

One of the chief values of the book is the way in which the authors concede many points of common ground while maintaining their respective tradition’s the-

ological integrity. The discussions are as cordial as they are candid. The dialogue models the kind of discourse needed to facilitate an appreciation of the views of others. Rich biblical and historical references underscore the scholarship of the essays. Armstrong sums up the discussion with ten points of agreement and a plea for Christian unity. Three useful appendices provide a survey of the NT language concerning baptism; confessional, creedal, and catechetical statements on baptism; and quotations on baptism. Finally, Armstrong offers a set of discussion questions for each essay. The format of the book is intended for group use and could provide new energy for the study of baptism in churches, colleges, and other settings. It is a welcome and much needed addition to Christian education materials on the subject of baptism. Let us hope that a similar volume on the Lord's Supper is forthcoming.

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Ben WITHERINGTON III. *Making a Meal of It: Rethinking the Theology of the Lord's Supper.* Waco: Baylor University Press, 2007. 160 pp. \$24.95.

This is the second volume of a trilogy on the sacraments addressing baptism, the Lord's Supper, and the Word of God, respectively. Noting widely divergent views of the Lord's Supper today, Witherington charges that Christians have moved a considerable distance from the source material in the New Testament. The title encapsulates the author's indictment upon the current state of affairs (in British idiom 'to make a meal' means 'to make a mess'!) and also a component of his proposed solution.

In the first two chapters Witherington explores the sacred meal in the OT and Judaism, highlighting the Passover motif as the most obvious antecedent to the Lord's Supper. He distinguishes between 'ceremony' and 'ritual,' noting that rituals (circumcision) effect a change of status and are nonrepeatable, whereas ceremonies (Passover), through their repetition, function to confirm the new status. The significance of the Passover meal for the Lord's Supper has much to do with the social function of the ceremonial meal. Sacred communal meals in Qumran perform a similar function, but present a new messianic emphasis. These meals anticipated a *koinonia* with the "Anointed One" who would bless the bread and the drink. Witherington sees a link here to Jesus' words of institution in Mark 14. The Qumran development is also significant for Luke's transition of the Lord's Supper (in Acts) from the Passover setting into the life and practice of the early church, where the community meal and commonness of possessions are integral components of Christian worship.

Paul's discourse in 1 Corinthians 10–11 is the centerpiece of Witherington's investigation. His sociological exegesis of the text yields compelling insights into the theology and praxis of the Lord's Supper, as he exposes Paul's attempt to redeem a distorted praxis that had invaded the Corinthians' worship gatherings. In particular, the Christians' meal must distinguish itself from the socially stratifying customs that characterized pagan meals. Significant here is that the fellowship meal,

the Lord's Supper, and communal worship were integral components of one ongoing event that took place regularly in Corinthian house churches.

Chapter 4 examines the "feast" of John 13 and the ensuing farewell discourse. Witherington argues that John's meal does not equate to Jesus' 'last supper' with the twelve and was not a Passover meal. Rather it was another fellowship meal attended by Jesus and some of his disciples, including—and perhaps hosted by—"the disciple whom Jesus loved." Witherington identifies the anonymous beloved disciple as Lazarus (recently raised from the dead), and suggests that this meal took place at Lazarus's home in Bethany. The argument is interesting and persuasive, but, as the author concedes, "does not really tell us much pertinent to our discussion of the Lord's Supper ceremony."

In Chapters 5–7 the author surveys historical developments in the theology and practice of the Lord's Supper at the end of the first century, through the second century, and beyond. The *Didache* at the end of the first century demonstrated a very 'Jewish' approach to the Lord's Supper (consistent with the New Testament), but by the end of the second century there was a virtual "smorgasbord" of views and practices. The elevation of the clergy during the next centuries and the shift of venue from the house church to the basilica significantly altered the theology and practice of the Lord's Supper. The ensuing doctrine of transubstantiation and the veneration of the sacrament of Holy Eucharist, championed by the Council of Trent, represent for the author a far cry from "that Passover meal in A.D. 30."

Witherington's final chapter highlights his own convictions and concerns that lie at the root of the study. He sees his work as an attempt to continue on from the initial footsteps of the reformers. In short, his plea is for a simpler, more substantial, and more participative approach to the Lord's Supper as regards the venue of the celebration, who may officiate, the 'meal' aspect of the celebration, integration of the meal in the worship context, and the frequency of observance. The goal should be to seek a close encounter with Jesus, who is himself the host of the meal.

This book has both the strengths and the weaknesses of a brief, popular volume that addresses a large and complex topic. The author emphasizes points that he finds most significant, while other pieces of the discussion are sidelined or ignored. Some readers will agree heartily with the author, while others will find themselves saying: "Yes, but. . . ." Precisely herein lies the value of the book: it provides an excellent springboard for healthy, ongoing discussion among diverse Christian communities as they struggle to rethink their own theology and practice of the Lord's Supper.

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Kevin J. VANHOOZER, Charles A. ANDERSON, and Michael J. SLEASMAN. *Everyday Theology: How to Read Cultural Texts and Interpret Trends*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007. 287 pp. \$23.99.

Vanhoozer, a research professor at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, has edited a volume that builds on his previous single-authored works and edited works:

The World Well Staged? Theology, Culture and Hermeneutics (1993); *Is There a Meaning in This Text? The Bible, the Reader, and the Morality of Literary Knowledge* (1998); *First Theology: God, Scripture & Hermeneutics* (2002); *The Cambridge Companion to Postmodern Theology* (2003); and the *Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible*, in 2005. Anderson is a Ph.D. candidate at Cambridge University, and Sleasman is a Ph.D. candidate at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School.

The foundation for this volume is laid primarily in chapter eleven of *First Theology* and in *The World Well Staged?* The concern for a theological interpretation of culture flows out of Vanhoozer’s vocation as a professor of and prominent writer for hermeneutics and theology.

This volume deals with concerns born out of the postmodern emphasis on the “reader.” Basically, “readers” are situated in a culture, and that culture has some interpretative difficulties or “blind spots.” By interpreting culture theologically, Vanhoozer illustrates to the Christian cultural “blind spots,” which must be addressed in order for typically situated readers to hear the message(s) brought by Christians. However, culture may contribute to the discussion by illustrating ways God is communicating in their respective cultures. These contributions may be positive affirming good in the culture, or negative illustrating a warning that Christians are not doing their job. Also, Christians themselves may benefit directly as they are shown their own “blind spots,” which are due to their cultural situated-ness, and as they are shown messages from culture concerning God. The Christian is called upon to reflect on culture, view it in the light of Scripture, and then act out Scripture by creating a counter-culture.

This volume is divided into four parts. The first part consists of one chapter, which Vanhoozer wrote, that explains the method of theologically interpreting culture used throughout the work. It first functions as a way of applying theology, something missing in many hermeneutical discussions. Next, it functions as a practical “living out” of Christian doctrine. Last of all, it calls for Christians to be agents of cultural change in our respective cultures.

The second part of this volume consists of five chapters that illustrate how to read a cultural text. The variety of texts studied in these chapters include the grocery store checkout line, Eminem (the rapper), human rights as a political agenda, mega-church architecture, and *Gladiator* (the movie).

The third part of this volume consists of four chapters that examine cultural trends. This part functions like the second part, but focuses on trends instead of individual texts. The trends examined include busyness, blogging, human modifications, and funerals.

The fourth part of this volume is a single chapter cowritten by the coeditors, Anderson and Sleasman. This chapter is a “How-to.” It takes the Christian step-by-step through interpreting a text or trend. The example in this chapter is a text, a wedding. As the chapter develops, this text is also seen as a trend. Weddings function like texts and like trends.

This volume fills a void in the field of hermeneutics. Hermeneutics covers how to do interpretation. Many works cover the interpretation of Scripture, and many cover culture, but few cover the area where Scripture interprets culture.

This volume is a textbook written at a popular level. The variety of cultural texts and trends covered point out that the scope has limitless possibilities. Virtually any cultural text or trend can be interpreted using the method given in the first chapter. This volume is primarily written to Christians everywhere, and would be useful as an introductory textbook in college or seminary, a supplemental textbook in a hermeneutics course, or as a plan for a discussion group or a church group. This volume could also be used for discipleship of believers at any academic level. Readers of *SCJ* would do well to read this volume and apply its principles.

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Peter J. LEITHART. *Solomon among the Postmoderns.* Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2008. 208 pp. \$19.99.

When asked about the epistemic shift from modernity to postmodernity, the average responder, who might at least be aware of the terms, would possibly equate postmodern thought with relative thinking. Yet most outside of those philosophic circles would probably ask the question to be repeated. Leithart, in the current volume, elaborates on the tension that exists between modernistic thinking and a rapidly accelerating world powered by what Leithart terms “postmodern provisionalism.” The book carries with it a provisional nature of its own. While well informed as displayed in a Leithartian renaissance style, he also appears to assimilate his description of postmodern theory at a street level—in accordance with his intentions.

His effort to harmonize postmodern theory (carefully defined) with cultural and political realities assures an audience from both the academic realm and its “street level” readers. Numerous examples and illustrations have been used from a plurality of social and political contexts articulating the prevailing influence of postmodernity. Through the discussion, he moves the theoretical components of postmodernity into the practical realms of daily life: businesses, art, technology, and theology, against a historical backdrop. Leithart helps show postmodernity ultimately as just a repackaging of previous rebellion against modernism (35). He concludes with encouraging a stance that can and should be taken by Christians, reverberating the words Solomon uses near the end of his writings (Ecc 8:15).

As Leithart traces these tenets of postmodern thinking, showing its outworking in a multiplicity of contexts, he passively helps encourage a heightened false idea that postmodernity is something *unprecedented in the history of culture*—which he clearly rejects. He seems to create this tension on purpose, just enough to create some level of vertigo for the readers. Leithart recounts many examples with what seems to be a voice of confident familiarity. His usage in this manner demonstrates the depth of his consideration for postmodern theoretical outworkings, which have often been overlooked. The chapters are broken up into a few categories that prove to be centered on key philosophical ideas seen through historical eyes. A few pages deal with the catchy title. A brief exegesis/word study is conducted to help substantiate his ideas—interpreting Solomon’s insights from Ecclesiastes as the primary illustration for a balanced look at the dialogue between modernity and post-

modernity. Some liberties are taken in his translations. These are not overtly deviant from the norm but serve to enhance his point. He excludes a larger literary/historical emphasis on the united monarchy, the role of covenant from Sinai (revelation), or parallels found in *Qoheleth* writings—from Egyptian wisdom literature. While these would serve to enhance a reader’s understanding of just what Solomon is proposing, Leithart does not address even a brief note of their influence. Leithart goes on to argue, that while Solomon can identify with tenets of postmodernity, he also has something unique to offer to the discussion regarding the ultimate *post-modern obsession* (128).

This work is informative as it traces major philosophical movements and voices past and present. Leithart’s vast knowledge serves as a great guide for those less prone to philosophic tendencies. This book’s style is compatible for a lay reader who is looking to understand where Postmodernity came from, what it looks like, and where it leads. It has a pastoral-like value in a sense as it ends with a stance readers can observe from one who has traveled down many avenues of knowledge and identifies with the name Christian. It is also formal enough in the implications of its ideas for seminary study though containing a less formal style. It might be a refreshing voice among many formal texts seminarians are required to read. For the academic-natured reader, this book should be used as a platform, for further consideration in their study. For those well acquainted with the discussion Leithart addresses, it will be a refreshing outlook that represents itself as a balanced view. It strives toward a biblical understanding in the midst of an ongoing conversation that is taking place in churches, classrooms, art galleries, and publications. I recommend it for its style, tone, content, and overall approach.

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Paul COPAN. *When God Goes to Starbucks: A Guide to Everyday Apologetics.* Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008. 221 pp. \$14.99.

P. Copan, the Pledger Family Chair of Philosophy and Ethics at Palm Beach Atlantic University, has written this latest volume to “guide readers, Christian or not, into practical answers to tough questions” (9). The book has a threefold structure, dividing the work into issues concerning truth and reality, worldviews, and Christianity. This book is similar in both structure and content to Copan’s previous works such as *True for You, but Not for Me* (Bethany, 1998) and *That’s Just Your Interpretation* (Baker, 2001).

Section One tackles the egoism of Ayn Rand and the moral relativism of Jack Kevorkian who is quoted as saying, “I’m an absolute autonomist. Do and say whatever you want to do and say at any time you want to do or say it, as long as you do not harm or threaten anybody else’s person or property” (22). Copan points out to the reader how ironic it is that many will deny moral absolutes but then qualify their statements with universal standards. For example, Kevorkian’s philosophy of absolute autonomy comes with the qualifier, “just as long as you don’t hurt anyone.” It is noted how such a philosophy is logically inconsistent and self-destructive.

tive. The final chapter argues, “Deception is morally permissible . . . under certain specific conditions” (29). Scriptural examples are given for clarification (Exod 1:15-21; Josh 2; 8:2; 1 Sam 16:1-5; 2 Kgs 6:18-23).

Section Two dedicates two chapters to miracles and three chapters to issues surrounding homosexuality. Chapter 8 asks, “Does the Bible Condemn Loving, Committed Homosexual Relationships?” Copan argues the affirmative while at the same time pointing out how the church has fallen short in reaching out to this ostracized segment of American society. This chapter is carefully laid out, with the exception that *pederasty* is defined four times in nine pages. Chapter 9 asks, “Aren’t People Born Gay?” The author concludes, “Both sides must be careful not to commit the either-or fallacy (‘it’s either biology or environment; either nature or nurture, either determined or a choice’). Regarding homosexuality, it seems wiser—and clearer—to talk about *influences* rather than *causes*” (98). The final chapter focuses on gay marriage. Here, Copan argues the traditional definition of marriage should not be changed. Among his nine objections is the point that the state cannot be morally neutral about gay marriage. Those asserting what the state ‘ought’ to do involve a moral standard (113).

Section Three contains three chapters on the “Yahweh Wars” of Joshua and Judges. In 25 pages the author points out some of the main differences between the biblical holy wars and Islamic jihad. One of the more significant observations made by Copan in this section was poorly explained. He notes, “The tolerant passages [of the Qur’an] precede the militant ones” (158). In other words exegetes of the Qur’an have adopted a view of progressive revelation in which earlier teachings expire and are overridden by later revelation. Thus, the principle of *naskh* differentiates between teachings from Mecca and those from Medina.

Furthermore, two chapters focus on the Second Coming where Matthew 24 and parallels are placed within their historical context. The apologist demonstrates exegetical prowess by conducting word studies and checking parallel passages. Copan rejects the popular premillennial approach to eschatology and hermeneutics. For example, he notes how the image of a darkened sun is figurative speech referencing political upheaval (Isa 13:10; 34:4-6; Jer 4:23; Ezek 32:7; Joel 2:10; Amos 5:18-20; 8:9). Furthermore, he affirms this imagery denotes the end of national Israel and the beginning of God’s new people, the church, who are the new “Israel.” Thus, Copan rejects interpreting the Bible in a woodenly literal manner. His main point, however, is that Jesus was not mistaken concerning the timing of his yet future return. The book concludes with a chapter on denominational division among Christians—a topic of interest to members of the Stone-Campbell Restoration Movement.

This volume is timely with topics such as homosexuality, jihad, and eschatology. However, the title may mislead some to believe the book is shallow coffee shop theology. Yet, I question whether this is college freshman material. The book will better serve seminarians and professors as it is demanding at times. It is worth both the price and the effort!

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John PIPER and Justin TAYLOR, eds. *The Supremacy of Christ in a Postmodern World*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2007. 192 pp. \$14.99.

Resulting from a conference in Minneapolis in the fall of 2006, this volume is a collection of essays which discuss the concepts of truth, joy, and love as they relate to Christ's supremacy in a "postmodern" world along with theologizing and contextualizing the gospel within this context. The authors aim to "sharpen our thinking and motivate our ministry by considering how each of these intersects with the truth of Christ in our contemporary world" (13). The book is broken into three sections. The first, entitled "Culture and Truth," includes essays by David Wells and Voddie Baucham Jr. Wells examines cultural "postmodernism" and western pluralism as pointing to a "new spiritual yearning" in our culture that ends up as a form of Gnosticism (26-33). He proceeds to link ancient Gnostics with "postmoderns" and posits Christ as the answer to the nihilistic tendencies of both. Baucham then proceeds with a worldview comparison between Christian theism and "a postmodern version of secular humanism" in the areas of God, man, truth, knowledge, and ethics (52).

Section two, entitled "Joy and Love," includes essays by John Piper and D.A. Carson. Piper's essay on joy is based on John 17:13: "These things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves" (71). Piper sets up a ten-point argument to substantiate the joy that Christ brings to the world, as declared in Scripture. His stated point is to "simply affirm the precious truth of *doctrinally* based joy over against the postmodern debunking of propositional revelation and biblical doctrine and expositional preaching—as though there were some other way to attain Christ-exalting joy" (72). Likewise, Carson examines Jesus' five petitions in John 17 in terms of the ground, reason, and purpose of each petition, with their relation to the love of God. He then proceeds to show Christ's supremacy in the love of God.

The final section, "Gospel Theologizing and Contextualizing," includes essays by Tim Keller and Mark Driscoll. Keller discusses evangelism in the context of a "postmodern" world. He rightly acknowledges that exposure to nominal Christianity on the one hand—or legalistic Christianity on the other—"create spiritual antibodies . . . making the listener extremely resistant to the Gospel" (104-105). Keller offers six areas in which the church will have to change to be effective in our present age. Driscoll then writes concerning differences in contemporary christology by comparing pop culture, liberals/emergents, and conservatives/fundamentalists. He states that in order to correctly represent Christ, both his divinity and humanity must be emphasized equally (127). Driscoll makes an appeal for a "two-handed approach to ministry" where the "timeless truths" of Christianity are held without compromise and the "timely ministry methods and styles" are left open (143). Finally, he states that "John Calvin rightly understood that God has both predestined the elect to be saved and predestined the church to be instruments of his election by contending and contextualizing in culture" (147).

This volume is meant to be an upbuilding discourse for Christians who are seeking to understand and be witnesses of the gospel in the present age. Truly, the declaration of Christ's supremacy in a postmodern world is just as necessary as it has been throughout the ages. For Christ reigns supreme no matter the current popu-

lar paradigm of thought. However, this collection of essays fails to adequately define the term “postmodern,” and instead suggests an esoteric form of cultural symptoms. Lacking is an engagement with the philosophical thoughts that have contributed to these current cultural symptoms. This results in a cathartic affirmation of presently held beliefs instead of an active conversation and critique of the roots of these symptoms. No doubt nihilism has infected our culture, riding in on the critiques of enlightenment philosophy, which have culminated into what many term to be “postmodernism.” The authors attempt to confront this nihilism, but because no real engagement occurs with any specific elements of “postmodernism,” it becomes a straw man argument. Thus, the term “postmodernism” becomes the signifier for symptoms of a post-Christian culture. Since this topic continues to be an open discussion among theologians, this book is recommended as an example of one possible approach to the “postmodern dilemma.”

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Lee C. CAMP. *Mere Discipleship: Radical Christianity in a Rebellious World*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2008. 272 pp. \$18.99.

The second edition of this volume juxtaposes the theological heritage of Camp, which includes both John Howard Yoder and David Lipscomb, with the contemporary state of discipleship in general in American churches. The result is an approach to discipleship that is sharp with critique for both the American Christian worldview and the follower of Jesus seeking perspective on discipleship in the current shifting culture. However, Camp is not simply the cynical complainer—he also provides solutions and thoughts toward resolving the shortcomings of Western discipleship.

Camp’s central thesis is that the rebellious world, theologically delineated by the Fall (Genesis 3), requires discipleship that radically positions the follower of Jesus against the “principalities and powers” (including empires and governments) that find their foundation and origin within the rebellious world. Camp pursues this thesis by showing how Constantinian Christendom created an empire-dependent form of Christianity that finds its identity primarily in living a “spiritual” life in Jesus while pledging “allegiance” to the empire, state, or operative power structure. There is, in Camp’s assessment, no room for allegiance to both Jesus as Lord and any greater rebellious power such as a nation, government, or economic system regardless of their seemingly contributive role to Christianity: “There is no compartmentalization of the faith, no realm, no sphere, no business, no politic in which the lordship of Christ will be excluded. We either make him Lord of all lords, or we deny him as Lord of any” (27).

Camp illustrates this by examining and critiquing the beliefs (gospel, Savior, and the church) and the activities (worship, baptism, prayer, communion, and evangelism) that disciples of Jesus undertake as central aspects of their faith. In each section Camp offers both a critique of the current situation and an alternative, preferred reality that disciples should strive to live out. Each of the solutions Camp offers are radically opposed to contemporary social and cultural “common sense”

that preserves the entire system and worldview which he defines as the “Constantinian cataract.” Therefore, questions arise about the support of militarism that is often “common sense” for American Christians and yet seems to fly in the face of Jesus’ commandment to “Love your enemies.” Camp’s discussion of the “just war theory” is helpful here, though he provides no caveat for allowing disciples to support radical militarism.

