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The Drama of Scripture

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Book Reviews

Craig G. Bartholomew and Michael W. Goheen, *The Drama of Scripture: Finding Our Place in the Biblical Story*, Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2004. 252 pp., \$19.99.

The prevailing practice in biblical scholarship is to examine the Old and New Testament documents on their own terms, apart from the rest of the canon. Bartholomew and Goheen take a different approach. They step back from the historical-critical task and present the entire Protestant canon as a single, unified story of God's work in the world. Rather than a work of critical scholarship, which would focus on the historical context or textual questions, their book is an attempt at narrative theology. It does draw, however, on the latest scholarship in its presentation of the biblical narrative and therefore serves as a worthy introduction or teaching tool.

After an opening Prologue, in which they lay out their presuppositions of the Bible as a single, grand narrative, the authors turn to the selections of Scripture that compose their telling of the story. The remainder of the book is structured in six Acts and an Interlude. Acts One and Two tell the story of creation and fall. Act Three, the longest in the book, portrays the history of the Nation of Israel. The Interlude stands in for the intertestamental period, with special attention paid to Jewish culture in the years leading up to the beginning of the Common Era. Acts Four and Five describe the life of Jesus and the development of the early church, with a closing movement on living in God's story today. Finally, the drama ends with Act Six, as the authors point toward the coming eschatological work of God.

The book has several strengths. It is a highly readable work. The authors' clear and simple writing style allows the reader to be caught up in the movement of the story itself. The book also contains twenty six figures, the majority of which are well-placed maps, which add to the sense of story and make the characters' movements and actions more conceivable. Other figures provide visual reference for some of the theological concepts that arise in the course of the story. Finally, the authors maintain a good balance between the biblical story itself and the historical background behind the story.

At times this historical context is presented in what scholars would regard as an over-simplified manner. Little or no space is given to the debates over particular historical-critical issues. Such a presentation, however, is well within Bartholomew and Goheen's thesis. *The Drama of Scripture* does not argue that the Bible is a single, unified story; it simply assumes that it is and builds on that assumption.

The book has several possible uses. It would be an excellent companion text in an introductory course on the Old or New Testament. In the pastoral setting, it would provide an accessible overview of the Bible for the new, adult believer. And for those Christians who are themselves looking to step back and gain a fresh perspective on the Bible, Bartholomew and Goheen's work might well prove worth a read.

Jonathan E. Kane

Tim Dowley, *The Kregel Bible Atlas*. Grand Rapids, MI. Kregel Publications, 2003. 91 pp., hardcover, \$21.99.

Dowley, a noted biblical history expert, opens this book with a geographic overview of the Holy Land, then traces the major highlights and events of the Old Testament from the journeys of Abraham to the rebuilding of the temple after the Babylonian Captivity. He then devotes a section to the Intertestamental period, focusing on the Alexander the Great and the Maccabean rule. His section on the New Testament begins with the Roman Empire as it existed at the time of Christ and includes Jesus' life, the journeys of Paul and concludes with the expansive spread of Christianity in A. D. 300.

The more than 80 maps are precise, easy to read and specific to the purpose of illuminating the text. In addition to the expected maps, Dowley includes campaigns during the time of the Judges, David's flight from Saul, the possible routes of the exodus, Jesus' travel and ministry in Galilee, and the spread of Christianity before Paul. The author has juxtaposed many of his own photographs with some of the maps, which offer a well tailored schematic and detailed presentation. His insightful writing gives context to the prophetic books such as Haggai and Zechariah, which are included in the section on the return from Babylonian exile.

An atlas is essential for any serious student as Scripture assumes the reader has a certain knowledge of the terrain, climate, soils and economy of the region. It is impossible to fully understand inferences or meanings without this basis. The text is complete in its coverage of geographical features and major events in the Bible, and each page is full of maps, colorful photographs, summarizing charts and clarifying diagrams. This book is an excellent companion for the Bible student and lay person alike. Its size and price make it affordable, and its coverage make it a valuable addition to a home or church library.

Mary Elizabeth Nau

J. Scott Duvall and J. Daniel Hays, *Grasping God's Word: A Hands-on Approach to Reading, Interpreting, and Applying the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI.: Zondervan, 2001. 431 pp., hardcover, \$37.99.

Touted as a "user-friendly book for serious readers who desire to journey into the world of the Bible," (p. 9) *Grasping God's Word* readily lives up to its title. Written by two seminary professors, the authors' backgrounds in biblical interpretation, Old and New Testament, Greek, Hebrew, and spiritual formation provide an excellent mix to a textbook that is critical, yet practical in its approach. The three main components of the book consist of laying a foundation for thoughtful reading, discussion of hermeneutical issues and guidelines for interpreting the major literary genres of the Bible.

In Part I, the authors lay their foundation by likening biblical interpretation to that of a journey. On this "interpretative journey," readers are encouraged time and again to read the text of Scripture thoroughly and carefully in order to determine the meaning within the text before advancing one's own ideas. Readers are taught to read at a micro level (sentences) and then expand out to the macro level (discourses), giving attention to details one would normally omit such as repetition, contrasts, comparisons, dialogue, conditional clauses, story shifts, etc.

In Part 2, the authors move into hermeneutical issues such as what the reader brings to the text, historical-cultural and literary contexts, word studies and Bible translations. It is here that one sees the shift from the practical to the theoretical, an approach the authors say their students have responded to positively. In dealing with the issues of preunderstanding and presupposition and their influence upon one's interpretation of the biblical text, even the staunchest critic of the role of culture in interpretation will have to admit the validity of the authors' position. For example, the reader is asked to read Romans 13:1-7 and then consider if it would have been wrong to participate in the Boston Tea Party with its apparent act of rebellion. (Here the authors acknowledge their readers from outside of America and ask them to reflect on a similar event from within their particular culture.)

Also within Part 2, Duvall and Hays tackle the tougher issues of historical-cultural and literary context, defining their terms and giving advantages and disadvantages to the use of these approaches. Relevant examples are given of some of the common misuses of Scripture such as the illustration found in the gospels about a camel going through the eye of the needle. The authors maintain the passage means just what it says—it is impossible for a large animal like a camel to squeeze through the eye of a sewing needle.

In the final sections of the book, the authors address meaning, the role of the Holy Spirit in interpretation and principles specific to biblical genres. As to meaning, the authors answer the question of who controls the meaning and discuss the levels of meaning that can be found in the text. A generous part of one chapter is spent discussing the role of allegory in interpretation, using Martin DeHaan's interpretation of a particular Old Testament passage as an example of violating interpretive principles related to historical-cultural context. The Bible Code and typology are covered as well. In a separate chapter, the authors address the role of the Holy Spirit in interpretation and outline their view on whether a text can be understood apart from the Holy Spirit, acknowledging Him as the "divine Author" in the Scriptures" (p. 201).

This book could serve as a text at the college or seminary level. Each chapter provides either review questions or assignments that offer hands-on and/or reflective type of exercises of the material. Good use is made of stories and anecdotes in the introduction of each chapter to provide a platform for the material that is going to be covered. The book's appendices include guidelines for writing exegetical papers and building a personal library. Also helpful is the publisher's website which offers a sample syllabus, lesson plan and exegetical paper.

All in all, the authors achieved their goal of offering a hermeneutics text that would help fill in the gaps in their students' knowledge of the Bible as well as equip them "for life and ministry" (p. 13). In so doing, they have provided a text that will be of particular value in an evangelical school.

Patricia M. Pope

Alan Reynolds, *Reading the Bible for the Love of God*. Grand Rapids, MI.: Brazos Press, 2003. 143 pp., paper, \$12.99.

With a foreword written by Eugene Peterson and reviews from other notables in the Christian faith, expectation is high for more than just another book on Bible study. Written by a former pastor and university chaplain, Reynolds states that he has been more of generalist than a specialist, one who tries to see Christian faith in the context of the

world (p. 7). This may explain his tendency to get bogged down in the discussion of technical and historical matters. For instance, he describes the events that led to the scientific study of the Bible and its subsequent impact on the Church's approach to Scripture more as an object to be observed than a place for meeting God (p. 19). Reynolds' point is valid and his goal of laying the historical groundwork is admirable. He does a much better job of relating the applicability of biblical passages to the believer's life.

His discussions regarding prayer and worship as ways of responding to God and evangelism as the fruit of a deepening relationship with Christ are very well presented. Reynolds contends that response to Scripture through prayer and worship is not enough (pp. 103-104). He has quite a bit to say on the issue of evangelism, defining it in its broadest sense as "whatever the church does to relate the gospel to the world" (p. 106).

Following his discussion on evangelism, Reynolds deals with holiness and describes it as that which calls Christians to action which can only be found in a deepened "relationship with the Word of God" (p. 119). It is within this discussion that Reynolds turns centuries of church practices on their head such as the Church's separation from the world into monasteries and the keeping of guidelines and customs as the means of holiness.

