Book Reviews

Peter J. LEITHART. *Defending Constantine: The Twilight of an Empire and the Dawn of Christendom.* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2010. 373 pp. $28.00.

Leithart challenges the recent theological identification of Constantine "with tyranny, anti-Semitism, hypocrisy, apostasy, and heresy," for "Today, few specialists in the period question the fact that Constantine was a 'real' Christian." Leithart claims that this refocusing has important practical implications, for as southern-hemisphere Christians form the new Christendom, "it is important that they learn from both the successes and the failures of the first Christendom." Instead, "Constantine provides in many respects a model for Christian political practice" impacting perennial questions regarding Christians and politics (9-12).

In IVP's author interview, Leithart seeks to "set the historical record straighter" by offering "a more balanced portrait of his life and achievements, without whitewashing his flaws and sins." Contra Yoder and many others, Leithart denies that Constantinianism is "what went wrong with the church in the West." He questions the modern pacifists' notion that Constantine moved Christian focus from suffering and martyrdom toward violence, military service, and the Empire.

For both interested and expert readers, Leithart provides a fresh biography of Constantine that analyzes the information available, making his work essential to Constantine studies. His method, research, and breadth are exemplary. He cites both ancient and modern authors, weighing their positions through several lenses. He uses expert scholarship, considering opposing views. He provides information often overlooked, especially by historians and theologians not specializing in early Christianity, particularly the fourth century. He cites broad social, legal, and political changes under Constantine—correcting injustices, benefiting the poor, forbidding parricide by exposure (213-227)—yet examines contra-indicators, such as his execution of his wife and son (227-232). He boldly challenges scholars whose positions he considers problematic, or embraces those he considers helpful, regardless of their stature or popularity.

Leithart's open rejection of Yoder's anti-"Constantinianism" is central to the work, particularly the later chapters. He believes Yoder's entire argument is based on the untrue Anabaptist assumption that a pristine church fell into apostasy tracing to Constantine. He rejects Yoder's historical revision (which places "Constantinianism" at the center of a late shift from very Jewish Christianity to a Christianity based on Empire culture) and the similar profile of Hauerwas and their followers (10-11, 133-136, 175-183, 252-254) as misleading misrepresentations of fourth-century culture and personalities. He discredits Yoder's assumptions that the early church was pacifist (255-278) and that "Constantinianism" or proto-"Constantinianism" shifted Christian belief and practice about war, empire, world, church, and future (279-297). He cites contemporary experts, with reasons for rejecting

Yoder's position (309-333). On the other hand, he values Yoder's insistence that war and peace questions be answered by examining all of biblical history (333-341).

Bob Rea
Professor of Church History/Historical Theology
Lincoln Christian University

Keith A. FRANCIS and William GIBSON, eds. *The Oxford Handbook of the British Sermon 1689–1901.* New York: Oxford University Press, 2012. 662 pp. $140.00.

This volume is part of a growing series of volumes dedicated to the emerging field of "sermon studies" from Oxford University. Most of the work on preaching, even the history of preaching, has been conducted from primarily homiletic (how sermons have been constructed) or theological (how sermons communicate doctrine) perspectives. However, as the authors of the companion volume note, "the landscape of sermon studies has been transformed" (Peter McCullough, Hugh Adlington, and Emma Rhatigan, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of the Early Modern Sermon*, xiv). The field of sermon studies, while focusing on homiletic and theological perspectives, is interested in studying sermons for their literary, political, and cultural influence. It is the belief of scholars in this field, most of whom are not preachers or homileticians, that sermons have had a profound impact on cultural and ecclesiastical development.

This volume is an anthology of essays that focus on the historical significance of preaching in Britain during the height of her worldwide imperial influence. As the editors note in their preface, "this volume seeks to restore the centrality of the sermon in this period" (xiii). The volume is divided into seven primary sections, each section reflecting how sermons influenced different aspects of British cultural and political development. The introductory section (chapters 1–2) focuses on setting the stage of the study by evaluating the performative nature of Victorian-era preaching, exploring themes that were consistent in preaching during this time, and analyzing the business of publishing and distributing sermons. The second section (chapter 3–13) focuses on the place of preaching in various theological traditions and cultural settings. For example, Michael Hewitt, in chapter 5, explores the communicative differences seen in delivering lectures from platforms and leading studies in homes. The third section (chapters 14–21) focuses on "occasional" sermons, those sermons that were delivered at special occasions (i.e., coronations, funerals, national holidays). Of particular note in this section is Grayson Ditchfield's chapter entitled "Sermons in the Age of the American and French Revolutions" (chapter 17). The fourth section (chapters 22–28) focuses on various theological and cultural controversies that were propelled through preaching. For example, Bob Tennant examines how Gravel Lane and SPCK-sponsored preaching from Proverbs and Matthew brought about the development of national education. Also, Keith Francis, one of the volume's editors, examines the sermons of William Paley in response to Darwin's publications on evolution and its challenge to natural theology. The fifth section (chapters 29–33) focuses on missionary preaching that occurred alongside colonization. The sixth section (chapters 34–36) focuses on examining sermons as a form of literature. Of note in this section is Linda Gill's chapter in which she argues (as it is done throughout the volume) that the British sermon was the precursor to the Victorian novel. The volume concludes with a

single chapter that lays out boundaries and issues for future research in the field of sermon studies.

Overall, this is not a scintillating read. It is a long book and can be difficult to track with when read straight through. It is academic prose, full of historical situations that the reader may not be familiar with. However, this is an important contribution for at least two reasons. Number one, the field of "sermon studies" is emerging; therefore anything written excellently needs to be on our radar. Second, it sets the sermon in a broader cultural context. The authors of these essays consistently argue that preaching shaped modern-day Britain. Sermons are more than just religious communication; sermons can change the world. I enthusiastically recommend this volume to theological libraries and to homiletical and historical scholars alike.

Rob O'Lynn
Assistant Professor of Preaching and Ministry
Kentucky Christian University

Walter D. RAY. *Tasting Heaven on Earth: Worship in Sixth-Century Constantinople.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012. 169 pp. $28.00.

This second book in the ongoing series called, "The Church at Worship: Case Studies from Christian History," provides readers an intimate glimpse into the worship practices of Christians living in a radically different time and place. In the first of three sections in this book, Ray includes a brief overview of the cultural setting, including a multifaceted timeline, and other aids for gaining a basic understanding of the cultural, liturgical, and geographical factors at play in this context. The second and largest section of the book contains excerpts from Maximus the Confessor's *Mystagogia*—explaining the sequence and significance of the typical worship service—as well as excerpts from a description of the newly remodeled Hagia Sophia by the sixth-century poet, Paul the Silentiary. He also includes additional excerpts and reconstructions from other ancient sources. Ray even provides several diagrams and photographs from Hagia Sophia (including of icons) so as to allow the reader to better envision the setting of the described services. The second section culminates with three sermons from sixth-century Constantinople: one concerning Pentecost by a Presbyter named Leontius, as well as two by the deacon Romanus—one of which is a hymnic sermon on baptism (meant to be sung, called a *kontakion*). The third and final section provides sets of discussion questions for devotional, small group, and scholarly use.

After reading this brief book, one will certainly have a far better understanding of sixth-century Orthodox Christian worship practices in Constantinople. Ray has a very straightforward and concise style, which allows the reader to move swiftly. This readability is enhanced since Ray also recognizes that he is throwing around many technical terms regarding sanctuary items and aspects of the service, so he also provides a sufficient glossary containing these terms; thus a potential weakness of the book is removed. This glossary makes the book far more accessible for readers coming from church traditions such as the Stone-Campbell Movement, as its members are typically unfamiliar with high church jargon in general, let alone ancient Eastern Orthodox terminology.

This book holds value for seminary study in multiple ways. For students of worship, this book contains inspiring snippets from rather unfamiliar forms of worship that are bound to

feed their creativity. For students of church history, this view into the heart of sixth-century Constantinople is truly helpful for pondering questions regarding both the nature of the affect of theological controversies on Christian worship and the ways in which believers reworked their faith in the context of a Christian empire, just as Ray claims the book will. For students of preaching and for practicing ministers alike, the two sermons by Romanos, and the one by Leontius with the marginal commentary notes carry the potential to invigorate with fresh (but tried-and-true!) perspectives on delivery and interpretation. Even lay church members without formal theological education could find spiritual value in this read, especially in light of the small group and personal devotional questions provided near the end.

Due to the possibility that this book may not dig deeply enough into background information concerning worship in Constantinople (although, as mentioned above, Ray does offer a workable knowledge of background issues), he also provides suggestions for further reading to cater to the needs of readers coming from various angles; he provides additional titles for the fields of Church History, Music History, Religious Studies, Preaching History, and even Worship History.

Josh Kugler
M.Div. Student in Church History
Cincinnati Christian University

Joseph F. KELLY. *History and Heresy: How Historical Forces Can Create Doctrinal Conflicts.* Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 2012. 232 pp. $29.95.

For many, the terms "orthodoxy" and "heresy" convey the notion of clearly distinguishable categories of religious thought which possess an absolute, eternal, and almost transcendent quality. In this volume, Kelly, Professor of Religious Studies at John Carroll University, explores the historical context of doctrinal conflicts in order to show that definitions of orthodoxy and heresy are products of history rather than timeless formulations of theological truth and error. In a clearly written and accessible volume, Kelly narrates the history of doctrinal controversies, detailing the variety of social, political, and economic factors that contributed to them.

The result is a sympathetic treatment of the views and aims of those condemned by the church as "heretics." The author seeks to understand heretics on their own terms, prior to the formulation of definitive statements of orthodoxy used against them. In Kelly's view not all heretics were technically guilty of heresy because in many cases the orthodox position was only established during the course of the conflict itself. Even those who did knowingly espouse heretical views still often held positions that could have had some validity for the church if ecclesiastical authorities had engaged them in a more constructive manner.

After an introductory chapter which presents the difficulties associated with the concepts of orthodoxy and heresy, five chapters follow in which Kelly explores selected doctrinal conflicts in church history. Kelly devotes two chapters to the early Christian period, examining first the conflict over the New Prophecy movement, known by its opponents as Montanism, followed by a treatment of the Christological controversies of the 4th–6th centuries, in which he focuses specifically on Monophysitism. Chapter four examines the Cathar movement in the medieval church, while the two chapters that follow deal respectively with the response

to modernism in the Roman Catholic Church and the struggle between Protestant modernists and fundamentalists. In each chapter, Kelly clearly explains not only the salient points of the doctrinal disagreements but also the historical factors that magnified them.

The volume concludes with a chapter devoted to dealing with heresy in the church today. Though Kelly persuasively illuminates the historical factors which contributed to doctrinal conflicts and the heavy-handed and often violent mistreatment employed by church officials against heretics, he insists that today's church not reject the categories of orthodoxy and heresy altogether because of the history of their misuse. The church should remain committed to preserving its historic teaching and confront theology which departs from it. Yet, it must do so in the spirit of humility, recognizing that all theological formulations are provisional and that "heretics" may in fact be offering new perspectives that articulate the nature of divine reality for a contemporary audience more adequately than do earlier formulations.

In spite of the many strengths of this book, two observations may be offered. Though not intended to be a comprehensive treatment of heresy in church history, notable doctrinal controversies are missing from this volume. The inclusion of chapters on Martin Luther, the Anabaptists, and the English Reformation, for example, would have likely expanded this volume beyond a manageable size, but it would have been fascinating for Kelly to examine these topics with the approach he has taken in this book. Some readers may also object to Kelly's somewhat tendentious handling of Protestant Fundamentalism's response to modern thought. Kelly's sympathies clearly lie with the theological liberals in this debate. And even though the conflict in Protestant circles is a "story that has not yet reached its conclusion" (186), Kelly frames the ongoing discussion as one between "modernist Protestantism" on one side and "fundamentalists and other conservatives and evangelical Protestants" on the other (187). Kelly seems to miss the important contribution of scholars who consider themselves conservative yet embrace higher critical exegesis. Nevertheless, this engaging volume can be recommended for general readers interested in church history and theology as well as experts in these fields. Kelly's book would be particularly well suited as a supplementary text in an upper-division undergraduate or seminary survey course in church history as an alternative approach to the subject.

K.C. Richardson
Associate Professor of Biblical Studies
Hope International University

Everett FERGUSON. *The Early Church and Today, vol 1. Ministry, Initiation, and Worship.* Abilene, TX: Abilene Christian University Press, 2012. 335 pp. $26.99.

While the Stone-Campbell Movement is relatively small in comparison to other church bodies, the Movement has produced four past presidents of the North American Patristics Society: Everett Ferguson, Frederick W. Norris, William Tabbernee, and Paul Blowers. Ferguson was the first of them and has had a distinguished teaching career at Abilene Christian University. He has published prolifically for publications inside and outside of the Stone-Campbell Movement, for the church and the academy.

His current volume primarily includes twenty-four previously published book chapters, lectures, and journal articles that span almost fifty years, from 1957–2004. A second volume will follow that focuses on Christian Life, Scripture, and Restoration.

In "Part I: Church and Ministry," Ferguson writes on a number of topics related to a teaching office in the church, ordination, the role of elders, and congregationalism. He writes as an apologist for the free churches. Ferguson demonstrates the way the teaching office in the church shifted from the inspired apostles, itinerant missionaries, and prophets to local church leadership of bishops, deacons, and evangelists, including women in certain contexts. Ferguson also includes several essays on church order, including the role of elders, how bishops came to be distinguished from presbyters, how the early church understood the various roles of ministry, "congregationalism," and the diverse roles of women in the post-apostolic church (while Ferguson does deny that women were permitted to teach in the assembly or serve as bishops/presbyters).

In the second part, "Baptism and Initiation," Ferguson includes two essays on baptism. In the first essay, Ferguson explores many motifs of baptism in the ancient church (Faith and Repentance, Washing, Death and the Devil, Resurrection and Rebirth, and The Seal and Illumination), and while he finds later understandings helpful, he warns about the dangers of simply reading later concepts back into the NT. The second essay discusses the ceremony, action, subjects, and purpose of baptism in the patristic period. Section three discusses how Justin Martyr and Origen understood demonology in light of biblical texts and Greco-Roman understanding.

The last two parts pertain to worship, the assembly, and singing. The essays' topics include Justin Martyr's description of early Christian liturgy, linguistic issues, the Sabbath, and congregational singing. In one essay, Ferguson summarizes Jewish religious music in the first century as the background for the early church. He demonstrates that early Christian singing had its roots in the psalmody of the temple, and the singing of the Psalms likely shifted to unaccompanied singing in the synagogues and carried over to Jewish singing in homes and sectarian groups. In two other essays, Ferguson uses this Jewish background, in addition to NT texts, sources from church history, the contemporary example of the Eastern Churches, and theological approaches to argue for a cappella worship in the Christian assembly. While those in the Christian Churches (independent) and Disciples of Christ likely will not take instruments out of their churches, Ferguson makes the argument for a cappella worship more understandable and relatable to those outside of the Churches of Christ.

The work, as the forward says, falls "between technical writings for an academic audience and popular writings for a church audience" (11). Despite this, most chapters simply state what early Christians thought about a variety of issues without providing any advice on how their thought should be applied. What titles should be used for church leaders? What role do women have in the contemporary church? How should we appropriate and/or not appropriate Justin Martyr's and Origen's demonology?

Despite this "inadequacy," Ferguson provides readers an excellent collection of his writings that, alongside his *Early Christians Speak* (3rd ed., 1999), could help introduce people to the patristic period. It would not only benefit scholars, undergraduate and graduate students, and pastors, but interested church members as well.

Shaun C. Brown
Associate Minister of Youth
Central Holston Christian Church
Bristol, Tennessee

Robin M. JENSEN. *Baptismal Imagery in Early Christianity: Ritual, Visual, and Theological Dimensions.* Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012. 238 pp. $25.00.

Not since Edward Yarnold's *The Awe-Inspiring Rites of Initiation* has there been an attempt to give such a moving and comprehensive account of the ritual experience of early Christian initiation. While Yarnold's classic study focused on the liturgical aspects of the rite, Jensen's volume is a multidisciplinary look at how the baptismal rite might have been enacted and experienced in the early centuries of the church. Using a wealth of documentary evidence from catecheses, sermons, and liturgies, combined with actual remains of early baptisteries and baptismal images, Jensen "recreates" the baptismal experience for contemporary readers, hearers, and viewers. Indeed, as Jensen notes, early Christian baptism engaged a several-stage ritual pattern consisting of spoken words, gestures, visual images, water, oil, breath, and light, all delivered in a spatial context. Accordingly, the aim of the book is to "appeal to the reader's imagination by offering a collection of both textual and material data that both informs and inspires it." (4)

To accomplish this rather vast task Jensen organizes her material according to five core motifs, following a "somewhat" chronological trajectory (4). The first chapter deals with baptism as ritual cleansing. The second deals with baptism as a rite of initiation into community. The third chapter looks at baptism as a means to impart sacred knowledge. The fourth treats baptism as participation in the death and resurrection of Christ. The fifth and final chapter considers the eschatological implications of baptism as the hope for the restoration of creation itself. Jensen admits that this categorization may result in some overlap of ritual action and meaning or effect. Throughout the study she seeks to avoid complex arguments concerning the doctrinal or chronological development of the rite or regional differences. Rather, her goal is to demonstrate the complexity of early Christian baptism by considering the textual, ritual, and visual materials which illustrate the rite (4). Nevertheless, at times it is apparently difficult to account for variations in practice without delving into historical development or doctrinal differences.

The interjection of historical backgrounds or divergent practices occasionally mars her organization of the material. For example, in the midst of a consideration of liturgical gestures relating to cleansing in chapter one, Jensen feels compelled to give an account of Greco-Roman, as well as Jewish, antecedents to immersion. Likewise, when dealing with baptismal illumination in chapter three, she takes an excursion into heterodox and Gnostic practices. The chapter, as she describes it, considers the gift of the Holy Spirit as it occurs in early Christian documents, religious practice, and in Christian iconography and architecture. (91) But it also seeks to give an account for the various ways in which the gift was perceived to have been transmitted and the differences of opinion about the validity of water to convey the gift. (91-105) *The Gospel of Thomas*, perhaps not surprisingly, appears in both orthodox and heterodox settings. The material is well researched and certainly provides the reader with the bibliography to take the study further, but it also seems a bit of a distraction when reconstructing the rite. These materials might better have been placed in footnotes or an appendix. Otherwise, Jensen gives a smooth reconstructive discourse.

Jensen references the breadth of scholarship on the topic of early initiation, including the more recent extensive study by Ferguson, as well as the German, French, and Italian classics on baptismal liturgy, symbolism, and architecture. (10) Yet her study remains overall visual and experiential. Each chapter traces the chronological development of the theme from

Scripture through patristic catecheses, sermons, and hymnody. With this foundation, Jensen turns to images, architectural settings, and liturgical gestures. This pattern gives imaginative coherence to what in truth is a heap of material. For example, in chapter one, Jensen gives a cursory overview of NT baptism, then moves on to early Christian exegetes' handling of the topic (Ignatius, Justin, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Cyril, Ambrose, Theodore, and Narsai). Next are the biblical types (Baptism of Christ, Noah, Jonah, the Red Sea Crossing, Naaman, the Paralytic, and the Man Born Blind). These are attested by the Fathers and given prolific expression in early Christian art and architecture. Finally, the volume covers the liturgical rites relating to cleansing and healing (*Apostolic Traditions*, *Apostolic Constitutions*, et al). These rites include the Scrutinies and Exorcisms, the Giving of Salt and Exsufflation, the Renunciation of Satan, Spiritual Disciplines, the Stripping and Preliminary Anointing, the Triple Immersion, and the Foot Washing. (42-48) So it goes for each chapter. Without Jensen's mastery, the book might have folded under its own weight. As it is, the book impresses upon us what a treasure trove of riches we have from early Christian initiation, including the stunning visual remains.

Beyond the numerous images from catacombs, sarcophagi, and more, Jensen takes us to Dura Europos, Naples' San Giovanni in Fonte, Ravenna's Orthdox and Arian Baptisteries, the Baptistery in Albenga, Liguria, the fonts from the Church of Vitalis, Sbeitla, and Kelibia in Tunisia, and more. Jensen has sifted through a mass of imagery in order to select pictures which specifically illustrate her themes. The book contains no color plates and the details in some of the images are sometimes difficult to see. Many of the black and white photographs were taken by the author. This no doubt accounts for the affordability of the book. Given the extensive bibliography and contemporary access to images online, it is not difficult to reconstruct the visual material for oneself.

It is impossible here to give an account of the beauty of this book. The extensive quotations from catecheses, but especially from hymnody, the rich description of liturgical action, and especially the art and architecture, paint a vivid picture of the early rite. Knowing the extensive preparation that candidates endured, their patience in listening to sermons before and after their experience, the night long vigil, and the multisensory physical experience itself, one is led to wonder about our truncated versions across denominations today. When less and less Christian imagery is employed to attract newcomers and create a "comfortable" space for nonbelievers, one wonders how much more can be excised? Are we in fact headed toward a new and pervasive Gnosticism? Robin Jensen's book is not only a scholarly summation of early praxis, it is a tool for reflection, discussion, and even devotion. It is well-suited to the academy, but with a little help from pastors may serve congregational use as well. This makes it a wonderful contribution to the field.

Karen M. Lindsay
Northwest Christian University
Eugene, Oregon

Paul HARVEY. *Through the Storm, through the Night: A History of African American Christianity*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2011. 217 pp. $40.00.

Harvey's current work adds a necessary volume to the sparsely filled bookcase dedicated to African American Christian history. Notably more concise than C. Eric Lincoln's and

Lawrence H. Mamiya's *The Black Church in the African American Experience* (1990), Harvey's book more closely resembles a book published a decade later by Albert Raboteau, *Canaan Land: A Religious History of African Americans* (2001). Not including the 45-page anthology of primary source documents located in the back of his book, Harvey offers a substantive, chronological record of African American Christianity in under 150 pages.

Professor of History at the University of Colorado, Harvey has spent his career researching, writing about, and teaching African American Christian history. His position on the editorial boards of various journals, including the *Journal for Southern History*, places Harvey on the frontlines of church history scholarship. In addition to his other books, *Redeeming the South* (1997) and *Freedom's Coming* (2005), Harvey also writes for and manages the scholarly blog, Religion in American History.

This volume offers six chronologically ordered chapters, beginning with a section on the Middle Passage in the sixteenth century and culminating with the American presidential election of Barack Obama in 2008. In between these bookends, Harvey describes the birth of African American Christianity in the brush arbors of the South, the attempts of American whites to evangelize slaves in the antebellum period, the struggles of African Americans in the Jim Crow era, and the leadership provided by black churches during the Civil Rights Movement.

Harvey's condensed version of this history provides nothing new to the narrative reported earlier by Raboteau's *Canaan Land*; however, the special attention paid to African American cultural products, most notably music, provides a new voice to the discussion. Instead of rehearsing the worn-out story of how African Americans adjusted and adapted their behaviors to find their place in the American and ecclesiastical cultures dominated by whites, Harvey explains how the music created by African American slaves, freed persons, civil rights activists, blues musicians, and rap artists has helped to shape the identity of this nation and the church.

In addition to highlighting the pivotal role music played in African American history, Harvey also gives a special hearing to the voice of women. Too many studies of African Americans begin and end with key male personalities, such as Frederick Douglass, Henry McNeal Turner, and Martin Luther King Jr. While not discounting these shapers of African American identity, Harvey also brings to the conversation the voices of Harriet Tubman, Lucy Smith, Fannie Lou Hamer, and Mahalia Jackson. Readers of this volume will see a more accurate picture of the African American experience due to Harvey's inclusion of so many female portraits.