The most valuable and thought-provoking chapter for those in the Stone-Campbell Restoration Movement is the chapter on “Baptism: Why Disciples Don’t Make Good Americans.” Camp’s thesis is that infant baptism in Constantinian Christendom and beyond removed the value of baptism as an entrance into membership in a new reality in Christ and placed it on gathering (or “saving”) people into the institution of the church. After critiquing many of the early conflicts over baptism, Camp utilizes Gal 3:27-28 to say that “At the heart of baptism lies an astonishing claim . . . all the division, all the social groupings . . . these are broken down. There is, for those who have been clothed with Christ in baptism, a new identity, an identity that transcends race, economic class, ethnic grouping, and citizenship.” (152) This new identity is explicated in the other chapters as living counter to the common sense of the empire and economic system in power at the time.

The main drawback of a book such as Lee Camp has written is also its strong suit, namely its limitations in fully discussing the practical nuances of each activity of discipleship. Deeper studies of passages such as Rom 12:14–13:1 where the relationship between the state and the church are brought to light could be extremely helpful. One of the other drawbacks is a failure to discuss the Anabaptist heritage that undergirds both Camp and others who are influenced by John Howard Yoder. What is obvious is that this volume is an accessibly thorough historical, theological, and practical critique of both the development of discipleship from the first century and the current condition of Western Christian discipleship as a whole. I highly recommend this for both classrooms and small groups that are looking for a resource that will spark deep, creative discussion on the topic of following Jesus in the contemporary Western world.

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M. Daniel CARROLL R. *Christians at the Border: Immigration, the Church, and the Bible.* Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008. 174 pp. \$16.99.

A Christlike response to the complicated immigration dilemma in the United States will not come from “detached objective analysis, cost-benefit calculations, efficiency quotients, or cultural arguments” (139). Instead, Christians must “reconsider their starting point in the immigration debate” (19). To that end, Carroll, Distinguished Professor of OT at Denver Seminary and adjunct professor at *El Seminario Teológico Centroamericano* in Guatemala, has provided readers with a much-needed “primer for a more biblically and theologically informed approach to the topic” (20).

This brief but balanced and well-documented study begins with a discussion of the sociohistorical legacy of Hispanic immigration. Next, Carroll surveys the rele-

vant biblical material, dedicating the second and third chapters to the OT and the fourth chapter to the NT. In the fifth and final chapter he answers the question, “Where do we go from here?” The Foreword, Afterword, and Back Cover include enthusiastic endorsements for this prophetic call to allow the Bible to inform our Christian response as “resident aliens” to Hispanic immigrants, first and foremost as neighbors created like us in the image of God, before we attempt to engage public policy debates that are usually driven by nativist and economic concerns rather than by Christian values and ethics.

Carroll provides readers with a brief yet invaluable history of the “contradictory regulations, confusing compromises and legal irregularities” (31) that have characterized immigration law in the United States and which must inform Christian responses to “the legality questions” raised by references to Romans 13. Responses to Hispanic immigration since 1848 demonstrate the recurring tension between the “perceived threats” to this country’s identity as an Anglo-Protestant, English-speaking nation, and the potential positive or negative economic impact of Hispanic immigration on American society.

Son of a Guatemalan mother and an American father, Carroll has spent much of his life in Central America and among immigrants in the United States allowing him to also successfully describe life lived “in the hyphen” (Mexican-Americans, Cuban-American, etc.) where danger, loneliness, discrimination, poverty, and socio-cultural disorientation plague many Hispanic immigrants. Like Joseph, Ruth, and the exiles in Babylon, Hispanic immigrants require generous hospitality not only to succeed in the United States, but also to make generous and positive contributions to the overall well-being of society in their adopted homeland.

Carroll insists that the Bible consistently affirms that defenseless people, including “sojourner” (*gēr*) are objects of God’s special concern and providential care. Carroll argues convincingly that the OT can “orient believers of the majority culture and the immigrant community as to the proper attitudes and perspectives with which both sides should engage the national debate” (89). Guidance from the NT, especially from the example of Jesus, suggests that the thrust of his ministry and the NT as a whole is to love the outsider and be hospitable. The clear “implication for today” is for Christians “to be gracious to the immigrant in the name of God and Christ. This inclination, in turn, will affect how one assesses present legislation and ponders where things should go from here at a personal level, in the local and national church and other Christian spheres, and finally within the country at every level of government” (132).

Nonpartisan church leaders will find that Carroll provides them with an invaluable resource for helping the church examine the values and principles that inform Christian responses to the so-called “immigration dilemma.” But more importantly, this volume will help inform their responses to immigrants themselves, many of whom like us confess that “*Jesús es el Señor*” (Jesus is Lord!). Like other immigrants to this country before them, including Thomas Campbell, immigrants from Latin America also have much to offer and perhaps much to teach us as well.

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Mark HULSEHER. *Religion, Culture and Politics in the Twentieth-Century United States.* New York: Columbia University Press, 2007. 249 pp. \$25.50.

Meant primarily as a textbook for undergraduates, Hulsether's book provides a narrative account of the importance of religion in twentieth-century American culture, as well as an analytical framework for thinking about religion in more complicated ways. He writes in opposition to scholars who define religion according to its central theological tenets. Instead, Hulsether situates religion within a broader context of struggle for sociopolitical power and cultural hegemony that is at the center of American and cultural studies. Drawing up the work of Gramsci, Hulsether does not reduce religion to an obstacle to counter-hegemonic struggles, as some are wont to do. Rather, he seeks to uncover the interplays between consent-oriented exercises of power and the movements designed to subvert those norms.

Hulsether lays out this framework in a long introductory chapter and then he encourages the reader to embark with him on a trip to map the contours of religious practice in recent American culture. Synthetically drawing upon recent scholarship, he begins the book by providing a cursory overview of religious developments in North America from Contact to about 1900. In the final six chapters, Hulsether divides his time between pre- and post-World War II. He structures the sections in a parallel fashion. Each section first covers the major religious developments of that particular period. For pre-World War One, Hulsether pays particular attention to the rising and splitting of Jewish and Catholic groups, as well as the divarications in Evangelical Groups, including the Disciples of Christ. For the post-1945 period, he charts two broad courses in the relationship between religion and American culture: homogenization and diversity. As more people began to speak English, interact with U.S. culture, and embrace consumer culture, religions began to become like culture, and individuals accepted the hegemonic ideal that religion is voluntary and privatized. However, homogenization did not occur without opposition. An increasing diversity of religious life fueled by immigration in the Asian and Latino communities provided new religious sources that worked to counterbalance the tendency towards sameness.

It is in the chapters concerning religion, social conflict, and the cultural aspects of the period that Hulsether's hegemonic/counter-hegemonic interplay appears most notably. These chapters consider traditional aspects of religious practice viewed through the lens of cultural categories, like race, class, and gender. Hulsether also works in descriptions about popular culture, immigrant religious enclaves, and the culture wars. A myriad of examples and case studies make up his narrative account, but to demonstrate how his framework operates, one will be examined here briefly. Hulsether writes that the Reform and Americanist tendencies in early twentieth-century Judaism cannot be understood apart from the normalizing power of the anti-Semitism of the Second KKK, Henry Ford, Father Coughlin, and university quota systems. The Jewish community did not universally assent to these hegemonic tendencies, but resisted through Zionism and the growth of Conservative Judaism.

The use of hegemony to study recent American religious history allows a more complex way of understanding religious practice. It is this focus on movement-based religious practice that takes up most of Hulsether's narrative account. Thus,

he focuses less on religious ideology and individual personalities. To some extent, he also focuses less on the relationship between religions and politics in a traditional sense, as that relationship is subsumed by cultural analysis. Hulsether deserves great credit for writing a cultural studies-inspired textbook of recent religious developments that is clearly written with well-defined terms. While some of his prose and metaphors become repetitive, this book could be adapted to any introductory college course on the role of religion in recent American culture.

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Robert E. WEBBER. *Who Gets to Narrate the World? Contending for the Christian Story in an Age of Rivals.* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2008. 137 pp. \$15.00.

Having spent virtually my entire adult life on the university campus, I was enticed by the title of Webber's book, expecting an account of the turmoil I see daily: the Marxist historians contending with the existential philosophers who are at odds with the materialist scientists who just can't get what the post-modern writers are all about. The reality was quite different than anticipated since Webber's short treatise primarily explores the historical rise and fall of Christian cultural dominance, and his fear that a lagging Christian influence will be supplanted by the radical Islamist agenda. His basic thesis is that if Christianity does not redirect itself, Islam will flow into the increasing vacuum.

Webber (who passed away before this book was actually released) established the Institute for Worship Studies in Jacksonville, FL, and wrote extensively about worship, especially emphasizing the need for modern Christian worship to be informed by early liturgical practices. Perhaps his work which would be best-known to the general church population would be *Worship Is a Verb* (Word, 1985). He was a highly-regarded professor at Wheaton College and Northern Seminary. Webber also convened the process which produced it and edited the document "Call to an Ancient-Evangelical Future" (which provides much of the basis for this volume).

Webber begins and ends the book lamenting the decline of Christianity's voice in the western world, and placing the blame for that consequence on a departure from Christianity as metanarrative to source of personal salvation and affirmation. He chronicles the bifurcation of the world into "sacred" and "secular" and twentieth-century religious "consumerism" as representative steps of the faith's marginalization.

The first few chapters of this volume are reminiscent of Rodney Stark's works on the expansion of early Christianity, and several later chapters could be entitled "Francis Schaeffer was right!" in tracing the decline of Christian influence in various areas of western culture. Webber's arch-villain in this minimization of Christianity is the cultural accommodation of the church he perceives at every level—civil religion, rationalism, privatism and pragmatism.

In the last few chapters, he acknowledges other voices alongside radical Islam seeking to be the authoritative voices of the West, including post-modernism, and makes suggestions regarding how the church might reverse the trends and regain a

culturally significant voice. It is at this point that the book may well have the most specific interest to readers of the *SCJ*. On the one hand, Webber often makes the plea to return to a more “scriptural” form of Christianity, which undoubtedly calls forth cheers from many readers. Yet, on the other hand, he calls for the re-integration of the church with the divine narrative through a renewed emphasis on liturgy and “lectionary preaching,” which likely brings about some jeers from the same crowd.

Webber contends throughout that modern evangelicalism has both privatized the gospel and reduced it to a series of doctrinal propositions, both of which have limited its appeal to and impact upon the modern/post-modern world. He calls his book both a wake-up call to the church and an appeal to use “post-modern apologetics” (narrative) in reaching out to the world. Though any part of the church which has not already recognized the abysmal level to which the influence of Christianity in the western world has fallen may be too deeply asleep to be awakened, Webber’s call to reassert Christianity as more than “my favorite flavor,” but as the true telling of history, cosmology, and theology is a message that deserves amplification.

It does seem that Webber was primarily focused on what he saw as weaknesses in the western church, especially in regard to the growing power he perceived in Wahhabist strands of Islam; it would have been interesting and helpful for him to have addressed the relative power and effectiveness of non-western Christianity, which is more directly engaged already in that conflict. Are sub-Saharan African churches guilty of the same sins as American churches? Are those Christians losing the battle against the comprehensive, imperialistic story of Islam? The statistics would seem to indicate that raw political pressure wields far more effect than narrative, but Webber’s warnings remain valuable for those of us in the West. We are not the only game in town.

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John POLKINGHORNE. *The Way the World Is: The Christian Perspective of a Scientist.* Louisville, KY, Westminster John Knox, 2007. 130 pp. \$16.95.

Polkinghorne has been one of my favorite authors for at least fifteen years. There is no finer introduction to the current science-theology dialogue than his book *Quarks, Chaos, and Christianity*. And his magnum opus *The Faith of a Physicist* should be required of all seminary students. So it was with delight and eager anticipation that I agreed to review this new reprint of a Polkinghorne work I’d never had the privilege of studying.

If the first paragraph sounds like I’m setting you up, there is a reason for that. For the first time in my life I find myself disappointed with an offering from my hero. Let me be quick to say that this disappointment does not stem from any of the obvious criteria one uses to judge the worth of an academic work. The scholarship is impeccable, the presentation is clear and inviting, and the reasoning is reminiscent of C.S. Lewis and other giants of 20th-century apologetics. My disappoint-

ment stems from my familiarity with Polkinghorne and the resultant realization of what this book could have been but is not.

This volume is an exercise in what I call “first person apologetics”—it is not so much a rehearsal of reasons why *someone should* believe, but rather the story about why *one particular person does* believe. Polkinghorne admits (as do all contemporary apologists worth reading) that the justification for faith he presents is not rationally compelling in the sense that one fully appreciative of it could not then rationally reject Christianity. He concludes, “Faith cannot be proved, but it is not unmotivated. If this book can help some to perceive something of the motivation of a Christian understanding of the world, I shall be well content” (112).

The framework within which Polkinghorne develops his apologetic generates the title of the book. There is a “way the world is” that is presented to us first through the successes of modern science and second (but by no means less importantly or convincingly) through our considered understanding of everyday experience. The world so presented to us is intelligible and open to investigation, but in a way that rewards only diligent and painstaking study. Science shows us that this world is a world of facts, and that those facts are organizable in rational ways that produce not simply observation but explanation and prediction as well. However, this understanding of the world—as compelling and challenging as it is—is incomplete. Human experience, even as carefully scrutinized by philosophers, theologians, and other professionals, reveals a world of truth beyond factual description. Ours is a world of beauty, value, and obligation as well. So a full understanding of the world requires more than science—it requires philosophical and especially religious insight. It is this latter contribution that this book attempts to offer (and largely succeeds in offering).

Polkinghorne’s religious insight, while informative and imaginative, strikes me as nothing new. Similar paths of reasoning are offered (and often done much better) by the likes of C.S. Lewis and George MacDonald, as well as contemporary writers like Keith Ward and N.T. Wright. And it is here that my fundamental disappointment with the book lies. Polkinghorne’s unique strength has always been his uncanny sensitivity for links between the insights of modern science and the demands of a robust theology. (Polkinghorne was a Dirac-trained mathematical physicist who then entered the Anglican priesthood.) What I hoped for in this book was a catalog of connections between what science tells us *is* the case about the world and what Christianity tells us *must be* the case.

Polkinghorne hints at such insight in several places, such as his declaration of an often overlooked similarity between NT scholarship and observational science: “In both disciplines an understanding has to be reached on the available evidence interpreted in ways that are sensible and consistent” (36). There is also a marvelous science-inspired reply to the so-called “hidden God” problem that occupies so much contemporary theology: “It seems that it is God’s way to work slowly and almost secretly. When we think of all those thousands of millions of years which elapsed from the big bang till the universe saw the emergence of life, we see that he is not a God in a hurry. He is a God of process and not of magic” (102).

But such gems are few, far between, and always underdeveloped. That which Polkinghorne is most equipped to offer us takes an inexplicable back seat in this,

his most personal statement of faith. And, no doubt, it reflects an honest and reflective treatment of his most deeply felt convictions. Nonetheless the results are to me strange and—as I have said—disappointing.

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Michael W. GOHEEN and Craig G. BARTHOLOMEW. *Living at the Crossroads: An Introduction to Christian Worldview.* Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008. 205 pp. \$19.99.

Goheen and Bartholomew observe that Christians today (at least, Christians in the West) live at a crossroads of two incompatible worldviews: a biblical worldview and a Western worldview, both of which claim to be the true story of life. Inspired by the work of James Orr and Abraham Kuyper, Goheen and Bartholomew set out to define a biblical worldview, expose the presuppositions of modern western culture, and suggest methods by which Christians can witness to Christ in a society whose values center on postmodernism, consumerism, and globalization.

The first chapter establishes the authors' understanding that each competing worldview claims to be the true story of the world and each encompasses the whole of our lives. In chapter two, "worldview" is defined as "an articulation of the basic beliefs embedded in a shared grand story that are rooted in a faith commitment and that give shape and direction to the whole of our individual and corporate lives" (23). For Goheen and Bartholomew, no real difference exists between "Christian worldview" and "the gospel," for both of them describe the same thing. The gospel is the gospel of *the kingdom*, and as such, it encompasses all of creation. A Christian worldview must be rooted in Scripture and is an abstraction from Scripture, a notion that postconservative Christians will reject (27). Chapters three and four map out a Christian worldview in which the authors affirm many traditional doctrines such as God's activity in the world, the *imago Dei*, creation, fall, and redemption. Chapters five through eight seek to uncover the "hidden credo" of western culture, explaining the evolution of "humanism" from its humble origins to today's secular, naturalistic, rationalistic, and scientific sense (68). These chapters trace the history of humanism, the Renaissance, the emergence of modernism and postmodernism, and the lingering effects of each on contemporary society. Four trends in the world greatly affect a western worldview: postmodernism, consumerism and globalization, the increasingly Christian southern hemisphere, and the rise of Islam (108). The responsibility of the Christian is twofold: affirm appropriate cultural development and expose the idolatrous corruption of God-given gifts. This is accomplished by learning to distinguish between "creational design" and "spiritual power," that is, between God's original, creational purpose for society and that which has twisted the original purpose for unbiblical ends (135). The final chapter applies this approach to hypothetical situations in the areas of business, politics, sports, art, scholarship, and education.

Though written as a sequel to *The Drama of Scripture*, this volume functions very well as a stand-alone work. It is written primarily for undergraduate students

and lay Christians having a familiarity with many of the terms and concepts it discusses. One useful feature of the book is the accompanying website, in which teachers and ministers can access free Power Point presentations and other teaching aids to supplement the book.

The well-informed reader will notice the writers' Reformed theology peeking through but will not be bothered by it, for such occasions (such as the assertion that God is involved in every part of creation, moving it toward his desired ends) need only minor clarification if used in a classroom. One aspect that will leave the reader dissatisfied is the absence of advice on how to articulate and defend a Christian worldview to those who, *a priori*, reject the Bible as a valid source of authority or truth. In its defense, however, this work is about Christians formulating and living a Christian worldview, not about non-Christians' reactions to it.

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John CORRIE, ed. *Dictionary of Mission Theology: Evangelical Foundations*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2007. 451 pp. \$32.00.

The moving of the global center of Christianity to the South and the East has been well documented. Although the church in the West remains active and continues to contribute significant resources to the world Christian movement, the number of Christian adherents, evangelistic efforts, and theological reflection in other parts of the world clearly indicate the globalization of the Christian faith.

This volume makes a valuable contribution to understanding world Christianity. An increasing volume of literature is growing out of the internationalization of the Christian church. This work, along with such contributions as the Christian Doctrine in a Global Perspective series, also by InterVarsity Press, confirms that Christianity is expanding beyond the confines of Western thinking.

More than half of the articles are authored by contributors from the majority world giving it a true international perspective. Insights and illustrations from theologians and missiologists from a nonwestern cultural context provide a multiethnic richness to this volume.

For example, in the entry on Inculturation Solomon Raj points out the fishers of men image used by Jesus is not used again in the NT to describe evangelism. While this image is used extensively and effectively in the West, Indian culture views this word picture negatively and generally does not use it.

This dictionary does not attempt to duplicate mission and dictionary resources that are already available but is concerned primarily with providing articles that offer a practical application for mission. The editors and contributors facilitate thinking about the theology of mission based in an evangelical understanding of scripture, encouraging an informed best practice approach to actually doing missions.

One of the most significant aspects of this volume is its contribution to the responsible process of contextualization of the Christian faith. Cultural imperialism continues to be problematic in many mission enterprises. This volume enables its readers to see Christianity in its broader context, developing awareness beyond

their own cultural experiences. While these articles are well written, easy to read, and suitable for the target audience, academic integrity is not compromised.

Mission students, particularly those on college and seminary campuses, will benefit greatly from this dictionary. Pastors, church mission leaders, and any Christian desiring a greater knowledge of what God is doing in the world will profit from its use. Missionaries and national church leaders throughout the world have in this volume a significant resource to facilitate the growth of the church. This volume is a valuable tool for the church, providing information, perspective, and encouragement to those seeking to be involved in God's global activity.

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Tom STEFFEN and Lois McKinney DOUGLAS. *Encountering Missionary Life and Work: Preparing for Intercultural Ministry.* Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008. 377 pp. \$24.99.

This volume is billed as a practical guide to twenty-first-century mission work. Tom Steffen and Lois McKinney Douglas are certainly well qualified to write such a text, having between them some forty-three years of field mission experience in addition to their solid academic resumes. The result of their collaboration on this project is a book strong on background and theory for the student of missions but at times missing the mark of practicality for laypeople searching for more of a “missions for dummies” manual.

The text begins with an overview of the vast changes in the contemporary mission scene, then proceeds to a brief overview of key figures in mission history. Rather than giving an exhaustive treatment, the authors use representative figures to pull out helpful foundational principles and cautionary tales for those who are pursuing mission service. Refreshingly, the obligatory references to Zinzendorf, William Carey, and Hudson Taylor are supplemented with heroes snatched from contemporary headlines such as Martin and Gracia Burnham, New Tribes missionaries kidnapped in the Philippines in 2001.

Approximately a third of the text works through issues of spiritual, personal, and professional development, with a particularly helpful chapter on decision-making and the will of God. Unfortunately only one brief chapter covers some of the most practical aspects of getting to the field that are of major concern to people who have already made a commitment to missions, such as raising finances, handling communications, and taking leave of one's family and friends in the home culture. Readers who are looking for detailed guidance in these areas will be disappointed. A chapter on avenues to cross-cultural ministries bravely tries to untangle for the reader the tangled labyrinth of evangelical missionary conferences, denominational boards and parachurch agencies. The tediousness of this chapter has more to do with the subject than the writers' skill.