Instead, Reynolds emphasizes a holiness that finds itself anchored in love; this provides a transition into the final portion of the book where he seems to get to the real reason behind writing it. Rather than being a book of techniques on enhancing one's reading experience, Reynolds offers an alternative: read for love (pp. 122-123). Reynolds devotes an entire chapter to the issue of love, defining it at its various levels. It is *agape*, however, where Reynolds says self-fulfillment can be found, and it is at this level that Reynolds feels one's reading should take place.

However, he does not let the reader off the hook at this point. He encourages participation in the renewal that he sees taking place in which people are seeking to read the Bible for an experience of and relationship to God. It is his contention that with this as a goal, the Church may avoid some of the disputes that have long plagued it (p. 134).

While the title might indicate that the reader is going to get techniques on how to read the Bible, Reynolds encourages that the Bible be read with love as the goal. As he so aptly puts it in his conclusion, the Bible is where "we meet and hear the voice of the One who calls us into communion, in love" (p. 135). As one reads in this way, a love for the Scripture can be cultivated or rediscovered. The book emphasizes that one's relationship with God should be the primary object in reading Scripture.

Patricia M. Pope

Paul D. Wegner, *The Journey from Texts to Translations*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1999/2004. 462 pp., paper, \$29.99)

Being a Wycliffe Bible translator and avid student of the Bible, I have had a more than passing interest in the subject matter of this very helpful book. So it was with eager anticipation that I began reading Wegner's volume and I was not disappointed. Well-written, well-organized and concisely stated, his presentation is a readable and fairly comprehensive introduction to a whole host of inter-related topics having to do with the written texts of the Jewish and Christian Scriptures and the means by which they have been preserved, passed down, and promulgated through the centuries. Beginning

with the nature and composition of the Bible (including a convenient overview of the synoptic problem), the author then surveys the canonical process whereby both the Old and New Testaments of the major branches of Christianity attained their distinctive shapes, the hand-copied transmission and resulting variety among the numerous original-language manuscripts of the books of the Bible, and the basic principles of textual criticism of both Old and New Testaments along with the most important manuscripts used in each of those disciplines respectively. Then, following a brief section on early Bible translations and the first printed versions of the Greek New Testament, the author concludes with an extensive and informative account of the English Bible that spans over 615 years of translation history. From the ground-breaking work of John Wycliffe (1382) and William Tyndale (1534) to the Authorized Version of 1611 and on through the veritable explosion of Bible translations in the mid- to late-20th century, Wegner traces the fascinating story of English Bible translation as far as the publication of the *New Living Translation* (1996) and *The Message* (1997). Along the way he includes bits of relevant cultural, historical, and political background as well as interesting biographical details and even portraits or photographs of some of the major players in the story he relates.

Wegner's book is made even more attractive and useful by the plentiful presence of reproductions of early manuscripts and printed versions of Scripture, maps, pictures of important archeological artifacts and many, many charts and diagrams that conveniently summarize the author's prose descriptions and contain a plethora of useful information from "Paleo-Hebrew and Square Scripts," to "Description of the Books in the Old Testament Apocrypha," to "Variants in Editions of the Authorized Version." The last major section of the book concerning the history of English Bible translation also includes a number of useful comparisons and evaluations of the different modern English Bible versions in chart form.

There are a few drawbacks in the book. The lack of a comprehensive bibliography occasionally requires a time-consuming back-tracking through several footnotes (actually endnotes) in order to retrieve the full bibliographical citation of a particular source. Indeed, the use of endnotes, rather than footnotes, is perhaps the most inconvenient aspect of the book. Wegner makes full use of a wide range of sources and authorities to document his material, but having to turn to the back frequently and flip through nearly 30 pages of endnotes to find a particular source or read an additional comment, was both laborious and time-consuming. Of lesser importance is the repeated use of the Lord's Prayer (Matt. 6:9-13) to provide a "taste" of the kind and quality of each English translation as it is discussed. Initially interesting, this pattern becomes somewhat tedious by about the 20th recital in yet another version that differs only slightly from the last.

While not all readers will agree with Wegner's conservative views on the nature and authority of Scripture, or with every one of his evaluations of the different modern language versions he reviews, especially his mildly pejorative (and sometimes perhaps even inaccurate) use of the word "paraphrase," there is no question that he has produced a work that is exceedingly useful. The book is a mine of information for both students and teachers of Scripture and anyone who spends time with it will be stimulated, informed and made more appreciative of those who have done the difficult and often thankless job of producing vernacular Scriptures for God's people throughout the ages.

Mark Hepner

Elmer A. Martens and Willard M. Swartley, eds. *Believers Church Bible Commentary*. Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, in process.

The Believers Church Bible Commentary is the work of a specific hermeneutical community attempting to interpret the biblical text. The Believers Church is identified as those Christians who are committed to "believers' baptism, the rule of Christ in Matthew 18.15-20 as crucial to church membership, belief in the power of love in all relationships and a willingness to follow Christ in the way of the cross." Eventually all the books of the Bible will be treated. These volumes attempt to be faithful to the text of scripture standing within a specific church tradition. Critical issues receive attention but not in the narrower interest to be *avante garde* in the scholarly debate. Writers are selected from the Believers Church tradition, they in turn consult with another biblical scholar and work with editors during a process of feedback. Then the manuscript is read by an Editorial Council of six members. These six are representatives from the Brethren Church, Mennonite Church Canada, Church of the Brethren, Brethren in Christ, Mennonite Brethren and Mennonite Church USA. Dr. David Baker is the representative for the Brethren Church on the Editorial Council. The Old Testament editor is Elmer A. Martens and the New Testament editor is Willard M. Swartley. The target audience includes pastors, teachers and Bible study groups.

Introduction to the various volumes are usually extensive and generally include a Preview, Content and Major Themes, Structure, Address, Authorship, Date, Historical Context, Pastoral and Hermeneutical Considerations, Translations and Other Commentaries. Each commentary follows the same basic format of Preview, Outline, Explanatory Notes (extensive), Text in Biblical Context and Text in the Life of the Church.

The last section is unique and especially interesting in its application to the church.

Richard E. Allison

BibleWorks Version 6.0. 2004. www.bibleworks.com 1-888-747-8200. \$299.95.

Bible Works 6.0 (BW) is a powerful research tool accessible to students, pastors, and scholars alike who are in need of doing serious research efficiently. With all the databases within BW, it is possible to conduct a seemingly endless list of different kinds of searches and to dump the results - references, texts, etc. - into any document in which you are working. BW 6.0's new features include: a Diagramming Tool to create grammatical diagrams of text, including Greek and Hebrew; Flash cards to build personal flashcard sets (print or electronic) and quiz yourself; Greek/Hebrew paradigms; Auto-complete morphologies that provide available options in an automatic popup list; Popup gloss and definitions that open a mini-window showing the gloss for Greek and Hebrew words to appear as your mouse passes over tagged words; Lexical/Grammatical Helps Window that displays a color-coded list of all lexical and grammatical references, including the introductory line from each reference as you move the mouse over tagged text; text coloring that allows you to highlight text by hand or highlight search results with various colors and formatings; a text comparison tool that allows you to compare multiple Bible versions at once; a series of editable outlines of biblical texts; a clone window that opens an identical copy of your BW window in which you are working, and

new Greek and Hebrew fonts that allow you to share documents in HTML, Word, Outlook, and many other applications.

Shall I go on? Okay. There are new databases as well. These include Tichendorf's Greek NT with complete apparatus; the complete works of Josephus, parsed and lemmatized, with Whiston's 1828 English translation; WTM Groves-Wheeler Westminster Hebrew OT Morphology database v.4.0 with two accent tagging systems and editorial comments; the Aramaic New Testament (Peshitta; viewable in Estangela or Hebrew letter script) with the Murdock English translation; the Targumim, parsed, lemmatized, and tied to entries in the Comprehensive Aramaic Lexicon; Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar; Moods and Tenses of NT Greek, by Burton; *Basic Hebrew for Bible Study*, by Futato; Matthew Henry's Commentary -- complete and linked to BW; Apostolic Fathers (Greek); and a few translations, including the Bishops' Bible (1595), Tyndale's New Testament (1534), and the NET Bible with notes and maps.

Had enough? Well, there's more. BW 6.0 has new modules available. The following tools are also available for unlocking: *Beginning Biblical Hebrew* (full text), by Futato (\$25), *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament*, by Wallace (\$25); *Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, by Waltke and O'Connor; and *The Qumran Sectarian Manuscripts* with morphological tags (\$80). Also available are BDAG (3rd edition, \$125) and HALOT (4th edition, \$159), or both together (BDAG and HALOT, \$197). Apologies to those who bought Brill's two-volume concordance to the non-biblical texts of the DSS (\$299.00). Upgrades are available from BW 4 (\$150) and BW 5 (\$125). Information for this and system requirements are available on the BW website.