The presidential election of 2008 once again brought race and religion to the center stage of American politics. Media outlets and white Christian pulpits tried to make sense of the Reverend Jeremiah Wright's jeremiad against America and its influence upon Barack Obama. Desperately needed has been a thorough and contextual appraisal of that pivotal moment in American history. Harvey fills that void. Placing Wright's sermon in its broader context of African American protest—a context that includes sermons preached by seventeenth-century slave preachers, the nineteenth-century intellectual Henry Highland Garnet, and even the twentieth-century civil rights icon Martin Luther King Jr.—Harvey helps his readers understand better Wright's indictment of America (and perhaps even the cultural worldview of America's current President).

Although Harvey's tremendous volume provides close examination of African American denominations, he rarely offers a glance at those African Americans who remained in pre-

dominantly white denominations. James S. Thomas' *Methodism's Racial Dilemma* (1992) and Joel L. Alvis' *Religion and Race* (1994) tackle specific periods in the history of Methodism and Presbyterianism, but neither trace African Americans in these denominations for four centuries. Harvey's work makes one wonder how African American members of the Stone-Campbell Movement, for example, contributed to or were shaped by African American identity from their place in predominantly white denominations.

Notwithstanding this minor critique, Harvey has offered a valuable text for new students in the field of African American history. Instructors in introductory courses will undoubtedly enrich their students with this concise and thought-provoking volume for years to come.

Wes Crawford
Senior Minister
Glenwood Church of Christ
Tyler, Texas

Paul M. BLOWERS. *Drama of the Divine Economy: Creator and Creation in Early Christian Theology and Piety*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2012. 440 pp. $160.00.

Creation is a hot topic in contemporary theology. Many biblical scholars and theologians, prompted by the environmental devastation caused by modern societies, have turned to the task of "greening" Christian theology and ethics. These treatments can range from the most banal affirmation of a vague concept of stewardship to the more extreme ecotheologies heavily influenced by the process theology of the mid-twentieth century. Blowers's current volume stands in marked contrast to these approaches. Rather than "greening" the witness of the earliest Christians, Blowers, the Dean E. Walker Professor of Church History at Emmanuel Christian Seminary, allows them to set the agenda. This results in a beautifully rich tapestry demonstrating the diversity, as well as the unity, of the nascent church's doctrinal and devotional teaching on creation.

Blowers recognizes the complexity of the task he sets out to accomplish in this book. He notes that for the earliest Christians the doctrine of creation included not just "the origins of the world (cosmogony) and the nature and structure of the universe (cosmology) but also properly theological considerations about the precise relation of the triune Creator to the time-bound creation and the ontological chasm (*diastema*) that separates them. . . . [Because of this,] the theology of creation addresses questions of the nature of time itself and of the transcending eternity of God, as well as the towering questions of theodicy, divine providence and the status of evil in creation" (1-2). Thus, for the earliest Christians, creation was far from being a theological afterthought, primarily concerned with Christian ethics in relation to environmental stewardship; rather, it set the agenda for the early church's properly theological concerns. The patristic writers were passionately interested in the questions of how physical creation came about as a result of the actions of a God who, as writers such as Ps-Dionysius, Maximus the Confessor, and John Scottus Eriugena understood so well, defies the category of being as such.

Blowers begins by describing the philosophical milieu concerning the material world that surrounded the early church, Greco-Roman as well as Hellenistic Jewish thought. This insightful analysis is necessary for understanding not only the complex questions that the

early church was asking about the material world (concerning, for example, human freedom, the nature of evil, whether the cosmos was infinite or closed, and the problem of unity and diversity within the material order), but also the methodologies that they employed in answering these questions (e.g., the philosophical categories of Plato, the scriptural hermeneutics of Philo of Alexandria). This background work sets the stage for Blowers's exposition of the development of a normative Christian discourse about creation in pre-Nicene Christianity. As the early church sought to provide an answer to the problems elicited by the various teachers and groups categorized as Gnostic, they began to articulate a positive Christocentric vision of the cosmos (Irenaeus and Origen being the prototypical examples of this).

Blowers devotes much of his book to describing how the earliest Christians read the scriptural passages that pertain to the doctrine of creation. Foremost among these passages, is, of course, the first two chapters of the book of Genesis. The earliest Christians were vitally concerned with reading these chapters literally, Blowers notes, but they understood this differently from the way contemporary readers might first imagine. The foremost concern of the majority of patristic writers was to read these passages in the *theologically* literal sense. Such a reading, Blowers notes, "could be patient of multiple approaches (even allegory) in the quest to discern God's intended meaning for the church" (9). The result is that, for patristic exegetes, Genesis 1 becomes a kind of montage of the whole of salvation history, pointing to God's action of creation surely, but also pointing ahead, as it were, to the appearance of salvation in Jesus of Nazareth.

Indeed, as Blowers's treatment of interpretations of creation passages outside of Genesis testifies, patristic exegetes understood the NT "prepositional" understanding of Christ's relation to creation (i.e., creation is "in Christ," "through Christ," and "for Christ") as the hermeneutical key for all of Scripture's witness regarding creation. It was the testimony of Scripture itself that drove the early church to understand creation not only protologically, but teleologically—only able to be properly understood in light of Jesus Christ. In the same way, Blowers highlights that patristic writers did not only see the Jesus of the Gospel writers in his soteriological or even eschatological roles, but very often in cosmological roles. The events of Jesus' birth, baptism, and passion were events within the same great cosmic drama as creation *ex nihilo* and the future consummation of the cosmos. Blowers writes that the early Christians understood this drama as the "intricate plot of God's forward-moving creative and salvific activity, driving toward an eschatological target or *skopos* which, in view of the simultaneity of his will, is always also a throwback, as it were, to his original creativity" (246).

This study is a substantial endeavor. Blowers draws upon a wide variety of sources, from early Christian homilies, theological treatises, devotional literature, and even literature detailing the lives of ascetics; he addresses sources from every geographical corner of the early centuries of the church, not overprioritizing either Latin or Greek sources, and also interacting with Syriac material. Blowers not only skillfully interacts with major sources like Origen, Augustine, or Maximus, he also draws upon material that informed Christian practices (e.g., Eucharistic prayers, monastic orders) in order to properly depict the panorama of patristic belief about Creator and creation. However, one deficiency with this work is the minimal attention given to nonwritten sources. Surely the plethora of early Christian art and architecture, from illuminated manuscripts to reliefs on sarcophagi to baptismal architecture, has something to contribute to a comprehensive picture of early Christian beliefs about creation.

While it is necessarily theologically and philosophically technical at times, this book deserves praise for its clarity. Blowers does a fine job of ordering and summarizing the diverse figures and approaches to the doctrine of creation in the early church, taking care to note where similarities are more implicit in light of diversity in philosophical language. Blowers particularly makes an excellent use of headings within each chapter, with the positive result that this book could be utilized as a reference book of sorts for issues relating to the doctrine of creation in the patristic period. While the study would have benefited from a more substantial treatment of the understanding of the "wise use" of material goods, given the early church's concern over acquisitive vices (greed, lust) and the contemporary concern over ecological stewardship, it is nevertheless a great reservoir for Christian teachers and pastors who seek to offer the church deeper thinking about the material world. This volume is highly recommended for those familiar with patristic scholarship who are interested in any aspect of the doctrine of creation.

Stephen Lawson
PhD Student in Historical Theology
Saint Louis University

Suzanne HESCHEL. *The Aryan Jesus: Christian Theologians and the Bible in Nazi Germany.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010. 360 pp. $28.95.

Heschel's book portrays itself as an investigation of Christian theologians in the Third Reich, though its conclusions are largely based on a limited group that includes Walter Grundmann and those involved in the "Institute for the Study and Eradication of Jewish Influence on German Church Life," founded in 1939 and shuttered in 1945. Heschel, who began studying the Institute nearly two decades before the publication of this book, was the first scholar to discover many of the primary source documents concerning the Institute.

Among its various projects, the Institute developed a thematically organized version of the Bible that eliminated Jewishness by excising the OT and many of Paul's writings, along with changes to individual verses. They also supervised the publication of a new hymnal that removed hymns with supposed Jewish elements. In addition, the Institute provided a forum for like-minded scholars to present and publish papers.

The book's strongest sections are those dealing with the postwar period. It describes how numerous blatantly anti-Semitic theologians and church officials maintained their positions or were quickly and superficially rehabilitated and reinstated. Heschel's discussion about how German theologians recast the German people as the (symbolically Jewish) victims in the postwar world, is also a compellingly disturbing section. Unfortunately, these parts are short-changed, receiving only one full chapter.

Having invested years researching the Institute, it is clearly important to Heschel, but it is unclear how influential it was in Nazi Germany. She uses its number of conferences and published volumes of work to prove its importance, but the prolific nature of a body does not inherently attest to its impact (282). The fact that it was founded halfway into the Third Reich, and used decades old anti-Semitic theological trends, downplays its impact. Other scholars have shown that Germans coming of age during the war years were already inculcated by Nazi ideology, so if the Institute was popular, it was likely because it capitalized on existing German thinking. Its popularity, though frequently referenced by Heschel, is never

proven. Instead, she uses vague terms like "a remarkable number," once arguing that something "can be assumed," while another time that a group "apparently succeeded" (64, 116, 141). And the quantitative information provided, concerning the Institute's Bible and Hymnal, seems to challenge their significance. There is no evidence to say whether the average German who bought one of the Institute Bibles (sold at a loss) used it to replace the Bible they already owned (111). Over 200,000 copies of the Hymnal were produced in its first year, but she admits that "the reception of the hymnal, *Grosser Gott*, is difficult to judge" (125). What we really need to know is whether a substantial amount of their content was adopted by the pulpit and the laity.

There are also issues with Heschel's treatment of Christianity and some pieces of history. Some passages might offend, such as the claim that Paul founded Christianity, and the repeated comment that the Gospel of John is "historically unreliable" (70, 34, 108). She also uses obfuscating blanket terms, such as "the church," which could refer to a denomination, or Protestants, Catholics, or Christians in general (287). Another flaw concerns some of her historical accounts. She calls a political party in 1924 a "precursor to the Nazi Party," even though the Nazi Party predated the former by about four years (45). More troubling is her assertion that the Kapp Putsch, which originated within the army, was a "Nazi coup d'etat" (184). Hitler's involvement in that event was an afterthought, so placing it in the hands of the Nazis is inaccurate.

If one has poured through the many books written about Nazi Germany and is looking for something that is little discussed, and warrants further investigation, then Heschel's volume will provide that outlet. But as much as it tries to present the feelings of German Christians in general, it is not an overview, and is probably best avoided by general audiences.

David Adams
Assistant Professor of History
Harding University

Thomas R. SCHREINER. *The King in His Beauty: A Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments.* Grand Rapids: Baker, 2013. 734 pp. $44.99.

As the subtitle indicates, Schreiner's volume is an ambitious attempt to provide a whole-Bible biblical theology; in doing so, Schreiner particularly seeks to address students and the local church (x). Schreiner acknowledges that academic audiences have tended to receive attempts at whole-Bible biblical theologies with comparatively greater skepticism (xii). Although the present volume is not specifically directed to academics, Schreiner still diligently qualifies that his contribution to the discussion does not attempt to present *the* definitive or best angle from which to consider pan-biblical theology (x). Rather, as simply *a* fruitful angle from which a pan-biblical theology can be written, Schreiner proposes the overarching category of the kingdom of God (xii, xvi).

Schreiner identifies three aspects of the kingdom of God he finds particularly salient when using the theme as a lens for pan-biblical theology (xiii, xv). First, the kingdom of God clearly has the aspect of divine rulership (xiii). In one sense, Yahweh's rulership is a permanent fact of creation. The creator is always lord and king. In another sense however, Yahweh's rule has frequently been flouted by willful creatures, but humans' fear of Yahweh

reverses this rebellion and causes Yahweh's right order to become manifest concerning them. In this way, second, the kingdom of God comes into focus particularly concerning human subjects (xiii-xiv). Humanity is the "crown of creation" (xiii), and with humanity, Yahweh particularly makes covenants. Covenants designate particular people as subjects of Yahweh's beneficent rule. Yet, Yahweh also exercises his kingship even in judgment when such subjects rebel. Third, the universe is where Yahweh's rulership is expressed (xv). By no fault of its own, the cosmos has been affected negatively by human sin, but Yahweh will one day fully restore the cosmos.

Although skepticism is sometimes expressed about pan-biblical theologies, what seems difficult will likely only ever remain so if it is left untried. Thus, Schreiner is certainly to be commended for stepping into this foray and working to provide a coherent and profitable pan-biblical theology. Schreiner's attention to canon in articulating an approach to a whole-Bible theology is quite appropriate (xv-xvi). In this volume however, the category of canon has greater relevance as a provider of material than as a particular hermeneutical guide (cf. 301, 429). Thus, especially in the chapters on the OT (3-427), the work frequently has a survey character, and the term "canonically" or some cognate often appears primarily to signal some kind of intrabiblical typological connection (5, 10, 33n16, 56, 66, 116, 118, 127, 140, 153, 172, 183, 196, 198, 220, 253, 256-257, 264, 266, 294, 317-319, 344-345, 347, 362, 370-371, 382-383). In these cases, comparatively little space is devoted to integrating the various books' testimony with each other. Even in the occasional summary interludes, the discussion tends to take up each book in sequence rather than working explicitly toward integration among the various parts of the preceding discussions (101-103, 226-229, 320-323, 420-422). Similarly, in commenting on the NT, the volume's approach is "canonical" primarily regarding its attention to an authoritative subject matter rather than regarding its hermeneutical or organizing principle (428-429, 469-39, 608-612). As a whole then, the volume may provide a less fully and coherently articulated pan-biblical theology than seems to have been intended (543), but the work is a valuable effort in this direction.

Perhaps the book's chief virtue is as a detailed survey of biblical literature. C. S. Lewis once observed that a beginning student of classical Greek literature can tend to be "half afraid to meet one of the great philosophers face to face. He feels himself inadequate and thinks he will not understand him" ("On the Reading of Old Books," in *God in the Dock: Essays in Theology and Ethics*, ed. Walter Hooper [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970], 200). The same phenomenon can also be quite noticeable with beginning students of biblical literature. These students may find themselves feeling inadequate to the task of working directly through the biblical literature in a theologically enriching way. Thus, a resource like Schreiner has provided may indeed prove to be a useful handmaid in leading its intended audience gently and by degrees carefully to consider the biblical text and heartily to cherish the king whom the text sets forth in all his beauty.

J. David Stark
eCampus Director
Faulkner University

Miguel A. DE LA TORRE and Albert HERNANDEZ. *The Quest for the Historical Satan*. Fortress, 2012. 248 pp. $20.00.

Torre, a Christian ethicist and self-described Baptecostal Catholic Santero (xi) and Hernandez, a Roman Catholic historian (ix) set out in this volume to debunk modern popular views of Satan that see him as the source for all evil saying that this view of Satan is relatively late. Instead, they suggest that one should view Satan as something akin to a trickster god in other religions. One who's purpose may not be evil, but benevolent, or at least neutral.

The first chapter, "Satan in the Modern World," begins by looking at how various groups, Hollywood, Satanists, Fundamentalists, Catholics, and others, view Satan today. This is, perhaps, their strongest chapter, for they show how far off popular conceptions of Satan are today. Just as many people tend to view Heaven as a place where good people go when they die to receive wings and a harp, many popular conceptions of Satan tend to view him as absolute evil, contending with God (and nigh equal to him) over the souls of us poor humans. From here, however, the volume goes down the same hole in many ways, since they seem to primarily focus on popular understandings of Satan throughout history rather than theological understandings of Satan.

Their true quest begins in ancient Egypt with god of chaos Seth or Set (52-56). From here they use a growth metaphor (from birth to death) for the evolving understandings of Satan. They do well to point out that Satan in the Hebrew Bible is something of an ambiguous figure, never being shown to do things on his own and never shown as in open rebellion to God. Instead, Satan is viewed as the accuser, someone who has a purpose in God's divine court. As the Israelites go into captivity, their conceptions of Satan grow, to include ideas picked up about chaotic or evil gods from Persia and Babylon (63-74). From here Satan reaches his early adulthood in the NT.

The authors gloss over the early church fathers, noting some references to Satan and noting Augustine's understanding of evil via the *privatio boni* (83). They seem to ignore, however, that Satan is not the main focus of Augustine's understanding of privation. Instead, for Augustine, all intellectual beings who have free will are (or at least were) capable of sinning, sourcing evil in nonbeing and acts of evil in free will and inordinate desires. They seem to ignore this since it goes against their picture of Christians viewing Satan as the source of all evil. They do admit later on (130) that Augustine's picture of Satan and evil is very different, and that it connects better with their view of the trickster god aspects of Satan. More on this below. The rest of the volume is a series of case studies throughout primarily Christian (though instances of Jewish and Islamic as well) history of how Satan and his demons are used to oppress, and often kill, those who worship other gods than the Christian God, as well as looking at other ethical implications of the perceived current understanding of Satan as source of all evil.

In the end, Torre and Hernandez want their readers to stop viewing Satan as some cosmic force at battle with Christ and God being the true antithesis of everything for which they stand. What they proffer instead is the trickster, one who uses deception and temptation to try humans, leading some on to deeper dependence on God and others to fall by the wayside (213). This picture of Satan is attractive. It even, in the eyes of this reviewer, is the proper way Christians ought to view temptation, as a trial. It does not, however, require that we

view Satan as benevolent as trying to weed out the wheat from the chaff for the glory of God. They seem to ignore the idea that Satan could provide this service in spite of himself. That he could believe himself as rebelling and that God could use his rebellion.

This volume is clearly written with a popular audience in mind and does an excellent job of communicating its information. Their take on ancient history is at least par for the course in terms of much standard modern biblical historicism. However, their biases, especially those of De La Torre, who desires people to stop seeing folk religions as demon worship, are so evident throughout that the implicit objectivity with which the volume purports to be written fails.

This volume could be useful in pointing toward ancient sources and their depictions of Satan, but its depiction of Christian history, particularly from the patristic and medieval periods, ignores major thinkers and views them only through the lens of Satan, master of evil. As an introduction to the topic of the history of Satan, this volume could prove useful. As an introduction to Judaeo-Christian ethics or the history of evil and its origins, however, one would be better served studying that material much more closely in other sources.

David Russell Mosley
Ph.D. Student in Theology
University of Nottingham

Alister E. McGRATH. *Mere Apologetics: How to Help Seekers & Skeptics Find Faith.* Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011. 197 pp. $16.99.

McGrath, professor of theology, ministry, and education at King's College in London is also president of the Oxford Center for Christian Apologetics. McGrath, a prolific author, among his numerous writings is *C.S. Lewis—A Life*, *Christianity's Dangerous Idea*, and his *The Passionate Intellect.*

McGrath clarifies his purpose in writing when he states, "This book does not reflect the approach of any school of apologetics, but aims to equip its users to think apologetically, drawing on the best apologists to help explore the issues" (35).

A major emphasis in this particular volume is adapting your message to fit your audience. As our author points out, "People do not exist in cultural vacuums" (25). Therefore, the thoughtful apologist must first know his audience before his apologetic approach is decided upon. Strategic variety can be illustrated in the way Peter preached to Jews in Acts 2 and how Paul preached to Greeks in Acts 17. Christians must avoid a one-size-fits-all approach to proclaiming the gospel and instead tailor the good news to be 'receptor-oriented.' Young apologists can wrongly assume seekers and skeptics are one homogeneous group. And, therefore, fail to scratch where their particular audiences itch.

Professor McGrath's writing style is simple without being simplistic. For example, he introduces his readers to Charles Peirce's method of abduction, or inference to the best explanation, without becoming technical. McGrath then builds his cumulative case for the Christian faith. He does a superb job in briefly explaining and illustrating the Argument from Desire, the Moral Argument, and examples of Fine-Tuning. The following chapter exposes young apologists to Francis Schaeffer's concept of 'points of tension' and the idea of 'taking the roof off.' In a text of only 175 pages, the reader will become conversant in the arguments and concepts of Christian apologetics.

When discussing the intuition of hope McGrath ponders, "Maybe God has planted the idea of eternity in our hearts as a clue to the true meaning of the universe" (120). He then goes on to admit, "This is not really a *logical* argument . . . it is about interpretation of the human situation" (120). While some works on apologetics focus solely on the rational, this volume repeatedly emphasizes how many postmoderns will more readily appreciate a focus on human feelings and longings. A strength of this volume is the emphasis that is placed on demonstrating the Christian faith as a livable worldview. Thus, the apologists must be capable of showing how their faith makes sense of all aspects of life, not merely the cognitive.

One weakness of the book is how McGrath repeatedly points out his volume does not follow any one approach to the apologetic task. Instead it is a collectivist writing. However, the nuances between a classical and evidentialist approach are never discussed even in summary form. Yet, for an introduction to apologetics it would be helpful to point out the different approaches between Alvin Plantinga and Francis Schaeffer even if ever so briefly. The book does a disservice to its novice readers by alluding to different apologetic schools without giving them a hint of what those approaches represent.

This volume is the written form of McGrath's lecture material after six years of teaching an introductory course on apologetics at the Oxford Center for Christian Apologetics. The book is neither an advanced nor a specialized text. For introductory purposes it would be a fine textbook for colleges or seminaries. Likewise, this volume would be a great discussion starter for the studious small group.

Andrew Ramey
Senior Minister
Parkway Christian Church
Pekin, Illinois

Jurgen MOLTMANN. *Ethics of Hope*. Translated by Margaret Kohl. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2012. 271 pp. $27.00.

This volume is the long-awaited "conclusion" as well as most contemporary application of Moltmann's eschatologically driven theology that first made its appearance with the publication of his 1964 volume, *Theology of Hope*. Moltmann should need little introduction to *SCJ* readers, much less the theological world in general due to his celebrated if not controversial model that views the past and the present through the lens of the consummated future. While such an organizing motif has drawn criticisms from both spectrums of the theological academy in the ensuing years, there can be little argument that the Tübingen scholar has renewed "the future" as a prominent biblical theme that is fundamental to present-day Christian practice. While Moltmann, himself, intended for this book to follow fairly soon after the publication of his seminal work (xi), his readers are grateful that he further explicated such themes as social trinitarianism in volumes like *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God* (1980), which helped to clarify that he was remaking traditional Christian doctrines about God into a Hegelian *geist*. Successive Moltmann works have also demonstrated that his "this-worldly" eschatology is not merely "baptized Marxism" (a conservative charge) or paradoxically, frequent liberationist accusations that his political theology is typically "European;" meaning, abstract generalities that fail to address the real issues of the here and now. We should also be glad that Moltmann delayed this present volume due to the current challenges

to human beings and the planet that have resulted due to unprecedented advances in science, medicine, and technology. Thus, this volume finally arrives on the scene not as a tome offering general ethical principles but rather as a focused attempt to address specific global issues with God's inscripturated promise "to rescue life from the jaws of death" (back cover).