The treatment of on-field preparations focuses upon cultural adaptation and language-learning, with respectable chapters summarizing standard material on these issues. The authors consider diverse approaches to cross-cultural communica-

tion, emphasizing the acquisition of both verbal and non-verbal skill sets. A significant deficiency is the make-or-break issue of conflict management, to which only some five pages in the whole book are devoted. The thorny problem of cross-cultural conflict receives only a sidebar mention based on Duane Elmer's *Cross-Cultural Conflict* (1993).

The authors take pains to highlight the contributions of women throughout the text and in a particularly strong chapter on women in missions. They handle the controversial aspects of women's ministry roles with an appropriate balance of boldness and sensitivity, challenging the conscience of the church for its studied neglect of faithful women servant-leaders. A separate chapter on missionary families thoughtfully explores the various schooling options for missionary kids. Quotations from MK's provide an unromanticized glimpse of the realities of third culture life from those who live it.

In order to live up to its title, the book needs to be supplemented with more practical texts in some crucial areas such as support-raising and conflict management. Some parts of it are better skimmed to get to the "good stuff." However, some of the strongest chapters well justify the purchase price and the authors do a good job of referring the reader to up-to-date web and print resources for further exploration. On the whole, it is a useful text for an introductory missions course and a worthwhile basic reference for field missionaries or mission-minded Christians.

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Benjamin L. MERKLE. *40 Questions about Elders and Deacons.* Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2008. 270 pp. \$17.99.

In the Preface, Merkle states the main strength of the book. Informing readers that his area of expertise is not historical or practical theology but biblical studies, he goes on to demarcate his aim as "to answer the proposed questions based on a sound interpretation of Scripture." (14) It would be hard to deny that Scripture is foundational for his approach to church polity.

The format is definitely "user friendly." The book is comprised of 40 questions, divided into three parts: "Offices in General," "The Office of Elder," and "The Office of Deacon." It is the second section, containing 27 of the 40 questions (over half of the text), which forms the nucleus. His discussion of the eldership is divided into four subsections: background issues, qualifications, the plurality of elders, and the selection, ordination, payment, and removal of elders. This emphasis on the office of elder is understandable; his doctoral dissertation was a defense for the leadership of a plurality of elders/overseers in the local congregation titled *The Elder and Overseer: One Office in the Early Church* (New York: Peter Lang, 2003).

Each chapter in this volume follows a consistent outline. Merkle begins each question (chapter) by either redefining the issue or providing a focus statement. This is followed by an examination of what he identifies as the relevant texts. He then presents the strengths and weaknesses of those texts, which precede a short summary and a series of "reflection questions." Though the chapters are short, each

chapter contains excellent information and abundant footnotes (some very lengthy) for further discussion/examination.

One minor weakness, especially if the book is not used primarily as a reference, is repetition. This is partly due to its format. Many of the questions are closely related. When you combine this with the fact that the number of biblical reference passages is limited, the result is a reexamination of several texts.

A second weakness—more formidable—is Merkle’s limited discussion of deacons—only seven of the 40 questions. It is certainly debatable that his identification of Acts 6 as a “pattern or paradigm” for the NT office of deacon is “sound interpretation of Scripture.” Though he admits that the noun *diakonos* does not appear, he sees a parallel in the relationship between the Apostles and “the seven” with the relationship between elders and deacons in a local congregation. He quickly passes over the fact that these men were chosen to meet a specific and limited need. Further, if this passage is a “pattern or paradigm” for the “office” of deacon, how do we account for the fact that all seven (like the widows in need) were also Grecian-Jews? And can the office of elder really be discussed in parallel fashion to the role of the Apostles—given the special status, gifts, and authority that accompanied the Apostles?

Additionally, he pushes the hermeneutical limits in his argument against women serving as deacons. Admitting that “conclusions (that women were not deacons) must be tentatively held due to the paucity of information,” it seems easy for him to deny the appointment of women to *any* office in the NT church. In order to do this, however, he commits two hermeneutical errors. First, he resorts to an argument from silence—coming just one page after he warns against this kind of argumentation. In a rather limited defense of the position that 1 Tim 3:11 refers to the *wives* of deacons, he admits that nothing is said concerning the *wife* of an elder, but quickly adds that “one cannot base too much on this argument from silence” (255-257). Obviously more evidence is available since, in the words of Gene Getz, “most Christian leaders over the centuries have not accepted the interpretation that Paul was referring to “deacons’ wives” . . . [but] the qualifications for “women” who also serve as deacons.” (*Elders and Leaders: God’s Plan for Leading the Church*, 104)

The second error is that Merkle engages in a circular argument. Concerning the application of the term *diakonos* to Phoebe, he admits that the masculine form is used when Phoebe is referred to as a *diakonos* “of the church at Cenchreae.” In fact, only Phoebe is referred to as a *diakonos* of a particular church. He denies her the office of deacon, however, asserting that it “was not God’s design for the church” for women to serve in this capacity. In order to support this belief (returning to Phoebe) he points to the differentiation between *diakonos* as “a designation of a church office” and as “a designation of someone who is sent on an official task” (257). Though not supporting how such a determination has or can be made, he cites Phoebe as an example of the latter, having been sent by Paul on the official task of delivering the letter of Romans. This is of particular interest since he has already given as a conclusion that the masculine form of *diakonos* is used by Paul because “like Apollos, Tychicus, Epaphras, and Timothy, she (Phoebe) had some leadership responsibilities among the people of God” (230). What is a deacon if not someone who is serving the church with leadership responsibilities?

Overall, the book is excellent. Most churches would benefit by having this book as a part of the church library—accessible when questions arise regarding the leadership of the elders and deacons. Any minister who is involved in leadership development would gain from a study or use of the book. I would also recommend the book, in light of the extensive footnotes, as a supporting text for an undergraduate course on church leadership—though other books which include the historical and theological discussions are available that would be more suitable for in-depth or graduate studies.

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Craig VAN GELDER, ed. *The Missional Church in Context: Helping Congregations Develop Contextual Ministry*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007. 256 pp. \$20.00.

The last ten years have witnessed a surge of interest in a stimulating ecclesial conversation focused around the missional character of the church. Owing much to the work of Leslie Newbigin and the International Mission Council's trinitarian formulation of mission in the 1960's, this most recent incarnation of the missional conversation was set in motion through the work of The Gospel and Our Culture Network in the mid 1990's. Calling for a reappraisal of ecclesiology which seeks to diminish the distinctions between *church* and *mission*, contributors to this conversation are enthusiastically urging the church to conceive of itself principally as being sent by God into the world to participate in God's mission. This text, edited by leading scholar in missional church research Craig Van Gelder, is the result of the annual Missional Church Consultation held in December, 2005. Its various chapters were hewn from the plenary essays of that conference and are presented here in the aim of augmenting this developing ecclesial discussion.

Set apart as an exploration into the theological, biblical, and historical underpinnings of missional church, the first section in this volume is an arrangement of essays which endeavor to posit a theoretical account for the church's missionary status, highlighting the importance of an appropriately contextualized Christian community. Unsurprisingly, the contribution of deepest value in this venture is Van Gelder's essay which details the origin and development of the motifs most influential in missional church thinking. This important chapter should be required reading for any minister, divinity student, church planter, theologian, or internet scribe who appropriates the nomenclature "missional" to describe his or her ecclesial approach. Van Gelder incisively traces the development of the theological discipline of missiology from its emergence in the nineteenth century to its present manifestation in the missional church conversation today. With this background in place, he offers an agenda for the missional church moving forward, teasing out the implications of the missional church's engagement with its world—an engagement that is contextual, reciprocal, and organizationally provisional. The remaining three chapters in this first section effectively speak to the relationship between congregations and their context, the Protestant Reformation's ongoing relevance for a the-

ology of mission, and leadership through the lens of a missional congregation. The second section seeks to flesh out, through four different contexts, many of the key impulses in the missional church conversation. These engagements range from more general contexts such as the postmodern setting of the denominational church in the United States, to more specific contexts—namely the Presbyterian, Southern Baptist, and Evangelical Lutheran Denominations in South Korea, Taiwan, and the United States respectively. While these four essays invite the reader into more definable settings, they still remain on a national and denominational level in their analysis and effectively eschew any substantial engagement with actual congregations.

For those who have been exposed to the concept of missional church but have little understanding of its fundamental nature beyond a vague notion of “relevance,” this text will be a welcomed companion. It represents a sturdy addition to the growing literature on the subject. Even so, it is an academic text by design, and as such, it will leave those searching for a “how-to guide” wanting. For those who have been more extensively exposed to missional church literature, this volume will seem to fall short in moving the conversation substantially forward. Many of the essays—although remaining remarkably well conceived and insightful when considered individually—duplicate an inordinate amount of source material and theory, oftentimes reproducing identical extended quotes and argumentation. While this can result in an echo effect when evaluating this work in its entirety, the overall quality of each essay serves to overcome this and ultimately does not significantly diminish the ecclesiological value of this important text.

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Sidney GREIDANUS. *Preaching Christ from Genesis: Foundations for Expository Sermons.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007. 536 pp. \$30.00.

This is the most recent volume in Greidanus’s works on preaching, an immediate follow-up and companion to his *Preaching Christ from the Old Testament* (Eerdmans, 1999). Greidanus recently retired from full-time teaching to devote himself to writing. This work alone should make preachers and students of the Old Testament grateful that he did.

Greidanus explained his methodology in his previous works, but summarizes it in this volume in chapter 1. He advocates seven ways of preaching Christ from the OT: redemptive-historical progression, promise-fulfillment, typology, analogy, longitudinal themes, NT references, and contrast. Not all of these can be applied to every narrative text and there is some overlap between the ways, but Greidanus provides a model for preaching that deserves widespread adoption. Greidanus also includes in chapter 1 a brief discussion of some of the issues involved in trying to interpret Genesis, such as source criticism, literary structure, genre, and historical issues such as historicity and historiography. He also adds an important element not often considered—describing the original readers of Genesis. Understanding who they might be is important for his point that the interpreter must understand the

theme and goal of the narrator. Only then can the preacher determine a theme and goal for the sermon. Greidanus sees three possible audiences for Genesis—Israel about to enter the Promised Land, Israel in the Promised Land, and Israel in exile.

In the main part of the book Greidanus devotes 23 chapters to 23 texts from Genesis. Each chapter is organized in the same methodical way: a brief introduction, observations on text and context, literary features, the plot line, theocentric interpretation, textual theme and goal, ways to preach Christ (a consideration of each of the seven ways in turn), sermon theme and goal, the sermon form, and sermon exposition. This last section is the longest in each chapter as he provides a detailed examination of the text.

Greidanus's examination of each text is remarkable for its depth and attention to detail. He exhibits a superb sensitivity to the narrative style, plot development, and larger context. He is careful to set the text in its biblical and historical context as well. Every chapter shows the plot of the narrative in chart form so that the student can easily see the beginning, high point of tension, and resolution of the story. When he develops his seven ways to preach Christ, he demonstrates the importance of seeing the big picture. His connections to Christ from the text are always grounded in scripture. If one or more of the "ways" are not appropriate for a particular text he says so.

The strengths of this book are numerous. Every preacher who wishes to preach responsibly from Genesis, or any OT narrative, must have a copy of this book. Greidanus condemns the common method of moralizing narrative and shows how a narrative text can be taken seriously on its own. His attention to the text itself is demonstrated over and over. Two examples will suffice. First, he is one of very few commentators or interpreters I have found who has paid attention to the text of Genesis 22 and found the clues for its interpretation in the text itself. He rightly discovers that the text is not about Abraham's faith but about God's providing (as said in the text twice). Second, he correctly puts Genesis one in its ancient near eastern and biblical context, and warns against trying to use the text for modern Christians' arguments with science. That is not the chapter's purpose or goal. When its purpose and goal are understood it has profound application to our culture as well.

The book does have some weaknesses. The very nature of the organization of each of the chapters leads to significant repetition. The detailed exposition always repeats material already noted in the previous sections of each chapter. For example Gen 25:23 is printed three times in the explanation of Gen 25:14–34. The redemptive-historical progression and promise-fulfillment approaches are often very similar in detail. Some of the sermon themes and goals for the various texts are similar. *SCJ* readers likely will disagree with his contention in the chapter on Genesis 17 that baptism simply replaces circumcision as a covenant sign. They will also disagree with a comment scattered here and there that sounds totally deterministic. Nevertheless, this volume is a valuable tool for preaching and should be in the library of every preacher, student, and teacher of the OT.

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Michael PASQUARELLO III. *Christian Preaching: A Trinitarian Theology of Proclamation.* Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006, 220 pp. \$18.99.

Much has been discussed about a cultural and homiletical shift riveting throughout America's pulpits and academic circles. According to Pasquarello, preaching has moved from participating in a grace activity in the Triune God to focusing on effective communication (10); the former, he believes, results in transformed lives, while the latter ends in polished deliveries. His latest book continues this theme from his earlier writings. He hopes to change the subject of preaching from ourselves to the Triune God.

With a background in historical theology and preaching, Pasquarello raises his concerns about contemporary preaching. He believes today's preaching often appeals to private judgment and personal experience (23). He roots such perspective to Charles Finney and finds its current blossom in Rick Warren. Such adherents, in accusation tones, separate theological wisdom from Christian speech, reducing rhetorical technique to pragmatism (25). Instead of focusing on faithfulness, preaching focuses on success. "How to preach" replaces the important question, "what is preached." Pasquarello calls for homileticians to restore the theological language in speaking of God (29).

This volume is composed of eight chapters, including a Preface, Introduction, and Epilogue. Each chapter, as well as the Introduction, is entitled "Speaking of God," making one wonder why he chose this title for the work. Each "Speaking of God" chapter includes a subtitle "practice" for the preacher to rethink, which helps Pasquarello flesh out his Trinitarian theology.

The chapters unfold as follows. Chapter one addresses the practice of theology by reminding the preacher that the church classifies Christians as "saints," not "experts," because they are marked with holiness (49). Chapter two discusses the practice of tradition; language, technique, and style do not make the message relevant, but remembering the church's own story does (68-69). Chapter three talks of the practice of ecclesiology in that the church becomes the place where the living Word is present (97). Chapter four argues for the practice of equipping the church to listen to God's voice (112) so as to promote holiness among God's people (129). Chapter five engages the practice of Scripture; relevance is witnessed when Scripture acts as the living voice of God to the church (135-36). Chapter six undertakes the practice of beautiful (an odd, lone, and even confusing adjective image), as preachers step beyond the human formation of style and speech to focus on the wisdom and power of God to affirm preaching's mystery (170). Finally, chapter seven highlights the practice of pilgrims in which the identity of the church is reaffirmed as an end times people looking for a city to come (183).

This volume has much to commend itself. The popular culture, whether drawing from a *Purpose Driven* model or any fad lacking theological reflection, needs challenging. The various forms of sermon construction occasionally need to be scrutinized, certainly from opposing perspectives, but especially from those who use them. The desire to market a message with the hopes of gaining a larger audience always tempts, thus remembering the cliché, "shallow waters run fast," applies to preaching as well.

That said, the book is a very slow read and at times difficult to follow. One must

be exposed to Wesley, Luther, and Augustine to follow or even effectively test Pasquarello's thought process; historical theology is his background. While he does not explicitly say so, he draws from the postliberal perspective, which slants much of his theology. He offers a sermon at the end of each chapter, a welcome and enjoyable read. However, a seamless line between chapter and sermon was hard to find; I struggled to connect the information in the chapter with the message of the sermon.

This volume is a difficult but rewarding read. If, as Pasquarello's believes, what is needed are "lives truthfully located in the gospel" (10), then one must make the effort to read this volume. When the effort is made, one may discover, or even rediscover, a deeper purpose to preaching.

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Kim Gaines ECKERT. *Stronger Than You Think: Becoming Whole without Having to Be Perfect*. Downers Groves, IL: InterVarsity, 2007. 232 pp. \$15.00.

Eckert has written a timely book in an era when women are pressured to be and do more than ever before. The model of the perfect wife, mother, and hostess has recently been expanded to include the perfect employee, board member, and volunteer. The myth that women can have it all (and all at once) is distressing, exhausting, and too often believed.

Eckert begins by encouraging women to understand that their longing for wholeness is God-given. Unfortunately women have often turned to outside sources of validation to feel complete. Only when women find their worth in relationship to God will they truly be satisfied.

Eckert's second section deals with "growing inward" and managing negative emotions, self-talk, and self-esteem. The author's counseling experience is obvious especially in this section. One chapter is an in-depth look at the importance of a healthy body image in what she calls a "toxic body culture" (117).

The final section looks outward at the importance of growing toward wholeness in the context of our relationships with others. In addition to discussing sexuality (in both beneficial and hurtful contexts) Eckert emphasizes the importance of strong friendships. She also addresses how one's own brokenness can lead to healthy compassion for others.

A particular strength in this volume is the "tools for the journey" segment at the end of each chapter (57, 74, et al). These specific "next steps" should prove helpful as individual readers apply what has been learned from that section's theory and examples. Those who study the book in community will find this a beneficial starting place for group discussion and growth. Additionally, lay counselors (such as ministers or bible study leaders) may find the suggestions helpful as they minister to others.

One weakness to note is that men may overlook this volume simply because it is presumed to be only for women. While this *is* a book for and about women, Eckert admits that "most, if not all, of our emotional problems are either rooted in

or affected by personal relationships” (28). Particularly chapters 8 (on sexuality) and 10 (on loss and abuse) leave much unsaid that should be examined regarding the specific ways men may have been part of that pain and loss. If true healing can only take place in the context of relationships, it is important to note that this includes (perhaps especially) those with men. Writing and marketing the book in this broader context would have been helpful.

One value to *SCJ* readers will be the discussion of the expectations of women in many of today’s congregations when compared to Jesus’ expectations (106). While many leaders avoid the topic due to its volatile nature, the time has come to examine it thoroughly; otherwise “the gifts of half of the church body are lost when women are not allowed to express their gifts unless they fit within accepted women’s roles (107).” Whether their reaction is positive or negative after reading her position is less important than the opportunity churches have to discuss it.

In addition, Eckert’s analysis of the message of grace (149) and the power of forgiveness (190) are astute reminders of the God we worship, particularly in contrast with the legalistic tendencies that some have had in the past. Ministers and counselors will appreciate the “further reading” section at the end of the book. Rather than a bibliography per se, the author has provided resources specific to the topics of each chapter. This could also prove helpful to a seminary student wanting to research one subject in depth. Additionally, the subject and scripture passage indexes should prove beneficial in these contexts.

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Lynn GARDNER. *Where Is God When We Suffer? What the Bible Says About Suffering.* Joplin, MO: College Press, 2007. 381 pp. \$29.99.

The introduction states the book was written for Christians for two purposes. First, the work seeks to help congregations “think biblically about the issues related to suffering . . . that will enable them to persevere” through suffering, and second, to “provide guidelines and insights equipping Christians for ministering to the hurting (18).

The opening chapter retells Gardner’s personal experience with suffering, summarizing eight years of agonizing grief. In the first week of October 1999 Lynn Gardner learned he had a serious health problem which was later diagnosed to be idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis, a fatal disease which deteriorates the lungs. A week later his 34-year-old son Mark died in a truck accident. Gardner goes on to describe his double lung transplant and the subsequent difficulties. Furthermore, his wife Barbara had multiple surgeries during this period due to a large cyst on the lining of her heart as well as breast cancer. In addition, Lynn’s brother Greg, who had cerebral palsy from birth, died. The opening pages of the book assure the reader that Gardner writes about pain as a fellow participant, not merely as a professor.

Part One is a systematic approach to suffering in the Bible. The individual chapters focus on Job, Psalms, the prophets Habakkuk and Jeremiah, the Gospels, Acts,

and the Epistles. In each of these chapters the reader is reminded of the suffering endured by multiple biblical characters that spanned both testaments.

Part Two reads like a practical guide for those suffering. The initial chapter tackles the so-called problem of ‘unanswered prayer.’ Jesus’ ‘sweeping promises’ are placed within their given contexts and reasons are given for unanswered prayers. The following chapters read as a ‘How to’ guide for Christians who are in the midst of suffering with insights pulled from the New Testament epistles.

Part Three is polemic in nature. Here, Gardner answers common objections used to reject belief in God on the basis of the “problem of evil.” It is noted how atheists often use the reality of suffering as a hammer against Christianity. However, all worldviews must supply a coherent explanation of evil. The third and final chapter of this section engages in neutralizing apologetics as Gardner attempts to demonstrate the inadequacy of non-Christian worldviews in explaining evil. Thus, this portion of the book not only defends the biblical worldview but goes on the offensive in revealing the failure of alternative options.

Part Four focuses on practical ministry advice and especially accomplishes the second objective of the book’s purpose. Chapter twenty lists sixteen common ‘words of comfort’ which do more harm than good (“I know just how you feel”). Gardner follows with a chapter on what to say and do for grieving families (“Allow the sufferer to express anger or bitterness, even with God”). It is noted there is no one correct way to grieve. Therefore, when ministering to the grieving, we must allow people to express themselves in their unique way. This section alone is worth the price of the book!

The strength of this book is found in its various genres—systematic theology, apologetics, pastoral ministry. The reader can reflect on four approaches to the topic of suffering in one volume and the format is as easy to follow as the content is to understand. The weakness of the text is that it adds little new to the discussion of suffering other than Dr. Gardner’s personal testimony. However, for those unacquainted with other works on the topic of suffering this is as good a place to begin as any other. This volume would serve well in both colleges and seminaries. It is a needed volume as many Americans have a distorted theology of suffering due in part due to the influence of the health and wealth gospel and the doctrine of a coming Rapture. *SCJ* readers will warmly receive the book, and rightly so.