Nothing is perfect, and the improvements BW has made over the years are indicative of their constant effort to improve their product. Having Josephus in Greek is priceless (apologies to those who bought Brill's [now two-volume] concordance to Josephus [\$349]) though Whiston's translation is less reliable than that in the Loeb volumes. Perhaps BW will soon include the works of Philo (with Yonge's translation). Translations for the Apostolic Fathers and the Targumim would be helpful. The Peshitta of the OT would be most welcome, as well as a parsed text of the NT. There are much better Syriac fonts available than that used in BW, which seems to be a BW creation (BWHeba). Some accents on LSJ lexicon do show up in the display garbled. The same is true for the UBS dictionary, some of Louw-Nida, and Thayer's dictionary. It is unfortunate that you cannot display or output other Greek fonts, such as SBL's SPionic, without remapping fonts from BW's BWgkl.

It is amazing what you can do with this product! Having BDB full and abridged and Bible dictionaries (including ISBE!) is very helpful. There's even a key to LSJ's abbreviations (I've always wanted one!). The flashcard component is great for those keeping up on language skills. There are even parsing cards for Hebrew and Greek. Vocabulary can be set by frequency, by book, or by frequency within a book, etc., though it does not seem set to the LXX, only NT Greek. With a few clicks of a button, you can use this feature to see that Jude has 226 different words, 16 of which are hapaxes. This is excellent for someone studying the text of a particular book. Moreover, the vocabulary flashcards are expandable and one can create databases for Aramaic, Latin, German, and French. Hopefully these will appear in future upgrades.

While this tool may be a bit too much horsepower for many, it can be very useful for students serious about keeping up language skills, pastors who want an efficient way to work in primary sources, and Bible translators who will find the original language tools essential and perhaps the scores of various Bible translations to be a

helpful resource. More than once I've found myself punching the air in triumph and exclaiming my joy at the depth of work I can accomplish with a few buttons that used to take me hours. Though the price can be a bit offsetting, BW does offer discounts for those buying in bulk, and will take about 10% off at ETS and SBL conferences. Considering all the books you do *not* have to buy if you have BW, the cost is easily justifiable to the nervous spouse concerned about the cost of books.

This review is by no means complete. Fuller reviews are written by Moisés Silva in *WTJ* 66.2 (2004) 449-54 and a full article comparing Bible software packages by H. Van Dyke Parunak, "Windows Software for Bible Study," *JETS* 46.3 (2003): 465-95 (comparing BW version 5).

Daniel M. Gurtner, Bethel Seminary, St Paul MN

Logos Bible Software Series X, Release 2.1b, 2004. Logos Bible Software, 1313 Commercial St., Bellingham, WA 98225-4307. www.logos.com. Original Languages Library, \$399.95; Scholar's Library, \$599.95; Scholar's Library Silver Edition, \$999.95.

Christof Hardmeier, Ecp Talstra, Bertram Salzmann, *Stuttgart Electronic Study Bible*. Stuttgart: German Bible Society (www.bibelgesellschaft.de) / Haarlem: Netherlands Bible Society (www.bijbelgenootschap.nl), 2004. Software, 240 Euros.

Electronic resources for biblical and theological study are expanding at a rapid rate, as they are in all fields of study. These two products continue the expansion of offerings using the Libronix Digital Library System. This journal has published two previous reviews or earlier versions (*ATJ* 28 [1996] 116-120 and 34 [2002] 94-97). Many of the features of the software, as well as some shortcomings, were addressed there, so here we will look at some additional features.

The Logos software continues to add Bibles, Bible study tools, and a plethora of other material across the spectrum of theological education. Some very useful new tools have been added to the libraries to aid in linguistic analysis. One is called a 'verb river' which presents the occurrence of verbal forms in a passage in a graphical, visual form so one can see changes in, for example, number and gender within a passage. For example, Exodus 20 is clearly shown to have both singulars and plurals at the beginning and end, but only singulars in the middle, Decalog section. There is also a similar graphical river showing variants between 10 different English translations, including KJV, NIV, NRSV, and NLT.

A feature not reviewed before is the Word Study Guide. Opening this tool from within Genesis 1, for example, can open up a screen with each Hebrew word listed with an English gloss, e.g. 'beginning', a transliteration, '*r__it*', and various links: the enhanced Strong's lexicon, Englishman's Hebrew concordance (referring to every occurrence of the word), the Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains, and several other dictionaries and word study tools. These links open up the resource in its own window, making word analysis tools easy to access, though one still needs to know how to analyze, evaluate, and use the information provided.

A largely forgotten tool for language analysis is sentence diagramming, where the relationship between words in a sentence can be clearly demonstrated. The program provides a diagrammatical function which can be used for Hebrew, Greek or English, aiding in understanding a passage's syntax.

Finally, the Graphical Query feature makes complex searches easier through visualization of the relationship between the words to be searched rather than simply listing the words. For example, it is relatively straightforward to make a query regarding every occurrence in the NIV where David precedes Jesse by not more than 5 words, and it is also possible to search for proximate words displaying various grammatical features. This sophistication allows textual analysis in ways impossible or extremely time-consuming without computer resources.

The Logos tools will help students of Scripture at all levels, from novice to seasoned scholar. The company is also always eager to hear of available resources which they might add to their repertoire, or of new concepts which need to be developed.

SEBS is more limited in scope to actual Bible analysis tools: 18 Bible versions in Hebrew, Greek, German, English, French, and Dutch; dictionaries (Hebrew-German, Hebrew-English, Greek-English of the LXX, and NT Greek-English and Greek-German); and 4 helpful databases (the BHS database from the Free University of Amsterdam; the CCAT LXX database; the GRAMCORD NA²⁷ NT database; and the German lemmatization database). A most valuable prize in this package for serious scholars of the original language biblical text is the availability for the first time, to my knowledge, of the marginal text-critical apparatus for BHS and NA²⁷. This relieves the frustration of having to constantly consult a printed source while working with a computer-based resource.

Both of these resources have great depth which can be plumbed for serious Bible study. Some of these are easily accessible, but some of the more advanced need one to consult the help material available in electronic and printed form. When using these in *SEBS*, remember that it originated in German, so if you find you can't read the instructions, don't panic, but look for the English translation which is also included.

David W. Baker

William G. Dever, *Who Were the Early Israelites and Where Did They Come From?* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003. 268 pp., cloth, \$25.00.

Following the format and tone of *What Did the Biblical Writers Know and When Did They Know It?* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), Dever addresses the question of the origin of Israel, presently one of the most contested issues in biblical scholarship. He aims to offer "the average educated reader" an accessible account the emergence of Israel, supported by "convergences" between archaeology and the Bible. Whereas the so-called "maximalist-minimalist" controversy constitutes the main focus of the prior volume, the present book concentrates on the disparate portraits of Israel's beginnings rendered by the Bible and the archaeological record, with primacy given to the latter.

The book provides an excellent and compact synthesis of archaeological excavations, surveys, methods, and models and will therefore be of particular interest to readers looking for a concise overview of the archaeological record as it impacts the books of Joshua and Judges. Dever begins with a brief assessment of the Exodus and wilderness traditions in light of the archaeological record (which offers little in the way of confirmation). He then summarizes the three models that, in the past, have been used to explain Israel's origins in the land: conquest, gradual infiltration (by pastoral nomads), and peasant revolt. The summaries are illumined by brief but informative accounts of the excavations at key sites (such as Jericho, Ai, and Gibeon – none of which yield significant evidence of occupation during the period in question). He then charts the shift

in archaeology from the 1970's – away from monumental remains and large sites in favor of surveys, smaller settlements, and material culture. He believes these yield evidence of a developing sense of ethnicity that is both continuous with and distinct from the culture of Late Bronze Age Canaan. Among the distinctive elements are house plans and village layouts, the absence of pig bones, indications that the society was kin-based and autonomous, and indications of different potting techniques (although with styles that demonstrate continuity).

A review of previous attempts to synthesize archaeology and the Bible opens the second main section of the book and leads to a refutation of Israel Finkelstein's proposal that the explosion of settlements in the central highlands is to be explained by the resedentarization of peoples originally displaced by the massive destructions that marked the end of the Middle Bronze Age. Dever then advances his own proposal, namely that Israel emerged from a *mélange* of groups that withdrew from Canaanite culture at the point of collapse and settled the central highlands in search a new society and lifestyle. He finds support for this proposal from archaeology – in remains that suggest the highland settlers had experience as subsistence farmers and that their villages display a homogeneity of material culture – and from the Bible – in the opposition to kings and their concomitants reflected in various texts. In short, he sees Israel gradually emerging from “an agrarian movement with strong reformist tendencies driven by a new social ideal” (p. 189).