Moltmann's eschatological ethic can be seen in his use of the Isaianic vision of turning swords to ploughshares (Isa 4:2). The author comments that this verse offers an ethical ethos that "(does not) turn swords into Christian swords, not to retreat from the swords to ploughshares, but (rather) to make ploughshares out of swords" (xiii). This perspective produces two seemingly contradictory actions on the part of the faithful Church (what else would one expect from a dialectical theologue!): waiting and hastening. Moltmann quickly notes that the former is not mere passivity or quietism but an unrelenting vision of the future that causes believers to repudiate the present-world systems by nonconformity to its patterns (7). The second action, then (hastening), is a call to actively challenge these fallen systems in deed and word, thus enabling and empowering the world's marginalized populations (including nature) to experience the Lord's glorious future in the here and now (8). Unfortunately, church history is often a disturbing narrative of wait/hastening distortions: secular swords are turned into Christian swords (Constantinian Roman Catholicism as well as much Protestantism), or there is a withdrawal from the sword to the more peaceful arena of the plowshare (Anabaptist). The authentic hope ethic does not conquer the world by its own violence, "Christianize" societal structures that need to be resisted or exorcised, or live as God's "alternative community" separate from the world. The ethics of hope, rather, brings a "transformative eschatology "(41), that sees the future in light of Christ's resurrection. This in turn, enables the People of God to recognize the world's fallen structures for what they are, come together across national and partisan lines, and practice "transforming actions that anticipate the coming, new creation which God has promised"(41). Not surprisingly, Moltmann sees twentieth-century martyrs, Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Martin Luther King as perhaps the best embodiments of transformational ethics (see especially Part 4).

With this principle firmly in place, Moltmann spends the bulk of this volume (Parts 2–5) explicating some fairly specific examples of hope-driven Christian practice. He organizes his comments around three contemporary challenges which threaten the cosmos: endangered life, the threatened earth, and the lack of justice and righteousness. Readers will find in these pages the vintage, dialectical Moltmann who is neither a prisoner to the political right or left, one who brings alongside some "interesting" dialog and supporting partners in his interaction with biblical sources (the Gaia Theory, Darwinian evolution, and the United Nations), and a champion of democracy but a fierce critic of western capitalism. There are some absolutely astute observations about how modern medicine has potentially reduced human beings to genetics (creating even further antipathy to those with disabilities, 80-81), and how the contemporary "health cult" has revived the ancient obsession with the "soldierly body" to the detriment of a biblical notion of embodiment that celebrates life and love (93-106). Perhaps most intriguing is Moltmann's positive use of the Gaia Theory ("living earth") and Darwinian evolution to bolster his biblical argument that humanity must recover its sense of "co-creatureliness" and its unique role of responsibility for creation rather than its master. As he pithily remarks: "*God's Sabbath* (not humans, themselves) is the crown with which human beings are blessed together with all created beings" (112, emphasis, mine). In his final encounter with this age's destructive powers (lack of justice and righteousness), the

author offers an insightful parody on traditional Christian views of war (*bellum iustum*), calling for a "just peace" (163). In this section, Moltmann contends for a Christian, "alternative community," that not only practices righteousness and justice among its member (as is the case of classical Anabaptism) but in the thick of secular society. An ethics of hope inspires—and requires—a peace that "consists of the present existence of righteousness and justice, not just the absence of violence" (163). While the earlier Moltmann's political theory was easily appropriated by liberation theologians to further a Marxist revolt against the ruling powers, this final volume makes it clear that "dragon-slaying" is best accomplished not by being an enemy to our enemy but rather by a "thirst for righteousness," that transforms hatred into love (200-204). In a brief final section, Moltmann brings together his case for eschatological living by reminding us that we do not use God as our means of changing the world but rather (as Augustine so well observed) we change the world to enjoy God (229). This taste of final *shalom* can be awakened in "strangers in a strange land" by renewing our appreciation of the great commemorative events of Sabbath, and Easter, and a "new Christian mysticism" that actively sees the pain and suffering of this world in the "daybreak of its eternal beauty" (239).

This volume is not a perfect book by any means. A common criticism of Moltmann is that since the publication of his first book, he has replaced careful biblical exegesis with somewhat speculative, even novel interpretations of the text causing the reader to question the nature of his hermeneutical principles. This final volume falls guilty to the same charge. Furthermore, the author tends to paint Christian traditions with a broad brush that oftentimes suggests a monolithic system of belief and practice which simply is not the case. For example, his characterization of Anabaptism in terms of societal withdrawal is true of groups like the Hutterites and Amish, but does not really correspond to peace and justice activism of many Mennonites. Also, one wishes that this volume would engage contemporary Roman Catholic expressions of a Moltmann-like eschatological ethic (John Paul II). While in his defense, the author explicitly tells the reader that the development of Catholic social doctrine is outside the purview of this book, it does seem a bit dismissive to remark that "up to now no convincing fusion between Catholic social doctrine and liberation theology has come into my hands" (xiv).

Finally, Moltmann's recommendations for specific expressions of hope-driven living (while in many cases, quite astute) still tend to "simplify" situations where human dignity, environment, and justice concerns form a complex web in one noble action, and where this actually imperils another sphere. This is certainly not to imply that the author is *simplistic* but rather to remind us that there are counterpoints to altruistic actions that require careful identification. On the other hand, if one takes this volume as a prolegomena into the kinds of questions Christians should raise in terms of the challenges of this century, these criticisms dissipate into minor irritations. Margaret Kohl has once again, produced a very accessible translation of her mentor's original German text. While undergraduates should have little trouble in reading this book profitably, it is advised that they first have an introductory seminar in Jurgen Moltmann's theological method.

This volume is presumably the final literary contribution of one of the twentieth-century's master theologians. It is a fitting culmination to a theological project which in the words of Richard Bauckham, gives "a relevance to the modern world which is achieved not only without surrendering central features of biblical and historic Christian faith, but more posi-

tively by probing the theological meaning of these in relation to contemporary realities and concerns" ("Jurgen Moltmann," in *The Modern Theologians*, 223). May this be a model for us all!

Robert C. Kurka
Professor of Theology and Church in Culture
Lincoln Christian Seminary

Gary HOLLOWAY and John YORK. *Unfinished Reconciliation: Justice, Racism, and Churches of Christ.* Revised and expanded edition. ACU Press, 2013. 228 pp. $18.99.

Holloway and York focus on the important issue of racial reconciliation among churches of Christ with a collection of essays addressing biblical concepts of justice, a history of race relations within the Stone-Campbell Movement, racism from the African-American perspective, and two reflections on the apology offered by President Royce Money of Abilene Christian University to the administration, faculty, students, and alumni of Southwestern Christian College. This volume is a revision of an earlier work of the same title (2003) to reflect on the topic after ten years. The first ten chapters are the same with minor stylistic changes; one chapter on African-American families has been deleted and two chapters reflecting on the apology have been added. These essays speak to a diverse audience including preaching ministers, educators, and the general reader.

The biblical material lays a foundation for addressing racial reconciliation beginning with three essays from Harold Shank on the concept of social justice from the Minor Prophets. Shank locates a concern for equality and fairness within the character of God: those who know God will give voice to the hurting and helpless and take positive steps to make a difference in their lives. John Mark Hicks approaches the subject through narrative theology in three essays that examine concepts of justice, wealth, and power in 1 and 2 Chronicles. The Chronicler portrayed a God of mercy and inclusion who tests the wealthy and powerful to see if they will reflect the Kingdom values of justice and compassion. Lee Camp completes this section with an assessment of the concept of justice in the Sermon on the Mount. Camp outlines the continuity between the Sermon and the OT teachings on justice and the Kingdom of God. He argues for a "this-world" Kingdom in which the community of faith operates as a "contrast-society" that seeks a creative, nonviolent transformation of society to promote a new social order.

The second major section of the volume addresses historical and contemporary efforts more specifically related to issues of race. Doug Foster surveys the history of race relations within the Stone-Campbell Movement, the response of churches of Christ to the Civil Rights Movement, and the experience of African-Americans at Lipscomb University. Kenneth Greene offers an emotional description of his experience as an African-American within churches of Christ and explains what he believes both black and white churches and educational institutions need to do to foster effective racial reconciliation. Royce Money recounts the events that led to a formal apology from Abilene Christian University to the predominantly African-American Southwestern Christian College "for the sins of racism and discrimination." William Lofton Turner concludes the volume with an assessment of the effectiveness of Money's apology and recommendations for the future.

The importance of Holloway and York's work is unquestioned. Churches of Christ (a cappella) and Christian churches (independent) within the Stone-Campbell Movement do not have a positive history in the arena of race relations, and a recognition of the sins of the past are essential to future accomplishments in racial reconciliation. The authors' biblical foundation uniting social justice and racial reconciliation forms a healthy approach to the subject. Greene offers a much-needed perspective on African-American experiences and attitudes, one that especially white Americans need to hear. The honesty of Foster's historical survey, Money's recounting of the apology, and Turner's response to the apology are refreshing. As might be expected, there are controversial elements to the essays, including Camp's advocacy of pacifism as the "inevitable" conclusion of teaching on social justice in the Sermon on the Mount and Greene's indictment of "Structural White Racism."

The volume would have benefitted from a stronger introduction, explaining the integrative theme and relating the various essays to that theme. Curiously, the introduction in the earlier edition offered a better conceptual framework for addressing the topic than the expanded version. The biblical material could have offered more specific connections to the race issue rather than assume that the reader will make the jump from social justice to racial reconciliation. One would also have expected an expanded conclusion as the purpose of the volume was to provide an "update" to the issue of racial reconciliation.

L. Thomas Smith, Jr.
Professor of History and Theology
Johnson University

Ian PAUL and David WENHAM, eds. *Preaching the New Testament.* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2013. 288 pp. $26.00.

Dedicated to Oxford professor R.T. France, his essay on "Preaching on the infancy narratives" may have been his last writing for publication. France is one of seventeen scholars/pastors including D.A. Carson, Stephen I. Wright, I. Howard Marshall, Stephen Travis, Peter Oakes, and Paul Weston to share ideas and opinions about hermeneutics and homiletics. In fact, the volume is as much about the former as the latter. Some chapters did not give the homiletical idea until the closing paragraphs. Their concern was more about proper interpretation.

The contributors are primarily from the U.K. who are from the Universities of Oxford, Nottingham and Cambridge. As a result the writing is not only scholarly but has a unique approach contrasted to U.S. scholars/pastors. Interestingly, there is a hint of Calvinism and a bent toward conservative scholarship.

The volume fulfills the title's promise to cover the whole NT. The Gospels are broken down into approaches for the infancy narratives, the parables, the miracles of Jesus, and the Sermon on the Mount. Once the NT is covered, topics such as the use of archaeology and history in preaching, ethics in the NT, hope and judgment, hermeneutics of relationship and the role of exegesis are expounded upon.

Helge Stadelmann critiques the "New Homiletic." He analyzes Fred Craddock's reader's response, inductive preaching and finds it wanting. Stadelmann thinks Craddock's approach creates an open canon that is untenable theologically. Eugene Lowry is critiqued for his lack of biblical text. Lowry's approach is to leave the text hidden until the end.

Stadelmann thinks the text is never really found. Jana Childers is questioned for seemingly putting the preacher/performer on par with the text, a position no preacher has the right to hold. Finally, Thomas Long, although viewed as being more balanced than the aforementioned, relies too much on a listener-oriented hermeneutic. "A better alternative is to have the witness of preaching inalienably linked to the faithful testimony of what biblical texts actually intended to say" (241).

One may wonder why Paul Weston's chapter on "Preaching from the Gospels" is the last chapter when the Gospels started the book. The reason may be because he does an excellent job of combining hermeneutics and homiletics in a clear, practical manner. He favors a narrative approach that moves from the text to the "wider story." He sees these stories as more than illustrations but as the good news themselves. The narratives "preach Jesus," and that is what the preacher is to do. Weston lists why and how the narratives "preach Jesus." (1) They tell the story of Jesus; (2) they tell the story of Jesus in story forms; (3) they paint pictures of the kingdom.

He proceeds to help the preacher "preach Jesus": (1) Learn to tell stories well; (2) invite listeners on a "journey"; (3) create connections.

Finally, Weston gives strategies: ask the "plot" questions: biographical, narrative, and theological. His approach is biblical and practical. He summarizes an approach that is appropriate not only for the Gospel narrative but offers helpful principles for preaching any section of the NT.

The chapters by Stephen Travis on "Preaching Hope and Judgment" and by Ian Paul on "Preaching from the Book of Revelation" are excellent treatises. They are "thought full" and "help full." The balance of theology and practice make getting ideas on how to preach these topics easily formulated.

All in all, this volume is a useful source as one preaches his/her way through the NT.

Joseph C. Grana II
Dean, Pacific Christian College of Ministry & Biblical Studies
Hope International University

Roland HOKSBERGEN. *Serving God Globally: Finding Your Place in International Development.* Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012. 240 pp. $21.99.

Christian, college students regularly awaken to global service. A few commit to a career path in missions or international development. For the former, advisors often can be located to offer seasoned counsel and connections. On many campuses, career advice in international development is a rarer commodity. This volume was written to fill this gap. The book is primarily directed toward Christian students (or their advisors) but it would be informative for anyone interested in learning basic Christian perspectives on international development.

Holistic or transformational development overlaps with missions at points but it has its own history and benefits from specialized knowledge, values, and skills. Development careers can be pursued with well-known non-profits such as World Relief, Bread for the World, or Hope International, with parachurch agencies, with community or social enterprises, or with Stone-Campbell-related organizations such as Mana Nutrition, Eternal Threads, Healing Hands International, Mission Lazarus, Predisan, and others. Employees and volunteers in

organizations such as these often come from a variety of backgrounds and training, but effective development requires more than simply applying one's professional skills in an international context. It requires as much unpacking of thought and practice as it does gathering new knowledge and perspectives.

Hoksbergen, professor of economics and director of International Development Studies at Calvin College, offers advice and perspectives from his own academic and field experience and salts the book with stories from 57 development workers interviewed in 2010. In nine chapters, Hoksbergen addresses five questions: What kind of development are we trying to accomplish? What is the field of international development like? What kinds of persons are most effective in development work? How might one prepare for development work in the college years? How does one actually get into the field?

The first six chapters frame career perspectives by introducing distinctive Christian views on international development. Chapter one explores the impact of beliefs and values in development. Chapter two explores traditional Catholic, Reformed, Mennonite, and Evangelical development views. Hoksbergen's ten basic principles for development are presented in chapter three and are sage advice for any development effort. Chapters four and five discuss professional and organizational niches and desirable characteristics of individuals working in development. Chapters six, seven, and eight offer practical career advice for the latter stages of college and beyond, suggesting entry points such as internships, AmeriCorps, and graduate school. A final chapter offers resources including a sampling of development organizations, a list of Christian undergraduate and graduate school programs, and other general resources for the career searcher.

Offering basic Christian perspectives on development, the book seems especially well-suited for the undergraduate student who is exploring transformational development as a career. The book would complement a basic course in missions or an introductory course in development. It also could provide Christian students in secular development programs with Christian development perspectives. It is not as direct or in-depth in its theological argumentation as works intended for that purpose, but it balances conceptual and career entry advice and thus achieves its subtitle: "Finding Your Place in International Development." For globally oriented students and their career advisors, this volume is a unique and needed resource.

Monty Lynn
Professor of Management
Abilene Christian University

Nathan FARIES. *The "Inscrutably Chinese" Church: How Narratives and Nationalism Continue to Divide Christianity.* Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2010. 309 pp. $75.00.

Readers familiar with China and Chinese culture will have at least some understanding of the term "Inscrutably Chinese" and why Faries would use it as an important descriptive in his title. However, it would need some explanation for many others. China is simply unique in world communities because it has had an unusually cohesive cultural, ethnic, and linguistic history that stretches back some five thousand years, and that without much foreign intrusion of ideas or military presence. Only Japan and Korea would be similar, who are

also universally described as being remarkably ethno-culturally unique. Although patriotism and nationalism in the modern era is shared with the same passion among most nations, because of this unique cohesive culture, the nationalism of China has an added dimension of intensity. Foreign ideologies do not fare well, with the notable exception of Buddhism (beginning in the fourth century AD), Christianity, and Communism. The last, being arguably and currently the most successful, had to be itself "tailor made" for China from the Proletariat of Marx-Lenin to the Peasant of Mao. As Faries notes, the case for Christianity in China is still out; will it eventually succeed as was the case for Buddhism, or will it eventually fade to an insignificant fringe presence as will all religion according to the Marxist/Maoist ideology? Or as David Aikman, former *Time* Bureau Chief in Beijing, contends, China is having a Constantine moment which will make China a "Christian" nation in thirty years.

Although the author divides the book into six parts, it is perhaps more accurately two parts. The first four chapters deal with more general information of how the Christian church has fared in China since the earliest meaningful introductions of Xavier and the Franciscans and the later Jesuits of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and then on to the Protestant introductions of the nineteenth, twentieth, and twenty-first centuries. Concluding the first of the "two part division" are chapters three and four which explain how the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) explains China and its people to the world and how it reacts to the like expressions of other nations, especially the US, when they come into conflict with each other, such as, how both sides explain what they mean by "democracy" and how the other side misunderstands or challenges their respective explanations.

Caught in between is the Christian church, which Faries treats mainly from the history and viewpoint of the Protestant church. The intrusion of this foreign religion and associated political/cultural ideology into the intensely compacted culture of China has produced an "inscrutable" situation that the author can only describe as a "Christian Chineseness or Chinese Christianity." Chinese Christians have a choice of participating in Christianity through the Three Self Patriotic Church, administered by the CCP, or through the semi-legal house church. Chinese Christians as well as Western Christians are divided as to whether both or either are truly representative of acceptable Christianity. Will it always be a "foreign religion" in China, and thus to become a Christian, a Chinese person would have to in some way forfeit their "Chineseness," particularly when "Chinese" means also citizenship in an officially atheistic nation? Or can a person become completely Christian in a fully Chinese Church as well as being a loyal Chinese citizen? Answers to those questions are currently being worked in varying degrees of clarity.

The remainder of the book, chapters five through fourteen, is based on Faries's area of academic expertise, English and Comparative Literature (mainly Chinese). Having taught in China for a few years has only enhanced the richness of his perspectives. It also is the reason he has couched all the information in the book, and especially the last chapters, in terms of narrative, explained as "stories, perceptions, world views—not with observable reportable truths, but the 'truth' about China as it is perceived from within China and from without" (7).

The author draws on an impressive range of literature, including fiction, non-fiction, poetry, travel diaries, films, documentaries, and of course, theological and ecclesiological works, written by Western, expatriate Chinese and Chinese authors. Much of this literature

is not religious in nature, but it goes a long way in helping the reader to understand what it means to be Chinese. Where it does touch on religion, it helps to give perspective to the greater theme of how the Chinese themselves view Christianity. From all this, Faries concludes that much of the understanding of the Chinese, religious or secular, remains "inscrutable" to the West, but through this literature, the fog has been made less dense.

CALVIN (WES) HARRISON
Professor of Bible and Humanities
Ohio Valley University

David T. BOURGEOIS. ***Ministry in the Digital Age: Strategies and Best Practices for a Post-Website World.*** **InterVarsity, 2013. 143 pp. $15.00.**

When I was in college, I took a course entitled "Religious Uses of Media." For the project portion of the course, I wrote a paper evaluating several church-based websites. (I was also taking a course in website design that same semester.) At the time, there was only a smattering of material related to ministry in the emerging "digital age." And what was available in the technology world was usually out-of-date before it hit the retail shelves. Ever since that course, I have tried to find good, solid material related to technology and ministry. I also became familiar with as much technology as possible because, let us be honest, we live in a digital age where technology is as fluid as water.

We have been grudgingly resistant to the emergence of technology in the Church. This is not a new resistance; we always seem to have been resistant to technology and innovation. Yet, it is not something that we are going to escape, unless we resurrect the old practices of the desert mothers and fathers. In the halls and journals of theological academia, we lament the uses of PowerPoint presentations in worship and chastise popular preachers for having the audacity to not simply publish their sermons on the Internet but to encourage other struggling preachers to use these sermons as they see fit. "What has the world come to?" we moan. What the world has come to, at least according to Bourgeois, is that some have "a well-thought-out digital strategy" and most do not (9). The argument, as proposed by Bourgeois, is not if to use technology (he argues for its use) but how to use technology (8).

Bourgeois, a technology consultant and an information systems professor at Biola University, is certainly a legitimate voice in the discussion about how to use technology in ministry. However, his volume is not a how-to book. If you are looking for a volume that will teach you or a ministry associate how to develop and maintain a church website, this is not the volume for you. What Bourgeois offers is a practical theology for technology and some "best practices" that will guide a congregation in developing that "well-thought-out digital strategy" that we mentioned earlier. He places his theological discussion within the context of relationships, arguing that the technology is not really that important. Technology comes and goes, yet relationships are what last forever. Also, technology is becoming more user-friendly, therefore a congregation does not really need to invest much into the technology (although Bourgeois argues that congregations should avoid using volunteers and opt for technology professionals). In his final analysis, Bourgeois says that, to be most effective in the Digital Age, congregations must embrace technology as a missional tool, build both internal and external relationships, and develop an effective strategy for implementing a technology ministry.

In general, this is a light volume. I quickly accepted that this was not a how-to manual on building and maintaining a church website, which was a welcome relief. His research is well-crafted and well-communicated, yet I finished each chapter with a desire for more. It seems that in an effort to be as practical as possible, the author seems to have forgotten some of what he really wanted to say. I can see myself using this material in a lecture or two on technology in ministry; however I cannot see myself using it as a textbook. It is a good, quick read, yet it needs to be paired with more in-depth material to really be an effective ministry tool.

Rob O'Lynn
Assistant Professor of Preaching and Ministry
Kentucky Christian University

Robert KOLB. *Luther and the Stories of God: Biblical Narratives as a Foundation for Christian Living.* Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012. 208 pp. $24.00.

Martin Luther is best known as a theologian and ecclesiastical reformer, less so as a pastor. Though this latter role is usually acknowledged as a part of his path to the church door at Wittenberg, in their rush to the Reformation, historical treatments of Luther tend to emphasize his theological revolution at the expense of his work as a minister. Kolb presents the pastoral contributions of Luther as a natural consequence of his theological contributions; in the process he offers readers a more complete understanding of Luther as shepherd to his flock in Wittenberg.

Kolb suggests Luther used stories strategically to amplify biblical truths revealed in expository or catechetical preaching, by making the messages both relatable and memorable for his hearers. This would, he believed, more effectively overturn false belief systems based on meritorious rituals or churched-up pagan superstitions and replace them with a life-changing biblical worldview. But the use of story was more than mere strategy, according to Kolb; Luther heard the "God of conversation and community" (Kolb often repeats variations of this phrase) speaking through the stories of Scripture to reveal Himself and His will for creation, including His will for His children.

This "metanarrative," of God seeking conversation and community with his creation, is presented by Kolb as the source of Luther's revolutionary theology; his use of story (biblical, but also extrabiblical and personal when appropriate) was a natural consequence of his theology. Luther recognized God as a relational God who created relational human beings, and through shared history and conversation (stories) we come to know, love, and trust—that is, to be in relationship with—our Creator. By his story in Scripture we know Jesus Christ, the ultimate expression of God's desire for relationship with his Creation, and through Christ we may enjoy the ultimate measure of love and trust in God our Father.

After establishing Luther's metanarrative, Kolb dedicates individual chapters to Luther's strategic use of the stories of Scripture to teach those under his care to faithfully live out specific aspects of the Christian life. The essential first goal of this strategy was that faith in Christ, not in the church or their own works of ritual, would become the foundation of his hearers' (and readers') lives on earth as well as the source of their eternal lives in heaven. With this foundation in place, Luther could then use story to teach his hearers to grow in Christ through suffering; to respond obediently to the Word of God in prayer and praise for

the Author; to love and serve each other as a natural expression of faith in God; and to trust God in death as Luther had taught them to trust God in life, confident that God would shepherd them safely into life eternal.