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S. White CRAWFORD, A. BEN-TOR, J.P. DESSEL, W.G. DEVER, A. MAZAR, and J. AVIRAM, eds. *Up to the Gates of Ekron: Essays on the Archaeology and History of the Eastern Mediterranean in Honor of Seymour Gitin*. Jerusalem: The W.F. Albright Institute of Archaeological Research and the Israel Exploration Society, 2007. 509 pp. \$92.00.

In this first-class *Festschrift*, fifty-four authors have been brought together to honor the work of Seymour Gitin, the longest-serving director of the W.F. Albright Institute of Archaeological Research (AIAR). The book includes several preliminary

articles, including an “Introduction and Appreciation” (xi-xv) by Sidnie White Crawford, who appraises Gitin’s life and work. She notes that it was the Board of Trustees of the AIAR who initiated the *Festschrift* as a celebration of Gitin’s Silver Jubilee (in 2005) as Director. Crawford’s review includes Gitin’s ordination as a Reform rabbi, his studies with Yadin and Glueck, which “sparked his initial interest in archaeology,” his doctoral dissertation under William G. Dever, directorship and revitalization of the Albright, as well as his leadership with Trude Dothan on the long-term joint Albright/Hebrew University Tel Miqne-Ekron Excavation and Publications Project, which has included 14 excavation seasons at the site through 1996. Crawford notes that “the contributions by 54 authors bear testimony both to the wide range of Sy’s interests and his influence on scholars from many different fields” (xv). Following the introduction is a tribute to Gitin by Ernest Frerichs, who reflects on Gitin’s contributions as director, scholar, mentor, and friend (xvi-xix). The introductory section comes to a close with an all-inclusive bibliography of the works of Seymour Gitin (xx-xxvi).

Following this introductory section, the essays in the book are grouped into five parts. Part 1, “Tel Miqne-Ekron and Philistia,” is made up of the following essays: Trude Dothan and David Ben-Shlomo, “Ceramic Pomegranates and Their Relationship to Iron Age Cult” (pp. 3-16); Yosef Garfinkel, “The Dynamic Settlement History of Philistine Ekron: A Case Study of Central Place Theory” (17-24); Barry M. Gittlen, “Sailing Up to Ekron: A Nautical Seal from Tel Miqne-Ekron” (25-28); Aren M. Maier and Joe Uziel, “A Tale of Two Tells: A Comparative Perspective on Tel Miqne-Ekron and Tell eṣ-Şāfi/Gath in Light of Recent Archaeological Research” (29-42); Orit Shamir, “Loomweights and Textile production at Tel Miqne-Ekron: A Preliminary Report” (43-49); Lawrence E. Stager and Penelope A. Mountjoy, “A Pictorial Krater from Philistine Ashkelon” (50-60); Jane C. Waldbaum, “A Wild Goat Oinochoe Sherd from Tel Miqne-Ekron” (61-67).

Part 2 is entitled, “The Archaeology of the Southern Levant from the Late Bronze Age through the Roman Period,” and includes Oded Borowski, “Burial Customs in Southern Judah: The Case of Tel Ḥalif” (71-77); William G. Dever, “Archaeology and the Fall of the Northern Kingdom: What Really Happened?” (78-92); David Eitam, “The Stone Tools from Khirbet ‘Aujah el-Foqa” (93-106); Israel Finkelstein, “Iron Age I Khirbet et-Tell and Khirbet Raddana: Methodological Lessons” (107-113); Volkmar Fritz, “On the Reconstruction of the Four-Room House” (114-118); Zvi Gal, Dina Shalem, and Moshe Hartal, “An Iron Age Site at Karmiel, Lower Galilee” [with an appendix by Anat Cohen-Weinberger] (119-134); Larry G. Herr, “The Late Iron Age I Ceramic Assemblage from Tall al-‘Umayri, Jordan” (135-145); Paul F. Jacobs and Joe D. Seger, “Glimpses of the Iron Age I at Tel Ḥalif” (146-165); Ann E. Killebrew, “The Canaanite Storage Jar Revisited” (166-188); Raz Kletter, “To Cast an Image: Masks from Iron Age Judah and the Biblical *Masekah*” (189-208); Amos Kloner and Yehiel Zelinger, “The Evolution of Tombs from the Iron Age through the Second Temple Period” (209-220); Nancy L. Lapp, “Some Early Persian Period Pottery from tell Balāṭah” (pp. 221-227); Jodi Magness, “Why Ossuaries?” (228-239); Eric M. Meyers, “Jewish Art in the Greco-Roman Period: Were the Hasmonean and Herodian Eras Aniconic?” (240-248); Ephraim Stern, “A Gorgon’s Head and the Earliest Greek

Temples at Dor and on the Coasts of Phoenicia and Palestine” (249-257); Ron E. Tappy, “The Final Years of Israelite Samaria: Toward a Dialogue between Texts and Archaeology” (258-279); Jonathan N. Tubb, “The Sixth Century BC Horizon at Tell es-Sa’idiyeh in Jordan” (280-294); Péter Vargyas, “Fakes before Coins: On the Gold and Silver Hoards from Level V at Beth-Shean” (295-304); Samuel Wolff, “Stone Pedestaled Bowls from the Late Bronze and Iron Ages in the Levant” (305-312); and Sharon Zuckerman, “Late Bronze Age Scoops: Context and Function” (313-330).

Part 3, entitled “Biblical, Epigraphic, and Philological Studies,” is comprised of Aaron Demsky, “*Šmn Rḥš*—Bath Oil from Samaria” (333-336); Baruch Halpern, “The False Torah of Jeremiah 8 in the Context of Seventh Century BCE Pseudepigraphy: The First Documented Rejection of Tradition” (337-343); Victor Avigdor Hurowitz, “The Biblical Arms Bearer (נושא כליִם)” (344-349); Philip J. King, “David Defeats Goliath” (350-357); Baruch A. Levine, “The Cultic Scene in Biblical Religion: Hebrew *’al pānāi* (על פני) and the Ban on Divine Images” (358-369); Nadav Na’aman, “The Opening Verses on the Kings of Judah and Israel: Sources and Editing” (370-381); Mark S. Smith, “Counting Calves at Bethel” (382-394); and John R. Spencer, “Ostraca and Other Epigraphic Material from Tell el-Hesi” (395-403).

Part 4, “Historical Geography and Demography,” consists of the following essays: Piotr Bienkowski, “Landscape, Identity, and Reciprocal Relations: The Wadi Arabah as Relationship and Discourse” (407-422); Zeev Meshel, “Defining the Biblical ‘Arabah” (423-435); and Ziony Zevit, “Text Traditions, Archaeology, and Anthropology: Uncertainties in Determining the Populations of Judah and Yehud from ca. 734 to ca. 400 BCE” (436-443).

Part 5, “The Mediterranean Horizon,” includes Maria Eugenia Aubet, “East Greek and Etruscan Pottery in a Phoenician Context” (447-460); Maria Iacovou, “Advocating Cyprocentricism: An Indigenous Model for the Emergence of State Formation on Cyprus” (461-475); Vassos Karageorghis, “‘Snake Charmers’ from Cyprus” (476-483); and Robert S. Merrillees, “Not Quite ‘Stoned in the Stone Age’: A Unique White Slip I ‘Opium’ Juglet from Cyprus” (484-487).

Part 5, “Vari,” contains the following two essays: Patty Gerstenblith, “Nineveh as a Microcosm of the Effect of War on Iraq’s Cultural Heritage” (491-497); and Carol Meyers, “Peopling the Past: Gender and Representation in Syro-Palestinian Archaeology” (498-509).

This volume consists of many important essays that deserve comment, but only a few can be discussed in the context of a brief book review. All of the essays in Part I, of course, make important contributions to the documentation of the work at Tel Miqne-Ekron, which is bringing significant increases to the knowledge of the Philistine period and the interconnections between the nation-states of the Levant in the Iron Age II. In her introduction, Crawford notes the important contributions that have already been made through the Tel Miqne-Ekron excavations, such as the fact that “the Philistines flourished in the eastern Mediterranean littoral until the late seventh century BCE, thus extending their documented history by 400 years” (xiii). These essays will add to our expanding knowledge about the Philistines and Levantine interconnections in the Iron Age II.

Those with a special interest in the Israelite settlement will want to take notice of Israel Finkelstein's article on "Iron Age I Khirbet et-Tell and Khirbet Raddana: Methodological Lessons," in which he argues that Callaway's two-phase interpretation of the village of Ai "is not supported by the finds and should probably be seen as an unfounded attempt to bridge the gap between the archaeological evidence and the biblical 'Conquest' narrative." Finkelstein bases his arguments on the pottery. Finkelstein acknowledges that many of the forms from et-Tell correspond with Stratum V at Shiloh, which is Iron I. But, because of the appearance of a few vessels that share forms that appear in Iron II (despite that fact that some of these also appear in Tell Qasile's Stratum X and possibly Stratum XI), he then wants to pull the whole assemblage down by a century. This seems to me, however, to ignore the principle that pottery sequences always overlap; typically, one form gradually declines as another increases (as per Nancy Lapp, "Pottery Chronology of Palestine," in *ABD* 5:433-44). If the whole assemblage corresponds with other Iron I assemblages but has a few of these later, Iron II forms, it seems to me that it could very well still have a founding date of Iron Age I.

Other chapters of special interest proliferate throughout the volume. Volkmar Fritz's reconstruction of the four-room house (114-118) makes the case that this house style derived from the Late Bronze Age building tradition, "but that it only acquired its typical character in the course of the early Iron Age, subsequently becoming the predominant building form during the Iron II" (117). Larry Herr presents for the first time an overview of the ceramic assemblage from Tall al-'Umayri, and notes that it "strongly suggests a date toward the end of the Iron I" (144). The study of ossuaries by Jodi Magness deals with the question of why ossuaries were introduced in ca. 20-15 BCE but then disappeared from Jerusalem after 70 CE. She accepts the view "that the appearance of ossuaries should be attributed to Roman influences on Jerusalem's elite" (233) rather than that they were connected with the Pharisaic belief in the individual, physical resurrection of the dead. The closing essay by Carol Meyers (498-509) explores the intersection of gender and images in archaeology. She notes that "the overall impression from leafing through handbooks of Syro-Palestinian archaeology and more than 60 volumes of a major journal of Palestinian and Near Eastern archaeology is that the illustrations favor the monumental and the male" (504). Meyer's thesis is that "the selection of images for display in archaeological publications is not value free" and that they misrepresent the past "by conveying to the viewer the notion that males were the chief actors.

Many other articles in this volume deserve to be singled out. The articles are sweeping in their coverage, which means that the volume will contain something of interest for specialists in a variety of fields. This volume is a laudable tribute to Seymour Gitin and his sweeping impact, both in his leadership at the AIAR and in the field of biblical archaeology.

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Bruce WALTKE with Charles YU. *An Old Testament Theology: An Exegetical, Canonical, and Thematic Approach.* Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007. 1040 pp. \$44.99.

Waltke, Professor Emeritus of OT Studies at Regent College, Vancouver, British Columbia and Professor of OT, Reformed Theological Seminary, Orlando, Florida, is author of numerous scholarly articles and several books, including commentaries on Genesis and Micah and two Hebrew grammars. He is OT editor for the *New Geneva Study Bible* and coeditor of the *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*. This most recent tome is an important addition to OT theologies by evangelical scholars.

The volume is divided into three parts. Part one, the introduction, deals with history and methodology in OT theologies. Here, Waltke explains his approach and how his theology is better than other theologies already written. Parts two and three contain the actual OT theology. Part two, the bulk of the book, deals with the Primary History, including Chronicles, Esther, and Ezra-Nehemiah. Part three deals with the other writings, the prophets, Ruth, and the wisdom literature.

The subtitle, “*an exegetical, canonical, and thematic approach*,” provides a good starting point for discussing the book’s approach and content. The word “exegetical” suggests that the approach has an attempt at objectivity. Biblical theology doesn’t bring the concerns of systematic or dogmatic theology. Instead, as a biblical theology, the shape of the theology is determined by the content and message of the Bible itself. Waltke engages in a thorough exegesis of several key biblical texts using an approach that emphasizes the narrative of the OT and the rhetoric of the biblical authors.

When Waltke uses the term “canonical” he is emphasizing the link between the OT and the NT. It is this canonical link between the OT and NT that Waltke uses to argue that the Christian community is the implied audience of the Bible, including the OT. Waltke traces the themes of the OT through the NT and discusses their relevance and meaning for the Christian community. His extensive interaction with NT texts raises the question, “How much NT content qualifies it as a biblical theology instead of an OT theology?” Also, with reference to the term “canonical,” readers looking for serious discussion on the shape and shaping of the canon as this term typically implies will be disappointed. In fact, when Waltke discusses the organization of his theology, he notes that he has rejected an approach that treats the biblical material in a chronological order for treating the Bible in what he calls “blocks of writing.” These represent the Tanak (Jewish Bible) rather than the Christian OT. His canonical approach, however, emphasizes the Christian OT and its link to the NT. While this approach creates tension, it does not invalidate his method, though Waltke might have considered exploring this tension.

Waltke’s use of the term “thematic” in the subtitle emphasizes his argument that the OT can be organized around a center of content. His thesis is that the central theme of not only the OT but the entire Christian Bible is the irruption of the rule of God into creation. This theme corresponds with Waltke’s evangelical and Reformed background. Such OT theologies often emphasize God’s working throughout history and the historicity of the OT narrative. Covenant and God’s interaction with the covenant people also come to the forefront. Waltke efficiently

demonstrates his approach by opening many chapters with a statement on how the OT material treated contributes to the central theme of God's reign irrupting into history and creation. His efforts, however, do not overcome the common difficulty of effectively including OT wisdom literature into such a scheme, and his effort regarding prophetic literature does not fare much better.

Waltke's OT theology is a welcome addition to the bookshelves of professors and preachers. Though there are more thorough treatments of the history and concerns of OT theology, Waltke's introduction does provide helpful discussion of the theological study of the OT. These opening chapters should be read carefully by anyone who purchases the book. The book itself provides helpful material to complement an OT introduction for teachers of surveys of the Bible or classes on individual books. The theological approach of the book integrates important themes and application into the general survey of the content of the OT. There are also several important chapters that treat themes such as the Old and New Covenants and the Land in the OT and NT. These discussions reveal the depth and extent of Waltke's knowledge and reflection on the OT. The length of the book might make it impractical for use as a textbook in a course on OT theology since such courses benefit from the treatment of more than one approach to the discipline.

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James K. BRUCKNER. *Exodus*. New International Biblical Commentary. Peabody, MA: Hendrickon, 2008. 416 pp. \$16.95.

The purpose of this commentary series is to bridge the gap between "ancient and modern worlds" by providing commentaries that elucidate ancient meaning for contemporary readers in order to "enrich the life of the academy as well as the life of the church" (ix-x). Bruckner's addition to the series serves this purpose well by providing research and reflection for teaching at the collegiate and congregational levels.

Bruckner has set forth six "interpretive perspectives" as guides for his commentary. The first perspective is that Israel's exodus was not simply to gain freedom from Egypt, "but freedom to serve the Lord." Second, the narrative of Exodus emphasizes the fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant. Third, God's delivering of Israel from Egypt was the foundational "delivering grace" of the law. Fourth, Exodus chronicles the emergence of Israel as the people of God. Fifth, the construction of the tabernacle was the first invitation extended to the Israelites for a "cooperative venture." Sixth, the exodus story is a message of hope (5, 6). As stated in the preface, "hope" is a key element to the message of Exodus, a message that speaks to "any emerging and growing people of God" (xiii). Thus the story of God's presence among the Israelites has provided inspiring hope to all beneficiaries of the Abrahamic covenant. It is with these perspectives that Bruckner has written an impressive exegesis of Exodus. He has drawn from the best of recent research and presented technical material in an accessible style.

Bruckner focused on important nuances of the Hebrew text that lead to useful theological reflections. For example, in his discussion of Exod 1:15-22, he noted the irony of Pharaoh's fear of the Hebrew *men*. This fear motivated Pharaoh's order

to extinguish all boys who were born to the Hebrew slaves. Yet, as Bruckner notes, it was not the boys who were the threat to Pharaoh's authority, but the midwives, "the *women* who continued to outfox him" (emphasis added, 23). The midwives' fear of the Lord surpassed the power of a paranoid, unnamed pharaoh.

In his discussion of Exod 2:1-10, Bruckner mentions the use of the words "basket" (*tebah*), "tar" (*khemar*), and "reeds" (*sup*). The basket's being covered with tar echoes Gen 6:14 and Noah's narrative. In a similar way as for Noah, Moses' "ark" became a vessel for salvation. The theme of salvation is further emphasized by "reeds," which points ahead toward Israel's deliverance through the "Sea of Reeds." Bruckner accurately surmises, "Moses' deliverance is paradigmatic for the salvation of the people" (27). Although not original with Bruckner, his discussion demonstrates his awareness of theology significant to interpreting and teaching the text.

Bruckner guides readers to see a number of important theological messages in Exodus. In addition to the liberation from Egypt, Exodus also conveys a message of hope in God's presence. The account of the exodus, the receiving of the law, the construction of the tabernacle, and the description of God's compassion and loving kindness all demonstrate how God cares for his people. Bruckner emphasized throughout the last chapters of his commentary God's forgiveness and willingness to have his glory dwell among the people in spite of their repeated acts of sin and rebellion (331).

While the commentary focuses on the theology of Exodus, it pays little attention to interpreting the text in the historical settings of ancient Egypt and the ancient Near East. For example, Bruckner hints at Egyptian documents in reference to slave enforcement (58), and he mentions in passing the sociological/political influences of the ancient Near East (42). However, he does not provide references to the documents themselves or elaborate on the sociopolitical setting of the Levant. When important historical details or references were given, they were unfortunately often placed in the "additional notes" at the end of the chapters rather than in the main discussions (200-201).

The commentary also lacks comparisons to the literary settings of ancient Egypt and the ancient Near East. How would the Myth of Osiris and his drowning in a "box" in the Nile compare to Moses' childhood story (*ANET* 4-6; *COS* 1.26, 41-43), or how does the royal motif of Sargon's being placed in a basket at childhood compare to this story (*ANET* 119)? How does the understanding of motifs of "abandonment" and "adoption" as part of the ancient worldview enlighten one's grasping of God's works among the Israelites?

These questions remain unaddressed. Those who are interested in comparing Exodus with ancient Near Eastern stories and motifs will have to look elsewhere.

Overall, this volume is a well written, thought provoking commentary on an important and foundational book of the Bible. Although historical discussions are minimal, Bruckner has eloquently illuminated God's desire to deliver his people and to dwell among them. Undergraduate students and church members will find this book a useful guide for increasing their understanding and admiration for God's power, patience, and lovingkindness.

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Marvin A. SWEENEY. *I and II Kings*. Old Testament Library. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007. 476 pp. \$49.95.

This recent commentary replaces the more historical-critically oriented edition by John Gray published in 1970. Sweeney's form-critical and literary-critical approach to the prophets and monarchy is well known and received. His application of those efforts on the Deuteronomistic books of 1 and 2 Kings is welcomed as a refreshing complementary volume that updates Gray's classic text. At just over half the size of the original, Sweeney's commentary though streamlined is nonetheless attentive to detail and a thorough literary-theological analysis. An immediately noticeable difference is the type face that is so much easier to read than the previous version. The layout for the Table of Contents is essentially an outline of the biblical books and the Abbreviations and Bibliography are typical. The use of substantive footnotes is liberal and helpful for retrieving additional information. There are no appendices but there is a brief Index of Authors. At the end of the Introduction, Sweeney provides a clear chart presentation of the chronological data for the kings of Judah and Israel with a precise discussion of the difficulties and solutions.

Sweeney offers an outstanding compact introduction to the redaction record of the Deuteronomistic History (DtrH) along five distinct stages: Solomonic, Jehu Dynastic, Hezekian, Josianic, and Exilic. While he follows fairly standard treatments and dating for most of these redactions, Sweeney convincingly and critically revises the proposal of Campbell and O'Brien (*Unfolding the Deuteronomistic History*) regarding Jehu from their designation of a Prophetic Record (PR). The modification is made to accommodate the emphasis within the Jehu material on the rise and fall of dynasties and the overriding perspective of the House of Jehu History dating to the early eighth century before the Assyrian crises, with the northern kingdom at the height of its rule under the succession of Jehu kings. According to Sweeney, the Jehu Dynastic History is a composite work dealing first with Saul, David, and Jehu, and second with Jeroboam, Ahab, and Jehu. Thus the Davidic focus is balanced by attention to the northern monarchy.

With each delineated section of text, Sweeney offers an introduction that orients the reader to compositional-redactional issues and historically-based literary-theological perspectives that impact the narrative as a whole and the reading of this particular portion related to the whole. For example, the opening chapters of 1 and 2 Kings deal with the death of David and Solomon's duties as successor. Sweeney notes that most commentators have simply focused on these chapters as the account of Solomon's succession, rather than as a transitional piece that lays a foundation for subsequent critique of Solomon embedded in the Exilic redaction of the narrative. This reorientation is pertinent for understanding the Josianic and Exilic DtrH. Sweeney astutely brings attention to this subtle thread that very carefully is woven into the fabric of the whole history right from the beginning.