Dever believes that it is better to refer to the early highland settlers as “proto-Israelites,” and he locates the heartland of what became Israel in the central highland regions of Ephraim, Manasseh, and Benjamin. He suggests that the Joseph tribes probably shaped the larger literary tradition of Israel to a large degree and eclipsed the traditions of other proto-Israelite groups, a possibility reinforced by the disproportionate attention given to the Joseph tribes at various points in the Hebrew Bible. He asserts that the Exodus-Sinai traditions, and indeed the pivotal role accorded to Moses, cannot have been an essential part of this process and are probably to be attributed to “Yahweh-alone” reforms, probably during the reign of Josiah. Moses, like Joshua, is more myth than man.

Dever's comprehensive review and assessment of archaeology in Palestine succeeds in offering an informative and accessible synthesis of a vast and complex discussion. Many readers will find this worth the price of the book in itself. His assessment of convergences and proposal for Israel's origins is thoughtful and informed but begs for more elaboration. He suggests, for example, that traditions about Moses may have entered early and may have been transmitted through pre-Israelite folk religion. Yet he also asserts the Canaanite fertility themes continued as the fundamental aspect of Israelite religion, the arena of which would also seem to be folk religion. Mosaic religion is fundamentally aniconic and covenantal and therefore antithetical to the fertility cults. How, then, did folk religion constitute the medium for both?

Regrettably, Dever's rhetoric sometimes undercuts the fair-minded, centrist persona he constructs, particularly as it perpetuates tired and outdated stereotypes of evangelical scholars, whom it seems are hardly worth mentioning. Whether through willful ignorance or intentional caricature, he lumps conservatives and evangelicals together with fundamentalists and Orthodox Jews as those who read the biblical text “uncritically, quite literally,” an assessment difficult to comprehend in light of some of the evangelical works he cites in his bibliography. Those who situate the Exodus in the 15th Century (this reviewer not among them) are summarily dismissed as “a few diehard fundamentalists.” From these and other comments, one can reasonably infer, therefore, that the “average educated readers” he has in mind do not include many of evangelical

persuasion. This predilection notwithstanding, readers will find in this book an informed and provocative introduction to the contemporary discussion on Israel's origins.

L. Daniel Hawk

Steven Grosby, *Biblical Ideas of Nationality: Ancient and Modern*. Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2002. 269 pp., cloth, \$29.50.

This volume brings together ten essays previously published in a variety of journals and anthologies. They include the following: "Religion and Nationality in Antiquity"; "Kinship, Territory, and the Nation in the Historiography of Ancient Israel"; "Sociological Implications of the Distinction between 'Locality' and Extended 'Territory'"; "The Chosen People of Ancient Israel and the Occident: Why Does Nationality Exist and Survive?"; "Borders, Territory, and Nationality in the Ancient Near East and Armenia"; "'*Aram Kulloh* and the Worship of Hadad: A Nation of Aram?"; "the Category of the Primordial in the Study of Early Christianity and Second-Century Judaism"; "Territoriality"; "The Nation of the United States and the Vision of Ancient Israel"; and "Nationality and Religion."

The essays are united by the author's interest in concepts of boundaries, territoriality, and nationality in the ancient Near East, with particular attention to Israel. Grosby asserts that the literature of ancient societies manifests notions of "nationality" that approximate modern concepts. As a whole, the essays advance this argument by exploring and developing interlacing topics: nationality as a concept founded on a trans-tribal collectivity living on bounded territorial entities; the role of "primordiality" (the importance attached to birth to particular lineages and specific territory); the influence of monolatry and a "law of the land" (and particularly Deuteronomy) on unifying smaller collectives into an Israelite nation; the relationship between the this-worldliness of nations and the other-worldliness of religion in shaping national consciousness; and parallels between ancient and modern expressions of these. To a large extent, the author's discussions of ancient Israel interact with classical models of Israelite religion and society (e.g. Wellhausen, Alt, von Rad), a puzzling focus given the explosion of studies which, in the last 20 years, have appropriated the social sciences to address the very topics of kinship and territory that form the heart of his program. Nevertheless, the call to explore associations between ancient and modern concepts of nationality is worth pursuing. The essays collected here offer useful models and language for shaping the project.

L. Daniel Hawk

Rodney R. Hutton, *Fortress Introduction to the Prophets*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press 2004. 115 pp., paper, \$16.00.

The primary purpose of this text is to provide a brief overview of the pre-exilic and exilic prophets. Hutton, a Old Testament Professor at Trinity Lutheran Seminary, wrote an intelligent written but easily comprehensible book that provides a great starting place for college students, beginning seminary students or anyone interested in learning more about the prophets of the Old Testament. At 115 pages the book does not adequately cover any of the prophets but it does introduce the major themes surrounding them sufficiently. Unfortunately, the book does not cover any of the later, post-exilic

prophets, except to briefly mention them at the end of the text. The purpose of the book is to expose the reader to the general concepts and purposes of Old Testament prophecy instead of exhaustively introducing each prophetic book. Subsequently, the books discussed include Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, Micah, Zephaniah, Nahum, Habakkuk, and Jeremiah.

Hutton provides a refreshing, balanced presentation of both conservative and liberal thought. One of the finer points of the book was the adeptness he displays in addressing issues of how to read Israelite prophecy. Should prophecy be read solely through the lens of Christ or do the prophets only speak in their own context? The controversial Isaiah 7 passage regarding virgin birth was presented lucidly. The beginning student will greatly benefit from the well-articulated discussion of both sides of this complex issue. While Hutton sides with a traditionally liberal view in regards to virgin birth, he recognizes the importance of a more orthodox view. Finally, he draws out what he feels is of more significance, one should trust in God to provide deliverance.

Authorship, historical context, literary form and literary structure in the prophets are all areas of relevance in the prophetic books. Each prophetic book Hutton discusses is used to exemplify and discuss these different issues. A fair presentation of the facts on each issue is presented in order to help the reader understand the bigger picture. While no book is written without bias, Hutton falls on different sides, conservative and liberal, on the various issues. No notes are used in the book, which would prove helpful for the reader to further explore the theological debates and facts presented by Hutton. Regardless, for a student who is still learning about the prophets and theological positions, the book's articulations will be beneficial.

Hutton utilizes Hebrew in an effective manner. There were several instances where a basic knowledge of Hebrew grammar was necessary to understand the point being made but his use was appropriate for a beginning reader. While an academic approach was not abandoned there were short devotional application pieces interspersed throughout the book. According to Hutton, in Isaiah, the theme of the book is to trust in God's deliverance. In Jeremiah, after a lengthy discussion of the nature of the prophets prophesying in the name of Baal, the main theme for Hutton is a false confidence in God.

Overall, this book is helpful for understand the basics of prophetic literature, the literary form, historical context, theological positions, and means of interpretation. The length of the book prohibited any in-depth analysis but it did provide a good starting point for further exploration. Yet due to the brevity, it would not be well suited for a thorough introduction to the prophets. In addition to the length, an extensive amount of time is devoted to the book of Jeremiah. This further inhibits getting a full picture of the entire group of Old Testament Prophets. While not ideal for thorough introduction, *Introduction to the Prophets* is a stimulating book that should provoke new students of the Bible to want to further explore the nature and content of the Old Testament Prophets.

Curtis D. Bissell

James W. Watts, ed., *Persia and Torah: The Theory of Imperial Authorization of the Pentateuch*. SBL Symposium Series. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2001. 228 pp., paper, \$39.95.

The book of Ezra contains a letter, purportedly written by Artaxerxes, which gives imperial authority to Ezra and enjoins obedience to "the law of your God and the law of the king" (Ezra 7:26). In 1984, German scholar Peter Frei proposed that the letter

reflects a policy typical of the Achaemenid empire, whereby the Persian authorities granted a degree of autonomy to subject peoples by authorizing local legislation. The proposal has ramifications for the study of the Pentateuch, for this was indeed the case, one could reasonably infer that the "authorization" of a law code for Judah served as a catalyst for the formation of the Pentateuch. The essays in this volume examine and evaluate the proposal from a variety of perspectives.

The first essay, "Persian Imperial Authorization: A Summary," is a translation of a German original published by Frei in 1996. In it, Frei elaborates his theory through a review of texts from Egypt, Yehud, Elephantine, and Asia Minor that he offers as examples of imperial authorization. Joseph Blenkinsopp responds with an essay titled "Was the Pentateuch the Civic and Religious Constitution of the Jewish Ethnos in the Persian Period?" which examines the Egyptian, biblical, and Elephantine texts cited by Frei. Blenkinsopp affirms that some of Frei's conclusions are possible but reserves judgment on the theory as a whole due to inconsistencies between the biblical account and the process of authorization, questions about the process itself, and the existence of attractive alternatives. The next essay by Lizbeth Fried, "'You Shall Appoint Judges': Ezra's Mission the Rescript of Artaxerxes," examines Ezra's mission and concludes that it was confined to the appointment of judges in accordance with Persian law. Lester Grabbe ("The Law of Moses in the Ezra Tradition: More Virtual than Real?") comes at the issue from an even different angle; he questions the historicity of the biblical account and some of the historical constructs that support the theory of imperial authorization.