Luther's task five hundred years ago in Wittenberg was not so different from that faced by all who minister today: Teaching people who have acquired some funny ideas about God (including what He wants from his people) to know him in truth and to live in a pleasing and honorable relationship with Him. For this reason modern preachers and teachers of the Word, who may want to make their expository preaching more applicable to everyday life and their topical preaching more biblically substantive, will find value in Kolb's presentation of Luther as a pastoral model whose philosophy and methodology can be emulated today.

For academic studies this book may be beyond the grasp of undergraduate students in a survey-level church history course, because Kolb (understandably) assumes the reader already has a solid familiarity with Luther's life and work. But I would consider this as a supplemental text for preaching majors in a graduate-level or second-level undergraduate Reformation history class, as a useful examination of how and why a "name" in church history made his theology practical and livable for those to whom he ministered.

Ross Knudsen
Director of Enrollment Services
Professor of History
Boise Bible College

C. Richard WELLS and Ray Van NESTE, eds. *Forgotten Songs: Reclaiming the Psalms for Christian Worship*. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2012. 242 pp. $19.99.

The aim of this volume is to reclaim the Psalms as songs in private and corporate worship. The book is the product of a lecture series at Union University, Jackson, Tennessee, in 2008. Presenters in this series were faculty members of Union University, other Baptist seminary or church leaders, leaders of the Presbyterian Church in America and the Christian Reformed tradition. The presentations are in two sections, with appendices, a name index, and a scripture index. The first section is titled "Biblical and Historical Foundations," and the second is titled "Practice."

Presenters in the first section argue for an understanding of the Psalms as "formative worship," an understanding of how they were appropriated in the NT, how they were used by the church fathers, how we need to recover the Psalms as poetry in a nonpoetry culture, and how we use them in both "doctrine and delight." The second section treats the practical use of the Psalms. Its aim is "to examine specific issues related to incorporating the psalms in worship." The section lays out ways in which the Psalms have been introduced into churches. C. Richard Wells closes the second section by pointing out that "We are fascinated with ourselves, the psalms are fascinated with God" (204).

Appendix 1, "A Modern-Day Psalmist Looks at the Psalms," is an interview of Marty Goetz, a Messianic Jew, and modern-day arranger of the Psalms. Appendix 2, "Songs to Be Sung," contains contemporary examples of metered psalms. Appendix 3, "Resources for the Recovery of the Psalms in the Life of the Church," lists books on the Psalms' history, their use in personal prayer, and current and past use of the Psalms in churches.

Most helpful in this book is the passion of the call to use the Psalms in corporate and private worship. Equally helpful is the material of the second section that discloses ways in which the practice has been instituted. Not so helpful is the material in the first section. Much of it deals with information about the use of the Psalms by the Hebrews and the early church. The same information can be had in numerous other books on worship, liturgy, and the Psalms.

The book fails to treat the use of the Psalms in worship throughout the history of the church. The series would have benefited from the perspectives of scholars and church leaders of those church traditions that have always used the psalms in their worship. Such church traditions represent, in fact, the majority of Christendom: Roman Catholics, Orthodox, Anglicans, Lutherans, and some churches of the Reformed traditions. Reclaim the Psalms? In the great majority of the world church they never needed reclaiming. The book's bibliographies contain many standard works from those church traditions.

I applaud the efforts of the Union University professors to call their Baptist churches and many other churches of free-church liturgy to reclaim the Psalms for corporate and private worship. Such reclamation is a laudable endeavor. Nevertheless—because I know about the worship practices of the early church, and/or because of my Stone-Campbell roots—I lament that a book with the title *Forgotten Sacraments (Ordinances?): Reclaiming the Lord's Supper and Baptism for Christian Worship* hasn't made its way into a lecture series. Such a series would be at least as important as one that calls for reclamation of the Psalms—or more so.

This volume is of value for pastors and worship leaders of churches that do not use historic liturgy. The book is not written on a level appropriate for the scholar's study, or the college and seminary classroom. The local church pastor may find the book helpful.

John C. Wakefield
Emeritus Professor of Music
Milligan College

Dave BRUNN. *One Bible Many Versions: Are All Translations Created Equal?* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2013. 199 pp. $16.00.

The Bible translation business is thriving right now, and there seem to be buyers for every new English version. Many publishing houses have staked their territory by having a monopoly on a specific translation they have sponsored (Zondervan/NIV, Broadman-Holman/HCSB, Crossway/ESV, Tyndale/NLT). This means that Bible translation is more than a ministry in many cases; it is an exercise in free market endeavor. At the same time, translation of Scripture into the many language groups of the world continues at an astonishing pace. This is where dedicated servants of the word with a missionary spirit have dedicated their lives to working, producing versions of God's Word in languages where no such witness exists.

This second world is where Brunn comes from. He is a field translator, having been trained in translation theory and linguistics. He desires to have a faithful version of the Bible in the language of every people group in the world to be used for evangelism, teaching, and worship. He labored many years in translating the Bible into the Lamogai people of Papua New Guinea. He is also a person who has been fascinated by the many variations he finds in the English translations, and wants to understand the basis for these differences. He is care-

ful not to load his observations with prejudice and distrust. He respects the work of all the major English Bible translators, and wants to explain why they did what they have done, why their versions turned out differently. His tone is irenic, and his conclusion is, "I recommend that every serious student of the Bible use a variety of translations" (166).

In doing this, Brunn has collected hundreds of observational examples (probably thousands) of English Bible variations. He is up-to-date, knowing what is going on in the latest edition of the NIV, and even being aware of the innovative project of Thomas Nelson Publishing, *The Voice*. In general, though, he focuses on the NIV, ESV, NLT, and NASB. The results are amazing. It seems to me that he favors the NASB (and to a lesser extent, the ESV), but he goes to considerable lengths to show that both of these lions of literal translation often employ serious interpretation features and even paraphrase in their renderings.

Brunn struggles (as he should) with an adequate definition of "literal" in regard to translation. Does this mean "word for word"? Not always, because Brunn acknowledges this can produce nonsense (59). In the end, though, he defines the spectrum of English translations as having the poles of "Literal" and "Idiomatic." The extreme on the literal scale would be an interlinear translation (which I have never thought of as a translation at all). The extreme on the idiomatic side would be what he calls "unduly free" renderings, with Clarence Jordan's "Cotton Patch Version" serving as an example (which I admit I have also never thought of as a translation).

This book represents many hours of careful work, but I have a couple of serious criticisms. First, Brunn does not seem fully to understand the challenge of translating idioms from the biblical languages into English. He sees this in his work with the Lamogai language but does not quite appreciate the fact that idioms from the ancient world and culture may require extensive explanation if rendered literally into English, something he would not countenance for the Lamogai people. Second, there is a lack of appreciation of some of the deeper aspects of the biblical languages in Brunn's work. I'm not sure he knows Greek or Hebrew very well. For example, he doesn't seem to understand that Greek often uses compound words with several individual components, and wonders why a single compound verb requires several words for English translation.

Third, I'm not always sure what elephants are in his room. He spends quite a bit of time inappropriately applying Rev 22:18, 19 to translation theory (80), when these verses have nothing to do with translation at all. Do we really think the translator must beware of adding or taking words away from this book? I cannot quite tell if Brunn thinks this is a real threat, or if he is just responding to overzealous biblical literalists in his camp.

Overall, though, I like the tone of this book and I learned some things from reading it. For example, Brunn warned that the translation controversies are not between believers and unbelievers, but between believers and believers (20). I had never quite thought of it that way. I wish he had more to say about gender in translation (an issue he does not address until the very end of the book), and I wish he were a little more aware of the issue of textual variants and how they must be addressed by translators. His goal is to show that our major English translations are not as different as we are often led to believe, and I think he has accomplished this.

Mark S. Krause
Academic Dean and Professor of Bible and Ministry
Nebraska Christian College

Philip F. ESLER. *Sex, Wives, and Warriors: Reading Biblical Narrative with Its Ancient Audience.* Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2011. 408 pp. $40.00.

Esler is Emeritus Professor of Biblical Interpretation at St Mary's University College, Twickenham, London, and was principal of St. Mary's when this book was published. His several books have tended to apply social-scientific approaches to NT studies. The present volume does the same for a handful of OT narrative texts.

Seventy-six pages precede Esler's foray into OT stories. This extended introduction provides two admirable summaries. The first traces the history of academic treatment of biblical narrative (1-34). Esler positions himself as valuing but moving beyond narratology. He promptly distances himself from "other approaches currently in vogue in the scholarly marketplace that are not concerned with reading for original meaning . . . ." In contrast, Esler offers "a particular answer to the question of how we should read these narratives—in particular by seeking to understand the meanings they would have conveyed to their original audiences in ancient Israel" (3). Also in this section we find a summary of Christopher Booker's *The Seven Basic Plots: Why We Tell Stories* (Continuum, 2005); throughout the book, Esler describes the extent to which each of his OT narratives follows one or more of Booker's plots. This section's overview of scholarship will strike many readers as tedious; the nonspecialist could skip this section and move more quickly to the "sex, wives, and warriors" promised in the title.

The second summary treats the historical and, especially, the social contexts of OT narrative (35-76). Here Esler hits his stride as he lays a foreshadowing foundation for his use of sociology, especially ethnography, in interpreting narratives. He singles out the following categories for special mention: families and villages; group (as opposed to individualistic) orientation; honor and shame; challenge and response; limited good; patrons and clients; patrilineality, patrilocality, and polygyny; agrarian socioeconomic structure; and high-context cultures. Knowledge of some of these categories (e.g., honor and shame, patrons and clients) is commonplace among scholars of either testament. In contrast, other categories (e.g., challenge and response, high-context cultures) are infrequently encountered outside sociological circles, and therefore give the reader high hopes for finding new insights in Esler's interpretations. Chapters 3–10 are interpretations of eight OT narratives, divided into three sections. These chapters range in length from 19 to 41 pages.

Two chapters fall under the title's category, "wives." Though six of eight narratives Esler treats are from the book of Samuel, the first is from Gen 38, "Judah and Tamar." Here the promised ethnographic approach is indeed delivered. One helpful example is the attention Esler gives to the text's comment that Judah named Er (Gen 38:3) while Judah's wife named Onan and Shelah (38:4-5). The sociological category spurring this attentiveness is the abovementioned high-context culture: "to understand what happens in the narrative, we have to read the brief account of these births quite closely, paying careful attention to every detail in this text from a high-context culture where compression and understatement were the rule" (87). Here, as elsewhere, Esler does not demur from taking other scholars to task—four for overlooking this detail (von Rad, Wenham, Hamilton, Sarna), one for obscuring it (Menn), and two for inverting it (Alter, Bos). The text is indicating that Judah was "mainly focused on his firstborn" and had a "direct and interested role . . . in that first birth" (88), a "predominant concern for his firstborn" (90).

The next investigation of wives concerns Hannah and Peninnah (1 Sam 1–2). Here sociology again serves Esler well as he describes relationships between co-wives, sometimes called rival-wives, noting especially the potential strife caused when a second wife is procured to mollify the shame brought when the first wife has not borne children. Esler moves from this feature of polygynous marriages to the lesser known sociological category of challenge and response. When, for example, Peninnah provokes Hannah regarding their husband's gifts of sacrificial meat at Shiloh, she seeks to gain honor by issuing a public challenge (1 Sam 1:6-7). Esler explains, "For Peninnah this was a glorious opportunity to take [public] revenge for the fact that at home Hannah, in spite of her having no children, was the wife whom Elkanah loved and probably the wife with authority" (127).

Four narratives fall under the title's category, "warriors," beginning with "The Madness of Saul, a Warrior-King (1 Sam 8–31)." One sociological category brought to bear on the narratives about Saul is that of limited good: "anthropologists employ the idea of limited good to refer to the fact that all aspects of life in the Mediterranean are thought to exist in finite quantities" (159). Thus Saul's association with a band of prophets results in the derisive saying, "Is Saul also among the prophets?" (1 Sam 10:12) because "One aspect of limited good is that people were expected to remain in the roles into which they were born. . ." (154). The anointing of David and the consequent spirit of Yahweh falling upon David (1 Sam 16:13) immediately precedes that same spirit's departure from Saul (16:14a; cf. 18:12). Similarly, when Saul appoints David as head of the army (18:5), "Saul has given David an arena where he will be able to win great honor for himself and in a culture where all goods, honor included, exist in finite quantities, it is inevitable that David will do so at Saul's expense" (162).

David as warrior is the topic of two chapters: "David and Goliath" (1 Sam 17:1–18:5)" and "David, Banditry and Kingship (1 Sam 19:1–2 Sam 5:5)." Esler has much to offer here, having elsewhere authored a chapter on Mediterranean single combat ("Ancient Mediterranean *Monomachia* in the Light of Cultural Anthropology: The Case of David and Goliath." In *The Idea of Man and Concepts of the Body: Anthropological Studies on the Ancient Cultures of Israel, Egypt, and the Near East.* Edited by Anjelika Berjelung et al. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011). The reader dives deeply, for example, into the sociology of challenge and response in the ANE, already introduced regarding the interactions of Hannah and Peninnah, and also into the sociology of sibling rivalry. Esler's approach, however, is not exclusively sociological. An example of a more directly historical-critical insight is his observation that the significance of the Hebrew text's "Are you not *servants* of Saul?" (1 Sam 17:8) depends on knowledge that the "Philistines had an oligarchic, not monarchical, system of political organization, so that they were an exception among the nations having kings referred to in 1 Sam 8:5" (188). The (arguably older) Old Greek here has Goliath ask, "Are you not *Hebrews* of Saul?" An example of a literary insight is the connection Esler draws between Hannah's song and David's rise: "David is similar to one of the poor and needy whom Hannah had sung would be lifted up to sit with princes (1 Sam 2:8)" (200). Consider also a theological note: "The core of the message is that God will not be restrained by established social roles and institutions in effecting his purposes, especially to the extent that he means to raise the lowly. . ." (214).

Chapter 8 is "'By the Hand of a Woman': Judith the Female Warrior" and is the book's sole departure from the MT. A significant part of this chapter (274-287) is a comparison of the narratives of Judith and David. Esler sees considerably more points of contact between

these two warriors than he does, for example, between the oft-compared Judith and Jael. This fourteen-page comparison begins, "As far as I am aware, this is the first extended attempt in the field of biblical scholarship to relate Judith to David. . ." (274). The comparison is made specifically between the text of Judith and the Old Greek of the David and Goliath narrative. Of Judith, Esler says, "Her story is really David's played in a different key" (287). The most salient similarity shared by these two heroes is that each "is an utterly improbable savior of Israel. . ." (186-187).

Two of Esler's interpretations fall under the book title's category, "sex." The book title begins, "Sex, Wives, and Warriors," but the table of contents reorders this triad as wives, warriors, sex. Furthermore, the book is much more about warriors than wives and sex. Indeed, even these two chapters are more about warriors than sex. One cannot help but wonder, therefore, whether Esler's original title was the present subtitle (*Reading Biblical Narrative with Its Ancient Audience*), and adding *Sex* as the title's opening word was the publisher's preference. In any case, the two main contributions of the chapter on "David, Bathsheba and the Ammonite War" are that Esler approaches 2 Sam 10–12 with an understanding of patrons and clients and with an appreciation for how the sometimes-overlooked Ammonite war—especially David's surprisingly delayed reaction to the Ammonite insult—knits the several pericopes together. Concerning, the former, "The details of the account [of Nathan's parabolic accusation] make good sense within the framework of God as patron, Nathan his prophet as broker and David as client" (316). In this context, Esler again adds theological comment to his largely literary and sociological approach: "This element in the narrative discloses something fundamentally important about this divine patron—he has an abiding concern for justice" (317). In this, the shortest chapter, one small weakness of Esler's book can be illustrated: Because he regularly gives careful attention to the fine details of the biblical text, and is not shy about pointing out when other scholars fail to do the same, it is all the more apparent when Esler himself is dismissive of some portion of text. Consider, for example, his comment on 2 Sam 12:25: "Then comes the curious episode in the story when God sends Nathan to give Solomon another name, Jedidiah, meaning 'Beloved of the Lord,' even though this name is not used of Solomon thereafter" (319).

The final chapter is titled, "Dishonor Avenged: Amnon, Tamar and Absalom (2 Sam 13)." One of its contributions is an ethnographically enhanced understanding of the sibling bond, including the strong bond of full siblings in contrast to children of co-wives in a polygynous system. While the obvious sibling relationships involved are among Amnon, Tamar, and Absalom, Esler also scrutinizes the role of Jonadab; though he is David's nephew, he orchestrates Amnon's opportunity to rape Tamar. Thus the breaches of family honor and group orientation are far reaching, shaming not only David's immediate royal family, but also his family of origin. Another contribution of this chapter is its emphasis on the outrage committed against Tamar. Western readers will likely not overlook the physical and psychological pain resulting from Amnon's crime, but these same readers would likely underestimate Tamar's ensuing social and even familial ostracization. Simply stated, "to rape a woman is to deny her the prospect of a happy and honorable life. . . . A man who rapes a woman in this context will, in most cases, consign his victim to a form of social death" (344). A brief epilogue, a substantial bibliography, and two indices conclude the book.

While the book is both too in-depth and too focused for a course such as OT Survey or even OT Introduction, it would be an excellent supplementary text for a course on OT his-

toriography or on the Deuteronomistic History (since seven of the eight narratives are from Samuel, and the treatment of Judith includes a lengthy comparison of Judith to David). Perhaps the best curricular place for the book would be in a course on interpretive methods. Esler's work is indeed full of rewards for the scholar interested in applying literary and sociological methods to the OT text.

Jeff Miller
Professor of Bible
Milligan College

Mark CHAVES. *American Religion: Contemporary Trends.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2013. 160 pp. $17.95.

Scholars of contemporary American religion and the sociology of religion will recognize Chaves. This volume won the 2012 *Christianity Today* award in the Christianity and Culture category. He proposes religion in America is not on the increase. In the last four decades, there has been "much continuity and there is some decline, but *no traditional religious belief or practice has increased in recent decades"* (14). So for those who hear, "Americans are growing more religious in recent years," or, for those hearing, "Americans are becoming less religious," this book will help you with a well-supported response.

Chaves primarily depends upon two surveys: the General Social Survey, conducted "at least every other year since 1972," and the National Congregations Study directed by Chaves in 1998 and 2006–2007. Both of these are conducted by the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago (4-5). The chapters of this volume describe Chaves's observations regarding trends in religious diversity, beliefs, church involvement, congregational issues, leadership, liberal protestant decline, and polarization.

Chaves's book is intentionally short; its purpose was to provide concise affordable data to support discussions about the trends in religion. I think that its length is serendipitously valuable because the book is best read in one sitting. Early pages raise questions answered in later pages, so it seems best to keep reading until all of the data is gathered, and then the author and reader arrive at the conclusion together. On the way, there are a number of interesting observations that may distract a reader to ponder. Such as, Chaves points out that not only is America more religiously diverse, but so are "our families and friendship circles" (11). The causes and effects of which affect our daily lives.

Any book that relies heavily on surveys is vulnerable to attack. This volume has weaknesses in areas where questions may cause respondents to exaggerate, such as regarding church attendance. Chaves discusses the types of survey questions that help minimize those tendencies. Questions about religion are not easily answered on surveys. Looking over several questions posited in surveys, I would need to ask, what do you mean by that? Or given available options for some questions, I would want to add "none of the above." For example, Chaves admits "it is difficult to know what people mean when they say they are spiritual but not religious" (41). It is also difficult to measure religious involvement. Chaves gives as a marker, "religious involvement in the United States still mainly means attending weekend worship services" (42). Differing definitions raise questions, but they do not change the bottom line: Are Americans becoming more religious? No.

Chapter 5 examines the makeup, size, and number of congregations, and provides sta-

tistical support for changes that we have been suspecting. Chaves's findings will raise discussion as to why the changes are happening. In Chapter 6, Chaves uses statistics to demonstrate changes concerning religious vocations. This is revealing data, particularly insightful to those who are blaming Christian colleges and seminaries for dwindling numbers and quality of their graduates.

Chaves does not mention the Stone-Campbell tradition, but the material can certainly be applied. Overall, the book provides data for knowledgeable discussion. It has course value for sociology of religion; or recent American religious history. Denominational and church planting leaders will appreciate the practical value of the data. College and seminary administrators will find statistical support for what they have observed in recent decades.

Robin W. Underhill
Assistant Professor of History
University of Delaware

Peter J. LEITHART. *Between Babel and Beast: America and Empires in Biblical Perspective*. Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2012. 200 pp. $24.00.

So, are empires necessarily a bad thing? It all depends, says Leithart. Some empires are "Babelic," insisting on a single tower and a homogeneous way of life; others are "bestial," fiercely antagonistic to the people of God and downright predatory; still others, a rare few, are "cherubic," guardians of God's people while they are in earthly exile. In this imperial taxonomy, America is a Babelic empire lurching ever more closely to the bestial. Hence the thrust of the book: American Christians must repent of their "Americanism" and "force Babel to the crux where it has to decide either to acknowledge Jesus as *imperator* and the church as God's *imperium* or to begin drinking holy blood" (152).

Leithart promises in his introduction that his book will offend practically everyone. He does not renege on that promise. Part I of the book is sure to pique the ire of the Christian Left with its nuanced treatment of empires in the Bible. Eschewing facile singular notions of "empire" and resisting the urge to isolate anti-imperial sentiment in Scripture on which to hang his theological hat, Leithart acknowledges the positive role that empires can play. "The struggles of the OT," he writes, "is not empire versus non-empire, but between rival imperialisms, rival visions for the political salvation of a human race divided linguistically, culturally, and religiously in the wake of the rebellion at Babel" (33). To the extent that empires coerce political, cultural, and religious conformity, they imitate the rebellious nature of the "Babel project," but to the extent that they provide refuge and safe haven for the people of God, empires can be "cherubic," that is, protective, as seen, for example, in Cyrus, Nebuchadnezzar, and first-century-Rome. Empires are not static, however; like Nebuchadnezzar, they can become bestial when they begin to entertain divine aspirations and persecute the people of God.

Israel herself was created out of the imperial promises given to Abraham. Yahweh would eventually scatter the citizens of his empire among the nations not only to punish them but to teach them how to be a "martyr-people whose faithful resistance would remake Gentile empire" (22). Rather than subvert these empires, Israel-in-Empire was to seek the welfare of the city without eating its food or worshiping its gods. In this way Yahweh set the historical stage for the emergence of the church, the "fulfilled Israel" of the Abrahamic promises and

the manifestation of Jesus' heavenly kingdom on earth. Though Leithart never uses the word, post-millennialism guides this reading of biblical history and his understanding of the church as a multilingual, multiethnic, multinational empire—God's imperialistic rival to Babel.

If Israel was God's first political form of empire, the church is and remains the second. But herein lies a problem that will surely offend those on the Christian Right. America, Leithart contends, has usurped those divine prerogatives! Rather than providing sanctuary for the church and allowing the church its own distinctive space, America has *become* the church and *become* the mission. "Americanism" (or, as some would call it, good old-fashioned "God and country") is the myth by which most Americans and American Christians live. Part II explores the origins of this myth, beginning with the Puritans whose political theology and eschatology Leithart terms "an-ecclesial" (which he distinguishes from *anti*-ecclesial), which bequeathed no room for an independent church apart from colony or nation. Leithart spends a great deal of time documenting this trajectory in American history, often with copious footnotes, concluding that "heretical Americanist typology has pushed the church to the political margins and replaced it with the American nation itself" (110).