Following the introductory material for each textual unit is a provisional translation with extensive textual notes, and then finally a dense verse-by-verse commentary which emphasizes the literary structure and form-critical elements. As expected, Sweeney's analysis leans toward the literary side with minimal inclusion or discussion of ancient Near Eastern elements or archaeological data (in contrast to

the Gray edition). In places the limited addition of this information, unfortunately, does not include the most current material or references. For most users of this commentary, this deficit will be overlooked.

Consult this commentary for its strong literary-critical insights and careful attention to the redactional history behind 1 and 2 Kings. Sweeney is a master at these aspects of interpretation and one will not be disappointed. On the other hand, for those looking for ANE backgrounds and archaeological clarification, one must reach for other resources to supplement this volume.

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Peter LEITHART. *1 & 2 Kings*. Brazos Theological Commentary on the Bible. Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2006. 304 pp. \$29.99.

Eschewing the view that doctrine distorts understanding of Scripture, this new series contends that “dogma clarifies rather than obscures” (9). Accordingly, it deliberately sets out to read Scripture through the lens of Christian doctrine, a theological reading with the *modus operandi* of exegesis directed by dogma (10-12).

From a theological perspective, the composition of 1 and 2 Kings for Peter Leithart can rightfully be named “gospel.” This designation emerges out of a prophetic message that undermines confidence in anything but the mercy of God. In the course of her history, wisdom, Torah, and temple cannot save Israel from division, destruction, and exile. The only hope for deliverance comes through faith in the power and patience of Yahweh, which in a Christian, evangelical reading of Kings foreshadows the good news of Jesus Christ (17-23).

In terms of exegesis, Leithart’s theological stance leads to some important insights. For example, in contrast with typical historical critical interpretations of the story of the old prophet and the man of God from Judah (1 Kgs 13:1-34), which focus mostly on compositional issues, Leithart sees the episode as a parabolic warning for Jeroboam: “When [Jeroboam] refuses to return (or repent) from his way (1 Kgs. 13:33) [‘return’ and ‘way’ are key words in the narrative], he leads Israel out of the land flowing with milk and honey into the howling waste, where they again turn to worship of golden calves” (100).

The situation of Jeroboam’s apostasy and the division of the kingdom affords Leithart the opportunity to address the division in Christendom between Catholic and Protestant (92-95), illustrating his pattern of using themes in the text as jumping off points for addressing contemporary issues. For example, the description of Solomon building for himself a house (1 Kgs 7:1-12) generates a conversation on the place of church in society (60-63), the reference to Solomon’s heart at the end of his reign (11:4-8) to a discussion of selfhood (83-89), and the story of Naaman (2 Kgs 5:1-27) to a treatise on baptism (192-197).

Leithart’s insightful readings are overshadowed, however, by a questionable methodology. Apparently influenced by narrative criticism, Leithart makes literary observations, as an example, the key words in 1 Kings 13 (above); however, his analysis often turns out superficial. In his characterization of Elijah, for example,

Leithart views the prophet as a “new Moses” and the only prophet with courage to stand up against Ahab and Jezebel (140-144). In this reading, he misses subtle literary features—like the contrast between Obadiah who hides prophets in caves and Elijah who covers in a cave on Mt. Carmel (1 Kgs 18:4; 19:9)—which characterize Elijah as self-centered and, although Moses-like, *no* Moses.

As in the presentation of Elijah as Moses-like, Leithart catches many intentional allusions (Elisha as Joshua-like, Hezekiah as David-like), but tends toward a typological, even allegorical, reading (where various elements in the story are said to have symbolic meaning) without control. In Jehoram’s campaign against Moab (2 Kgs 3:1-27), for example, the water that looks like blood parallels the water that turned to blood in the Exodus narrative. Sounding alike, the name “Moses” corresponds with “Mesha,” with a song of Moses surfacing in the harp that brings the word of God to Elisha (2 Kgs 3:15). The events that transpire even become a Moabite Exodus, with the death of the firstborn (on the walls of Kir-hareseth) resulting in a Passover that delivers Mesha—like the “Son of the King crucified outside the walls by his own ‘fathers’” (178-183).

This tendency to read stories as allegories means that Leithart often spiritualizes aspects of the narrative without warrant. A comment he makes about Solomon riding on David’s mule illustrates this well: “Mules are mixed-breed animals, and this perhaps points to Solomon’s kingdom, including Jews and Gentiles” (32).

In the preface to the series, R.R. Reno laments the shortcomings of seminary training that offers “theology without exegesis and exegesis without theology” (11). Even though many valuable observations appear in Leithart’s commentary on 1 & 2 Kings, the methodological issues raise questions about his overall reading. While some will find his theological approach refreshing, others, especially biblical scholars, will lament his “theology without [careful] exegesis.”

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Stephen M. HOOKS. *Job*. The College Press NIV Commentary. Joplin, MO: College Press, 2006. 485 pp. \$25.99.

This commentary joins this nearly complete series. It follows its predecessors in both style and format. A seventeen page introduction to the book is followed by a five page outline of Job and an eight page bibliography of secondary sources. After this, the commentary turns to a verse-by-verse examination of the biblical text.

Hooks’ commentary on Job is a welcome addition to any library. He states in his preface that his intention is to read Job “canonically and theologically.” By canonically he seems to mean he will address the final form of the text, since he then remarks on the inability to reconstruct an original text. His comments focus on understanding and interpreting the text. Frequently this involves a brief explanation of a Hebrew word, written both in Hebrew and transliterated, and its use elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible. Occasionally this involves a summary of scholarly views on a difficult issue which is then compared with Hooks’ interpretation of the text. Job 19 serves as a good example. Regarding the identity of Job’s redeemer,

Hooks describes the two major views and seems to agree with the second, though his further comments show that both views still show Job as convinced he will be vindicated (250-251). However, regarding Job's view of the afterlife in chapter 19, Hooks presents the three major views, but then comes down strongly in favor of one, listing its strengths and answering its criticisms (252-254). These examples illustrate the author's interaction with scholarly literature, his ability to evaluate these views against the text, as well as his ability to admit that a concrete answer is not always available.

The author helpfully outlines the text of Job, though a table of contents would be helpful, and includes a very useful bibliography of secondary sources. The publisher's note at the beginning of the book suggests the commentary is a resource for preparing "a Bible School lesson, sermon, college course, or your own personal devotions." As a commentary whose primary audience is the church, the author's attention to scholarship is commendable. As a commentary that seeks to aid in such spiritual venues, though, it is surprisingly lacking in the area of application. The author can never be accused of ignoring the theological in favor of the academic. However, a minister preparing a sermon or a believer using the commentary for devotions may legitimately ask "How does this text preach?" or "What is the application for believers today?" The focus of the commentary is to explain the text. Application of the text is left to the reader.

The audience that will benefit most from this commentary would be the believer or minister attempting to understand the text of Job, or student looking for further help. Hooks pays close attention to imagery and frequently makes reference to similar ideas in other biblical books, both of which aid in clearing up the confusion often found in poetry. In the introduction specifically, the author's comments seek to introduce the lay reader to scholarly discussion, which is a positive in many respects. His comments summarize what would otherwise be a tedious laboring through the more technical commentaries, a practice necessary for professors preparing a class or graduate students.

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Tremper LONGMAN III and Peter ENNS, eds. *Dictionary of the Old Testament Wisdom, Poetry & Writings*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2008. 966 pp. \$50.00.

The third of the (at least) four OT volumes in the IVP "Black Dictionary" series has appeared and it does not disappoint. Editors Longman and Enns have assembled a truly outstanding team of both senior and junior scholars who present up-to-date research with current bibliographies on all the major issues confronting the interpreter of these important books. In terms of content, "As with previous volumes, each biblical book gets a long article. But a new feature of this volume is that for each book there is also an article focused on its ancient Near Eastern background and on its history of interpretation. Major characters are also the subject of longer treatment as well as the most significant 'theological themes'" (p. vii).

Because of the books covered there are helpful articles on all the major features of Hebrew poetry (e.g., Parallelism) as well as the various criticisms used in their scholarly interpretation. Since such criticisms are used in interpreting books other than those considered in this volume of the set of dictionaries there is some repetition (e.g., an article on form criticism is also discussed in the Pentateuch volume), although the focus of the articles is the use of the various criticisms on the books under consideration. There are also treatments of some of the very latest trends in interpretation of which a helpful article on Intertextuality is an example. Like the previous volumes in the series this volume represents the best of broad-based evangelical scholarship while being thoroughly conversant with broader scholarship. I often find that the first place I send an interested student to is an article in one of the black dictionaries and this volume only reinforces my sense of the overall quality of the scholarship of the series, all the while given in a well-organized and accessible way. Students, pastors and scholars whose specific focus is in other parts of the Bible will find a reliable place to begin their thinking about the text they are investigating.

While I am genuinely enthusiastic about the volume and the series, a couple of minor reservations might be expressed. The books covered in the various volumes of the OT series seem at times to be somewhat arbitrarily chosen. Volume 2 containing "Historical Books" includes Chronicles and Ezra-Nehemiah, but not Ruth or Esther. Volume 3 containing "wisdom, poetry and writings" does not include Daniel, Chronicles, and Ezra-Nehemiah, but does include Lamentations. This arrangement consistently follows neither the Greek or Hebrew (or English) traditions, nor the genre of the books, nor their presumed datings. The explanation given in the preface (p. vii) "in order to treat all the Megillot (or Festal Scrolls) together" is perplexing. The Megillot, viewed as a collection of scrolls to be read during the celebration of the various feasts, are a late Jewish construct created well after the destruction of the second temple and of no particular relevance to Christians, the intended primary audience for a "Dictionary of the Old Testament" rather than a Dictionary of the Hebrew Bible.

To be fair, the publishers and editors may well have been constrained by space and the desire to produce volumes of approximately the same length. The third section of the Hebrew canon, the "Writings" or Kethubim, is often viewed as a sort of hodgepodge of later writings and this view seems reflected in this volume to a degree. The fact that the various volumes are edited by separate scholarly teams and have been produced in a time sequential order also causes problems of consistency. The first volume on the Pentateuch does not have an article on God, only the names of God. The second and third volumes have articles on God, but only God as depicted in the books within the respective volumes. One wonders about the value of an article on God in Psalms, Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs, Ruth, Esther, and Lamentations without reference to the depiction of God in the rest of the canon. One also wonders how one can talk about the God of the OT without the pentateuchal statements about his nature in Exod. 34:6-7, etc., situating the discussion. But such considerations are bracketed out by the choices of books covered in each volume. Some topics necessarily reach across the boundaries of the volumes and limiting oneself to a relatively arbitrarily chosen set of books

risks truncating or even misunderstanding the topic being discussed. Students will have to remember to look in the other volumes for additional articles on the topic, for example all three volumes have articles entitled “Hermeneutics,” two of them by John Goldingay!

As has been the case with the volumes on the NT for some time, the black dictionary series from IVP on the OT will undoubtedly serve as a prime example of the flourishing of evangelical scholarship on the Bible and be of great use to students, ministers and scholars alike. If you are only going to buy one encyclopedic dictionary on the Bible, this is the one I would recommend.

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Leo G. PERDUE. *Wisdom Literature: A Theological History.* Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2007. 415 pp. \$39.95.

Leo G. Perdue is a formidable scholar in the field of wisdom literature having published several works that have contributed greatly to the field. *Wisdom Literature* is the fruit of a long academic career concentrating on wisdom as it developed throughout the ancient Near East which includes Egyptian and Mesopotamian texts as well as the Hebrew wisdom texts. Perdue’s writing style is clear, concise, and insightful. With this book he is covering a theological history of the wisdom literature found in the Old Testament (Proverbs, Job, and Qoheleth) and nonbiblical texts (Ben Sira and Wisdom of Solomon). Perdue shows the historical development of each of the literary texts listed above along with the theological links that bring these texts together in a common understanding of ancient wisdom.

Perdue laments the lack of attention devoted to wisdom literature among biblical scholars and suggests that a lack of “comprehensive social history of the sages and their literature has yet to be written” (1). This lack, consequently, has “hindered the study and articulation of wisdom theology” (2). Perdue had earlier attempted this with his *Wisdom and Creation: The Theology of Wisdom Literature* (1994). With this earlier book Perdue argued that “creation was the center of wisdom theology.” With this present book Perdue seeks to “discuss the historical development of wisdom theology within a social-historical framework” (2). By so doing Perdue approached the subject involving a combination of several factors: 1) the history of religions which included Egypt, Mesopotamia (Sumer and Akkad), Ugarit, Aram, and the Hellenistic empires of the Ptolemies and the Seleucids; 2) using methods of writing for social history such as historical criticism to cultural anthropology to sociology; 3) “the literary character of myth and the metaphors used by the sages in the articulation of their theologies. Creation myths, in particular, were the common reservoir of texts used by the sages in the construction of their own theologies” (3); and 4) “the relationship of wisdom theologies to others in biblical and nonbiblical texts” (3).

Perdue’s fundamental presupposition concerning this topic is that “biblical theology may legitimately claim a role for itself as a separate discipline of inquiry only

when it takes seriously and utilizes many of the features of the method of the history of religions” (7). After the above introductory points, Perdue has an excellent overview of OT scholars (chapter two) who in part or whole have contributed to the discussion of wisdom literature. A working definition of wisdom in OT theology has three features: 1) a body of knowledge about God, the world and nature, humanity and society; 2) a discipline that leads to character development; 3) a discourse on moral living for both the individual and society. Perdue added a fourth idea which is that foolishness is exposed by this wisdom which is derived from the kingly court (the educated), artisans (the practical), the apocalyptic (esoteric and hidden activities of God), and personified Lady Wisdom (which Perdue claims was “originally a goddess in Israelite religion prior to the development of monotheism” (30).

I found Perdue’s discussion of Proverbs (chapter 3) to be convincing, maybe because he agreed with me on many specific points. Proverbs is the result of royal wisdom and has Egyptian culture as a strong influence on the literature. This thought goes against the work of Wolff and Gerstenberger who argued for a “tribal wisdom” as the beginning of wisdom in Israel. Perdue’s discussion on the United Kingdom of Solomon has merit, but many higher critical scholars deny any historical validity to the 1 Kings 1–11 material. While conservatives will applaud this chapter, negative critics will still be skeptical, due to archaeological interpretations about Hadad of Edom and the Twenty-First Dynasty of Egypt. Dating such events is hazardous at best.

On the other hand I questioned the placement of Job during the Babylonian exile, the “poetic dialogues . . . written most likely during the period of Babylonian captivity.” He sees the prose narrative as preexilic and having a different message than the final form of the book. Perdue argued: “Placing Job in the first generation of exiles explains the absence of major traditions of election, salvation history, covenant, and Torah” (85). The final form of the book of Job would not take place until the latter part of the Second Temple period. Elihu’s speeches (chapters 32–37) are a later redactional addition, as is the wisdom poem of chapter 28. In spite of the above, Perdue’s theological discussions of Job are insightful and helpful as long as one understands his presuppositions about the development of the book.

A minor mistake is found on page 157 concerning the observance of the Day of Atonement: “On the first day of the seventh month (Tishri), later known as the Day of Atonement,” and, of course, it should be the “tenth day.”

Perdue’s entire discussion of Qoheleth was difficult for me, for he late-dated it to c. 225 BC, against the background of the “decline of Ptolemaic power and status in Asia” (163). For Perdue Qoheleth is heavily influenced by Greek language, literature, and philosophy. His argument is circular reasoning. By placing Ecclesiastes so late, Perdue wrote: “In my judgment, placing Qoheleth within its social world is critical to understanding its teachings, purpose, and relationship to Judaism as a whole” (183). It was a pluralistic Hellenistic period. Perdue’s theological interpretation of Ecclesiastes can be described as negative and skeptical. Because of his presupposition about an urban Hellenistic background, Perdue interprets Ecclesiastes 12 as an allegory of not only old age but the “decline and

final eclipse of either a large estate or a city” (208). I do not see two mixed metaphors in this text, only the old age and eventual death.

Perdue’s views of Ben Sira and the Wisdom of Solomon, nonbiblical texts, seem solid and mainly uncontroversial. Perhaps I was more tolerant of the nonbiblical texts.

Wisdom Literature: A Theological History is a great reference work for any OT teacher or scholar. Conservatives will not like what to them is the late-dating of some of the wisdom literature which affects the interpretations, but aside from that, the book offers tremendous theological insights, Ancient Near Eastern parallels and their evaluations, and historical information that begs for more study. All teachers of the biblical and extrabiblical wisdom literature need to read this book, but I would not recommend it as a college textbook, perhaps seminary only. The book concludes with endnotes only (349-415), no subject index or biblical references.

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Christopher R. SEITZ. *Prophecy and Hermeneutics: Toward a New Introduction to the Prophets*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007. 264 pp. \$22.99.

Chris Seitz is a familiar name in biblical studies, especially within the prophetic and Isaianic areas of research. His current volume fits well within his area of expertise, as will be readily apparent in his interaction with past and present perspectives on prophetic interpretation. Seitz’s thesis in this work is that a “. . . theological reading of the prophets means reading them in such a way that history is properly appreciated, on the terms of its own biblical presentation” (247). Seitz advocates a canonical reading of the prophets, and his aim is that this proposal would bring new possibilities for understanding the prophetic corpus (252).

The work is divided into two parts, with the first focusing on the last two hundred years of prophetic research. Seitz pinpoints perspectives that influenced the way the prophets were interpreted and how these changed the way the prophets were studied. This first section of the book attempts to show the necessity of the new approach proposed by Seitz, which is described and demonstrated in the second part of the book. The canonical reading advocated by Seitz entails reading not just the final form of the text, but also the final, and Masoretic, ordering of the (twelve) prophets. However, the majority of Seitz’s effort in the book is spent interacting with other literature so that his perspective is found via contrast rather than explicit presentation. The closest he comes to describing his method in practice is with reference to the book of the twelve on pages 204-219.

Seitz’s interaction with scholars is superb. Throughout the book he presents past and present perspectives in prophetic study with an eye to show inadequacies, though never glossing over their positive addition to biblical studies. He can certainly not be accused of throwing the baby out with the bathwater.

In a nutshell, Seitz is proposing a new way in which to introduce and read the prophets, he is not writing an actual introduction to the prophets. Therefore, in proposing a new look at the prophets, especially in the classroom, Seitz deals main-

ly with the twelve due to the ease with which a new theory can be tested on this group (232). This explains why in a work focused on the prophetic books, Ezekiel and Jeremiah are almost never mentioned and Isaiah is mentioned only briefly. The work does not intend to be an introduction, but the reader may still be left wanting more. Seitz ends his book by giving a glimpse into his next work, a book on the use of the OT in the NT, which comes out of this investigation into theological interpretation. However, one cannot help but wish his next work would instead be an actual introduction to the entire prophetic corpus following and illustrating his own proposed methodology.

Seitz's book, though very helpful, is also quite focused. With extensive review of interpretative and methodological frameworks as well as a theoretical aim, this work seems best suited for the academic institution. Professors and graduate students especially will benefit from this stimulating work.

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Christopher R. SEITZ. *Prophecy and Hermeneutics: Toward a New Introduction to the Prophets. Studies in Theological Interpretation.* Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007. 272 pp. \$22.99.

This volume offers a sort-of prolegomena to a new introduction to the prophets. Seitz offers this proposal because of his dissatisfaction with standard introductions to prophecy since the nineteenth century. According to Seitz these introductions prove reductionistic, failing to deal with the full canonical witness of the prophetic texts and focusing mainly on portions of the text that seem to emanate from the historical prophet. Seitz proposes to treat the prophets in their canonical presentation in order to allow for a full figural reading (67-68), one that allows for a historical connection with previous prophets and the witness of the New Testament.

The book divides into two major sections. "The Overreach of History: Figuring the Prophets Out" overviews the history of modern introductions to the prophets, outlining their inherent weaknesses and pointing toward an introduction embracing more fully the canonical presentation of the prophets. "Time in Association: Reading the Book of the Twelve" focuses mainly on recent trajectories in reading the Book of the Twelve and the potentialities for understanding the canonical books both individually and collectively.

In assessing previous introductions to the prophets Gerhard von Rad serves as Seitz's main interlocutor. Though Seitz obviously admires von Rad's work and theological insight, his role as the premier tradition historical scholar allows Seitz to highlight the weaknesses in the method itself. For Seitz, even von Rad does not deal adequately with the whole of the canonical witness due to a narrow focus on the particular tradition being traced, the limiting link between a tradition and its geographical point of origin, an undue weight to the "original" voice rather than the final form of the prophetic books, and the anemic vision of typology linking the OT to the NT (163-171).

Seitz considers recent work that concentrates on the final form of the prophetic books and corpus, like that initiated by his Brevard Childs, more promising. Since this book is not an introduction to the prophets, Seitz offers only preliminary indications of the promise of such an introduction. For example, in the present canonical order of the prophets, Amos follows Hosea, though standard introductions place Amos before Hosea in history. Seitz notes that the canonical placement allows Amos to indicate why God's patience with Israel, indicated in Hosea, ran out (206-207).

Seitz is right to commend the hermeneutical and theological value of attending to the full literary form and affiliations of the canonical prophetic books. Yet, lacking is a clear theology of the canon, which seems to be of some import for how to approach the canon for theological purposes, though Seitz is not alone in this lacuna. Furthermore, though Seitz rightly criticizes the limited scope of historical introductions to the prophets, this critique can be exaggerated. In fact all readings prove limited because of the particular focus of the readers, which means all interpreters remain open to similar criticism. As for the book's style, the continued referencing to what lies ahead in the book in phrases like, "I will argue" or "What I shall endeavor to show" proved obtrusive to this reader and distracting from Seitz's argument.