Gary Knoppers' contribution, "An Achaemenid Imperial Authorization of Torah in Yehud," raises the question of whether the Persians actually encouraged the collection or writing of local law codes and answers by seeing a more passive Persian involvement in local affairs. Donald B. Redford, in "The So-Called 'Codification' of Egyptian Law Under Darius I," evaluates a key supporting pillar of Frei's argument and concludes that the recording of Egyptian law drawn up by order of Darius was more a translation into Aramaic undertaken to familiarize imperial authorities with local traditions, as opposed to an authorization of local legislation. In the final essay, "'Persian Imperial Authorization': Some Question Marks," Jean Louis Ska goes to the heart of the matter and questions whether any of the documents cited by Frei really constitute evidence of the type of imperial authorization he proposes. Speaking to the origin of the Pentateuch in particular, Ska finds the needs of the Second Temple community to be a more plausible explanation than an intervention from imperial authority.

As this review indicates, the respondents do not as a whole find Frei's thesis to a compelling one. All essays, however, are well-written and stimulating and offer many insights into the context of postexilic Yehud. They will therefore be of most interest to readers who wish to know more about the history of this community and how that history is constructed and evaluated.

L. Daniel Hawk

Andrew Louth, ed., with M. Conti, *Genesis 1-11*, Ancient Christian Commentary of Scripture: Old Testament, ed. T. C. Oden. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2001. lii + 204 pp., cloth, \$40.00.

Exegetes do well by remembering the observation of John Donne that "No man is an island, entire of itself." While we do have our own exegetical observations to make, we are blessed by a 'great cloud of witnesses', living and dead, who have plowed these

same fields before us. Part of the task of any exegete worthy of that title is to be aware of the thoughts of these others.

The aim of Thomas Oden and InterVarsity Press is to aid in this endeavor by making available commentary on Scripture from the patristic period, the first seven centuries of the Church. Oden begins by introducing the project itself, the plenteous resources which had largely been neglected up to now, the ecumenical range of contributors and consultants (Greek Orthodox, Catholic, Anglican, Lutheran, and Evangelical), as well as providing useful comments on misogyny, anti-Semitism and Pelagianism. The volume editor, professor of patristic and Byzantine studies at the University of Durham, then introduces the volume itself. He comments on the varieties of versions (Hebrew, Greek, Latin) and various theological issues such as typology and original sin.

The commentary proper begins each section with the verse or pericope under discussion (taken from the RSV). Following an overview of the passage, there is comment on words and phrases drawn from the fathers. For those used to working with Jewish sources, the layout is similar to that of the rabbinic commentaries.

The volume, and the series, fills an important gap in exegetical resources. While it will not be the only, or even the first, commentary, which a student of Scripture will have on the desk, it is an important resource if one wants to seriously grapple with the text. If nothing else, I hope that the series lifts our modern eyes from a superficial personal application based on all too shallow exegesis to a time when the Bible was considered worthy of serious theological engagement.

David W. Baker

Creach, Jerome F. D., *Joshua*. Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching. Louisville: John Knox Press, 2003. 168 pp., cloth, \$24.95.

Jerome Creach is an associate professor of Old Testament at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary. The purpose of the interpretation biblical commentary series is to be a resource for teaching and preaching while emphasizing the use of historical and theological results to find meaning within the biblical text. Creach believes that Joshua was "written in the ancient world to trace national origins and support nationalistic goals.....their concern is to create identity and teach values, not to report 'what really happened'" (p. 5). The narrowness of Creach's focus does not include: the historical phenomenon of Joshua, an editorial history, a comparison of the LXX and the Masoretic Text, or a detailed analysis of the whole book (p. 4). He believes that the theological themes in Joshua are rooted in Deuteronomy: obedience to torah, warfare and *herem*, and the unity of Israel. Creach uses source and redaction criticism to locate the author(s) and the audience of Joshua (p. 4). He divides Joshua into three distinct parts: God's gift of the land (Josh. 1-12), dividing the land for an inheritance (Josh. 13-22), and when YHWH had given rest (Josh. 23-24).

There are several advantages to Creach's study of Joshua. Creach effectively deals with the issues that surround the ban. He demonstrates that the authors of Joshua struggled with the issue of the ban. The only sins reported in the land of Canaan are Israel's transgressions. Yet any Canaanite who surrendered to Israel's God could be saved (p. 42). Another advantage of Creach's work is that he tries to understand violence within the context of Joshua's time. He recognizes that violence was defined as any action which defied God's sovereignty, especially pride and "imperious self-interest" (p.

15). Violence was not understood as the utter annihilation of a whole people group.

There are disadvantages to Jerome Creach's study as well. Creach is somewhat successful in his argument that Joshua was a prophet. However, Creach misuses Hosea 12:13 as one of his points that Joshua was a prophet. He believes that the second prophet in Hosea 12:13 is a reference to Joshua. Hosea 12:13 referred to one person, Moses, who was the prophet who brought Israel out of Egypt. The second reference to "a prophet" in verse thirteen also referred to Moses. The author(s) of Hosea contrasted the main character of verse twelve, Jacob, with the main person of verse thirteen, Moses. The second disadvantage of Creach's book is that he reads too much into the text. He draws conclusions from the color of the cord that Rahab hung out of her window and the fact that the spies were hidden under flax (Josh. 2:6, 18, 21). He compares Rahab with the virtuous woman of Proverbs 31:10-31. Joshua 2 does not say that Rahab worked with flax (Prov. 31:13) or that she dressed her family in crimson clothes (Prov. 31:21). Creach also hypothesizes that Rahab may have been a prostitute in order to pay back a family debt which would show that Rahab was really devoted to her family (p. 39). Rahab was devoted to her family in that she saved them from being killed; however, Joshua does not say that she was a hooker in order to repay a family liability (Josh. 2:12-13). The third disadvantage to Creach's research is that he does not take into consideration the broad perspective that the diversity of the United States has upon the applications of Joshua. He states that:

Americans, diverse in ethnicity and experience, tend to adopt and identify with a single view of national origins. Settlements at Jamestown and Plymouth have come to embody values for the nation as a whole that collapse the variegated experience of immigrants into one (p. 53).

This "tendency" probably does not account for the numerous slaves who were brought over from Africa. This "tendency" probably does not account for the Chinese who were exploited for the railroad systems in the West. What about Middle Easterners, Hispanics, and other Asians? If Creach's view of the whole of Americans is the white majority then maybe he is right; however, many would disagree.

Jerome Creach successfully stayed within his focused topic and he approached the theological argument of *herem* effectively. Yet sometimes his applications do not fit the text or the relevance of the vast opinions of society. He also stretches the meaning of Hosea 12:13 in his search to find a text that actually referred to Joshua by the title of prophet.

Heather Hicks

Eugene F. Roop, *Believers Church Bible Commentary: Ruth, Jonah, Esther*. Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 2002. 283 pp., paper, \$24.99.

The *Believers Church Bible Commentary: Ruth, Jonah, Esther* is a well-written, easy to read commentary on three short biblical narratives. It was written in response to the expressed need of many different churches for help in biblical studies.

The foreword of the book gives great detail about the Roop's purposes and the Believers Churches' goal in writing this commentary. The author worked primarily with English translations of the biblical stories for the easy understanding of the lay audience.

These three books of the Bible are looked at separately and broken down into the detailed episodes of each book. Special attention is given to the overall themes of the books; debated issues are addressed, but not emphasized. Each biblical book is given an

overview, outline, introduction, detailed analysis of the episodes in the book, and a conclusion. Attention is also given to the application of the texts within the church setting. Difficult terms throughout the text are addressed at the end of the book in the form of short essays, and are referred to in the text by bracketing and italicizing the term. The book also has an extensive bibliography and index of ancient texts.

Due to a printing error, the first thirty-two pages of the book are repeated at the end of the book. Hopefully, the publishers have already discovered this, and it will not be an issue in later press runs.

This *commentary* is very easy to read. The expansions and explanations by Roop were well written. It would make a wonderful addition to the library of any Sunday school teacher, pastor, or person interested in learning more about Ruth, Jonah or Esther.

Amy Kinder

Steven J. Lawson, *Psalms 1-75*. Holman Old Testament Commentary. Nashville: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 2003. 384 pp., hardcover, \$19.99.

The Holman Old Testament Commentary series attempts, in a concise way, to deliver an essential understanding of the Old Testament books. Interpretation is based on the NIV version of the Bible. The purpose is to present a practical resource guide for teachers and pastor to assist them in their teaching of the Old Testament. The introduction to the volume on Psalms 1-75 contains many helpful articles such as: unique features, book title, human authors, time period, intended purpose, superscription and notations, literary types, book divisions, literary style, figures of speech, and acrostics.