Leithart devotes Part III of the book to an exposé of America's sins. In addition to being a heretic nation, America is a "Babelic" empire, seeking worldwide hegemony under the guise of liberty and toppling regimes under the guise of democracy. "We believe everyone should be like us, and we believe that everyone *wants* to be" (123). America sacralizes its wars, justifies its exploitative economic practices, and, most surprising of all, funds countries that restrict or outlaw religious freedoms. "Though we are not a beast, we enjoy the company of beasts; we send them money, train their soldiers, and have even permitted beasts to write constitutions that leave them free to be beasts" (137). Despite this damning report, America is not a beast—not yet anyway. But Leithart believes that Americanism as an ideology could quickly become one if the American church should ever find its voice of the martyrs and wrest itself away from the clutches of the beast long enough to assume her own rightful *imperium*.

Leithart calls his effort a "book-length footnote" to his prior work, *Defending Constantine*. Now in this follow-up book we see Leithart working out his own political theology, one that presupposes a post-millennial representation at every turn. I may be off base here, but my hermeneutics of suspicion cannot help but think that a "reconstructionist" paradigm lurks in the shadows of his understanding of Christian empire, raising a whole series of persistent and troubling questions: What is "Christendom" for Leithart? What does it mean practically for the church to be "metapolitical" in American and even global society? Is there a legitimate separation of church and state and, if so, does that principle give the necessary room for the church to be prophetic? Most curious of all, what is Leithart envisioning exactly when he calls governmental officials to acknowledge Jesus as *imperator* or condemns the fact that in America "public officials are not held publicly accountable to King Jesus" (110)? I agree with much of Leithart's critique of God-and-country; I agree, for example, that "American churches need to remove the flags from their podiums—and stop treating July 4 as a high holy day" (151). His view of God-in-country is what makes me wonder.

The breadth and scope of Leithart's reading and research is truly impressive, yet frustratingly I lacked the expertise to evaluate many of Leithart's political sources. The attack on America and American institutions is so relentless and one-sided in this volume that it struck

me as bordering on propaganda. As a critical reader, I found myself constantly longing for other opinions or perspectives so that I could at least understand the realism behind the realist foreign policy decisions of the United States that Leithart finds so distasteful. A robust doctrine of sin and the human condition should keep one from deifying the state or any other secular institution. But it should also keep one from deifying the church. Let him who is without sin cast the first stone.

David Lertis Matson
Professor of Biblical Studies
Hope International University

Rowan WILLIAMS. *The Lion's World: A Journey into the Heart of Narnia*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2012. 152 pp. $16.95.

In this brief book, Williams, former Archbishop of Canterbury, provides an extended reflection on the themes of C.S. Lewis's Narnia series, "to display some of what has mattered most to me as a reader of Lewis over more than half a century" (xi). One of the strengths of the Narnia narratives is that they tell the truth about the relationship between God and humans without didactically *telling* the truth. Indeed this is what Lewis had in mind. One of the strengths of Williams' reflection is that it gathers up instances from Lewis's writing into themes and explains what these themes are. As a reader and re-reader of the Narnia series and other works by Lewis, I found Williams' insights familiar and illuminating—familiar because they resonate with the recognizable messages of Narnia and illuminating because they put words to these messages that I had experienced imaginatively but not explicitly.

Ironically, one of the themes Williams identifies has to do with deception, and I found this book deceiving, but not necessarily in a bad way. I should know by now not to judge a book by its cover, but the volume's miniature size, large font, charming illustrations, and enlarged marginal notes led me to believe this would be light devotional reading. Its title led me to believe that it would be all about the Narnia series. It is neither light nor limited to the adventures in Narnia. The text is usually clear enough, only occasionally giving way to overly complex syntax and vocabulary-learning opportunities. Its weight is due more to the weightiness of its topics than the opacity of its language. (I suppose one could say this about the Narnia series itself.) Williams' work draws upon other works by Lewis as well, particularly the *Ransom Trilogy*, *The Great Divorce*, *Surprised by Joy*, and *A Grief Observed*. Familiarity with these works is helpful but perhaps not necessary to grasp Williams' central message.

The point of the Narnia series, Williams writes, is for "readers to experience what it is that religious (specifically Christian) talk is about, without resorting to religious talk as we usually meet it" (19) and "to help us rinse out what is stale in our thinking about Christianity—which is almost everything" (28). The heart of this experience is grace; "once you had begun to understand this, all sorts of *details* of Christian doctrine would fall into place" (142). Williams expands on the meaning of grace through the experiences of the children who meet Aslan.

To be honest, although Williams' points are well-taken and well-illustrated, they flow from one to another in a way that prevents them from being put into a neat list. Rather than creating an artificial inventory of main points, I will describe Williams' treatment of one theme that may be of particular interest to those in ministry, especially counseling ministry:

the danger of self-deception. On several instances, when the children come to Aslan with complaints about others, they confront in his presence the truth of their own culpability. Aslan is, after all, "not a tame lion," and to encounter him is to face the pain involved in admitting the truth. Williams does a good job of explaining in the context of Narnia some of Lewis's skepticism of the psychological process of discovering one's "real" self, showing that the truth of who we are and what we have done come to light only by learning "to spot the moments when you are lying or evading what is in front of you, acknowledge your responsibility, seek absolution and move on" (84). Absorption and obsessiveness about one's self are both symptoms and perpetuators of self-deception; true joy can happen only when we are not busy analyzing ourselves.

This book is an excellent choice for anyone who wants to learn more about C.S. Lewis and the meaning behind the Narnia series for personal or professional edification. It is best appreciated with a strong understanding of the series and a familiarity with Lewis's other works mentioned above.

Carrie Birmingham
Associate Professor of Education
Pepperdine University

Eddie GIBBS. *The Rebirth of the Church: Applying Paul's Vision for Ministry in Our Post-Christian World*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2013. 288 pp. $21.99.

Change is not easy! There seems to be a mental inertia at work in many if not most churches that prohibits an honest appraisal of spiritual health. Thus, as Gibbs and many others are pointing out, "churches are declining in membership and in social influence . . . increasingly marginalized and unable to count on the support of the communities they are meant to serve" (ix). In this book, Gibbs attempts to answer the question, "Where do we go from here?" by calling for the church to "look for models that are both biblically rooted and culturally engaged" (ix).

Structurally, the book is divided into two main sections. In the first major section, "Comparing Contexts," Gibbs identifies as his task the engagement of the "twenty-first century post-Christendom context" and the "first-century context." He correctly notes that the church of the first three centuries changed significantly "from a loose network of local faith communities to a much more institutional, bureaucratic, and centralized institution" (4). And he is also correct when he notes that the "Christendom model" has been a primary shaper of the church as we know it. As one who has been raised in the Stone-Campbell movement, it is hard not to ask if there is a problem with going back to the "loose network of local faith communities." For reasons not adequately developed, Gibbs believes that the path for the church "is one of renewal, not of restoration, and it begins right where we are" (62).

Though he identifies as the focus of the book "the missionary strategy of the apostle Paul," his approach to the first-century church is not quite the same as that espoused by many who identify with the Stone-Campbell movement. He provides the following delimitation: This is not an exercise in what is known as "restorationism," as though the NT church existed in some ideal form to which we need to return. Rather, we will revisit the early church from the perspective of our post-Christendom awareness to see what we might have missed in our previous reading because of our Christendom-bound cultural bias or

blindness (25). To this he will add, "As we move back from modern times to the first century, a cautionary word must be given at the outset. There is a tendency among some ardent Bible students to idealize the churches of the NT period" (31). Though not citing any sources, he seems to indicate that there are many among this group who forget that Paul's letters to the churches are full of "warnings and admonitions." The statement really requires substantiation—even if only an explanatory footnote.

As he begins to conclude his comparison of the twenty-first and the first century contexts, he correctly notes the task of the church. He calls on the church to recognize the "strategic importance" of the cities and the global impact that they exert upon our culture. In this light he will identify the task/challenge of the church as "to distinguish between the treasure of the gospel, the baggage of our culture, and the economic and political power that world-class cities exert" (53). However, he will also give the following delimitation: "My intention is not to return to the first century in a misguided attempt to reproduce a twenty-first century version of the first-century church" (57).

The second major part of the book is entitled "Issues and Insights." These chapter titles identify fairly well the focus for this part of the book: "Urban Engagement" (Ch. 3), "Birthing New Churches" (Ch. 4), "Caring for New Churches" (Ch. 5), "Welcoming and Incorporating New Members into the Body of Christ" (Ch. 6), "Upholding the Apostolic Message" (Ch. 7), and "Relationships with the Church and the World" (Ch. 8).

In the final chapter of the book, "Mission and Ministry, Then and Now," Gibbs addresses two very important issues: first, the consumer-driven church that "has produced undiscipled church members on a vast scale," and, second, the importance of relationships (230). In addressing the first issue he reminds the reader that "simply moving people from being couch potatoes in front of their televisions to becoming 'pew warmers' in front of the pulpit or altar does not represent significant progress," calling for the church to move from being "a passive society to being participatory" (231). The final chapter is basically a call to return to the ministry of all believers, as gifted by the Spirit and exhibiting the "six defining characteristics of faithful local congregations ("as indicated by Paul's letters"): relational, reproducible, incarnational, faithful, resourceful, and hopeful.

This is an excellent book for reexamining the issues that confront the church as it attempts to minister in a relevant manner to the world in which we live. Though there seems to be an unnecessary allegiance to the institutional and denomination forms of the church, the call to guard and emphasize the historical basis of the events of the gospel, to declare Jesus in exalted terms, "resisting every temptation to submit to the demands of the world we engage" (190) is clear and needed.

Chauncey A. Lattimer, Jr.
Preaching/teaching Elder
Martinton Church of Christ and Darrow Church of Christ.
Marinton, Illinois, and Darrow, Illinois

Keith BODNER. *Jeroboam's Royal Drama*. Biblical Refigurations. Oxford University Press, 2012. 167 pp. $85.00.

With an invitation for readers to "take a fresh look" at various methods in biblical interpretation, the preface to the Biblical Refigurations series promises "new perspectives" on

select biblical characters. From the viewpoint of narrative criticism, Bodner in this volume gives a close reading of the story of Jeroboam I. In his analysis, Bodner maintains that the account in Kings is "a literary achievement of great subtlety and complex characterization" (1). Claiming that Jeroboam may be "the most misunderstood character" in the OT, Bodner argues that the insurgent king is "a rebel *with a cause* authorized by God" (14).

In six chapters, framed by a "Prologue" and "Epilogue," Bodner develops the character of Jeroboam. The first chapter situates the narrative in the context of the reigns of Saul, David, and Solomon and their use of power. In chapter two, Bodner surveys the adversaries raised up against Solomon. Allusions to Moses and Joseph in the Hadad narrative (1 Kgs 11:14-22) and to David in the account of Rezon's revolt (vv. 23-25) intimate that God is raising up Jeroboam as an adversary to Solomon (35-41). Parallels with Samuel and David (e.g., with the term "Ephratite" [cf. 11:26 and 1 Sam 17:12] and that prophets from Shiloh [Samuel and Ahijah] announce the demise of Saul and Solomon) suggest that Jeroboam will be a new David (41-50). Additional connections (the rebuffing of Rehoboam with Sheba's song from Absalom's rebellion [1 Kgs 11:26 and 2 Sam 20:1] along with Adoniram's role in each rebellion) indicate that the schism, the subject of chapter three, will undermine David's house (73-78).

In chapter four, Bodner sees a turn in Jeroboam's characterization. An opening soliloquy (12:26-27) by the new king reveals an underlying insecurity that situates Jeroboam as a Saul-like figure (84-89). His fear of Rehoboam and southern hegemony leads to the construction of shrines in Dan and Bethel, rival sanctuaries that become another way of exercising power (92-96). Jeroboam's characterization is further developed in the unusual story of the man of God from Judah who curses Jeroboam's altar and then is deceived by the old prophet from Bethel (13:1-34). This "play within a play" (the subject of chapter five) indirectly comments on the king as the man of God and symbolically represents Jeroboam and his disobedience (108-111). Bodner balances this negative portrayal in chapter six with the observation that interpreters often overlook that the king was a monogamist (124). The consequences for Jeroboam's family connect this story again with the judgment on the house of Eli (125 ff.). In the epilogue, Bodner reiterates the complexity of Jeroboam's characterization and the artistry in the narrative. In the Jeroboam narrative (1 Kgs 11–14), a "variety of literary devices and techniques" are used to comment on the reign of this important figure. Ironically, the "solution to Solomon's corruption" himself becomes corrupted when wielding the power of kingship (146, 151).

This is a well-written volume with numerous insights, in which Bodner demonstrates the value of narrative criticism for reading Kings. One of the chief contributions of this study is Bodner's grasp of the intertextual allusions that are so important in the characterization of Jeroboam; however, there is oversight in his analysis. Bodner notices the parallels between Solomon and the Pharaoh of the Exodus narrative but does not follow the obvious implication that Jeroboam is a new Moses who becomes Aaron-like (missing numerous allusions to Exodus 32 in 1 Kings 12) in his turn away from God. This omission reflects the need for more control in identifying intentional allusions. Nevertheless, this volume is an excellent one for anyone interested in the literary artistry of Hebrew narrative.

Jesse Long
Dean of the College of Biblical Studies and Behavioral Sciences
Professor of Archaeology, Old Testament, and Homiletics
Lubbock Christian University

Eric A. SEIBERT. *The Violence of Scripture: Overcoming the Old Testament's Troubling Legacy.* Minneapolis: Fortress, 2012. 232 pp., $23.00.

In this volume, Seibert builds upon his work in *Disturbing Divine Behavior* (Fortress, 2009). His objective is twofold: to advocate a nonviolent way of reading the OT that helps overcome its violent legacy and to apply his hermeneutic to specific cases.

Seibert joins a growing tribe of scholars who unabashedly confess that, when it comes to violence, many OT passages portray God inaccurately. They reject a view of biblical authority that requires readers to accept its portrait of God and invite readers, instead, to recognize a plurality of voices in Scripture and to accept the testimony only of those that portray God accurately. This view, Seibert suggests, follows from God's choice to give humans a central role in the Scripture's composition. Human involvement should dissuade us from embracing everything the Bible says and encourage us to read it critically. We honor God most, in his view, by entering into spirited conversation with Scripture.

In Part One, Seibert explores the OT troubling legacy. He tells the familiar story of those who justify all sorts of violence to nations, enemies, and minorities by recourse to OT precedent. He also insists that blame lies both with the humans who misapply Scripture and the inherent flaws in Scripture itself. One cannot read all of Scripture approvingly without its depictions of virtuous violence and oppression seeping into our consciousness and shaping our worldview.

In Part Two, Seibert sets forth his proposal for how to read the OT nonviolently. We must cultivate the habit of reading actively not passively, questioning what we read and not simply listening to it, and critiquing rather than automatically approving what we read. Furthermore, each reading must be guided by the rule of love, commitment to justice, and an ethic of life. Such a reading is facilitated by a five-step process that embodies Seibert's principles: name the violence, analyze the violence, critique the violence, use textual violence constructively, and transcend the violence. Seibert does not excise problematic passages from the Bible but uses them to foster reconciling dialogue.

In the third and final part, Seibert presents three samples of nonviolent interpretation, beginning with the conquest of Canaan. Since Scripture's account presumes divine violence, it is mistaken. We can use it, nonetheless, to warn readers against religious violence, to expose how political leaders use religion to serve their agendas, to start conversations between the perpetrators and victims of colonization, and to contemplate how outsiders in our day might find refuge among God's people as Rahab and the Gibeonites did in Joshua's day. In the same manner, Seibert derives lessons from other OT passages that otherwise seem to justify warfare and violence against women.

Seibert's desire to counteract selective use of the OT to legitimate violence is certainly commendable. Yet his solution leaves many questions unanswered. If Scripture cannot provide accurate information about God's identity, what can? If we cannot trust Scripture's portrait of God to inform ethical norms, what can we trust? What are the wider ramifications of Seibert's hermeneutic? Can it be applied to other theological and ethical topics?

Though I resonate with a Christian commitment to nonviolence, it is not clear to me that Seibert offers a reliable hermeneutic for one. To reject what we perceive to be the message of a passage and then to use it to teach a contrary message is to undermine Scripture's ability to say something to us that we do not already believe. Seibert and a host of other scholars have given up on certain violent passages too soon. If Jesus truly is God's most

definitive self-disclosure and if all of Scripture points to him, then we have not read a passage critically enough until we can see how each one on its own terms points us to his loving, reconciling work.

John Nugent
Professor of Old Testament
Great Lakes Christian College

John D. WINELAND, Mark ZIESE, and James Riley ESTEP Jr., eds. *My Father's World: Celebrating the Life of Reuben G. Bullard.* Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2011. 234 pp. $28.00.

The editors and contributors in this volume celebrate Reuben G. Bullard as a Christian scholar who contributed to changing the practice of archaeology and the lives of students. The editors of the volume have drawn their title from the posthumously published poem of the widely regarded preacher, Maltbie D. Babcock, which has been a staple of American hymnody for the past century. The lyrics address the topic of natural theology and are particularly appropriate, as theology and earth science were centers of the professional activity and teaching of Bullard. He enjoyed leading such songs to start classes when he taught at Cincinnati Christian University. This work will find its initial audience among family, friends, and former students. These persons will enjoy the work from cover to cover. Through the fine sieve of internet search engines students will find materials on a spectrum of topics that they will not find through scanning titles on shelves. The essays written by former students and colleagues are artifacts of the influence of Bullard. Perhaps most significantly the editors have drawn together a collection of artifacts and reminiscences that will help to write future chapters in books on the development of Biblical Archaeology in the second half of the twentieth century.

The first section of the book is biographical and provides insights to the life and motivations of Reuben Bullard. The editors provide a concise account in their chapter "The Life of Reuben G. Bullard" that has the benefit of five pages of pictures. The extensive bibliography and list of scholarly activities testify to the varied places and topics touched by Bullard. The absence of a magnum opus on Archaeological Geology may be lamented but is certainly not worthy of criticism. Bullard was obviously productive. In the letters of remembrance and the foreword by William G. Dever there are delightful anecdotes and insights from colleagues. The notes by scholarly contemporaries such as Joe Seger, and George Rapp testify to Bullard's person and scholarly contributions in field excavation and in archaeological geology. The letters of former students and the preface by Wineland testify to their teacher's didactic enthusiasm and personal impact.

The second section of the book is made of contributions drawn from friends and former students. These articles address archaeological subjects. Some of these will provide readers with a snapshot of the state of studies at the time of their writing while others strive to make new contributions. One highlight from the first category is Brian Johnson's "*Crurifragium*: An Intersection of History and Archaeology and Theology in the Gospel of John" (86-100). Johnson's study revives discussion of issues that exist with the limited study of the bones of the crucified man from Giv'at ha-Mivtar. While he concludes that the osteological evidence from the one crucified man found thus far is inconclusive, like his teacher he believes that the Gospel of John will withstand scrutiny. A highlight from the second category is Robert

W. Smith's "Roof Tiles and How They Relate to the Interpretation of the Synoptic Gospels" (120-142). This study is illustrated by drawings of artifacts and reconstructions that help to show how the context of the parallel accounts of the healing of the paralytic in Capernaum found in Luke 5:18-20 and Mark 2:3-5 can be harmonized through knowledge of ancient roofing materials and systems. The use of dried mud bricks in making flat roofs and clay beds in setting sloped roof tiles Roman period Levantine construction are contributions that should find their way into commentaries that deal with these texts, studies of biblical background, and Bible encyclopedias.

This volume will be of particular interest to libraries that support programs in Archaeology and Biblical studies. This volume preserves some artifacts of a life that touched that of others and pointed them to his Father whose providence should never be forgotten.

Bob Smith
Professor of Bible and History
Mid-Atlantic Christian University

Athalya BRENNER and Gale A. YEE, eds. *Exodus and Deuteronomy.* Texts@Contexts Series. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2012. 360 pp. $40.00.

This volume, a part of the series on Texts@Contexts, provides an in-depth look at the texts of Exodus and Deuteronomy within several, diverse and modern contexts. According to the series editors, "the discipline of biblical studies . . . is profoundly influenced by the assumptions and values of the Western European and North Atlantic, male-dominated, and largely Protestant environment" (vii). The idea is that these must be laid aside in order to make way for other "contexts," including geography, gender, economics, faith, and class, contexts that are often overlooked.

This volume is split into three parts: a discussion of the wilderness wanderings, the leadership of Moses and Miriam, and an analysis of the law. The first part is a discussion, in light of the Exodus story, of the stories of immigration and resettlement that many communities tell and retell including the contexts of African Americans, Africa, Australia, the Middle East, and Europe, providing the backdrop for a reinterpretation of the original Hebrew Exodus.

The second part is a glimpse at the roles of Moses, the predominant male leader, and Miriam. The contexts analyzed here represent Hong Kong, the culture of a struggling Jewish woman, a Singaporean woman, and false prophets and climate change. The final section of the book takes an interesting look into the laws of the OT in light of current lifestyles, including violence, slavery, the freedom of women, homosexuality and more.

One of the major strengths of this work is that it takes seriously the thoughts of non-masculine or non-western readers. For far too long biblical studies has simply taken for granted the very male-oriented and western mindset of many readers, and many western readers have begun to take advantage of this by developing a very western, or American, theology. On the converse, one of the major weaknesses of this work is that it does not accept the biblical texts as historical documents, mentioning the "myth" of the Exodus quite frequently in the introduction alone. Beyond this, the dismissal of what is termed male dominated and largely Protestant environment seems to relegate this model of interpretation to a nonsensical position. Perhaps the greatest weakness of this work is that with so many contexts and possibilities for interpretation, a standard approach for interpreting the biblical texts is missing.

Even with these negative concepts, there is a great value to this work, as it lays out very pointedly the beliefs and struggles of those who are very often passed over. Whether proper hermeneutics or not, the contexts of natural life do in fact illuminate certain concepts that could have been overlooked without a context being considered, and the contexts contrary to our own are contexts that many of us (the majority) cannot properly understand without help.

For the pastor, this means learning to understand our congregations who very often come from different walks of life including missing home, financial struggles, or feelings of being overlooked. For the classroom, we find that our students come to us from different parts of the world with contexts outside of the Western norm, giving us a glimpse into how the biblical books might speak to them. For the scholar, it provides a deeper understanding of the social and anthropological norms of cultures, beliefs, and religions outside of our own and opens our minds for the exploration of truth outside of the box we often find ourselves in.

Justin Singleton
Adjunct Instructor
God's Bible School and College

Harold S. KUSHNER. *The Book of Job: When Bad Things Happened to a Good Person.* New York: Schocken Books – Random House, 2012. 145 pp. $24.00.

In the 'Introduction' to this volume, Kushner's very first sentence proclaims that this work "represents the closing of a circle." In his words, it is a return to the question he desired to address forty-eight years earlier in his doctoral dissertation: "the role of God in human tragedy as portrayed in the Bible . . . of life's unfairness and God's role in dealing with it" (7). He further suggests that this is "the issue I believe I was put on earth to deal with, the question of what kind of world we live in" (9). This impetus has produced a volume that is more of a biblical "guide" or "analysis" of a very important issue than a verse-by-verse commentary.