All-in-all Seitz has given us a useful trajectory for further inquiry into the prophets but we yet await the fulfillment of the promise of this book before we can offer an enthusiastic embrace of his proposal. Most likely, this book will serve as reading for an advanced seminary class or for scholars who have an interest in the developments in the field of studies in the prophetic literature.

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Sidnie White CRAWFORD. *Rewriting Scripture in Second Temple Times. Studies in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Related Literature.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008. 160 pp. \$16.00.

Crawford proposes "Rewritten Scripture" as "a category or group of texts characterized by a close adherence to a recognizable and already authoritative base text (narrative or legal) and a recognizable degree of scribal intervention into that base text for the purpose of exegesis" (12-13). She distinguishes Rewritten Scripture from "parabiblical texts," that "use a passage, event, or character from a scriptural work as a 'jumping off' point to create a new narrative or work" (14) but these lie outside the scope of her interest.

Crawford first examines the preservation at Qumran of a "pre-Samaritan" text-type for Exodus and Numbers that have been harmonized intentionally with Deuteronomy (23), concluding that the harmonizations in Deuteronomy, however, appear less intentional and may have resulted from "a simple lapse of memory" (35). The text of the Pentateuch, though subject to some variation, is comparatively stable and recognizable across multiple text-types. The scribes at Qumran could even accept "two parallel literary editions of the same text as valid Scripture" (37).

Crawford then focuses on texts she labels “Reworked Pentateuch,” which differ from pre-Samaritan texts because they insert “outside material . . . not found in other parts of what we now recognize as the Pentateuch” (40). Crawford refers to these outside additions as “hyperexpansions.” Reworked pentateuchal texts exhibit similar exegetical traditions as Jubilees and the Temple Scroll and may have provided the haggadic and halakhic bases for those later texts. Crawford asks if this suggests that these texts were received as examples of (rather than expansions upon) the Pentateuch (56-57). Though the evidence cannot answer this question definitively (Crawford’s conclusions here are careful and cautious), she does conclude that “all of these manuscripts shared a common tradition of exegesis, and that this tradition of exegesis was authoritative in and of itself, at least for those groups that embraced it” (57).

Jubilees, the subject of the fourth chapter, represents a less obviously “harmonized” text of Genesis–Exodus (64), in part because its “scribal intervention . . . becomes so extensive that a new, distinctive composition is created” (62). Unlike the texts analyzed in previous chapters, the composer of Jubilees uses his base-text “as a jumping-off point to bring together a wide variety of sources into a new and coherent whole” (67). Crawford concludes that Jubilees claims for itself a scriptural status (60-61) alongside its Pentateuchal base-text; it neither displaces Genesis–Exodus (since it assumes their continued validity) nor is subsidiary to them (since it claims to have been revealed to Moses on Sinai; cf. 81-82).

Crawford then analyzes the Temple Scroll, a text with striking similarities with Jubilees. Both texts rewrite a major section of the Pentateuch and extend its legal traditions in line with theological concerns found in other Second Temple texts. Both are “recognizably new compositions that make the same claim to authority as [their] base texts” (102). And neither replaces its pentateuchal base texts. Despite the similarities, the Temple Scroll makes a stronger claim to authority than Jubilees by claiming implicitly to have been dictated by God to Moses; conversely, its scriptural status is less clear than is that of Jubilees.

Crawford then examines the Genesis Apocryphon, which extends the spectrum of Rewritten Scripture because it does not claim scriptural authority. Instead, the Apocryphon “combine[d] the equally authoritative traditions of Genesis, Jubilees, and 1 Enoch into a whole” (126-127). Crawford highlights the exegetical similarities between the Apocryphon and the texts examined above (107, 126). This text illustrates the freedom scribes apparently felt to rewrite and even compose anew scriptural traditions from within that tradition, as well as the comparatively dynamic boundaries marking off authoritative scripture from other writings.

Finally, Crawford explores the limits of Rewritten Scripture in her analysis of 4QCommentary on Genesis A. In its first three columns, 4Q252 exhibits the exegetical processes Crawford has traced in previous chapters; then the style of commentary abruptly shifts to a pesher-type exegesis (137). This aggregation of exegetical styles suggests that both forms of commentary were current (130). We thus see more clearly the adaptability and utility of extant exegetical techniques.

Crawford provides a clear introduction to her texts and their exegetical methods. Differences between modern conceptualizations of and approaches to biblical texts and how those texts functioned in the Second Temple period reveal critical

differences between their world(s) and ours. Crawford cautiously generalizes her findings beyond Qumran (146-149), but it remains to be seen how other Second Temple groups approached their sacred traditions. Similarly, Crawford doesn't explore the relation between written text and extratextual, nonwritten tradition, although her subject implicitly raises the question of how text and tradition informed and impacted one another.

This brief volume makes a substantial contribution to a number of current discussions in biblical and cognate disciplines. Crawford's prose is lucid, clear, and within easy reach of the interested nonspecialist.

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Abraham WASSERSTEIN and David J. WASSERSTEIN. *The Legend of the Septuagint: From Classical Antiquity to Today.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006. 334 pp. \$71.84.

The title is precise and accurate. Many today believe they are aware of some details of the origin of the Septuagint (LXX). However, the Wassersteins distinguish between the actual and the legendary origin of the Septuagint (LXX). This book has only to do with the Legend, and they affirm that the Legend is basically all that exists about the origin of the LXX.

The authors begin with an introduction initiating the reader into translation practice in the ancient world, and Jewish culture in the Hellenistic world that would give rise to a Greek translation. The first chapter treats the *Letter of* [pseudo-] *Aristeas*, the earliest source describing the origin of the LXX. They argue that *Aristeas* is a Jewish work that in fact gives no credible information on the origin of the LXX. The only real testimony *Aristeas* offers is that a translation of the Pentateuch into Greek existed at the time of composition of *Aristeas*, in the first half of the second century BC.

Chapters two through five deal with the development of the Legend in Hellenistic and rabbinic Jewish circles up through the Middle Ages. By carefully examining these sources, the authors demonstrate that the miraculous features, absent from *Aristeas*, were added by Palestinian Jews about AD 80-117 in order to strengthen the value of the LXX (65-69). The miracle grew from a miraculous production of identical translations to identical deviations from the Hebrew text. It was only in the later centuries of the first millennium AD that Jewish sources became less favorable to the LXX and viewed the translation effort as a disaster (83).

Chapters five and six describe the development of the Legend among Christians. The authors identify two strands of tradition. One strand retained the Jewish miraculous component of the inspired translation, but extended it to include the whole OT (100-102). The other strand of church tradition dropped all miraculous components. The authors then trace the complex merging and evolution of these two strands that begins in the third century and eventually becomes something far exceeding the Jewish version (106-31).

Chapters seven through nine discuss the story among the Muslims, Yosippon,

and among the Karaites and other medieval Jews. The similarities in the Muslim accounts demonstrate that they are related, but the differences reveal that they are not mere borrowing (181). The *Book of Yosippon*, a tenth-century Jewish work drawing on accounts not strictly Jewish, colors virtually all subsequent Jewish literature. It was translated into many languages, and the authors follow the Legend as it branches out in the various versions.

No mere afterthought, chapter ten characterizes the Legend in modern times as modern critical study rather than evolution of the Legend itself. The authors round out the study with a conclusion, summarizing the findings, and an appendix, treating the Legend in a pagan writer of the third or fourth century.

This work, begun by Abraham Wasserstein and completed posthumously by his son, David, is accessible to nonspecialists. Greek and Hebrew texts are provided in the original, always with accompanying translations; other texts are provided only in translation. The authors model careful treatment of sources and display immense learning in many fields. For example, several passages are translations directly from manuscripts of unpublished texts. Nowhere is this care better illustrated than in the authors' judicious treatment of both Epiphanius' rehearsal of the story of the LXX and of modern critiques of Epiphanius (116-124 and notes 24, 33 and 34). Their knowledge of renaissance Jewish and Christian scholarship is impressive (ch. 10). This book is suitable for graduate-level students and scholars and provides a careful safeguard against any gullible acceptance of the stories going about "in the air" or even in scholarship.

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Richard J. GOODRICH and Albert L. LUKASZEWSKI, eds. *A Reader's Greek New Testament*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007. 574 pp. \$34.99.

Barclay M. NEWMAN, ed. *The UBS Greek New Testament. A Reader's Edition*. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2007. 704 pp. \$64.99.

When the Goodrich-Lukaszewski *Reader's Greek New Testament* (*RGNT*¹) was published in 2003, reviewers welcomed it warmly: it met a real need. *RGNT* gives the eclectic Greek text underlying the NIV as reconstructed by Goodrick and Kohlenberger. Except for the variants it adopts, it follows the current Nestle-Aland text (NA²⁷) even in punctuation. In place of the NA and UBS apparatuses, the page bottoms of *RGNT* give lexical glosses for all Greek vocabulary, even names, used 30 or fewer times in the NT. Hence *RGNT* encourages intermediate students toward rapid reading in Greek. *RGNT*² improves *RGNT*¹: it makes corrections, sharpens the Greek font, adds a mini-lexicon of words occurring more than 30 times, and gives maps, which *RGNT*¹ lacked.

Assimilating to the NIV caused many errors in *RGNT*¹. In Matt 6:15 *RGNT* expegetically adds τὰ παραπτώματα αὐτῶν but does not move the comma: ἐὰν δὲ μὴ ἀφῆτε τοῖς ἀνθρώποις, τὰ παραπτώματα αὐτῶν. This was one instance in a pattern of errors in *RGNT*¹—adding a variant reading to the text of NA²⁷ but leaving the

NA²⁷ punctuation in place in front of the variant, resulting in confusion (see Matt 4:10, 8:25, 20:30; John 7:39 in *RGNT*¹). *RGNT*² corrects most of these (but not Matt 6:15) by restoring the NA²⁷ reading.

Besides taking over erroneous punctuation from NA²⁷, *RGNT* commits its own errors. In Mark 10:46 *RGNT* drops *προσαίτης*, with the comma the text needs on both sides of the appositional *τυφλός*, thus reading *ὁ υἱὸς Τιμαίου Βαρτιμαῖος, τυφλός ἐκάθητο*. In John 14:5 *RGNT* makes Thomas' words into a double question: *Κύριε, οὐκ οἶδαμεν ποῦ ὑπάγεις; πῶς δυνάμεθα τὴν ὁδὸν εἰδέναι*; The first question mark should be a half-stop, as in NA²⁷. In Acts 8:34 *RGNT* removes *τοῦτο*; creating a run-on: *περὶ τίνος ὁ προφήτης λέγει περὶ ἑαυτοῦ ἢ περὶ ἑτέρου τινός*; In Eph 3:3 *RGNT* reads [ὄτι] *κατὰ ἀποκάλυψιν—ἐγνθρίσθη μοι τὸ μυστήριον*. The dash is inexplicable. *RGNT* retains all other uses of the dash in NA²⁷ undisturbed and otherwise never adds a dash of its own. Has a printer's error somehow moved this one from the end of 3:1, where NA²⁷ has it? *RGNT* also omits the periods needed between John 3:13-14; 4:39-40; 5:3,5; 7:39-40; Acts 4:3-4, making them run-ons.

RGNT never uses parentheses, and it removes the parentheses that NA²⁷ uses. In John 20:16 *RGNT* gives *λέγει αὐτῷ Εβραΐστί, Ραββουνι ὃ λέγεται Διδάσκαλε*, removing the parentheses around John's translation of the Aramaic term; in John 9:7 it does the same, removing the parentheses around *ὃ ἐρμηνεύεται Ἀπεσταλμένος*. In Col 4:10-11 *RGNT* removes parentheses marking a grammatical insertion: *Μάρκος ὁ ἀνέπιος Βαρναβᾶ περὶ οὗ ἐλάβετε ἐντολάς, ἐὰν ἔλθῃ πρὸς ὑμᾶς, δεξασθε αὐτὸν καὶ Ἰησοῦς ὁ λεγόμενος Ἰουῆτος . . .* In 1 Tim 3:2-6 *RGNT* removes the parentheses around 3:5 (needed because the verse interrupts the single-sentence description of an *ἐπίσκοπος*, thus obscuring the construction). Grammatical insertions must be marked by punctuation at both ends: double commas, double dashes, or parentheses would do this. Removing the parentheses leaves the reader directionless. NA²⁷ has itself been niggardly with parentheses—in the entire NT these are the only four sets it uses—but here *RGNT* outdoes the rigorism of NA, each time for the worse. What brief can *RGNT* have against parentheses?

Punctuation is a set of road signs for the reader pointing how a text is to be read—it signposts the relationships of clause to clause, phrase to phrase, idea to idea. It is the most important tool we have to give texts clarity and readability. Mispunctuation throws readers off the track. Especially in a text designed to encourage intermediate students to do rapid reading, the punctuation must be reader-friendly.

One virtue of *RGNT* is that its lexical glosses, taken from Trenchard's *Vocabulary Guide*, give a range of meanings for the terms. But this is a tradeoff: it also results in woodenness (compounded by computer-generation) and in failure to notice idiomatic uses of a term. From the glosses for *τυγχάνω* in *RGNT* one could not piece together the meaning of *οὐ τὴν τυχοῦσαν* in Acts 28:2 or of *εἰ τύχοι* in 1 Cor 14:10; nor from the gloss of *παρεκτός* could one understand *χωρὶς τῶν παρεκτός* in 2 Cor 11:28; nor from the gloss of *βάρος* could one understand *ἐν βάρει εἶναι* in 1 Thess 2:7. *RGNT* addresses idiomatic uses by citing NIV renderings, but the NIV is not always a reliable lexical source. Questionable glosses from the NIV include *πατρίς* in Jn 4:44 as “country”; *κακῶ* in Acts 14:5 as “poison”;

συγκλείω in Gal 3:22 as “declare a prisoner”; παράκλησις in 1 Tim 4:13 as “preaching”; γυναικάριον in 2 Tim 3:6 as “weak-willed woman”; βρώμα in Heb 13:9 as “ceremonial food.”

RGNT's practice of glossing every occurrence of a term, even when used repeatedly in the same passage, causes repetitiveness. To choose random examples from Romans, see the repeated glosses of ἀκροβυστία three times in Rom 4:9-12; of παράπτωμα six times in Rom 5:15-20; of κατεργάζομαι six times in Rom 7:8-20; of κτίσις five times in Rom 8:19-39. This happens on nearly every page of *RGNT* and should be streamlined. So should the glosses of proper names. Why do the kind of readers who use *RGNT* need a gloss for Ἀδάμ? But *RGNT* glosses Ἀδάμ twice in two lines at Rom 5:14. Why gloss Ἰσαάκ or Ἰακώβ? But in Hebrews 11 *RGNT* glosses Ἰσαάκ and Ἰακώβ no fewer than seven times, five times within the same three lines.

At least one lexical gloss is mistaken: in Heb 6:14 *RGNT* gives μὴν in εἰ μὴν as “month, new moon” rather than as the intensive particle “indeed.” This is a simple computer-generated error, but it does not inspire confidence. *RGNT*'s gloss for ἀλίσημα in Acts 15:20, “ritually defiled,” an adjective phrase, ought to be a noun phrase, “ritual defilement.” *RGNT*'s gloss for πορνεύω (1 Cor 6:18, etc.), “I engage in illicit sex, fornicate, whore,” borders on ungrammatical: English seldom uses “whore” as a verb, nor do either Trenchard or the lexica give this as a gloss.

The UBS has now published its own reader's edition (*UBSRE*) addressing the same needs as *RGNT*. Choosing between the two requires drawing comparisons and contrasts. Both do much the same thing. Like *RGNT*, *UBSRE* glosses words used 30 or fewer times. Unlike *RGNT*, *UBSRE* does not gloss proper names, and, helpfully, it gives parsings of difficult verbs and verbals. Except for *RGNT*'s assimilations to the NIV, the text of each is that of NA²⁷/UBS⁴.

So is the punctuation—which is no virtue. This the least reader-friendly feature of the *UBSRE*. The blame falls on NA²⁷. In NA²⁶ Aland and Aland massively revised the punctuation from previous editions following a minimalist theory explained in their *Text of the New Testament* (31-33, 44-47, 228-232). On this approach they redirect many road signs, or remove them altogether. Reading NA²⁶⁻²⁷ or UBS⁴ alongside earlier editions shows that most changes are for the worse. For example, NA²⁶ moves the question mark in Mark 7:19 from before to after καθαρίζων πάντα τὰ βρώματα, changing what is clearly a Markan editorial comment into a question on the lips of Jesus. *RGNT* and *UBSRE* repeat the error, though *RGNT*¹ struggled with it, giving question marks both before and after: οὐ νοεῖτε ὅτι . . . εἰς τὸν ἀφεδρῶνα ἐκπορεύεται; καθαρίζων πάντα τὰ βρώματα; The first question mark is correct; the second is nonsense. NA²⁶ deletes a necessary comma in Acts 18:6: καθαρὸς ἐγὼ ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν εἰς τὰ ἔθνη πορεύσομαι. Somebody must bite this bullet and commit a comma or half-stop to paper either before or after ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν. Better an editor than an intermediate reader. NA²⁶ hopelessly confuses the punctuation of Acts 27:23: παρέστη γὰρ μοι . . . τοῦ θεοῦ, οὗ εἰμι [ἐγὼ] ᾧ καὶ λατρεύω, ἄγγελος λέγων . . . The clumsy comma after θεοῦ belongs after ἐγὼ, as in earlier editions of NA, which encase the grammatical insertion ᾧ καὶ λατρεύω with commas on both ends. Because of its minimalism, NA²⁶ reduces scores of half-stops to commas, thus leaving the logical relationship between clauses unmarked. This is especially visible in

1 John, where so many statements are binary—comparisons and contrasts, balanced constructions, parallelisms, antitheses; these cry out for the half-stops that NA²⁶ removes (1 John 2:5-6,18,23,24,27; 3:1,9; 4:5-6,12; 5:6,10). In extra fits of minimalism, NA²⁶ often omits punctuation altogether, resulting in scores of run-ons (among the worst, Luke 7:37-38; Acts 7:9b-10; 14:24-26; Rom 5:1-2; Rev 17:8-9). This gives the reader no guidance in moving from clause to clause. NA²⁶ drops many commas between items in series, but with no discernible pattern—see the series in Rom 1:29-31; 1 Tim 1:9-10; 2:1; 6:11; 2 Tim 2:3-4. I found 18 series punctuated inconsistently: contrast the full use of commas in the series in Gal 5:19-21 and Col 3:8 with the minimalist use on the same pages, in Gal 5:22-23 and Col 3:5,12,16. The only consistent feature is underuse. Since *RGNT* and *UBSRE* depend on NA²⁷, they share these problems; this is especially lamentable in Greek Testaments intended for intermediate readers. New editions of the Greek Testament need serious remapping of the punctuation that NA²⁶ has misdirected.

Keeping in mind the intended use of these books—providing an easy-to-use Greek Testament designed for rapid reading—by most criteria *UBSRE* is the better choice. Its text is better than that of *RGNT*, whose efforts to produce a Greek companion-text to the NIV flaw it; and while the poor punctuation of NA²⁷ infects both *UBSRE* and *RGNT*, *RGNT* adds its own errors. The Greek font of *UBSRE*, thankfully, is not that of UBS⁴, but that of NA²⁷, enlarged. This makes it visually beautiful, crisp and clear, whereas that of *RGNT* is readable and decently attractive but borders on faintness. The page layout of *UBSRE*, with spacious margins and open places for notes, is far superior visually to that of *RGNT*, which is so crowded as to be visually confusing. This holds true especially with the word glosses at the bottom of the pages: *UBSRE* presents them neatly in two columns, making them easy to find; *RGNT* crams them together in paragraph form, making them hard to find. Their physical form differs significantly: *UBSRE* is a book made for studying, underlining, note-taking, writing in the margins; *RGNT* is a Bible printed on thin (but not India) paper and bound in leather—and with its narrow margins, thin paper, and cram-packed pages *RGNT* does not lend itself well to marking.

I find the lexical glosses of *RGNT* preferable. *RGNT* gives multiple glosses for the Greek words; *UBSRE* gives only what it considers the right gloss in context. This means that when a writer gives a term a special sense, *UBSRE* gives only the special sense with no broader look at the semantic associations of the word; it also means that *UBSRE* does not standardize its glosses. For example, *UBSRE* gives a different gloss for each of the four NT instances of κοίτη: in Luke 11:7, the basic sense “bed”; in Rom 9:10, with poor lexical authority, the strange gloss “sperm”; in Rom 13:13, the metonymous “sexual immorality”; and in Heb 13:4 the bowdlerized “marital relationship.” “Sperm” and “marital relationship” give new readers of Greek no clue to the basic meaning of the term. *UBSRE* gives the six NT uses of σαρκικός five different glosses: “material” (Rom 15:27; 1 Cor 9:11), “worldly” (1 Cor 3:3), “earthly” (2 Cor 1:12), “belonging to this world” (2 Cor 10:4), and “sinful” (1 Pet 2:11); and *UBSRE* gives the four NT uses of σάρκινος three different glosses: “unspiritual” (Rom 7:14); “worldly” (1 Cor 3:1); and “human” (2 Cor 3:3; Heb 7:16). *UBSRE* treats σκάνδαλον and πρόσκομμα as exact equivalents and in Rom 9:32-33 and 14:13 interchanges their glosses arbitrarily: σκάνδαλον,

“something that causes stumbling” (Matt 13:41), “something that causes falling” (Rom 9:33), “stumbling block” (Matt 16:23, 18:7; Luke 17:1; Rom 11:9), “obstacle” (Rom 14:13); πρόσκομμα, “something that causes stumbling” (Rom 9:32; 1 Pet 2:8), “stumbling block” (Rom 14:13; 1 Cor 8:9). In Titus 3:9 *UBSRE* gives νομικός, -ά [sic], -όν as “concerning the law of Moses”; in Titus 3:13 it gives νομικός, -ή, -όν as “pertaining to the law (ὁ v. lawyer).” “Concerning the” and “pertaining to the” are equivalents defining an adjectival use: *UBSRE* would do readers a favor to choose one or the other. Specifying that the law in question in 3:9 is the law of Moses overinterprets the term.