Each of the covered Psalms 1-75 receive a patterned treatment. First there is an illustrated introduction to the Psalm. Then follows a verse-by-verse commentary that interprets the passage with accompanying identification of the main idea and the supporting idea. Third, the conclusion draws together the themes identified in the passage. This is followed by a life application section with additional illustrative material. Next is a prayer followed by a deeper discoveries section designed to provide explanation for keywords, phrases and background information. The seventh section is a somewhat detailed teaching outline of the Psalm and concludes with issues for discussion.

The book is obviously a resource for teaching in the local church. One aim of the work is to "make every minute of preparation time meaningful." Thus the market is to pastors, teachers and personal devotional study. Each psalm received four to eight pages of treatment. The author is the senior pastor of Christ Fellowship Baptist Church in

Mobile, Alabama. He holds a D.Min. degree from Reformed Theological Seminary.

Richard E. Allison

David George Moore and Daniel L. Akin, *Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*. Holman Old Testament Commentary, ed. Max Anders, vol. 14. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2003. 367 pp., hardcover, \$19.99.

Most commentaries are written for academics, pastors and other persons educated in biblical scholarship. This volume is clearly written with a different target audience in mind. The format of this book is designed for those who are interested in

learning and applying the text without wading through lengthy discussions on textual criticism and other more academic arguments. Even so, the introduction of Ecclesiastes includes a fair discussion of the issues relating to authorship, while no such discussion is presented in Song of Songs. Overall, due to the extensive illustrations and application discussions, this material seems to be best suited for an American audience, or for those with an otherwise western cultural understanding. Theologically, the writing attempts to fairly represent many sides of significant academic discussions, but teaches from a generally evangelical perspective.

The introduction to Ecclesiastes includes a summary of the overarching theme, a description of the discussions on authorship and date of origin, an outline, an overview of its genre, its canonicity and other background notes. The body of the commentary is in a different format than normally seen. The scripture is broken up not by chapter, but into passages that represent sections of logical thought. Each section under analysis includes an introductory section, commentary, conclusion, application and notes for deeper discoveries. These sections then conclude with a teaching outline and issues for discussion. Overall, Ecclesiastes is presented in clear, understandable language that helps the reader to sift through passages that can include complex and sometimes baffling forms and difficult terminology. My only difficulty in reading Ecclesiastes, was that the authors seem to try too hard to make a dark subject more cheerful than is merited.

The section on Song of Songs is laid out similar to Ecclesiastes, but, in addition, this introduction includes sections on the purpose of the book and a description of how the book can speak to a modern generation. Song of Songs is similarly well written, and, although this book does not present the same difficulty to the reader that we find in Ecclesiastes, the authors point out many interesting highlights along the way.

The format of this commentary puts a lot of material on a lower shelf, accessible to many who may consider traditional commentaries to be too difficult or complex. Combined with the authors' understandable writing style, this volume is worthy of serious consideration by laypersons normally put off by academic commentaries.

John Partridge

Richard S. Hess, *Song of Songs*. Baker Commentary on the Old Testament Wisdom and Psalms. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2005. 285 pp., hardcover, \$29.99.

Richard S. Hess's *Song of Songs* is the first volume of the Baker Commentary on the Old Testament Wisdom and Psalms, edited by Tremper Longman III. Hess, professor of Old Testament at Denver Seminary, is the author and editor of numerous works, including the commentary on Joshua in the Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries and *Israel's Messiah in the Bible and the Dead Sea Scrolls*. In the present volume, as Calvin Miller of Beeson Divinity School comments on the back jacket flap, he opts to "tear away the brown wrapping" from the often controversial Song of Songs, introducing readers to the sacred music of this exotic "song for the ages."

The intent of the new series is to present the message of each biblical book to an audience that includes "clergy and future clergy, namely seminary students" (p. 8). This volume thus was written to be accessible to nonscholars, although abundant footnotes provide detailed information for scholars and venturesome nonscholars alike. Limiting the scope of the series to the Psalms and Wisdom books allows each volume to be "tailored" to the unique character of that portion of the Hebrew Scriptures and to

highlight significant poetic conventions, a task which Hess accomplishes richly and thoroughly.

Hess's commentary consists of an introduction and individual chapters representing his seven major structural divisions for the Song. As will be the case for all commentaries in the series, each division is accorded (1) an original translation, (2) a detailed interpretation, and (3) a final reflection on theological implications. The introduction includes a section entitled "How (Not) to Read the Song," in which Hess explains that the Song of Songs is *not* a drama or sequential narrative, an allegory, an anthology of diverse erotic poetry, a "manifesto for free love," a description of a married relationship, or a sex manual. It *is* a literary work similar in imagery and metaphor to Egyptian love poetry; "a fantasy that explores the commitment of an erotic love affair" (p. 35), probably in the context of marriage; and an introduction to the concept of sex as a gift from God, "an experience of love whose intensity has no parallel in this cosmos and serves as a signpost to point to the greater love that lies beyond it" (p. 35).

In the "Translation" sections, Hess leaves no word unturned: his detailed notes offer historical and etiological facts for virtually every significant word in each section, thought-provoking arguments for nontraditional lexical decisions, and alternative points of view. The "Interpretation" sections consist of verse-by-verse comments that address literary, historical, rhetorical, even psychological issues. In addition to detailed observations concerning other interpretations, the section footnotes encompass information on parallel texts, explanations of literary and poetic conventions, and discussions of thorny grammatical and lexical concerns. The "Theological Implications" sections, which are short (sometimes less than one page) but comprehensive, link the Hebrew text to Christian application. Overall, despite his strong belief that the couple in the Song are, at least ultimately, married, Hess affirms that physical love is the main focus of the Song. Passion, he declares, is "the closest experience this side of the grave of the transcendent knowledge of the living God" (p. 34), and his last theological reflection connects the still-unsatisfied longing of the couple in the Song's final scene to the human yearning for God's love, which will reach consummation only "in the marriage of Christ and his Bride," described so eloquently in Rev. 19:7-9 (p. 251).

In a book dedicated to presenting God's message, Hess's theological reflections seem brief, but such brevity may nudge the reader toward further, independent theological reflection—an especially good exercise for seminarians. Nonscholars should at least skim the extensive footnotes, which provide a wealth of fascinating information, much of it comparatively "user-friendly," and the substantial bibliography. This book speaks to different levels of scholarship without forcing one level on the reader, raises thought-provoking questions without imposing answers, presents a theological challenge without threatening faith. One need not agree with everything Hess says to conclude that he solidly achieves the series' goal to "inform readers and...stimulate reflection on and passion for" (p. 9) a sacred writing that has intrigued, shocked, and challenged readers for centuries.

Susan A. Blake

Stephen R. Miller, *Holman Old Testament Commentary: Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*. Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 2004. Xiii + 378 pp., hardback, \$19.99.

The *Holman Old Testament Commentary Series* edited by Max Anders is one of the most helpful biblical resources for local church Bible study. Stephen R. Miller well utilizes the form and structure of the *Holman* commentaries which are known for their eight-fold presentation of the material (Introduction, Commentary, Conclusion, Life Application, Prayer, Deeper Discoveries, Teaching Outline, and Issues for Discussion). Any lay teacher would find themselves delightfully equipped to lead a study of these six prophetic books as Miller provides interesting, insightful, and informative information that brings these ancient prophecies to life for the modern day and time. Miller provides relevant historical facts that impinge on the life and times of the prophets. He includes helpful diagrams and charts to organize personalities, dates, and eras of the time, and, ties the prophetic literature to the New Testament when appropriate. His illustrations and anecdotes are diverse and to the point.

While all church leaders would benefit from having Miller's work on their shelf, for a deeper understanding of the literature one would need to supplement the study of these prophets with other works which address them within the broader Book of the Twelve. Unfortunately, though Miller makes a passing remark with respect to the Twelve to argue for the unity of Zechariah, he fails to bring the context of the Twelve to bear on the interpretation of the individual books and passages. Recent scholarship is making significant strides to read the Twelve as a theological unity which sheds considerable light on the message(s) of the Minor Prophets (cf. the recent works of scholars such as C. Seitz, R. Clements, R. Rendtorff, J. Jeremias, T. Collins, R.C. Van Leeuwen, etc.).

Failing to tap into this discussion of The Twelve means that several interesting issues involving these prophets were overlooked in the commentary. For example, how does the compassion formula (Exodus 34) that occurs in Nahum 1:2-3 function in the light of the way it grows and develops within The Twelve (Joel, Jonah, and Micah)? What about the significance of Malachi's divorce theme in respect to Hosca's marriage motif? How does Malachi's last verse respond to Joel's eschatological judgment? What roles do the books without historical superscriptions (Joel, Obadiah, Nahum, Habakkuk, and Malachi) play in the theological development of the Twelve? What is the significance of the three consecutive uses of *massa* in Zechariah 9, 12, and Malachi 1? Is Haggai-Zechariah presenting the fruit in Zion that Habakkuk is waiting for? How do the books relate to Micah 3:12, the center of The Twelve? The way one views the Minor Prophets as a unity influences the interpretive force of various themes and motifs running through the individual books.