It should also be noted that Kushner honestly admits how "the events of [his] personal life and professional life have moved [him] over the years" (140). Above and beyond the "normal" encounters Kushner would experience as a young rabbi, one can only imagine how devastating it was to be told that his three-year-old son had been diagnosed with progeria, the "rapid aging syndrome," explaining: "When Aaron was diagnosed with progeria, I read everything I could find about his condition (there was very little available at the time) and everything I could find about God's role in the suffering of innocent children. . . . After Aaron died, it took two years for me to gain the perspective needed to think about his death in terms of what it meant rather than how much it hurt" (7-8).

Later he writes, "The most painful aspect of mortality is that a person will not live to see his or her children grow old" (68). Various comments reveal how this has impacted his interpretation of Job. Even his hermeneutical observation includes a strong bias towards the personal: "In the end, every one of us reads his own book of Job, colored by our own faith and personal history" (116).

The first chapter sets the stage by addressing the question, "Does everything happen for a reason?" A foundational contention is that "human beings are meaning-makers, constantly trying to understand our world in terms of cause and effect" (10). Further, we want our

world to be more than just "predictable and reliable in natural/geological ways," we want to believe that it is fair; that "people get what they deserve" (13)! Kushner will go on to say—in terms of this search for reason—that in order for misfortune to be "less painful and more bearable" we need to either impose or discern a meaning. His search brings him to the book of Job, for it is "one place in the Bible where serious theological conversation about the nature and thought processes of God does take place" (18).

Chapters two and three address the macrostructure of the book of Job. Kushner does not believe that "the book as we have it" is the book of Job as originally authored (34). The prologue and epilogue (as distinct from the dialogue/poem), are believed to have been written for a Jewish audience—though he does not believe that Job was an Israelite (22). The author was "a writer blessed with a mind of great subtlety and a vocabulary unmatched by any other biblical author." And if the material in the prologue and epilogue bother you, Kushner says that you should be comforted by the fact that this *final* author "had the same reaction," taking "the venerable, pious Fable of Job, turn[ing] it inside out, and [giving] us the theological masterpiece we know as the book of Job in the Bible" (32). Since the author was a "God-fearing Everyman," it is a composition for all people in every age.

Kushner affirms that the dating of the book is uncertain; in fact, his conclusion is that "we don't know, we will probably never know, and it really doesn't make that much difference" (40). However, he provides a hint as to his beliefs when, making a hardline distinction between the two major sections of the book, he writes:

> The first thing you need to know about the biblical book of Job is that there are two of them. There is the Fable of Job, a very old, simple folktale of faith maintained and rewarded, found in chapters 1, 2, and 42 of the biblical book. And then there is the Poem of Job, a much later, more complicated work comprising the large middle section of the book (19).

If you were only aware of the distinction between the prose and poetry sections, but not aware that Job was composed of two books, do not feel bad: "A lot of people reading the Bible don't realize that." Examples include "the author of the book of James in the New Testament [who] didn't know there were two parts to the Job story" (19), as well as the 12th-century Jewish scholar Moses Maimonides, who was "blessed with the greatest mind of any Jew between the death of Moses and the birth of Albert Einstein." Commenting on his work, Kushner says Maimonides was one who "labored under one insurmountable handicap . . . that the Fable and the Poem were of one piece by a simple author" (119). In fact, Kushner finds it much more acceptable to "read the Poem as a challenge to, and a rejection of, the theology of the Fable" (38).

An additional matter relating to the composition of Job surfaces in his comments on the Elihu chapters (Job 32–37). Kushner will posit that this material constitutes a "foreign element that does not stem from either the Fable of Job or the Poem as its author wrote it." He will go on to say that the writer of these chapters is not being critical, but the material is simply the work of one who "accept[ed] the author's tacit invitation to join in the discussion." (98).

What Kushner identifies as "the argument"—a "theological debate . . . that has no parallel in the Bible or in ancient literature"—is examined in chapters four to six. Probably due to the participants in the dialogue being "fictional characters," Kushner says they do some-

thing very different: "They actually listen to each other" (43). Because of this, he sees them changing and evolving as the dialogue cycles run their course. What follows in these chapters is an examination of the text by means of a narrative/summary of each person's contribution to the dialogue, with occasional comments on specific phrases or words. The primary focus remains on the way in which these dialogues speak to the issue of how an all-powerful, all-loving God could allow evil to exist.

From a negative standpoint, Kushner characterizes God, as presented in the Fable of Job, as "a God who plays games with the lives of His creatures to enhance His ego" (23) and, again, as "a God who prizes unquestioning loyalty and absence of criticism over all other virtues" (31). There are a lot of sentences, phrases, and even words that might suggest that Kushner's interpretation and understanding of God (especially as he sees it in the prologue) is tainted by his personal and very painful experiences. For instance, he writes that "God inflicts Job" (26) with the disease that covers his body. Yet, the biblical text says, "So Satan went out from the presence of the Lord and afflicted Job" (Job 1:7, NIV).

Positively, the conclusion/solution that he presents is thought-provoking. Kushner is right in pointing out that Nature is not just an all-loving, all-powerful God who has chosen to limit his use of power by "not intervening to compel Nature to make exceptions for nice people" (139). He is also right in pointing out that God makes two speeches in the end, not one. His thesis that the second speech regarding the challenge to tame Behemoth and how this relates to the second area where God chooses to limit Himself—"human freedom to choose between good and evil"—is intriguing and merits additional development (130).

The volume is an easy but thought-provoking read. The length of the volume allows the reader the opportunity to read it as a topical study, rather than as a reference book. It should also reveal to most that it is not intended as an in-depth commentary.

Chauncey A. Lattimer, Jr.
Preaching/Teaching Elder at Martinton Church of Christ, and Darrow Church of Christ
Martinton, Illinois; Darrow, Illinois

Rolf A. JACOBSON and Karl N. JACOBSON. *Invitation to the Psalms: A Reader's Guide for Discovery and Engagement.* Baker, 2013. 176 pp. $17.99.

The Jacobson brothers write this volume to be a tour guide for the interested nonspecialist to familiarize the reader with the landscape and let them loose to read, pray, sing, and live the psalms. Consequently, the primary topics of the volume will come as no surprise to specialists. Chapter one considers the key features of Hebrew poetry: parallelism (normally *echoing* and *extending*, but "Do not reduce parallelism to either echoing or extending!" [19]) and poetic structure. The second chapter introduces two types of genre: content and form. The remainder of the chapter is devoted to basic forms in the Psalter: lament, hymns of praise, trust psalms, and songs of thanksgiving. Chapter three introduces genres distinguished by their content: royal psalms, enthronement psalms, wisdom psalms, creation psalms, and historical psalms; with brief attention to penitential psalms, imprecatory psalms, Zion psalms, and liturgical psalms.

The fourth chapter raises the question, "Who is the psalmist?"—a question that engages two realities: the persona (the face put on by the one who presents the psalm) and the life situation out of which the psalm arose. In addition, this chapter contributes helpful sections

on the superscriptions of the psalms, the Temple and Israelite religion as they relate to the psalms, and the issue of the congregation and the individual in the psalms. I especially liked the authors' suggestion of "covering" (as when one musician plays or "covers" another artist's songs) as a helpful way of viewing our use of the psalms.

Metaphor is the subject of chapter five; about which, the authors aptly claim, "metaphorical thinking is psalmic thinking" (119). To facilitate discussion, the chapter introduces technical language for metaphors (target domain/source domain), but also emphasizes that imagination is essential to understand a metaphor. The authors then provide a map of metaphorical expressions for the human situation in the Psalms and metaphors for God. They conclude by noting the potential ambiguity of extended metaphors and other metaphor-like language (hyperbole, merism). The final chapter considers the theology of the Psalms, with an effort to locate a theological center in the book: God's loving faithfulness (*hesed*). The Jacobsons carefully demonstrate the presence of this theme in each of the formal genres and then ask what kind of God the psalms presume? The question provides opportunity for summary reflections: a God committed to all creation, a God who does not mind being challenged by humans, a God who works through others, and a God who is active in the world.

On the strong side, each chapter offers exercises for the reader to complete before continuing. At the end of each chapter the authors include a section entitled "Going Deeper" in which they give various assignments, most of which would be helpful to an upper-division undergraduate course, only a few of which could use revision: Why not pray the angry letter like the Psalms? (87, #3); What is the purpose of drawing the images (75, #1)?

Ultimately, a volume should be judged by its own goals and in this, this volume does very well. The basic information a "competent" reader needs to engage the Psalms is provided in a clear fashion. Only one precaution, the Jacobsons write for the *interested* nonspecialist, students who are likely in a seminary, but as likely as not in undergraduate programs that require Religion credits. In such a case the instructor will need to do some work before bringing in the Jacobsons. But then, by all means, introduce your students to this fine work.

Glenn Pemberton
Professor of Old Testament
Abilene Christian University

William BAIRD. *History of New Testament Research: From C.H. Dodd to Hans Dieter Betz, Vol. 3.* Fortress, 2013. 688 pp. $70.00.

This long-awaited third volume has finally arrived, and it does not disappoint. Although Baird does not really aim at bringing every area he discusses to the current state of the question, he does land the reader in familiar territory, discussing a good number of the most important figures in NT research from the past eighty or so years.

Although the title suggests a more straightforward history of research, Baird organizes this volume as a series of biographical vignettes, covering most of the more important figures from his (Baird's) lifetime. (In spite of the volume's subtitle, the first vignette is devoted not to C.H. Dodd but to Vincent Taylor.) Baird tells us that he chose to give this biographical treatment only to those scholars who have passed on, or who are octogenarians, or nearing that point (although one is still in his early 60s). Scholars who receive this treatment

include Taylor, Cadbury, Manson, Dodd, Barth, Bultmann, Käsemann, Bornkamm, Robinson, Jeremias, Black, Davies, E. P. Sanders, Hengel, Kümmel, Koester, Conzelmann, Marxsen, Farmer, Goulder, Kloppenborg, Schnackenburg, Brown, Meier, Cullmann, Knox, Minear, Bruce, Barrett, Dunn, Gerhardsson, Schüssler Fiorenza, Martyn, Keck, Furnish, and Betz. Every reader, of course, will wonder about Baird's choice to include or exclude a certain scholar, but none of his choices is very surprising, with the exception of Karl Barth. (Barth was influential, but he was *not* a biblical scholar.) Since a strictly biographical approach leaves too much unsaid for a "history of research," Baird intersperses, at several places, supplementary chapters and sections, covering such topics as the discovery and interpretation of the Nag Hammadi codices, the Dead Sea Scrolls, the development of NT textual criticism, and the founding of scholarly organizations (the SBL, SNTS, CBA, and Jesus Seminar). This supplementary material, of course, contains references to younger scholars. This way of organizing the volume undoubtedly had its usefulness for the task of writing—it surely would be much more difficult to weave a continuous narrative about the history of NT research.

The amount of research that went into this volume is daunting, of course, but much of it seems to have formed the background of Baird's own lifelong encounter with the scholarship he reviews. At times, Baird adds a personal reminiscence—my personal favorite was the humorous story of Oscar Cullmann singing "My Darling Clementine" (476)—but he never lets his own views intrude. He shows a lot of respect for the scholarly guild and goes to great lengths to be fair and balanced.

This volume is highly recommended for anyone wanting to gain a more detailed understanding of the field of NT studies. The fact that it consists mostly of biographical vignettes also allows it to compete with (or supplement) the *Dictionary of Major Biblical Interpreters* (IVP Academic, 2007).

John C. Poirier
Chair of Biblical Studies
Kingswell Theological Seminary

Israel KAMUDZANDU. *Abraham Our Father.* Paul in Critical Contexts Series. Fortress, 2013. 208 pp. $49.00.

Kamudzandu is assistant professor of NT studies in the Lindsay P. Pherigo Chair at Saint Paul School of Theology. In this most recent volume, he seeks to utilize both the experience of postcolonial Christianity in Zimbabwe and Virgil's *Aeneid* in order to shed light on Paul's Letter to the Romans, especially Rom 3:21–4:25. In addition, he attempts to demonstrate how Shona Christians in Zimbabwe appropriated and engaged with Paul in his use of the Aeneas story to tell the story of Abraham.

Kamudzandu's volume is made up of five short chapters. Chapter one offers a historical overview of the arrival of colonial and missionary groups to Zimbabwe and gives some background information about Shona ancestors, specifically one named Nehanda. Chapter two focuses on the engagement between missionary teachings and African culture, and argues that mission centers were the incubators of religious and cultural change. Chapter three attempts to show connections between Paul's faith as it is expressed in Rom 3:21–4:25 and Shona (post-)colonial experience, and argues that African Christianity emerged from a syn-

thesis and antisynthesis of the two. Chapter four (which bears no resemblance to the "chapter four" outlined in the introduction) elaborates on Virgil's *Aeneid* and describes the function of the cult of Aeneas in the Greco-Roman world. Finally, chapter five presents the ways in which Philo and Josephus depict Abraham in their respective works.

Although Kamudzandu makes some interesting claims with regard to Paul's depiction of Abraham in the context of Greco-Roman cults and myths about Aeneas, I cannot recommend his volume to others due to its numerous shortcomings. First of all, the volume is full of unjustified assertions. For example, Kamudzandu says, "I will make the perhaps surprising claim that neither British nor European missionaries talked about Paul or Abraham" (41). This claim is indeed surprising and in need of some historical evidence to support it, but Kamudzandu never offers any. Has he studied sermons or tracts from the time that lead him to this conclusion? The reader does not know because Kamudzandu never mentions any evidence. Another example: in the preface, he asserts, "The experience of colonization helped Shona Christians to recognize that Paul's appropriation of Abraham in the context of the Roman Empire was to counter the ideology of the Julio-Claudian family" (xiv). Throughout the rest of the volume, not once does he identify any Shona Christian who has made this recognition (besides himself). And this is the pattern throughout the entire volume: first a claim, followed by another claim, and another and another. The reader is left to wonder: Is there any evidence to back up these assertions?

Second and related to the first point, Kamudzandu's negative judgment of Western missionaries leads him to make unjustifiable (and undefended) accusations against them and, in contrast, to paint an idealistic picture of African Christianity. For example, he claims, "This is the genius of African Christianity: it has concern for all peoples, nations, ethnic/tribal races, and genders. Missionary Christianity, on the other hand, focused on leaving other races, tribes, and peoples alone" (52). Such claims are demonstrably false on many levels. Perhaps the most distinctive feature of *missionary* Christianity is that it does not leave other races, tribes, and peoples alone, but seeks to bring the gospel of Jesus Christ to them. And Kamudzandu never offers any evidence that African Christians care more for all peoples, nations, ethnic/tribal races, and genders than missionaries do. Again, a few pages later he asserts, "Missionaries failed to see the implications of the death of Jesus as an event open to all people, nations, and races on the basis of faith" (56). My question to Kamudzandu is the following: Why were missionaries in Africa evangelizing if not for the fact that they saw that Jesus' death was an event open to all people?

Third, Kamudzandu overreaches in what he believes he has demonstrated. For example, in his conclusion he states, "What this volume has proven is that ancestors, or *nostri maiores*, are central to identity formation" (98). Up until that point, I had no idea that he was even trying to prove that thesis. Throughout the volume, he does argue that ancestors were important to Romans, Greeks, and Jews, and that they continue to be important for Africans. However, nowhere does he make any attempt to prove the overarching thesis that "ancestors are central to identity formation," full stop. Furthermore, he makes the following assertion in his second to last chapter, "Paul's Letter to the Romans *cannot be understood* without taking into perspective the Augustan construction of the Aeneas legend" (83; italics mine). Does he mean that Christians, including postcolonial Africans, who have never heard of Aeneas *cannot* understand Romans? Once again, his overblown claims lead him to make statements that I am not sure even he believes.

In addition to these three major concerns others abound: the logical connections between sentences and paragraphs are often unclear; Kamudzandu's consistent evaluation of "New Testament commentators" is that they are blinded by their habitation in the lands of colonial powers, even though every time he quotes a Western NT scholar, he invariably agrees with them; he often points out how "novel" his interpretation of Romans is, even though most of what he says about Romans is pretty uncontroversial; and he frequently claims to know what "postcolonial Africans" or "Western missionaries" think without ever quoting them or giving concrete examples.

This volume makes interesting claims. Reworked, especially with evidence to support its claims and with more nuanced conclusions, it could be a good volume. But as it stands, this volume fails to justify its thesis or major claims and I therefore cannot recommend it to other readers.

Garrett Matthew East
Missionary
Tabora, Tanzania

David C. PARKER. *Textual Scholarship and the Making of the New Testament.* New York: Oxford University Press, 2012. 186 pp. $40.00.

Parker presented the Lyell Lectures at Oxford University in May of 2011 to scholars interested in the history of the book. Speaking to an audience of non-specialists, Parker carefully defined technical terms and procedures. For example, Parker distinguishes between documents, texts, and works. A document is a particular, physical manuscript that may contain one or more works (such as the Gospel of John). The form of the words in a document is its text.

The result is a book that is clear, readable, and interesting—one that will be an essential companion for anyone who works with the Greek NT. Parker introduces the reader to a whole new world in the theory and practice of textual criticism, a world made possible, in part, by the digital revolution.

The lectures emphasize the role of scribes in making the NT. Where textual criticism in the past sought to recover the text intended by authors, Parker is concerned with recovering the earliest recoverable form of the ancient text produced by the scribes who wrote the documents that were combined by other scribes to make up the NT (Parker calls the search for the author's original text the "authorial fallacy." Stanley E. Porter has recently defended the goal of seeking to recover the author's text, in *How We Got the New Testament: Text, Transmission, Translation* (Baker, 2013, 27-36). An equally important role for textual scholars is to study the history of the text as a window into early Christianity.

Of the 5606 documents (as of May, 2011) containing works included in the canonical NT, few contain all of the NT and only the NT. The official classification of the manuscripts is the *Liste* maintained by the Institute for New Testament Textual Research at Münster.

The *Liste* classifies manuscripts by material, script, and type: Papyri, Majuscules, Minuscules, and Lectionaries. Items such as amulets (good-luck charms consisting of verses worn for divine protection) and ostraca are hard to fit into these categories. Commentaries and lectionaries make up over half of the NT manuscripts included on the *Liste*. The various documents containing texts of NT works also contain artwork, introductions, punctuation, cross references, and headings.

The critical edition of the NT for the future will exist in the form of linked databases, though the print version of the completed *Editio Critica Major* is scheduled for 2023. The categories in the *Liste* will be retained for convenience, but links will be provided to descriptions, transcriptions, and digital images of the original documents.

The traditional method of classifying manuscripts in families (Alexandrian, Western, Byzantine) has been superseded by Gerd Mink's Coherence-Based Genealogical Method, known also as the Münster method. The method starts with an initial, editorial text and evaluates individual variant readings based on internal evidence. Decisions about the priority of readings are stored in a database which can then compare hundreds of variants in all the manuscripts available and produce charts showing the genealogical relationship of the manuscripts. A hard drive can store more data than a human brain, but the brain of a trained philologist is needed to make the input and to evaluate the output of the database.

A glimpse into the NT of the future can be seen at the Münster and Birmingham Virtual Manuscript rooms (http://ntvmr.uni-muenster.de/ and http://www.vmr.bham.ac.uk/) or at the Sinaiticus project (http://www.codexsinaiticus.org/en/). Parker has been involved in a project on the Gospel of John (http://www.iohannes.com/).

The digital critical edition of the future will be produced by the scholars at Birmingham and Münster assisted by an international team of volunteers. If you would like to help make the NT of the future, go to http://www.igntp.org/ and look at the "Opportunities" link.

MARK ALTERMAN
Professor of Bible
Manhattan Christian College

Charles E. HILL and Michael J. KRUGER, eds. *The Early Text of the New Testament.* New York: Oxford University Press, 2012. 497 pp. $175.00.

Both of the editors of this volume have published before through Oxford. Hill is a NT professor at Reformed Theological Seminary in Florida and a Henry Luce III Fellow in Theology. He has written *Who Chose the Gospels? Probing the Great Gospel Conspiracy* (2010) and *The Johannine Corpus in the Early Church* (2004), both of which were published at Oxford. Hill has written a number of books and articles in peer-reviewed journals on Johannine literature, the Synoptic Gospels, manuscript history, and the Early Church Fathers. Kruger is a NT professor at Reformed Theological Seminary in North Carolina and the Dean there as well. He has written *Canon Revisted: Establishing the Origins and Authority of the New Testament Books* (2012) and *The Gospel of the Savior* (2005). Kruger has coauthored several works, *The Heresy of Orthodoxy: How Contemporary Culture's Fascination with Diversity Has Reshaped Our Understanding of Early Christianity* (2010), and *Gospel Fragments* (2009), published also by Oxford. He has a number of articles in peer-reviewed journals as well, on a wide variety of NT subjects, including canonicity, specific manuscripts, apologetics, and the ending of Mark.

This volume has a chapter-length introduction followed by three main parts. Part one contains four chapters concerning the culture of text copying and reading during the first several centuries of Christianity. Part two contains eight chapters which discuss the history of transmission for various NT books. The Pauline corpus and the Catholic letters are treated as groups, while the other NT books are treated individually. This part also contains one chapter that discusses the early versions. Part three has one chapter devoted to methods and standards for cita-

tion during the Early Church Period and seven chapters that deal with citations of the NT text by both the Early Church Fathers and by Marcion. While the editors did not provide a general conclusion to the volume, concluding remarks may be found at the end of each chapter.

The introduction provides a rationale for the current volume, an evaluation of the term "original text," a discussion about the classification of manuscripts, and a statement of assurance in the quality of modern reconstructed texts of the NT (9). The introduction also lays out the methodology of the current volume along with the limitations set for the contributors. Each contributor had to deal with the Aland's assessment of each manuscript as to its strictness or freedom, but each contributor was allowed freedom to disagree (18). The introduction then explains several of the key issues to be handled by the various contributors, followed by an annotated outline of what the reader will expect.

Part one of this volume provides the backdrop for the following parts, by creating the historical setting of the copyists, incorporating a comparison between secular and Christian trends. Issues such as the shape of the letters, uniformity of production style, and systematic contraction of *nomina sacra*, are used to point to the goal of obtaining a wider readership of the NT text than what was normal for secular literary reading societies. Kruger's evaluation of early Christian attitudes toward textual transmission leaves the reader with the impression that early Christians expressed a unified front against textual alteration; however, textual alteration still occurred, partly due to the zeal to preserve what the text was believed to be (80).

Part two of this volume presents fresh investigation into the textual history of each NT book or corpus treated. On dealing with Matt mss, Tommy Wasserman disagreed with Kyoung Shik Min four times out of fourteen concerning textual quality of the manuscript, and three times out of fourteen concerning textual transmission quality (86-87). He also confirms early scribal liberty with the NT text (103). He also links controlled scribal community and disciplined practices to the texts that are "strict" in his assessment (105). Juan Hernandez Jr., who dealt with Luke mss., changed the Alands' rating on two of the six mss in his article (139). This provides a few examples of what the various contributors accomplished in this volume. Not all of the contributors wrestled with Alands' ratings to the same degree as these two.

Part three of this volume deals with the use of citations of the NT text. Hill begins this section by countering W. L. Petersen's remarks concerning the sloppiness of the early copyists (263-264). He then explains how assumptions regarding standards lead scholars to extreme positions (264). He concludes that early citations would normally reword a text to better explain its original meaning (280). Hill also points out that the citations may tell us less about the author's exemplar than what scholars have hoped, but that recovering the reading is still worth doing (281). Tjidze Baarda laid out many difficulties scholars would have to overcome if they wished to use the *Diatessaron* as a witness for NT citations, and concluded that it is not possible to use it at this time (348).