The erratic lexical glosses of *UBSRE* are less troublesome than the ways the glosses lend authority to arguable hypotheses. *UBSRE* lends its weight to the “engaged couples” view of 1 Cor 7:36-38 by glossing τὴν παρθένον αὐτοῦ as “the woman to whom he is engaged” and γαμίζω as “marry/give (a bride) in marriage.” “Marry” is wrong. Admittedly, BDAG, BDF, and MM suggest that γαμίζω in 1 Cor 7 equals γαμέω, but the authority they cite is Lietzmann. There are no examples in Greek, up to the eleventh century, of γαμίζω as the equivalent of γαμέω, and “Lietzmann says so” is not an adequate lexical authority. The lexicography of 1 Cor 7 should at least not eliminate the traditional “fathers and daughters” view; nor should it charter an arguable interpretation. *UBSRE* de-genderizes its glosses of νεανίσκος (“young person,” 1 John 2:13), ἀδελφότης (“group of fellow believers,” 1 Pet 2:17; 5:9), φιλάδελφος (“loving fellow believers,” 1 Pet 3:8), and φιλαδελφία (“love,” Rom 12:10; “love of one another,” 1 Thess 4:9; “love between believers,” 1 Pet 1:22; “love for fellow believers,” 2 Pet 1:7). Whatever one’s stance toward patriarchalism in the NT, the case must be argued from the Greek NT. Removing gender from our lexicography destroys the evidence.

RGNT’s lexical glosses, though cumbersome, give readers a broader view of the semantic force of terms. This is preferable to *UBSRE*’s one-gloss-per-term practice, which makes rapid reading of the Greek Testament perhaps too rapid—as if one were reading an English translation after all. Reading the Bible in Greek helps overcome our overfamiliarity with the Bible in English; the danger in riding this kind of pony is that it keeps the English too near us.

RGNT is bound beautifully: Zondervan knows how to make Bibles. This binding will live far longer than that of *UBSRE*. *RGNT* is half the bulk of *UBSRE* and so is easier to carry around and hold in the hand—say, as a go-to-church Bible. *UBSRE* should stay in the study. But a Greek Testament intended for rapid reading will stay mostly in the study, not the pew, so this difference does not weigh heavily in favor of *RGNT*.

Cost may be a factor in deciding which to buy: *UBSRE* is twice the price of *RGNT*. But keep in mind the purpose: to give new students a reader-friendly Greek Testament that fosters rapid reading, thus transitioning them from learning grammar, syntax, and vocabulary to reading the Greek Bible with facility and graduating them to more advanced scholarly editions like the UBS and NA texts. *UBSRE* achieves this purpose enough better than *RGNT* that the difference is worth the money.

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William LOADER. *The New Testament with Imagination: A Fresh Approach to Its Writings and Themes.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007. 206 pp. \$16.00.

While NT scholars might be skeptical at the announcement of a “fresh approach” to the NT’s writings and themes, Loader has proved able to provide just that. He writes, however, not with those scholars in mind but rather for an audience who is not necessarily familiar with the ancient culture or languages. Nonetheless, critical academic research lies at the foundation of his explanations of the ancient world, the variants among manuscripts, and the stories of the text.

Through imaginative story-telling at the beginning of each chapter, Loader enables his readers to enter the world of the NT as a Jew in Capernaum during Jesus’ ministry, as a woman in Paul’s church in Corinth, as a scribe compiling a gospel account, and as an elderly Christian whose church has gone through a split. He takes his readers back to the first century and enables them to experience the sights, smells, and sounds, as well as the political and social dimensions, of that distant world. He uses these exercises in imagination to teach the readers lessons about everyday life in first-century Palestine, about Jew-Gentile conflict, about authorship of the Gospels, and even about “Q.” Following each imaginative exercise, Loader provides a thorough list of scriptural passages from which he drew the context of his story.

Each chapter then reflects on four texts that are relevant to the chapter’s topic, texts that lead the readers “into major issues and insights for understanding the New Testament” (x). In these textual analyses, Loader not only reflects on the stories the books tell, but he also instructs the readers on how the texts came into being and demonstrates historical-critical ways of reading the texts. Chapters 1 and 2 focus on Jesus’ message, death, and resurrection, utilizing passages from the Synoptics and 1 Corinthians. The third chapter looks at the church from the Pauline letters (both undisputed and disputed), while the fourth returns to the Synoptics to explain how the Gospels were compiled. Finally, Loader addresses faith and the future in light of the Johannine corpus. Loader’s discussions of the key texts do more than just transport the readers into the New Testament world—they teach valuable lessons on how to approach the text. He touches on issues such as text criticism and translation, the historical Jesus, and how to interpret parables, yet avoids the tone or format of a Biblical Studies textbook.

Loader thoroughly covers the Gospels and Paul’s letters, but he neglects to address many of the other NT voices. While the texts he selects provide an adequate basis for his themes and issues, he could strengthen his presentation with an inclusion of books such as Acts, Hebrews, James, 1 Peter, or the Pastorals. Acts, in particular, would supplement his chapter on the church. In spite of this criticism, Loader presents the important NT issues in a fashion that is very accessible to a lay-reader. He manages to discuss complex issues (such as redaction and textual criticism) with scholarly integrity while avoiding overly technical language. Although many of these subjects may be new to those readers who have not received formal theological training, Loader addresses the issues in a nonthreatening, pastoral way. He respects the authority and sacredness of Scripture while insisting on the presence of human fingerprints in its composition and transmission.

This book is ideal for a church small group, a non-Bible major religion course,

or a Christian seeking to read the New Testament in a new and challenging way. For curious readers, Loader includes helpful appendices that compare outlines of the Synoptics, provide significant dates in early Jewish history, and make available a nice book list for further reading. In the end, while this book was written with lay-people in mind, scholars or ministers could nonetheless walk away from it envisaging the NT in a fresh way.

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Serge RUZER. *Mapping the New Testament: Early Christian Writings as a Witness for Jewish Biblical Exegesis.* Jewish and Christian Perspectives Series. Boston: Brill, 2007. 254 pp. \$170.00.

Ruzer keeps his cartographical eye out for interpretive trends that suggest ongoing (and close) interaction between nascent Christian groups and non-Christian Jews as well as for “exegetical moves that consciously [aim] at boundary drawing [but] might bear witness to existing patterns” (8).

The first chapter compares a sample of Matthew exegetical strategies with similar strategies attested in other Jewish literature. Though much of Ruzer’s comparative material is considerably later than the NT (the Targumim, as well as Tannaitic and later rabbinic sources), he also identifies relevant material from Philo and the Dead Sea Scrolls to argue that the NT texts fit within a wider field of exegetical praxis that was current in the late Second Temple period and continued into Rabbinic times. Ruzer rightly avoids arguing for a *literary* connection between the texts he compares (16), and he respects differences in exegetical detail and tone as he identifies similarities in exegetical procedure. Similar analyses address the “love-your-enemy precept” in Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount/Plain and related ideas in other Jewish literature (chapter two) and “the double love precept” in the gospels and the Dead Sea Scrolls (ch. 3).

In chapter four Ruzer turns his attention to specifically messianic exegesis at Qumran and in early Christianity. He frames the early Christian expansion of Davidic exegesis to comprise not just Christ but also the Christian community in terms of “reservations” regarding Davidic traditions (113-116). This framing presents a serious problem in this chapter. In chapter five Ruzer analyzes halakhic approaches to marriage and divorce, noting parallel appeals to Gen 1, 2 in the NT and the DSS, though to various ends. His analysis raises more questions than it answers here, but this chapter continues Ruzer’s program of examining ancient Jewish exegesis using NT evidence.

Chapter six takes up various discussions regarding the bodily “seat of sin.” Ruzer identifies a developing tradition characterized by a “transition from utterly negative appraisal of the bodily limbs’ role to connecting them with the positive commandments of the Torah” (176). The exegetical treatment in this chapter, however, depends too strongly on setting certain passages in opposition with others (Matt 5:22 and 5:29-30) without giving any attention to whether any tension was perceived in these texts, either by Jesus, Matthew, or their earliest interpreters (149-151).

Ruzer then analyzes Luke and Acts (which he reads as two separate works by one author, rather than as one work in two parts (182, n. 5; 211) and how their author attempts to interpret the meaning of the crucifixion in biblical and traditional terms. Ruzer argues that in Acts a number of potential interpretive avenues are pursued and found unsatisfying. In all of these themes he tries to show how the NT author took up traditional exegetical patterns in innovative ways to ascribe meaning to Jesus' crucifixion.

The final chapter addresses Jeremiah's "new covenant," collective understandings of anointing, and exegetical similarities between Paul and the DSS. Whereas in the Jeremian concept the "newness" is focused solely on the internalization (and "democratization") of the covenant, both Paul and Qumran characterize the new covenant in terms of a newly revealed interpretation of Torah. Though Paul and Qumran bear striking differences in their understanding of the new covenant's *content*, Ruzer argues that both reveal a "current exegetic trend" toward their respective exegetical ends.

The book ends with a brief concluding chapter (239-241). Ruzer stresses his aim is to map NT exegetic procedures—and not its theologoumena—onto wider Judaic discourse. Ruzer's program provides a detailed reevaluation not just of NT documents but of early Christian movements themselves as Jewish phenomena. His analysis should not simply be broadened to other NT texts and themes but should be extended to question the too-facile distinctions often made between "Judaism" and "Christianity" in this period. For example, he notes that the success of his program depends "on one's ability to distinguish the *rhema* of a peculiar 'Christian input' from the *thema* of the shared exegetical background reflected in the New Testament tradition" (240). This ability constitutes one of the primary strengths (and insights) of Ruzer's work. And yet it also raises the question to what extent peculiarly Christian *themata* should be considered Jewish phenomena.

Ruzer's book suffers from a number of unconvincing and problematic textual interpretations, some of which are pivotal for his argument (14-16, 193-194). The book's primary strength lies in its reframing NT texts in more thoroughly Judaic terms rather than its reading of specific texts. Ruzer also brings an impressive array of ancient evidence to bear in his discussion. Though too technical for use in undergraduate classes, this volume provides a promising direction for NT and Christian origins scholarship.

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T. Scott WOMBLE. *Beyond Reasonable Doubt: 95 Theses Which Dispute the Church's Conviction against Women.* Longwood, FL: Xulon, 2008. 492 pp. \$23.99.

At least for two streams of the Stone-Campbell Restoration Movement (the so-called "independent" Christian Churches/Churches of Christ and the a cappella Churches of Christ), the role of women in the life of the church continues to be a live and controversial topic. The third stream (Disciples of Christ) made its peace

with the women's issue long ago. Among those churches where the issue still looms large, this book takes on special importance as one voice in the current debate. The author leaves no uncertainty concerning his stance: "There is no doubt that the church which embraces the ministry of women will be a more complete church which more accurately shows forth the image of God and is also better equipped to fulfill the mission of God" (38).

Womble joins the debate by invoking the imagery of a courtroom. Women have been wrongly convicted in the past and need a new trial. The first section of the book introduces the "parties and facts of the case": the plaintiffs (complementarians), who restrict leadership roles in the church to men, versus the defendants (egalitarians), who believe that women can and should be ministers and leaders in the church. The author executes his role as defense attorney by taking up the egalitarian cause and presenting ninety-five theses that, in his view, cast reasonable doubt on the church's prior conviction against women and force a new trial. For Womble, Professor of Biblical Studies, Saint Louis Christian College, which is in the Christian Churches (independent) stream of the movement, this book is a gutsy and admirable move, one certainly not without its risks.

The second section of the book presents the "opening statement," which lays the theological and hermeneutical foundations for the kind of inclusive ministry the author envisions. Here the ninety-five theses begin, though they function more as subject titles than propositional statements. Of foundational importance is the first: looking at the larger picture that the Bible presents rather than focusing on isolated proof-texts to decide the case. Part of that bigger picture is a relational understanding of the Trinity that posits mutuality in the Godhead rather than hierarchy. Womble is keen here to remove a key foundational plank from the argument of the complementarians by arguing for the temporary (incarnational) rather than eternal (ontological) subordination of the Son to the Father. Rather than establishing gender hierarchy within the created order, God's trinitarian nature actually sponsors a partnership of mutuality between the sexes who bear the same relational image.

Section three "cross-examines" the complementarian position and exposes a number of its vulnerabilities. The author continues his line of theses by bringing to the surface a number of statements and excuses that ministry-minded women often hear that preclude them from reaching their full potential in the church. The inconsistencies that Womble uncovers (women can "speak," but not "preach"; women can write Sunday School curriculum but not teach a Sunday School class; women can teach vulnerable children but not self-actualized adult males) offer a glimpse into the mind-set of the average church and constitute "the driving force behind the entire book" (97). The author uses this section to address three ecclesiastical functions usually denied to women: ordination, eldership, and the office of pastor. Womble admits the lack of a clear biblical example of female elders but leaves open the possibility that they did exist.

Key texts in the biblical debate about women appear in the fourth section of the book under "presentation of the evidence." Here Womble tackles the crucial texts in question: Genesis 1-3; Gal 3:28; 1 Tim 2:9-15; 1 Cor 14:34-35; and 1 Cor 11:3-16, along with the related texts Eph 5:22-24 and 1 Pet 3:1-7. His investigation touches on all the key exegetical issues but, overall, was lacking in critical perspec-

tive. Womble assumes, for example, that Paul is the author of all the texts bearing his name, though much of mainstream biblical scholarship questions Paul's authorship of Ephesians and the Pastorals, which changes the nature and scope of the argument in significant ways. Womble also fills in the gaps in the historical record by appealing too easily to Acts without taking Luke's own literary and theological agenda into account. Most important perhaps is Womble's assumption that the same historical occasion lies behind all three of the Pastoral letters, which aids his case considerably in dealing with the troubling 1 Timothy 2 text.

"Additional evidence" supporting the author's biblical case appears in the fifth section of the book. Womble divides this section into two—one dealing with women of the OT and another with women of the NT. The latter is clearly more relevant to the author's case as he surveys a number of significant examples of women who exercised notable ministries in the early church, including Priscilla, Phoebe, and the interesting case of Junia, "outstanding among the apostles" (Rom 16:7).

The author reserves his "closing statements," the sixth section of the book, for a look at Jesus' treatment of women, lamenting "how often our Lord is left out of this debate" (305). Even a passage like the Great Commission (Matt 28:19-20), not often at play in the complementarian-egalitarian courtroom drama, assumes particular importance here since the discipling activities of baptizing and teaching are clearly not restricted to men! The verdict? Women should be released into ministry.

This book will achieve its best result in the specific context in which it was written—the conservative evangelical wing of the church. Churches struggling with the role of women in their midst will find in this book a thorough, well-documented, challenge to some longstanding beliefs and practices. The subject matter, of course, could prove controversial, but the author evinces a winsome hermeneutical humility throughout that greatly minimizes the risk. The inconsistencies that Womble exposes are sure to generate lively Sunday School class discussion, such as when the author asks: "How many times have elders and deacons mulled over issues for hours in a meeting, only to go home and consult their wives who have a better handle on some areas of church life?" (327).

At the end of the trial, however, both complementarians and egalitarians fall prey to the same legal strategy—assuming a unanimity in Scripture without sufficiently appreciating its diversity. That both sides can garner scriptural arguments for their respective positions is telling. Is it possible, for example, that a later author of the Pauline school modifies Paul's earlier egalitarian teaching about women to address a new sociocultural situation? How we deal with such diversity is an invitation to do theology and to render a verdict that is just and compassionate to all.

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Kenneth D. BOA and Robert M. BOWMAN Jr. *Sense and Nonsense about Heaven & Hell*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007. 199 pp. \$9.99.

This accessible book covers a wide range of doctrines which in 17 short chapters constitutes a system of theology with heaven and hell at its center. At the end of each chapter there is a summary statement that neatly clarifies what the “sense” and “nonsense” consists of in regard to the subject of that chapter and there are eye-catching quotations bracketed off throughout the book introducing succinct quotations summarizing key points.

The book’s stated purpose is “to foster a biblically sound view of death and eternity” (7). The book mainly relegates discussion of death to the categories of *hades*, *sheol*, and hell while salvation is primarily discussed in terms of salvation from futuristic punishment. For example, chapter one and two compare false views of salvation and heaven in which the authors sum up the work of Christ by saying “Jesus came to save us from hell” (17). Chapter three separates *sheol* and *hades* from physical death and equates them with a place of punishment prior to hell, but on the same order. In severing physical death from these future categories, the life and death of bodies are separated from the author’s primary focus on the life and death of souls. The fourth and fifth chapters focus on death as the final enemy and a denial of innate immortality respectively. Though the authors are clear in their denial of innate immortality, their equation of *soul* with that which is inward and *body* with that which is outward and material (52), serves to maintain their focus on futuristic consequences.

In chapter eight in discussing the resurrection they quite rightly explain Paul’s usage of *soul* as connected/equated with the body (77-78) in contradistinction to their explanation of the word above in a different context. While the discussion of resurrection cannot be faulted for what it includes, no discussion occurs of living a resurrected life now, or of the hope of resurrection as a resolution to the sinful life oriented to death. In chapter nine Universalism is refuted with the traditional Calvinistic doctrine of a limited atonement (82), which perhaps explains the emphasis on futuristic and nonuniversal elements and the lack of discussion of universal elements that seem to be part of Scripture but which are not part of the heresy of Universalism.

In chapters ten through thirteen God’s anger is connected to a future judgment (chapter ten) which is irreversible (chapter eleven), and though hell is metaphorical (chapter twelve), it is the singular focus of Christ’s death (chapter thirteen). As they state it in their chapter (thirteen) heading “Jesus is the only Savior from Hell and the only Way to Heaven” (120).

Chapters fourteen to sixteen include a discussion of who will be included and who will be excluded from salvation (heaven). Infants and the mentally infirm are included along with OT believers (chapter fourteen), while there may be enough available light to save some small number of heathen (chapter fifteen). As in chapter sixteen the book poses these arguments primarily against the alternatives of Jehovah’s Witnesses and Mormons. Recent work which offers an alternative to inclusion or exclusion in a practical salvation through the Church now, might have made for a more interesting sounding board than Jehovah’s Witnesses and Mormons.

The final chapter (seventeen) recognizes that a new heaven and a new earth follows “going to heaven” in a disembodied state. Unfortunately this promising start is the final and not the first chapter and so its implications are left unmined. Hope of heaven is primarily focused on a futuristic salvation from the future wrath of hell in spite of the very earthly heaven which this final chapter presents. A present tense practical salvation or a rescue from sin and death in the here and now is never broached. The possibility that Christ did not die primarily to save from hell does not arise as a possible consideration. Whether the authors agree or disagree with this understanding is perhaps not important, but to ignore it may limit the usefulness of their book.

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Timothy Paul JONES. *Misquoting Truth: A Guide to the Fallacies of Bart Ehrman’s Misquoting Jesus*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2007. 176 pp. \$15.00.

As the subtitle suggests, this volume is an evangelical response to Ehrman’s popular-level introduction to textual criticism, manuscripts, and the workings of ancient scribes—a *New York Times* bestseller—as well as Ehrman’s *Lost Christianities*. Ehrman’s *Misquoting Jesus* (a lighter version of his *Orthodox Corruption of Scripture*) demonstrates that scribes often altered the text of the NT, and sometimes with theological motives. From this, Ehrman proceeds, amongst other things, to draw implications for the (lack of) inspiration of Scripture. Ehrman’s *Lost Christianities* concerns versions of Christianity that fell outside of “proto-orthodoxy,” and here he suggests that early (eventually “orthodox”) Christians suppressed, in one form or another, all Christianities other than their own. In this volume, Jones offers, sometimes in “point-by-point” fashion, a response to Ehrman’s claims, ultimately in service of Christians who are ill-informed by the realities of ancient Christianity and the development of the Christian canon (142-143). Jones thus offers his book as an alternative port of entry into the issues of canon, scribes, and inspiration, and himself as an authoritative alternative guide to Ehrman. He even begins the book by mirroring Ehrman’s relating (in *Misquoting Jesus*) of personal struggles with these issues in an undergraduate faith-based education (16-22). Also similar to Ehrman, Jones’s book does not seem to be concerned with the implications of manuscripts of the NT for the doctrine of inspiration per se but rather specifically with the narrower issue of inerrancy (30-32, 143).