In Miller's defense, dividing the Minor Prophets into two commentaries did not especially yield itself to focusing on the contours of the entire corpus. This division is an editorial decision. Nonetheless, a few remarks as to how the material of Nahum-Malachi corresponds to reading The Twelve as a theological whole could still have been maneuvered.

Steven D. Mason, St. Mary's College, University of St. Andrews, Scotland

A. Andrew Das, *Paul and the Jews*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2003. 256 pp., paper, \$24.95.

In many ways Andrew Das is an old school scholar. He has a careful eye to detail, is exegetically laborious, and he is interested in the comparative dynamics of Pauline letters. In many ways too, the exegetical conclusions of *Paul and the Jews* are not radically different than those of authors from a generation ago. Yet Das is significantly aware of the “New Perspective on Paul,” and is seeking to move that discussion forward. The newest offering brings together the best of what the New Perspective has to offer, with cautious critiques and careful exegesis to see the study through. Essentially, *Paul and the Jews* is a study of Galatians and Romans focused by the question: how does Paul understand Judaism in light of the Christ event?

Das asks two questions of Galatians: What does Paul find problematic about the Law? Why can the Law not save? Most significant for answering these questions is understanding audience. Das suggests that Jewish Christians were promoting Gentile law-observance alongside faith. For Paul, this denied the power of the new thing God did in Christ and the Spirit. The Law always pointed to Messiah, and the Hebrew Scriptures displayed God’s grace and mercy in the person of Jesus Christ. When Paul met Jesus, this altered the way he viewed his Judaism, and concluded that if faith did this, the Law did not have efficacy.

Das then turns to Romans. He begins with chapters 14-15, and the identification of the “weak” (Gentiles law-keepers) and the “strong” (other Gentile Christians). This context is confirmed by a background in which Jewish Christians established the Roman church, but were expelled by Claudius. Without their support, Gentile believers were ostracized in the synagogue and left to worship on their own and without Kosher resources. Regarding Romans 9-11, Paul’s Christology forces him to speak negatively and positively about ethnic Israel. Das critiques the “two-covenant” theory for not including all of the data, concluding that the only way to read Rom 9-11 consistently with 11:25-31 is that in the future ethnic Israel will be converted. Das asserts God’s impartiality, yet argues that Paul still holds a position of primacy for national Israel.

Can impartiality and primacy co-exist? Das dedicates a chapter to studying this very issue, and focuses specifically on how Romans 11 fits with Galatians 3-4 and 1 Thessalonians 2:14-16. Das concludes that Paul does not curse Israel for disbelief, but holds out hope for ethnic Israel. He maintains racial distinction, but his Christology still requires all to be saved by a faith in Christ.

In chapters 6 and 7, Das turns to Paul’s view of the Mosaic Law. Like his view of Judaism, Paul feels ambivalently regarding the Law. Das affirms the finding that Paul objected to the ethnic exclusivity of the Law, but adds that Paul also had other critiques. He concludes that Gentiles will be judged according to the same Law, but with the power of the Spirit Gentile believers fulfill the Mosaic Law while (paradoxically) not seeking to obey it, thus enjoying the benefits of Israel’s election.

“Hope” is the motif Das chooses to end with. He concludes that Paul’s “radical reconceptualization of grace” when he encountered Christ changed his view of Judaism and Torah significantly. Das recognizes that although Paul holds out hope for his Jewish compatriots, his Christocentric theology remains a stumbling block.

Das’s strengths are his competence in creating plausible background hypotheses for his careful exegesis, and offering significant critique and correction to the

New Perspective on Paul, while still swimming the same stream. Das shows significant respect for differing conversation partners and he is eager to tackle difficult texts.

Unfortunately, though, Das resultant treatment of the key text, Romans 7, was far too brief and cursory at best. In an attempt to capture Paul's ambivalence (I believe), Das's exegetical conclusions are sometimes ambivalent, and he never really explains how Israel's primacy and God's impartiality work as they sit together in tension, despite several tries. Although Das does not come off as a traditionalist, it is unclear how Das's monograph is a "newer perspective" on Paul, and what difference the New Perspective has actually made.

Despite his desire to contribute to Jewish-Christian dialogue, does Das actually contribute in that direction? Das's Paul is consistently ambivalent and significantly negative toward ethnic Israel and the Mosaic Law. This is, however, one of the keener, and most subtle, insights of Das: true dialogue in Jewish-Christian relations must be predicated with a faithful reading of Pauline texts.

Upper-level NT students and serious seminarians should find much beneficial in this volume. Das is detailed, but presents his arguments logically and understandably. Most of all, Das offers an important contribution to and critique of the New Perspective on Paul in an excellent introduction to Paul and Judaism.

Brenton Dickieson, Regent College, Vancouver, BC.

David A. deSilva, *An Introduction to the New Testament. Contexts, Methods & Ministry Formation*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity; Leicester, UK: Apollos, 2004. 975 pages, cloth, \$40.00.

Guthrie has been the venerable volume that InterVarsity Press contributed to the genre of New Testament introduction. Donald Guthrie's massive tome (1161 pages) was most recently issued in 1990 in its fourth revised edition. Now we have a weighty and worthy complement to Guthrie from IVP, one that extends the typical borders of the genre—as indicated in the book's subtitle. Dr. deSilva, who teaches New Testament and Greek at Ashland Theological Seminary, has made notable contributions to scholarship in his many prior books and articles, particularly in his studies on the social contexts of the world in which the New Testament emerged.

As a longtime teacher of seminary introductory NT courses, I have heard students' reactions to a succession of introductory texts. While many agreed that Guthrie thoroughly covered the issues (at least up through the mid-1980s), reading his text was tough going, and many considered it too dry and laborious. Both Carson, Moo, Morris and Achtemeier, Green, Thompson presented worthy improvements. Professor deSilva offers the latest and perhaps the best successor. First, he expands the genre from the standard concerns of "introduction," viz., authorship, recipients, characteristics, purpose, date, structure and integrity, language and style, contents, plus other matters specific to particular books. To these he adds (1) important introductory chapters, (2) recurring "exegetical skill" sections that introduce the readers to the wide range of disciplines currently practiced in NT studies, and (3) a section on "ministry formation" at the end of the study of each NT book. The book brims with pictures of places, maps, tables, and many sidebar type articles that address issues pertinent to the subjects at hand. A few examples include "The Contents of Q," "Differences Between the Greek and Hebrew Texts of the Old Testament," "The 'Faith of Jesus Christ' in Galatians," "Paul's Use Of The Old Testament In 1 Corinthians," "The Didache," and "How Christian Is James?"

The three initial chapters position the book and explain some of its notable features. Chapter 1, entitled “The New Testament as Pastoral Response,” reminds readers that the NT books were written to help Christians understand who they were in distinction to the Jews on one hand and the pagan world out of which they have come on the other. The NT books respond to pastoral concerns, and we neglect the point of the Bible apart from a careful appraisal of their implications for life and ministry today. Accordingly, at the conclusion of most chapters deSilva includes a section on “ministry formation” that suggests ways to apply the major themes or concerns of each book. Many of his applications are hard-hitting but true to the text. On ministry formation from Philippians he writes, “Many Christians live as if Paul’s exhortation to ‘be of the same mind’ means ‘if you are willing to think and to worship as I do, then we can have fellowship and experience God together.’” (p. 666). Ouch!

Chapter 2 sets the NT in its historical and cultural contexts in the first century world—growing out of developments in the intertestamental period and within the diversity of Judaism and the many Greco-Roman religions and philosophical schools. Chapter 3 addresses a constellation of issues under the rubric of “The Cultural and Social World of the Early Church” including such matters as purity and pollution, honor and shame, patronage, and the family. Awareness of these kinds of cultural matters does not end with this chapter, however. It prepares the reader for components of the following chapters on the gospels. So we find, “Cultural Awareness: Jewish Purity Codes and Mark’s Gospel,” “Cultural Awareness: Honor Discourse in Matthew,” “Cultural Awareness: Luke and Patronage,” and “Cultural Awareness: Kinship Language and the Interpretation of John’s Gospel.”

Following a chapter on gospel criticism the book moves sequentially from Mark to Matthew and then to Luke and Acts; to John and the Johannine Epistles; then, after a prologue to the study of Paul, through Paul’s letters, including an excursus on pseudepigraphy and the canon; then to the general epistles; and finally to Revelation. Each chapter concludes with a significant bibliography for further reading.