This provides a sampling of what is available in this volume. The decision to use the Alands' labels is a good one even if the model proves to be inferior later on. Consistently labeling manuscripts according to any scheme still allows for a faster labeling whenever a better model might emerge, and allows scholars to compare similarities and contrast differences among the mss uniformly in the meantime. Citations by Origen were regrettably lacking discussion in this volume. Both Justin Martyr and Polycarp are cited in one section as examples for displaying an attitude of accurately preserving the text (77), but in another section are shown to contribute the very error they preach against (270, 276, 300, 315). The volume does not resolve this tension, so

the reader is left to conjecture whether Justin and Polycarp were ignorant of the textual condition, or if Justin and Polycarp meant something else by their stern statements.

This volume provides a multifaceted and evenhanded look at the history of early NT text transmission. It exposes the readers to the many difficulties facing the textual critic today. This volume would be useful as a textbook for a class on transmission history, or as supplemental reading for any course involving the textual apparatus. This volume is a valuable reference tool to anyone researching difficult issues in the mss history, and will be for many years to come.

James E. Sedlacek
New Testament Bible Teacher
Cincinnati Christian Schools

Jodi MAGNESS. *Stone and Dung, Oil and Spit: Jewish Daily Life in the Time of Jesus.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011. 375 pp. $25.00.

Burial customs and bathroom amenities, purification ritual and home decor are among the stuff of life addressed in this fascinating study by Magness, archaeologist and Kenan Distinguished Professor for Teaching Excellence in Early Judaism at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Using biblical and extrabiblical texts to illuminate the archaeological record and vice versa, Magness offers a glimpse into the workaday world of Jews in Palestine between the mid-first century BCE and 70 CE—or from about the reign of Herod the Great through the destruction of the Second Temple.

The book consists of an introductory chapter on the social structure of Palestine in the Late Second Temple period, ten chapters focusing on different aspects of Jewish daily life, and an epilogue that touches on some of the repercussions of the temple's destruction. Eighty-four pages of endnotes, an extensive bibliography, and indices take up about half the book.

Magness sets out at the beginning certain assumptions and simplifications she makes for purposes of the study, including assuming a relationship between Pharisaic and later rabbinic practice (4). And despite the book's heavy focus on purity and Qumran—research from which the study evolved (x)—it is nonetheless also valuable in fleshing out the cultural backdrop of the NT writings, whether or not one agrees with the various conclusions she draws. (Some of her assertions seem to suffer from a lack of close reading.)

For example, her discussion in Chapter 2 of the differing views on purity and purification among the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Qumran community, as well as rabbinical debates about hand-washing and whether a vessel's exterior defilement extends to its interior (17-23) gives additional context to Jesus' clashes with the Pharisees and scribes in such passages as in Matt 15:10-20 (Mark 7:14-23), 23:25-26, and Luke 11:37-41. Examination of archaeological findings, such as pools (*miqva'ot*), basins, and mug-shaped vessels for ceremonial washings, informs this discussion.

Magness's discussion of Late Second Temple burial customs in Chapter 11 provides insight into the gospel accounts of Jesus' burial and background helpful for evaluating much-hyped theories about the Talpiot tomb, purported to contain the remains of Jesus and his family, and the "James ossuary," purported to contain the remains of Jesus' brother.

Drawing from archaeological research on excavated tombs and textual evidence from sources including the NT, Apocrypha, Dead Sea Scrolls, Josephus, early church writings, and

rabbinic literature, Magness demonstrates the theories are unlikely. Only the wealthy elite could afford rock-cut family tombs; most Jews, including the Qumran community, were buried in the ground in pit graves or trench graves (156-158). As for Jesus' burial, Magness suggests Joseph of Arimathea offered an unused niche (*loculus*) in his family tomb because Jesus' family was too poor to own a rock-cut tomb, and there was no time to dig a grave for him before the Sabbath (170).

The book includes 48 illustrations and black and white photos with good resolution for a trim, six- by nine-inch paperback. (It is not available in hardcover, although it is available in some electronic formats.) Magness writes for a general audience, avoiding overly technical language and offering extensive quotations from many of the primary sources she cites. This makes the book accessible to nonspecialists and a helpful reference for students of biblical studies and archaeology.

Cheryl L. Eaton
Adjunct Professor
Lincoln Christian Seminary
Administrative Assistant
Mare Institute for Biblical and Archaeological Studies
Covenant Theological Seminary

Matthew L. SKINNER. *The Trial Narratives: Conflict, Power, and Identity in the New Testament.* Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2010. 210 pp. $35.00.

In this volume, Skinner takes a look at the trials of Jesus and his apostles found in the Gospels and Acts. Skinner's introduction defines "*trial scenes* to be narrative episodes in which accused persons give account of themselves or answer questions before recognized authorities who wield power to issue rulings or declarations concerning the acceptability of the people and ideas being examined" (6). With this definition, Skinner clearly lays the groundwork for what he is going to talk about (and what he is not). Skinner argues that since many other scholars have worked with these texts in a variety of other ways (employing a historical approach, or a rhetorical approach, or a linguistic approach . . .), he is not going to rehash those studies but, instead, provide a complementary study that looks at these texts in their narrative context and their impact on the sociopolitical culture (the relationship between the gospel and first-century sociopolitical authorities).

After the Introduction, Skinner's second chapter provides a brief historical context of trials in the first century, focusing on Roman governance and the legal authority of provincial governors (the types of Roman authorities those on trial in the NT usually faced). He concludes this chapter by exploring trials within Greco-Roman literature, specifically Greek novels. Skinner notes that many elements found in trials within Greek novels are also found within NT trial narratives: cheering mobs, the injustice of false accusations, pain of imprisonment and torture, to name a few. He also mentions that, of course, there are going to be differences due to the nature of the charges brought against the defendants. Those on trial in Greek novels are charged with crimes like adultery or murder, whereas charges in the NT are blasphemy or disturbing the peace.

Chapter three begins the study of trials within the NT. Skinner first looks at Mark's version of Jesus' trial and then follows up in chapters four through six with the differences the

other Gospels give in their accounts of the same events. Chapter seven provides an overview of trial narratives within the book of Acts and specifically looks at the trials of Peter, John, and Stephen in Jerusalem. Chapter eight looks at Paul's trials in Philippi and Thessalonica (Acts 16–17), and Paul's trials in Acts 21–28 before various people is discussed in chapter nine. Chapter ten wraps up the book, providing summary remarks.

Each chapter is structured in the same way. Skinner begins with a good narrative overview of the trial scenes within the text being studied. Then he places the trial(s) within the narrative context of the book. This is followed by a breakdown of the trial into its various scenes. Each chapter ends with concluding remarks, including the elements of narrative irony found in the texts.

The narrow approach Skinner uses when studying these texts could severely limit his audience. Skinner writes his target audience is "undergraduate and graduate students engaged in critical study of the NT and its ethical and theological claims, as well as for seminary or divinity-school graduates and Christian lay people who seek a deeper understanding of the Gospels, Acts, and their theological contributions" (12). The book is fairly easy to read (Greek words given in Greek font, with no transliteration), and the layout is easy to follow, but the reader has to come to this book already knowing some Gospels and Luke-Acts background studies that Skinner references but does not expound upon. I agree that this could be an undergraduate-level book, but it would be best used with upper-level undergraduates who are already knowledgeable in the various approaches to reading and understanding the Gospels and Acts.

The biggest critique I have of the book is that Skinner's conclusion was too short (four pages). The majority of his conclusion is a good summary of his main points, but then the very last paragraph of the book makes a brief comment on how this study of these trial narratives could apply to modern day Christians and their current sociopolitical contexts. But then the book ends! A few more pages of Skinner expanding on this idea would have been nice . . . maybe he means to do a follow-up volume.

Alisha Paddock
Part-time Professor of Biblical Studies
Manhattan Christian College

James D. G. DUNN. *The Oral Gospel Tradition*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013. 390 pp. $45.00.

This book collects fifteen of Dunn's essays, all previously published between 1977 and 2011, that examine the oral transmission of the Jesus tradition both before and after the writing of the Gospels. Throughout the work Dunn argues several points: 1) Oral tradition in general, and the canonical Jesus tradition in particular, shows a distinctive pattern of "the same yet different" (5 *et passim)*. Each incident or saying retains its essence across the different "performances," but the performer elaborates the tradition with the needs of the audience in mind. 2) The written Gospels vary in their presentation of Jesus in much the same way as different performances of the oral tradition varied. 3) We cannot get back to an "original" version of any saying or incident in Jesus' ministry, in part because the same saying or deed might have had differing impacts on different eyewitnesses. 4) The early tradents passed on the Jesus tradition in an "informal" but "controlled" way—informal in that they performed it rather

than memorized it (*pace* Gerhardsson) yet controlled in that others who witnessed the performances restricted the speakers' creativity to the common core of the tradition.

The essays fall into three groups. In the first part seven essays lay out Dunn's thesis from various perspectives. The second part contains four essays written in response to criticisms of his book *Jesus Remembered* (Eerdmans, 2003). The four essays in the third part represent "attempts to step back from the close textual work and argumentation of Parts I and II to set the thesis about the oral Gospel tradition in . . . wider contexts . . . ." (9).

The essays do not approach the reader all at the same level, a consequence of their collection from various publications. Most of the essays first appeared in scholarly journals, *Festschriften,* or monographs, but some come from more popular works. In the various essays Greek and Hebrew words appear in translation, in transliteration, or "naked" (my term, not Dunn's). In addition, the reader must tolerate some redundancy, since the author had to make the same points several times in the different essays. As usual with Dunn, the prose flows smoothly and communicates clearly.

This book serves a useful purpose in that it enables the reader to enjoy much of Dunn's recent work without chasing down each piece in its original publication. Although the levels of the essays vary somewhat, the book as a whole will communicate well to upper division college students and seminarians. As for Dunn's overall thesis, I find it persuasive.

Carl B. Bridges
Professor, New Testament
Johnson University, Tennessee

Michael BIRD. *Jesus Is the Christ: The Messianic Testimony of the Gospels.* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2012. 207 pp. $18.00.

In this volume, Bird argues straightforwardly that central to each of the four evangelists' portraits of Jesus is their depiction of him as the Messiah (31). Specifically, Bird contends that the Gospel authors craft their portraits of Jesus in this manner for three reasons: first, Jesus himself claimed to be the Messiah (6-22); second, the Gospel authors hoped to persuade their Jewish readers of his Messianic status (33, 141); and third, Jesus' Messianic identity was the core tenet of the early church's Christology (1-4).

The introductory chapter lays the groundwork for the volume by arguing succinctly that the historical Jesus did claim to be the Messiah. In asserting this, Bird argues against other scholars who believe that the early church imposed the title of Messiah on the person of Jesus. Building on this argument, Bird states that the earliest Christians' belief that Jesus was the Messiah undergirds the composition of the Gospels. As the author admits in the preface, this discussion builds on his earlier monograph, *Are You the One Who Is to Come? The Historical Jesus and the Messianic Question* (vii), consultation of which provides the argument substantiating the historical claims made in the introductory chapter of the present volume.

The four chapters that comprise the heart of the book examine how each Gospel writer casts Jesus as Messiah. In chapter one, Bird examines Mark's Gospel and its attempt "to reconcile the notion that 'Jesus is the Messiah' with 'crucifixion'" (33) concluding that Mark's casting Jesus as the crucified Messiah sums up "Jesus' mission and identity" (55). Chapter two traces the Gospel of Matthew's portrayal of Jesus as the Davidic Messiah who has come to save Israel (78). Next, Bird examines the theme of Jesus' Messiahship in Luke and Acts,

concluding that the third evangelist shows Jesus to be the prophetic Messiah who carries out his mission in the anointing power of the Holy Spirit and reigns over his people as exalted Lord. Bird then explains how the author of the Gospel of John develops his unique portrait of Jesus' Messianic status. Bird argues that John's Jesus is the incarnate, preexistent Messiah who is sent in the flesh to reveal the Father. Bird specifically examines Jesus' meetings with various individuals throughout the first half of the Gospel and shows how these characters fail to fully grasp what the reader knows: that Jesus is the Christ. He concludes that in this way the fourth Gospel presents an "elusive Messiah" in whom the reader of the Gospel is intended to believe (John 20:31). In his conclusion, Bird enumerates three desires for his own readers in light of his analysis. First, he wants the Church to remember that it is "umbilically linked to Israel" via its belief in Israel's Messiah, Jesus (144). Second, he hopes his audience will recover the Messianic identity of Jesus that was marginalized by the Church fathers in their development of Trinitarian Christologies in the second through fourth centuries. This means that the Church will need to view Jesus as the climax of Israel's history and is both sent by God and represents God in the incarnation (145). Third, Bird believes that belief in Jesus *as Messiah* should "serve as a benchmark for establishing boundaries of authentic Christian belief" (146).

This brief review of Bird's little book does not do justice to the wealth of information it contains. The author has covered much ground as evidenced by his bibliography and extensive endnotes (148-205). He has done so in a concise and readable manner. This book provides professors teaching courses on Jesus and/or the Gospels in theological colleges and seminaries with a useful, supplemental text for their classes.

Frank E. Dicken
Assistant Professor of New Testament
Lincoln Christian University

Darrell L. BOCK. *A Theology of Luke and Acts: God's Promised Program, Realized for All Nations.* Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012. 512 pp. $39.99.

Bock, research professor at Dallas Theological Seminary, has written this current volume after almost thirty years of scholarly reflection on Luke's Gospel and the Book of Acts. Among evangelical scholars, Bock is one of the most qualified individuals to write such a volume on Luke's theology, having written major commentaries on both Luke's Gospel and Acts in the Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament series, as well as various articles and essays on Luke and Acts. This particular volume represents one of eight projected volumes in Zondervan's Biblical Theology of the New Testament series.

This volume consists of three parts. Part one introduces historical and literary issues with which most students of Luke and Acts would be familiar. For example, chapters in this section discuss matters of authorship, date, provenance, and the original intended audience of these two works. Another fundamental issue Bock addresses in the book's third chapter is whether the scholar is justified in reading Luke's Gospel and the Book of Acts as two volumes of a single work or as two distinct volumes. As the volume almost necessitates, Bock argues for reading both Luke and Acts as a literary and theological unity. Chapter four, the final chapter of part one, provides an outline with a brief narrative summary of Luke and Acts for the reader.

Part two constitutes the majority of Bock's volume (comprising just over 60%) and func-

tions essentially as the body of the book. In this section, Bock structures his theology by identifying what he considers to be prominent themes running throughout both Luke and Acts. Notable theological categories in this section include topics such as the Holy Spirit, Israel, Women and the poor, the Law, and Jewish Scriptures. Within each chapter, Bock explores the major theme by working through, in narrative order, both Luke and Acts to demonstrate how each concept flows throughout Luke's works. For example, in chapter 9, "The Holy Spirit in Luke-Acts," Bock begins by demonstrating the prominent appearance of the Holy Spirit in Luke's Gospel and Acts in comparison to the other Synoptic Gospels. Ultimately, Bock argues that the Holy Spirit is seen as a sign of a new era initiated at Jesus' birth. This theme continues in the Book of Acts as the Spirit gives guidance to the early leaders of Christianity in the beginning and throughout the Book of Acts. Another exemplary chapter of Bock's work is his chapter on women and the poor, chapter 17. Bock argues what scholars of Luke and Acts have frequently observed: Luke seems to have a particular interest in women and the poor and often portrays them as being pious. Specifically in this chapter, Bock argues that Luke and Acts affirm women's right to participate equally among God's people. However, based on Bock's reading, Luke's writings still distinguish the roles of men and women within the early church because women are not among the central church leaders (i.e., the Twelve). Additionally, he argues Luke's Gospel and Acts highlight the poor as of special concern for God and God's people.

In part three, consisting of two brief chapters, Bock provides a chapter discussing the reception of Luke and Acts into the Christian canon and the contributions Luke's works make to a fuller picture of the life of Jesus and the early church. While Bock has brought out several themes throughout this current work, in his final chapter he provides what he believes to be six central theses to Luke's theology. Among these key theses, Bock highlights the presence of the Holy Spirit as a sign of a new era, the inclusion of Gentiles within Israel, and the fulfillment of God's promises from prophecy.

Bock's work is a contribution to the study of Luke and Acts in that it attempts to provide a general overview of Luke's theology in his two-volume work. Yet, contrary to what the abstract on the back of the book claims, the contents of this volume are by no means groundbreaking. Bock does a good job synthesizing and presenting information that may be found elsewhere. However, this is far from being an essential or significant work on this account alone. There is little said by Bock in this volume that has not been said, either by him or other scholars of Luke and Acts.

That being said, this book would still be a useful volume for the student who has little familiarity with the theological themes of Luke and Acts, as well as a helpful text for the professor who wishes to introduce students to significant theological concepts in Luke's Gospel and Acts. Since Bock does such a good job of bringing together complex issues in Luke's theology and presenting these important themes in a clear format, this volume would be useful reading in many classrooms. This volume would also be useful for individuals who seek an evangelical treatment of Luke's theology.

James Mitchell
University Archivist
Freed-Hardeman University

Craig S. KEENER. *Acts: An Exegetical Commentary.* Vol. 2: 3:1–14:28. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2013. 2191 pp. $59.99.

Keener's second volume continues his magisterial study of the Acts of the Apostles. Volume one provides an extensive introduction and commentary discussion up through Acts 2. This second volume continues the commentary discussion through the first half of Acts. Keener's treatment of Acts is exhaustive, detailed, all-encompassing, and may quite possibly turn out to be the definitive word on Acts.

Keener's knowledge of first-century culture, history, and literature shines brilliantly throughout this volume. Not only does he weave first-century reality through his commentary discussion but also highlights ancient themes, histories, concepts, and literature that shed light on the text of Acts in a multitude of excerpts scattered throughout the volume. Keener displays seemingly exhaustive knowledge of Hellenistic as well as Jewish literature, and all find their appropriate integration in his commentary discussion. His excerpts also treat issues and readings particularly pertinent to modern scholarly debates. His interaction with the New Perspective on Paul is an excellent example: well-written, insightful, engaging every major voice with insight and directness, and full of theological and historical contextualization (2079-2090).

In addition, Keener's engagement with scholarship is quite simply impressive. His grasp of historical scholarship and its influence on and relationship to modern scholarship is enlightening and challenging. Yet he combines this exhaustive knowledge with a readable style and a humility and sincerity that are as impressive as his academic rigor.

The approach of the commentary is sociohistorical at heart, emphasizing the historical, social, and cultural context of Acts. Keener's treatment of the speeches of Acts demonstrates this commitment, drawing on classical rhetoric, history, and ancient literature to inform his interpretation. However, he does not ignore the biblical links of the text, highlighting unending connections between OT, Gospels, Pauline literature, and Acts in both narrative sections and speeches, beautifully underscoring the unity of Scripture.

It may be significant to Stone-Campbell scholars that Keener consciously does not emerge out of a particular theological tradition. Instead he deliberately remains within the first-century world of the text as he interprets it, engaging these theological traditions without being bound to them—an attitude very much in keeping with the Stone-Campbell Movement.

It should also be noted that Keener's tour-de-force on miracles was born as a footnote in his Acts commentary. While he does treat the question of miracles within the commentary in a brief excerpt, to grasp the full breadth of his argument and theological application to Acts one should address his *Miracles.*

While clearly not a cover-to-cover read for the faint of heart, this study of Acts proves a top-tier reference tool that combines exhaustive rigor with a down-to-earth readability that easily makes one (nearly!) forget the length of the volume in favor of just how truly interesting Keener is to read. The volume is definitely appropriate for seminary students and above, yet its clear organization and well-written nature make it an approachable reference tool for pastors and students seeking a more complete treatment of a particular passage.

JUDITH ODOR
PhD Student in New Testament
Asbury Theological Seminary

Robert JEWETT. *Romans: A Short Commentary.* Minneapolis: Fortress, 2013. 266 pp. $39.00.

Jewett's latest contribution to the field of Pauline studies is a condensed, "best-of" version of his *magnum opus* Hermeneia volume on the Epistle to the Romans. Yet it is more than just the highlights edition, since it also presents Jewett's further reflections on Romans after having completed his immense commentary in 2007, the culmination of over two decades of study focusing on Paul and his Roman letter.

As such, it both condenses and intensifies Jewett's particular perspective on Romans. He frames his commentary—quite appropriately—against the backdrop of the traditional interpretation of Romans as primarily addressing justification by faith as an individualized experience (1). Although Jewett began with this traditional perspective over three decades ago, his work has since brought him to the conclusion that Romans is more about the dynamics of inclusion in and exclusion from the community. His movement toward this view began with a study of the vocabulary of the epistles: word frequencies and meanings that were determined according to their usage in the epistle, not within the past two millennia of theology, convinced him that "the central issue was setting the world right by overcoming its perverse systems of honor and shame" with their implications on identity within the community (2).

Issues of honor and shame, then, form the main thrust of the letter. Its occasion Jewett finds within his rhetorical analysis of the letter: "the theological climax of Romans comes at the point of the rhetorical climax, in chapter 16" (7). Within this schema, then, the occasion for the letter to the Romans is simply that "Paul is seeking to persuade the Roman congregations to support his mission to the barbarians in Spain" (6). Paul uses the urgency and primacy of his mission to justify confronting these deeply ingrained cultural values: because preaching the gospel is of first priority, no prejudice or exclusivism may be allowed within either gospel or church. Even virtue and honor may hold no special sway in receiving the gospel.

Jewett's approach is strongly rhetorical, using the rules of classical Hellenistic rhetoric to identify the flow of argumentation, the emphases, and the relationships between portions of arguments within the epistle. However, in this smaller condensation of his work, Jewett avoids drowning the reader in classical terms, preferring instead to explain terms and argumentation in language more appropriate for a wider audience. One of the benefits of such a rhetorically oriented approach is the sense that it makes of the relationships between sections of Romans. Understanding that first-century argumentation was not simple linear argumentation but rather obeyed a set of well-known and well-defined rules that both governed composition and assisted interpretation proves invaluable in shedding light on the meaning of the text as its first-century audience would have understood it.

One of the great strengths of Jewett's commentary is that he demonstrates how to take culture and vocabulary seriously in its own context, without transplanting it several millennia into our various theological heritages. This approach meshes neatly with the Stone-Campbell heritage that seeks to return to a first-century understanding of the text without being driven by theological traditions. A second (but not inconsiderable!) strength of this shorter commentary is simply that it is shorter, and in fact a small fraction of the size of Jewett's Hermeneia volume. It is readable, well-written, and useful for a wider audience than the (frankly intimidating!) Hermeneia commentaries appeal to.

The weaknesses of the volume are in keeping with its strengths. Because it is a shorter commentary, Jewett does not engage other perspectives or scholars as frequently or as in-

depth as some may wish. In addition, Jewett's emphasis on inclusion within the community suggests a failure to fully differentiate between an ethic of openness and inclusion and a doctrinal openness. The tension of these priorities is reflected within the Restoration movement as well in the motto "In essentials unity, in all things/non-essentials love." Love is the openness, the attitude of the church that mirrors Jesus, yet the church must hold firmly to the essentials in order to actually remain the church—God's people. One gets the feeling reading Jewett's commentary that this tension between inclusion and doctrinal essentials has not yet been fully worked out in the author's own theology.

In short, Jewett's short commentary is well worth the read. It is thoughtful and thought-provoking, appropriate for students and pastors alike who wish to dip into a rigorous study of Romans without facing the prohibitive price and size of a Hermeneia volume.