In terms of strengths, this volume is well-written in an accessible tone and style. Perhaps his greatest contribution is simply in producing a succinct synthesizing of the issues for nonspecialist readers. Jones is not too heavy on jargon and provides helpful breakout boxes to explain terms with which his readers might not be familiar. Furthermore, Jones’s study is supported by much scholarly research, as the end-notes reveal. More specialized readers will be comforted there to see names such as Hengel, Metzger, Aland, Millard, Harris, Hezser, and Vansina, *inter alia*. Similarly,

Jones has not focused myopically on Ehrman himself but rather discusses some important primary sources, such as the testimony of Papias. For his thorough engagement with Ehrman via critical primary and secondary sources, Jones must be applauded.

Equally deserving praise, Jones ends his book by addressing the real issue behind the smoke screen of Ehrman's discussion of textual matters in *Misquoting Jesus*, namely, faith. That is, Jones correctly notes that the true matter is not whether variants of a theological nature exist, and that scribes therefore sometimes altered the text to make it say what they thought it said anyway. Upon these matters, Jones agrees with Ehrman. The real issue is what a community of faith does with those facts. And here, Jones disagrees with Ehrman, correctly in this reviewer's opinion.

Despite these obvious strengths, numerous serious weaknesses plague *Misquoting Truth*. First, Jones's discussion sometimes reveals glaring omissions and inaccuracies. For example, Jones claims Codex Bezae (D) is dateable to "A. D. 500" and bases this conclusion upon "the style of writing, the use of vellum instead of papyrus, and the presence of Greek *and* Latin" (45; emphasis original). He also claims Bezae "seems to have originated in the region of Europe now known as France" (45). Jones cites no sources for these statements, which he makes in a section entitled "Textual Criticism 101." It is thus not clear where Jones has gotten his information, but it is entirely clear that it is not from D.C. Parker's *Codex Bezae: An Early Christian Manuscript and Its Text* (Cambridge University Press, 1992), the widely-accepted standard work on Bezae, where Parker dates the manuscript to 400 CE and argues for a provenance in Beirut, the Latin center of the East. This is a surprising oversight since Jones references Codex Bezae in an authoritative manner at several places in his book (44-46, 69, 98) and claims enough familiarity with early Christian scribal culture to have translated "hundreds of Greek epigraphs, papyri and writings from prominent second- and third-century Christians" (118).

Another weak section due to inaccuracies and omissions—called "How Dumb Were the Disciples?"—is where Jones attempts to counter Ehrman's claim that the authors of the gospels were not eyewitnesses by asserting that at least two of the disciples, Matthew and Luke, could have kept written records. The argument that Jesus' original followers could have taken written notes, upon which the gospels were later based, is traceable to Alan Millard's *Reading and Writing in the Time of Jesus* (which Jones cites) and has not been widely accepted, despite Millard's invaluable discussion of the ancient scribal scene. Nonetheless, Jones argues that Matthew, as a tax collector, possessed the "one skill" of being able to "read and write," and that therefore, "Despite Ehrman's disdainful description of the first disciples as 'uneducated, lower-class, illiterate,' a tax collector such as Matthew could *not* have fit such a description" (115; emphasis original). Jones's rebuttal ignores two realities that are discussed in several books he cites. First, reading and writing were not "one skill" in the ancient world, but rather separately acquired and utilized (established firmly by the work of Rafaella Cribiore on the Egyptian school papyri, which Jones cites on p. 166, n. 26). Second, and perhaps more importantly, the literate skills required of a tax collector are not the same as those that Jones envisions as enabling written eyewitness sources of Jesus. That is, despite their familiarity with

documents and literate culture, public officials such as tax collectors nevertheless *could* indeed be accurately described as “uneducated” or “illiterate.” Proving this is the example of the Egyptian village scribe Petaus, who could write nothing more than the formula required by his public position and was thus accused of illiteracy, demonstrates. (Jones cites Ehrman’s discussion of Petaus on p. 39 and inaccurately refers to him as a “copyist.”) Keeping records and authoring a literary text are different literate skills. Relatedly, Jones claims that since Luke was a physician, “it’s unlikely that he was ‘illiterate’ or ‘uneducated’” (117). Jones does not defend his claim that Luke was a physician (Col 4:14), and ignores the famous work of Henry J. Cadbury on that identification of Paul’s companion. Whether or not Ehrman is incorrect, Jones’s attempt to refute him by claiming “Matthew the tax collector and Luke the physician almost certainly would have possessed the capacity to author such documents” (119) is neutered because he fails to build it upon a firm basis.

Another major weakness of Jones’s study is that, in the process of making assertions in support of his argument, he occasionally handles his sources in what appears to be a less-than-honest manner. For example, in his chapter “Truth about ‘Significant Changes’ in the New Testament,” which alternately agrees with and counters points Ehrman makes about theologically-motivated scribal alterations, Jones claims with regard to the Long Ending of Mark: “Again, these verses [Mark 16:9-20] probably weren’t in Mark’s original Gospel, but they *do* represent an authentic tradition about Jesus’ resurrection. When this is taken into consideration, it becomes clear—in the words of Bruce Metzger—that the New Testament contains not four but five evangelic accounts of events subsequent to the Resurrection of Christ” (64, emphasis original). In the book Jones cites (*The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration*), Metzger observes only that there are five postresurrection narratives in the manuscript tradition (the four canonical endings plus the Long Ending of Mark) without offering commentary on the authenticity of those accounts one way or another. Jones’s manner of citation, however, implies that Metzger would support Jones’s previous point that the Long Ending of Mark is authentic Jesus tradition; again, something upon which Metzger does not comment.

Another example of this exact same problem occurs in Jones’s discussion of the fact that Mark 1:2 attributes a combination of OT texts from Malachi and Isaiah (with some parts from Exodus) solely to the prophet Isaiah. Ehrman notes in *Misquoting Jesus* that later scribes attempted to correct this error by changing the attribution to “the prophets” rather than “the prophet Isaiah.” Jones responds: “Ehrman depicts this as an error in Mark’s Gospel. But Isaiah is the most prominent prophet in the mix, and it was a common practice to cite combined quotations by the most prominent source” (61). In support of his statement, Jones cites R.T. France’s critical commentary *The Gospel of Mark* (NIGTC; Eerdmans, 2002). When one chases down the citation, however, one finds that France says Mark attributes the entire citation to Isaiah “presumably because the better-known Isaiah text, even though coming second, was the basis of the herald idea which links the two” (France, 63). That is, *contra* what Jones leads his readers to believe, France says *nothing close* to the idea that “it was a common practice to cite combined quotations by the most prominent source” (Jones, 61). It is hard to avoid the conclusion

that Jones simply wants to avoid the term “error” for theological reasons and attempts to bolster his assertion by putting words into France’s mouth that he never wrote.

Yet a third example of Jones’s handling his sources in a less-than-honest manner is when he relies heavily upon Richard Bauckham’s *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses* as he is arguing against Ehrman in a chapter entitled “Truth about Eyewitness Testimony.” He cites Bauckham’s book favorably several times in this chapter (164, n. 2, 10; 165, n. 15) but then ends the chapter curiously: “And the stories in the Gospel According to John? It seems that they originated in John Bar Zebedee—one of Jesus’ first followers—or perhaps one of John’s students, recording his teacher’s testimony” (120). This statement is “curious” because *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses* is a primary place where Bauckham thoroughly argues against identifying the author of John’s gospel as the son of Zebedee and for identifying him as John the Elder. Since Jones cites Bauckham’s book when it supports his case, the complete failure to acknowledge that Bauckham’s study argues strongly against the closing point of the chapter is questionable at the least.

Whatever may be Jones’s intentions, one must regard it as highly unlikely—indeed impossible—that he was unaware that Bruce Metzger and R.T. France do not support the statements that he implies they do. It is equally difficult to assume that Jones was unaware that Bauckham provides a stout argument against the identification of the author of the Fourth Gospel as John son of Zebedee in *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses*. His failure to acknowledge these realities causes a strongly suspicious eyebrow to raise high for some readers, and this doubt casts a long shadow over the whole study.

Although Jones provides a useful popular-level introduction to the transmission of the New Testament, to scholars in the field of early Christian scribal culture Jones appears as an interested and informed amateur (in the technical sense) who has overstepped his bounds. For these reasons, Jones’s book may be helpful in, for example, a Sunday School classroom, but should not appear in a college or seminary classroom. For an academic response to Ehrman’s highly-controversial work, one is better suited to consult Robert H. Gundry’s 2006 article in *Christianity Today* (to which Jones himself refers on p. 144).

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Brad H. YOUNG. *Meet the Rabbis: Rabbinic Thought and the Teachings of Jesus.* Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2007. 270 pp. \$16.95.

Christian scholars who wish to master the rabbinic literature have a well-established heritage. In Great Britain, Herbert Danby, in the U.S., G.F. Moore, and in Germany, Hermann Strack distinguished themselves in the mid-twentieth century as more than capable of handling these difficult materials. Young’s goals in this monograph are a little less ambitious but no less important than the above mentioned scholars. He wants to introduce a more popular audience to the rabbinic literature and its use as an aid in interpreting the Gospels.

The author divides his task into four parts: Introduction to Rabbinic Thought, Introduction to Rabbinic Literature, Introduction to the Rabbis, and Study Helps. In Part I appear chapters on master teachers and their disciples, on Torah, on the Great Sanhedrin, and a chapter called “Parallel Rabbinic and New Testament Texts.” Part II has chapters on the Pirke Avot, on the daily prayers, on Maimonides’ principles of Judaism, and on Hillel’s principles of interpretation. Part III has a chapter surveying the important rabbis, a chapter on the oral Torah, and one entitled, “Utopia or Plan of Action?” which is an interpretation of the Sermon on the Mount in light of the rabbinic literature. Part IV, “Of Books, Commandments, Laws, Holy Days, and Lineage,” seems to me to be little more than an appendix and probably should have been listed as such.

At several points in Young’s monograph, he stresses his overriding goal. He wants to present Jesus as fully Jewish (I would say as fully rabbinic) and dispel latent anti-semitism from his Christian readers (60, 155, 202, 216). One quotation can suffice to sum up his purpose: “How ironic it is, then that the world has invented its own brand of Christianity. Some Christians want Christianity to be distinctly different from any vestige of the old Judaism. . . . They neglect the fact that Jesus was a Jew. Contrary to popular opinion, Jesus never converted to Christianity” (216).

Young’s goal of stressing the Jewishness of Jesus (though this is hardly a novel idea) is to be applauded, but his rhetoric too often is incendiary. One such example is when he accuses those neglecting to study the rabbinic literature of putting the rabbis in the “ghetto,” building a fence around it, and putting up a sign reading “Entrance Strictly Forbidden!” (155).

The book does offer several benefits to the average reader. First, it presents an overview of the rabbinic literature for those unacquainted with it already. Those, however, who have already read even a few of the major works in this area may think this overview has little to teach them. Second, Young does helpfully list parallels from the rabbinic literature to the teachings of Jesus. For example, compare b. Sotah 48b, “The one who has bread in his basket today and says, ‘What will I eat tomorrow?’ behold that one is of little faith,” and Jesus’ words in Matt 6:25–30 about not fretting about tomorrow (184). Third, some of his insights are attractive, such as his translation of Matt 5:39 as “do not compete” with evil as opposed to the usual “do not resist” evil (209).

Yet, this monograph has several problems. First, he insists that Jesus was a Pharisee or at least not far from the Pharisaic movement and that Jesus adhered to the oral Torah (33, 34, 53, 60, 208). Second, Young persists in his conviction that Jesus spoke and taught in Hebrew—in spite of all the Aramaisms in the Greek text of the Gospels (10, 43, 64, 210)—and even that the Gospels are based on an original Hebrew source (20). Third, his bibliography is stunningly light on the works of Jacob Neusner. Aside from a couple of the latter’s translations, he lists only a collection of dictionary articles edited by Neusner and drawn from the old *Jewish Encyclopedia*. Young, in his annotation, comments that Neusner’s preface to this dictionary exhibits “(Neusner’s) post-modern school of interpretation” (239). Fourth, he often assumes the anachronistic perspective of the Talmudic sages. For example, he thinks rabbinic Judaism was *the* Judaism of the first century (199 and 203). Further, he states that God never really wanted all the sacrifices but only Torah study (59–60).

These problems make the work, on balance, of doubtful benefit as a critical, historical work. The book does offer us the perspective of one school of thought with respect to the rabbinic literature.

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Paul BARNETT. *Paul: Missionary of Jesus.* Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 2008. 240 pp. \$18.00.

This work is a follow-up to Barnett's book *The Birth of Christianity: The First Twenty Years* (Eerdmans, 2005). In this volume, the author takes a broad look at the ministry of the Apostle Paul. Barnett is refreshingly conservative in his assessment of Paul, accepting all thirteen Pauline Epistles as authentic and accepting Acts as written by Luke, Paul's friend and oftentimes traveling companion. The work tracks Paul's career chronologically but is more than a mere biography. It also addresses numerous theological issues, but is not a full-blown "theology of Paul."

In the first chapter, Barnett examines the attempt by many scholars to drive a wedge between Jesus and Paul. Liberal scholars of the mid-19th and early-20th centuries (Bauer, Wrede, Bultmann, Harnack, Schweitzer, et al.) attempted to show that Paul developed a form of teaching quite contrary to what Jesus had envisioned according to the Gospel accounts. Jesus was a simple man, a moral teacher, according to the critics. Paul, it is claimed, turned him into a God and created the entire scope of redemptive/atonement theology. Paul has been called (in an uncomplimentary manner) the second founder of Christianity. Barnett takes this still common belief to task and answers the question: Was Paul true to the teaching of Jesus?

In chapter 2, Barnett gives an impressive list of facts Paul knows about Jesus gleaned from the Epistles. It is clear from his letters that Paul doesn't seem to be introducing new information to his readers. The message of Jesus was part and parcel of his preaching and teaching. Barnett relates, "If the giants of New Testament scholarship erected a wall between Jesus and Paul, far less famous historians have demolished it." The remainder of the book analyzes the continuity between Jesus' mission and Paul's mission.

Chapter 3 is an overview of Paul's younger years in Tarsus from AD 1–12 and his upbringing in Jerusalem from 17–33 AD (Barnett accepts AD 33 as the date of the resurrection). Care is spent to show that although Paul's youngest years were spent in the diaspora, his personality was rooted in strict Pharisaical tradition.

Chapter 4 is an intriguing account of how Paul came to be a persecutor of the church. This has been seen to be problematic. In the Jewish tradition of Paul's day, there were two main rabbinic schools: Hillel, who was known for his tolerance, and Shammai, who was much more severe in his teachings against non-Jews. Since Paul was a student of Gamaliel (the son or grandson of Hillel), why did he adopt the more rigorous views of Shammai and become a leader in the persecution of the early church? Barnett goes to great lengths to answer this question. His creative conclusions will not satisfy everyone, but they are worth examination.

Chapter 5 examines Paul's Damascus Road experience. It is noted that some scholars (Krister Stendahl) argue that Paul did not change religions on the Damascus Road but merely received a new commission and calling. Barnett responds with overwhelming evidence from Acts and the Epistles that Paul's life was dramatically changed and rearranged—a true conversion to the message and person of Jesus. In chapter 6 we find an overview of the “levantine years” of Paul's life between his conversion (33 AD) and his work in Antioch with Barnabas (47 AD). Although the evidence is sparse, Barnett makes a convincing case that Paul carried on an extensive work in the regions of Cilicia and Syria.

Chapter 7 is the heart of the book: Paul, True Missionary of Jesus. In fact Barnett states that this was his reason for writing the book. Was Paul's mission to the Gentiles according to the mind of Jesus, an authentic extension of his own ministry to Israel? Was Paul a true missionary of Jesus? Barnett examines the Gospel records to show that Jesus did show a desire for the nations to be incorporated into God's Kingdom. This understanding was also confirmed by the other apostles.

Chapter 8 is an expansion of the previous chapter meant to address the new perspective viewpoints of T. Donaldson and E.P. Sanders. Barnett is no sympathizer for the new perspectives. Donaldson's position, that Paul's mission to the Gentiles predates his conversion, is exposed as resting on nearly nonexistent evidence. Sander's view, that Israel had always viewed the Old Covenant as a covenant of grace, is also severely criticized by Barnett. Paul did not view Christianity as “renewing” the old covenant, but rather “abolishing” it. Barnett does not give a complete critique of Sanders. Rather, he points his readers to the works of S. Kim and D.A. Carson. Barnett's conclusions, however, are devastatingly contrary to the new perspectives viewpoint.

The remainder of the book (chapters 9–12) gives an overview of Paul's mission travels, dealing with theological issues that are unique to the locales of his labors. Special attention is given to his interaction with the Judaizers (who Barnett calls “counter-missionaries”), his work in Corinth and Paul's epistle to the Romans.

In the brief final chapter, Barnett draws six main conclusions relating to the lifetime achievement of Paul: (1) Paul was a gospel herald to the Gentile world, (2) Paul was an exemplary missionary, (3) Paul was an iconic convert to Christianity, (4) Paul was a missionary theologian, (5) Paul was a savior of the church from proto-ebionism (showing salvation came freely apart from law), and finally and most importantly, (6) Paul was a fulfiller of Jesus' vision for the church.

Barnett's work will be appreciated by anyone who values a conservative approach to Pauline studies. It will also be very useful to anyone pursuing a detailed study of Paul, especially those who teach Pauline theology or his mission travels in Acts.

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Michael J. GORMAN. *Reading Paul*. Eugene: Cascade Books/Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2008. 205 pp. \$22.00.

Gorman is recognized primarily for his work on Paul, Pauline theology, and the book of Revelation. However, he also has interests in the fields of general and moral theology and how both of these shape missiological readings of Scripture. This latest volume reflects this collective interest.

Gorman begins by explaining the reason for yet another book on Paul (chapter 1): sociological and theological readings of Paul tend to polarize Paul and the reader, thus making Paul's gospel irrelevant to modern ears. This tendency also manifests itself in how people see the relationship between the teachings of Jesus and Paul (respectively), which is perceived as equally irrelevant and disconnected. This twofold dilemma is what Gorman seeks to address; although more emphasis is laid on the apparent detachment between Paul and the modern reader. Following this introduction, the book is divided into three sections.

First, the general historical questions about Paul and his writing are considered (chapters 2–4). Little here will surprise those familiar with the territory. Occasional hints to debatable topics do emerge that are left open for the newcomer to explore if desired (Paul of Acts vs. the Paul of Paul, Paul's "conversion," opponents of Paul, Paul and rhetorical theory, authorship vs. pseudonymity). Gorman concludes with a summary of the "big ideas" (42) that constitute the Pauline gospel, which becomes the central focus of the book.

Second, Gorman nuances these "big ideas" derived mostly from the undisputed letters, but with some support from the disputed ones (chapters 5–12): God breaking into the world through Christ; covenantal fulfillment; crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension of Christ; justification; sanctification; Christlike living; and the triumphant return of Christ. Gorman shows that Paul's gospel was not an esoteric platitude isolated from the rest of the world; instead, it spoke directly to and engaged with the theological, political, philosophical, and sociological dimensions of first-century life. As in the first section, there are few surprises; however, Gorman does intimate significant points of scholarly debate that would entice the curious student—e.g., covenantal continuity, *Kreuzestheologie*, pre-Pauline credal formations, the New Perspective on Paul, Christian response to suffering, the eschatological salvation of Israel, etc.

Finally, Gorman revisits the idea of Paul as a contemporary "spiritual guide" (2) and his ability to speak to the modern world (chapter 13). The contemporary relevance of Paul is found in the reality that his gospel possesses the power and ability to speak to and engage with the theological, political, philosophical, and sociological dimensions of the modern world. This is so because the church continues to live within the "overlap of the ages" (185). The transformative power of the gospel reveals itself in how the modern church displays the graciousness of God by living Christlike lives through the Spirit of "holiness, peaceableness, inclusion, cruciformity, and justice" (184).

This volume, as a whole, is to be commended for its balance in the material it covers and for its accessible presentation. Particularly, Gorman is to be praised for his treatment not only of Paul's theology of justification but also the theology of a transformed, or "cruciform" (146) life. Both of these topics continue to be debat-

ed within scholarship and the church, and Gorman rightly sees the need to confront these with reverent honesty and a desire to recognize and maintain their interconnectedness. In other words, a “cruciform” life is (or should be) the natural result of justification.

In spite of its brevity, only two points stand out as being potential weaknesses to Gorman’s book. First, the scope of the book is not clearly defined; although there is a thesis statement (see, 8) that rivals (and defeats) Eusebius’s opening to *Ecclesiastical History*. The full weight of this thesis is not lifted until the end of the book; thus, the reader is confronted initially with a rather obscure and daunting picture of what is to unfold. Secondly, the role of the Spirit as a fundamental component of Paul’s gospel is not adequately discussed (140-143); especially in the light of Gorman’s insistence that the church lives within the “overlap of the ages.” For Paul’s gospel, the Spirit is crucial in this regard; however, one is hard-pressed to find this in how Gorman addresses this subject.

Given its size and scope, this volume would be a helpful starting point for those entering an introductory course on Pauline theology; although its usefulness could easily extend to both the pastor and the curious lay-person of a church. This volume would also function as an adequate primer for those interested in Gorman’s more nuanced discussions found in *Cruciformity: Paul’s Narrative Spirituality of the Cross* (2001) and *Apostle of the Crucified Lord: A Theological Introduction to Paul and His Letters* (2004).

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