Judith Odor
PhD Student in New Testament
Asbury Theological Seminary

Chris TILLING. *Paul's Divine Christology.* WUNT II 323, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012. 334 pp. 69.00.

Tilling serves as both Tutor in NT at St Mellitus College (London, England) and Visiting Lecturer in Theology at King's College London. In 2009 Tilling completed his PhD at London School of Theology (Brunel University), under the supervision of Prof. Max Turner. In his thesis-turned-monograph, Tilling addresses two necessary and related questions: 1) does "Paul's Jewish-style faith in God" influence our reading of his christological emphases, and 2) do Paul's (undisputed) letters evince a divine Christology, and if so to what extent?

In a brief introduction (chapter 1), Tilling situates the specific aims of his study within the context of recent discussions of Paul's (divine) Christology. Tilling then addresses pre- and post-1970s scholarship (chapter 2), engaging with the arguments of those who speak for and those against a fully divine Christology in Paul. The breadth of coverage and level of scrutiny in this section are commendable and repay close attention. From here Tilling offers a more focused, though somewhat imbalanced critique of the works of Fee, Hurtado, and Bauckham (chapter 3; "imbalanced" because Fee is the prominent figure in this part of the discussion), with their respective contributions serving as building blocks in the development of Tilling's research. Specifically, Tilling builds upon 1) a particular neglect (or lack of sufficient development) in Fee's discussion of divine and human "relationality" (47; cf. 49-52), a theme that Tilling deems crucial for understanding Paul's divine Christology; 2) Hurtado's emphasis on the phenomenon of extending religious devotion to or worship of Christ by the early believers, with the implication that he is in some way considered divine (31-32; cf. 52, 55-56); and 3) Bauckham's twofold view of a relational "divine identity"—i.e., God and Israel, God and all reality (19; cf. 61-62). After providing this incisive and fruitful survey of scholarship, Tilling articulates his specific thesis and approach (chapter 4), which are concerned with issues of method and practice when examining the christological data in Paul as well as the substance of such examinations (cf. 74).

The core of Tilling's thesis unfolds in chapters 5–8, beginning with an in-depth (and rewarding) exegesis of 1 Cor 8.1–10.22 (chapter 5). From his close reading of the text (see 77-103), Tilling demonstrates how Paul negotiates (for the Corinthians) both the Jewish-

style faith in God, which is intrinsically relational, and a fully divine Christology, which itself proves to be relational. Specifically, Tilling emphasizes the way in which Paul compares the relationship between Israel and YHWH vis-à-vis idolatry with the relationship between believers (in Corinth) and Christ vis-à-vis idolatry. What is revealing about this comparison is that the *language* and *themes* of the OT, detailing the relationship between Israel and YHWH, are intentionally employed by Paul for "explaining and indicating the relation between Christ and Christians" (103), which *suggests* that Paul operates from an established understanding of how the two foci are compatible/harmonious. Then, in chapter 6, Tilling offers an examination of the other (undisputed) Pauline letters to see how much of Paul's thought-world, as illustrated in 1 Cor 8.1–10.22, appears in other contexts. In other words: does Paul possess an established divine Christology that shapes his thinking, or is his argument in 1 Corinthians merely a one-off? Tilling contends, again from close readings of the texts (see 106-176), that, given the substance of Paul's remarks and the emphases or associations he makes in his other letters, an established understanding of Christ-devotion is unavoidable and that this understanding is nuanced in relational terms (see 176-180)—terms normally ascribed to God-devotion. From here, Tilling is able to conclude that Paul's "Christ-relation" constitutes a theological and conceptual pattern in Paul's thought and expression (chapter 7), and that such a pattern can easily illuminate Pauline texts otherwise "overlooked or downplayed" (188), in this case: 1 Cor 16.22 (chapter 8).

In chapter 9, Tilling takes a step back in order to address a potential issue, namely a small handful of extrabiblical texts (*Sirach, Life of Adam and Eve,* and *Similitudes of Enoch*) thought to be detrimental to a fully divine Christology. Opponents of a fully divine Christology contend that these texts illustrate the phenomenon of other intermediary figures receiving devotion (or worship), bearing titles, and/or exercising authority that ordinarily belongs to YHWH alone. The upshot being: while these figures received such things, they were not considered divine or even synonymous with YHWH. Thus, according to Tilling's interlocutors, there is no reason to attribute divine status to Jesus because of his similarity to these other intermediary figures. Tilling, however, emphatically disagrees and exposes not only the methodological error of his interlocutors but also the incorrect conclusions drawn. In each case, through a close and attentive (re)reading of the texts, Tilling demonstrates how Paul's language about Christ mirrors not the language about intermediaries but the language about God in those texts (see 197-230). Thus, Paul's treatment of Christ is decidedly and categorically different from any supposed precedent. Tilling then takes this reading of the Pauline data and returns to scholarly discussions of divine Christology (chapter 10). It is here that one sees not only Tilling's indebtedness to Fee, Hurtado, and Bauckham but also his contribution (and ability) in moving the discussion forward (see 234-244) as well as stymieing the advances of those wishing to deny Paul a fully divine Christology (see 244-252).

Finally, Tilling provides a summary of his research (chapter 11) and an insightful explanation for how a fully divine Christology, specifically in terms of a "Christ-relation," affects current theological debate (appendix). While this latter section is classified as an "Appendix," it should not be considered or treated and thus read as an afterthought. Tilling's observations in this section repay close attention, especially by those wishing to enter into christological debates in general and Pauline Christology in particular.

Tilling is to be commended not only for his ability to engage fairly and thoroughly with scholars on both sides of the debate but also for his patient exegesis and rereading of the pri-

mary and secondary sources, and allowing the data to direct the outcome of the argument. Tilling's monograph serves as an example of how to do scholarly research in NT studies. In terms of weaknesses, one will be hard-pressed to find any, unless of course one wishes that Tilling brought in the disputed Pauline letters as a way for either comparison or contrast with the undisputed ones. Fortunately, at least for one disputed letter (Ephesians), Tilling has already addressed this concern in the 2012 Festschrift for Max Turner.

Carl S. Sweatman
Online Adjunct Instructor
Johnson University

Graham TOMLIN, ed. *Philippians, Colossians.* Reformation Commentary on Scripture. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2013. 355 pp. $50.00.

Tomlin's volume is the fourth published volume of the projected 28-volume Reformation Commentary on Scripture (RCS), which follows in the footsteps of the Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture (ACCS). General editor of the series, Timothy George, says, "The RCS has four goals: the enrichment of contemporary biblical interpretation through exposure to Reformation-era biblical exegesis; the renewal of contemporary preaching through exposure to the biblical insights of the Reformation writers; a deeper understanding of the Reformation itself and the breadth of perspectives represented within it; and the recovery of the robust spiritual theology and devotional treasures of the Reformation's engagement with the Bible" (xv).

George begins the volume with a "General Introduction" expanding on the goals of the series, its relationship to the ACCS, the parameters used for choosing the selections included in each volume, the organization of the volumes' contents, and the nature of biblical interpretation in the period as represented by different groups at the time. Following the introduction, "A Guide to Using This Commentary" explains the structure of contents. Next, Tomlin's introduction to the text includes the concerns and methods of the Reformation authors, a brief survey of the authors and works used to compile the volume, and a description of the key themes that arise from the Reformers' interaction with the epistles. The layout of the commentaries consists of the pericope, and an overview of the themes raised by authors reacting with that portion of the biblical text, followed by the commentaries from each author. Each excerpt begins with a topical heading and the author's name. The name of the source and a footnote to bibliographic information follow the selection. Occasionally, footnotes are also provided referencing allusions to other scriptures or classical works, explaining the historical background of the period or previous church history, and providing other important information. Following the commentaries, there are other extras including a map of Reformation Europe, a 10-page timeline of the Reformation period organized by date and country, brief biographies of authors used in the volume, a bibliography, and indices to authors and writings, subjects, and scripture references.

The authors used in the volume include extremely well-known Reformers (Calvin and Luther), other familiar names (Arminius, Bullinger, Erasmus, Knox, Melanchthon, Simons, and Zwingli), and more obscure individuals (Girolamo Zanchi and Henry Airay). As the names suggest, selections are very diverse, including representatives from Lutheran, Reformed (from various countries), Anglican, Puritan, Catholic, and Anabaptist perspectives. The excerpts derive from expected sources (commentaries and sermons), but also lectures, catechisms, letters, treatises, and confessions.

The editors have published a great volume. The introductions are helpful. The layout of the commentary material is easy to understand and gives necessary information for further research. Particularly valuable are the biographies at the end of the volume. For any obscure individual in the commentary, the biography provides insight into the author's life and theological perspective. The diverse selection of writers from various persuasions, especially Catholic and Anabaptist, and the various types of written sources are also commendable.

Despite the overall quality of the volume, there are a couple of weaknesses. First, the overview for the selections for Phil 2:1-11 refers to a selection from Erasmus, but nothing is included in what follows. Second, and more reflective of the entire volume, the inclusion of material from confessions is often distracting. Selections from confessions are regularly included as they relate to the theological subject addressed by the authors as they interact with the passage of Scripture, but they do not necessarily reveal the interpretation of the biblical text. This deviates from the purpose of a biblical commentary. For example, after Luther's selection referencing Col 2:9 and discussing the ubiquity of Christ, a selection from the Bohemian Confession of 1535 is included addressing Christ's presence but with no reference to Colossians (184-185).

Except for the introductions, this book does not lend itself to reading for long periods, but it is a valuable reference text for ministers, students, and scholars preparing sermons and exegetical papers. Due to the pastoral and practical concerns of the Reformation-era authors, the text could meet the first and second goals of the series. As Tomlin points out, the Reformation writers, while not being unaware of hermeneutical issues, primarily study Scripture to live a Christian life (xliii-vliv). For church historians, the author and writings, and subject indices would be a helpful research tool, and the introductions would be a great start for studying the exegesis of the period.

Shawn C. Smith
Registrar
Lincoln Christian University

Garreth Lee COCKERILL. *The Epistle to the Hebrews*. NICNT. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012. 791 pp. $60.00.

Cockerill's current volume replaces the previous volume on Hebrews by F. F. Bruce in the NICNT series (xii). Bruce's original commentary is being kept in print by Eerdmans as a standalone volume under the same title as Cockerill's replacement. Cockerill presents the updated volume as making its own substantial contribution beyond the original because of the update's attentiveness to "developments over the past decades in the study of ancient rhetoric, in the analysis of Hebrews' structure (particularly through discourse analysis), and in intertextual studies" (xiii). Leveraging observations from these and other angles, Cockerill suggests that Hebrews chiefly urges its audience to "persevere [in faithfulness] by availing themselves of the grace provided by drawing near to God through [their] effective High Priest" (79; cf. 87).

Cockerill treats Hebrews as a "pastor's sermon" and divides its argument into four main sections (11–16, 79–80). In Heb 1:1–4:13, the sermon reviews the history of Israel's disobedience and highlights this history's implications for the sermon's audience (79, 85-217). The history especially focuses on Israel's experience at Sinai and in the wilderness, arguing that the weight Israel should have given Yahweh's words there has been redoubled in con-

nection with Yahweh's more recent speech in his son, Jesus. In Heb 4:14–10:18, the sermon considers Jesus' priesthood primarily in relation to the greatness of the benefits that it supplies to his followers (79-80, 218-460). Even so, these benefits' greatness also increases the magnitude of the obligations to faithfulness under which Jesus' followers stand. In Heb 10:19–12:29, the sermon provides a counterpoint to the history of disobedience provided in the first major section and highlights instead a history of faithfulness (80, 460-673). Avoiding imitation of the examples of unfaithfulness already discussed, the audience should take heart from positive examples of obedience in Israel's history and emulate their perseverance in whatever difficulties or trials may arise. In concluding, Heb 13:1-25 further specifies the shape of this persevering obedience for the audience, stressing some instructions that were particularly relevant to them (80-81, 673-722).

As he works through Hebrews' text, Cockerill's comments are judicious, instructive, and attentive. Consequently, the volume will likely make a helpful addition to the library of the student of Hebrews. In some cases, the discussion may make overly much of Hebrews' possible chiastic structures and their significance (463, 515, 531, 578, 614), but if the genre and style of any NT text suggest that it may make significant use of chiasms, Hebrews probably is the best candidate.

Far more significant for the commentary as a whole is its understanding of Hebrews' stance toward Israel's scriptures. The volume's introduction contains a substantial, strong discussion of this dynamic (esp. 41-59). According to Cockerill, Hebrews' argument "rests on careful OT interpretation" (41), and Israel's scriptures bear witness in concert with Yahweh's fresh, climactic revelation in his son (44-49, 52-54). Thus, "[t]he typological [attitude Hebrews articulates toward Israel's scriptures] is one of continuity. . . . [It] do[es] not show that the Old Covenant has been invalidated, but that, on the basis of its own testimony, it was never intended to be final" (53). That is, the crux of Hebrews' stance toward Israel's scriptures is not one of correction or supplanting of the old by the new, but it is the climactic, eschatological embodiment in Messiah Jesus of Yahweh's purposes for his people. This messianic movement is a fitting continuation of Israel's story, but as a continuation, it also sheds fresh light on previous scenes and shows up former settings in new relief (356, 362, 381, 396).

On the other hand, sound as this perspective appears, certain sections in the commentary's body seem to suggest that Hebrews takes a more critical or supersessionist stance at least toward the contents of Israel's scriptures, if not toward these scriptures in themselves (325, 329-330, 373, 385-386, 423, 439-441, 457, 540, 667, 694). It may well have been intended that this later discussion should be understood as being qualified by the introduction. Yet, the commentary would be still more helpful if this connection with the introduction also more clearly and fully informed the subsequent discussion of Hebrews' text. Even so, the volume as a whole is certainly very fine, and it should prove to be a useful resource for careful analysis and discussion of Hebrews.

J. David Stark
eCampus Director
Faulkner University

Gregory STEVENSON. *A Slaughtered Lamb: Revelation and the Apocalyptic Response to Evil and Suffering.* ACU Press, 2013. 256 pp. $19.99.

In this volume, Stevenson combines the often bifurcated disciplines of biblical theology and biblical studies in an effort to present a contextualized study of theodicy from the Volume of Revelation. After admitting his philosophical and theological bias in the existence of evil, Stevenson summarizes several approaches to theodicy while consciously limiting his questions, definitions, and methods to John's Apocalypse. He further admits the Volume of Revelation is not a formal theodicy *per se*, in that it does not systematically address questions of evil and suffering, nor is it concerned with the post-Enlightenment obsession with human reason. This leads Stevenson, following the likes of Hauerwas, to argue that questions of theodicy are as much based in experience as they are in reason and that John's fantastic and violent images provide answers to questions of theodicy rooted in the oppressive experiences of his first-century readers.

The volume posits that the dominant image of Christ in Revelation is of a slaughtered lamb, and argues that God's response to evil and suffering is, "to join humanity in suffering, to identify with creation rather than stand above it" (31). This experiential approach by God serves as a model for both early and modern Christian readers of Revelation. Suffering and evil are not problems they must solve or realities they must escape, but rather they are "inescapable component[s] of life to be endured in faith" (41). Those who have never suffered deeply or experienced evil in its rawest forms will invariably read the Volume of Revelation, as well as Stevenson's treatment, in a different light than those whose lives are scarred by evil.

By defining evil in the Volume of Revelation as that which stands in opposition to God's kingdom, Stevenson asserts that the Apocalypse is concerned with moral evil, the results of one's moral choices, as opposed to natural evil, like natural disaster or disease. He understands this moral evil in light of opposing claims to authority and power, between God and Rome for instance; those individuals or groups who faithfully worship God can expect suffering and evil at the hands of those who oppose God's claim to authority, and *vice versa*. Equally, within the images of the seals and trumpets, to name a few, one can see both God's judgment against those opposing him, initiating their own suffering, and God's mercy upon the faithful, providing hope that He will vindicate their suffering. Because God is the sovereign ruler of creation and incapable of moral evil, Stevenson's portrait of Revelation rejects any efforts to claim culpability with God for suffering.

The volume is well-written, engaging a broad, educated, Christian audience. Those with limited formal education may find it inaccessible. It is a valuable resource not only on the subject of theodicy but for the study of John's Apocalypse and eschatology, successfully demonstrating that sound biblical theology arises from careful exegesis of texts and audiences alike. Those with significant philosophical training will find fault with the lack of a substantive discussion regarding natural evil. Stevenson's separation of moral evil and natural evil is debatable, especially in light of the images concerning natural violence and disaster. However, Stevenson repeatedly asserts that efforts in discussing theodicy are limited and is conscientious of potential shortcomings. Finally, those who do not allow for any divine role in the "reception or production" of the Book of Revelation will find it a difficult read.

Fred Hansen
Assistant Professor of Biblical Studies
TCMI Institute

List of Books Reviewed in This Issue

Peter J. Leithart, *Defending Constantine:The Twilight of an Empire and the Dawn of Christendom* (Bob Rea, Lincoln Christian University)

Keith A. Francis and William Gibson, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of the British Sermon 1689–1901* (Rob O'Lynn, Kentucky Christian University)

Walter D. Ray, *Tasting Heaven on Earth: Worship in Sixth-Century Constantinople* (Josh Kugler, Cincinnati Christian University)

Joseph F. Kelly, *History and Heresy: How Historical Forces Can Create Doctrinal Conflicts* (K. C. Richardson, Hope International University)

Everett Ferguson, *The Early Church and Today, vol. 1, Ministry, Initiation, and Worship* (Shaun C. Brown, Bristol, Tennessee)

Robin M. Jensen, *Baptismal Imagery in Early Christianity: Ritual, Visual, and Theological Dimensions* (Karen M. Lindsay, Northwest Christian University)

Paul Harvey, *Through the Storm, through the Night: A History of African American Christianity* (Wes Crawford, Tyler, Texas)

Paul M. Blowers, *Drama of the Divine Economy: Creator and Creation in Early Christian Theology and Piety* (Stephen Lawson, Saint Louis University)

Suzanne Heschel, *The Aryan Jesus: Christian Theologians and the Bible in Nazi Germany* (David Adams, Harding University)

Thomas R. Schreiner, *The King in His Beauty: A Biblical Theoloty of the Old and New Testaments* (J. David Stark, Faulkner University)

Miguel A. de la Torre and Albert Hernandez, *The Quest for the Historical Satan* (David Russell Mosley, University of Nottingham)

Alister E. McGrath, *Mere Apologetics: How to Help Seekers & Skeptics Find Faith* (Andrew Ramey, Pekin, Illinois)

Jurgen Moltmann, *Ethics of Hope* (Robert C. Kurka, Lincoln Christian Seminary)

Gary Holloway and John York, *Unfinished Reconciliation: Justice, Racism, and Churches of Christ* (L. Thomas Smith, Jr., Johnson University)

Ian Paul and David Wenham, eds., *Preaching the New Testament* (Joseph C. Grana II, Hope International University)

Roland Hoksbergen, *Serving God Globally: Finding Your Place in International Development* (Monty Lynn, Abilene Christian University)

Nathan Faries, *The "Inscrutably Chinese" Church: How Narratives and Nationalism Continue to Divide Christianity* (Calvin (Wes) Harrison, Ohio Valley University)

David T. Bourgeois, *Ministry in the Digital Age: Strategies and Best Practices for a Post-Website World* (Rob O'Lynn, Kentucky Christian University)

Robert Kolb, *Luther and the Stories of God: Biblical Narratives as a Foundation for Christian Living* (Ross Knudsen, Boise Bible College)

C. Richard Wells and Ray Van Neste, eds., *Forgotten Songs: Reclaiming the Psalms for Christian Worship* (John C. Wakefield, Milligan College)

Dave Brunn, *One Bible Many Versions: Are All Translations Created Equal?* (Mark S. Krause, Nebraska Christian College)

Philip S. Esler, *Sex, Wives, and Warriors: Reading Biblical Narrative with Its Ancient Audience* (Jeff Miller, Milligan College)

Mark Chaves, *American Religion: Contemporary Trends* (Robin W. Underhill, University of Delaware)

Peter J. Leithart, *Between Babel and Beast: America and Empires in Biblical Perspective* (David Lertis Matson, Hope International University)

Rowan Williams, *The Lion's World: A Journey into the Heart of Narnia* (Carrie Birmingham, Pepperdine University)

Eddie Gibbs, *The Rebirth of the Church: Applying Paul's Vision for Ministry in Our Own Post-Christian World* (Chauncey A. Lattimer, Jr., Marinton, Illinois, and Darrow, Illinois)

Keith Bodner, *Jeroboam's Royal Drama.* (Jesse Long, Lubbock Christian University)

Eric A. Seibert, *The Violence of Scripture: Overcoming the Old Testament's Troubling Legacy* (John Nugent, Great Lakes Christian College)

John D. Wineland, Mark Ziese, and James Riley Estep, Jr., eds., *My Father's World: Celebrating the Life of Reuben G. Bullard* (Bob Smith, Mid-Atlantic Christian University)

Athalya Brenner and Gale A. Yee, eds., *Exodus and Deuteronomy* (Justin Singleton, God's Bible School and College)

Harold S. Kushner, *The Book of Job: When Bad Things Happened to a Good Person* (Chauncey A. Lattimer, Jr., Marinton, Illinois, and Darrow, Illinois)

Rolf A. Jacobson and Karl N. Jacobson, *Invitation to the Psalms: A Reader's Guide for Discovery and Engagement* (Glenn Pemberton, Abilene Christian University)

William Baird, *History of New Testament Research: vol. 3, From C.H. Dodd to Hans Dieter Betz* (John C. Poirier, Kingswell Theological Seminary)

Israel Kamudzandu, *Abraham Our Father.* Paul in Critical Contexts Series (Garrett Matthew East, Tabora. Tanzania)

David C. Parker, *Textual Scholarship and the Making of the New Testament* (Mark Alterman, Manhattan Christian College)

Charles E. Hill and Michael J. Kruger, eds., *The Early Text of the New Testament* (James A. Sedlacek, Cincinnati Christian Schools)

Jodi Magness, *Stone and Dung, Oil and Spit: Jewish Daily Life in the Time of Jesus* (Cheryl L. Eaton, Lincoln Christian Seminary, Covenant Theological Seminary)

Matthew L. Skinner, *The Trial Narratives: Conflict, Power, and Identity in the New Testament* (Alisha Paddock, Manhattan Christian College)

James D. G. Dunn, *The Oral Gospel Tradition* (Carl B. Bridges, Johnson University)

Michael Bird, *Jesus Is the Christ: The Messianic Testimony of the Gospels* (Frank E. Dicken, Lincoln Christian University)

Darrell L. Bock, *A Theology of Luke and Acts: God's Promised Program, Realized for All Nations* (James Mitchell, Freed-Hardeman University)

Craig S. Keener, *Acts: An Exegetical Commentary* (Judith Odor, Asbury Theological Seminary)

Robert Jewett, *Romans: A Short Commentary* (Judith Odor, Asbury Theological Seminary)

Chris Tilling, *Paul's Divine Christology* (Carl S. Sweatman, Johnson University)

Graham Tomlin, ed., *Philippians, Colossians* (Shawn C. Smith, Lincoln Christian University)

Garreth Lee Cockerill, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (J. David Stark, Faulkner University)

Gregory Stevenson, *A Slaughtered Lamb: Revelation and the Apocalyptic Response to Evil and Suffering* (Fred Hansen, TCMI Institute)