A feature that sets this book apart from its peers is the addition of “exegetical skill” sections sprinkled throughout, usually at places where their practice helps shed light on its usefulness in illuminating the biblical text at hand and the critical method itself. DeSilva divides the skills into their areas of special focus: “inner texture: close study of the text itself,” “intertexture: the text in conversation with other ‘texts,’” “social and cultural texture: the intersection of a text with its world,” and “ideological texture: agendas of authors and interpreters.” In other words, instead of introducing students only to the background of the books of the canon—how and why they emerged—deSilva helps students grasp the larger plan for the full exegesis of the texts themselves, what Vernon K. Robbins calls “socio-rhetorical interpretation.” DeSilva illustrates how the various exegetical tactics can combine to produce the best understanding of the text. In the process, readers will find few skills unmentioned—and no doubt quite a few that many seminary students have not encountered before.

A glance at the table of contents will confirm that the author has outlined a comprehensive agenda for himself. I conclude that he has succeeded marvelously. While understandably not including a defense of his hermeneutical approach to the NT, deSilva has provided his readers with a virtually complete introduction to the background, contents, and values of studying the NT while also showing readers what they need to do to grasp that message well. At the same time, of course, no reader will agree with all the conclusions in a book that covers so much territory. Some might well suspect that his bent toward social-scientific criticism predisposes him to find more examples of kinship,

honor/shame, or patronage than are clearly present. He sometimes prefers Paul account of something rather than Luke's when their accounts are difficult to reconcile where others might pardon Luke on the grounds of his selective reporting. To his credit, deSilva sometimes is willing to remain on the fence on some interpretive issues when he believes the evidence is evenly divided. For example, on the authorship of Ephesians he writes, "Either position faces serious obstacles, and it is best to conclude that there are no easy resolutions of this particular question (however much scholars on both sides might represent the solution as clear and indisputable!)" (p. 721). He invites readers to think through for themselves answers to the tough issues (such as pseudonymity) while emphasizing that all such interpretive disagreements need to be subsumed under the affirmation that what is in the canon is authoritative Scripture. So, he advises, "nor should the value of the Pastorals be diminished should they be found decisively to be pseudonymous" (p. 748).

Overall, this is a remarkable achievement. Its unique constellation of components sets it apart from all other books on NT introduction. I am going to test it out on my next classes in NT introduction. I think it will serve my students well.

William W. Klein, Denver Seminary

James D.G. Dunn, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to St. Paul*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003. 324 pp, hardback, \$65.00 / paperback, \$23.99.

The Cambridge Companion Series is designed to provide a solid introduction to a particular topic for new readers and non-specialists. This particular volume provides such a service by acquainting the reader with the current issues being discussed in the area of Pauline studies. The most appropriate audience for this text would seem to be college or seminary-level students being introduced to the life and letters of St. Paul for the first time. Edited by James D.G. Dunn, this book contains articles about St. Paul from some of the foremost Pauline scholars today.

Beyond simply providing commentary on specific Pauline epistles, this text offers articles which discuss topics of the life of St. Paul himself. The introduction, written by Dunn, provides key information so the beginning student will understand some of the debates in Pauline scholarship over the past two centuries. To this end Dunn briefly surveys F.C. Baur, the History of Religions School and the New Perspective.

After the introduction, the book is divided into four primary sections. The first section which is entitled "Paul's life and work," includes the following contributions: "Paul's Life" (Klaus Haacker) and "Paul as missionary and pastor" (Stephen C. Barton). This section is primarily designed to show the reader what historical information about the life of the Apostle can be gleaned from biblical texts.

The second section, entitled "Paul's letters," examines the Pauline epistles themselves with general commentary on the text. This section contains the following articles: "1 and 2 Thessalonians" (Margaret Mitchell); "Galatians" (Bruce Longenecker); "1 and 2 Corinthians" (Jerome Murphy-O'Connor); "Romans" (Robert Jewett); "Philippians" (Morna Hooker); "Colossians" (Loren T. Stuckenbruck); "Ephesians" (Andrew T. Lincoln); "The Pastoral Epistles" (Arland J. Hultgren).

One particular area of this section which will certainly be of interest to the reader just beginning to study the Pauline epistles is the portion which discusses whether or not the Pastoral Epistles were written pseudonymously (142-143). While Hultgren, in the end, concludes that these texts were written pseudonymously, the reader is provided

with the arguments, in five clear and simple to understand points, which have caused the author to hold these views. The reader is thus able to see the data supporting both sides of the argument and is able to better understand the dilemma for which there will never be an absolute solution. Rather than simply casting the opposing side in a pejorative light, Hultgren clearly shows why such a belief can be held.

The third section, entitled "Paul's theology," includes the following contributions: "Paul's Jewish presuppositions" (Alan F. Segal); "Paul's Gospel" (Graham N. Stanton); "Paul's Christology" (L.W. Hurtado); "Paul's Ecclesiology" (Luke Timothy Johnson); "Paul's Ethics" (Brian Rosner). Since many readers of the New Testament are often puzzled by Paul's use of scripture, Segal's article will also likely be of interest to the beginning reader. In this article Segal discusses such topics as Paul's handling of scripture (e.g. Paul's use of midrash in Gal. 3:6-14) and what Paul's presuppositions may have been as a Pharisee (164-71).

The final section, which is simply entitled "St. Paul," includes the following articles: "Paul in the second century" (Calvin J. Roetzel); "Paul's enduring legacy" (Robert Morgan); "Contemporary perspectives on Paul" (Ben Witherington, III). Witherington's article has several facets which will be helpful to the reader unfamiliar with the topic. One such area is that Witherington juxtaposes Alan Segal's views about Paul's Jewish-ness against opponents of such a view (257-58). The debate which he singles out is the degree to which Paul was a "good Jew" (257). Other sections of Witherington's article provide broad overviews of such topics as feminist and liberationist approaches to the Pauline Epistles as well as a discussion of understanding the corpus through the lens of rhetorical criticism.

Readers unfamiliar with the technical terminology used in biblical studies will greatly appreciate the glossary provided at the beginning of the text. While this text is certainly broad in focus it provides a solid foundation from which the reader is able to venture out into the larger world of Pauline studies. It seems this book would be helpful in an introductory course and would aptly serve as a supplement to a New Testament introduction text book.

Marcus P. Adams

Bart D. Ehrman, *Lost Scriptures: Books that Did Not Make It into the New Testament*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003. vi + 342 pp., cloth, \$30.00.

Lost Scriptures provides a readily available and accessible collection of Christian texts from the second through the fourth centuries CE, some republished here in their entirety, some available here only as selections. Ehrman has included many of the important witnesses to emerging Gnostic Christianity, ascetic streams of Christianity, as well as proto-orthodox Christianity, though the Apostolic Fathers are on the whole poorly represented in this collection (though these are readily available in other collections edited by Ehrman). The collection groups works by genres in the same order as the New Testament: extra-canonical Gospels, Acts, Epistolary Literature, and Apocalypses, concluding with early witnesses to the formation of an authoritative canon of New Testament writings.

There is an unmistakable agenda behind the collection of these writings, namely an attempt to level the playing field, as it were, turning back the clock to a period in which "orthodox" Christianity was but one group among many vying for the right, as it were, to define what Christianity was. Gnostics, Docetists, and ascetics should not be

thought of as “heresy” (which Ehrman equates with “false belief,” though “divisive faction” would be more apt), but as promoters of competing understandings of Jesus’ significance and message. The introduction to the collection positions readers to experience the expressions of faith in the various documents as fundamentally “equal,” without giving due notice to the unequal geographic and demographic distribution of these views, an inequality that would support the traditional view that there was in fact a broad consensus regarding the apostolic message and elite or sectarian groups that “split” from this consensus to pursue their own adaptations of the Gospel. The process of canonization, a process of selection that is now recognized largely to have proceeded from the ground up rather than to have been imposed on a broad-minded, inquiring, and tolerant church from above, is much more susceptible to the traditional rather than this revisionist view of diversity in the early church.

Such tendencies aside, Ehrman is to be commended as always for investing his considerable energies into putting the primary texts in the hands of the general reader. The study of early Christianity should certainly not be limited to the reading of the New Testament, but must extend to the careful study of the apostolic fathers and the literature collected in this volume. This treasure trove of primary sources was published primarily to complement the reading of his *Lost Christianities* (New York and Oxford: OUP, 2003), but it would serve equally well as a complement to the reader’s independent exploration of the varieties of expression of the Christian faith in the first three to four centuries.

David A. deSilva

Michael J. Gorman, *Apostle of the Crucified Lord: A Theological Introduction to Paul and His Letters*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004. 624 pp., paper, \$39.00.

The man who wrote the book on Pauline Spirituality (*Cruciformity: Paul’s Narrative Spirituality of the Cross*) has now ventured into the broader world of Pauline Introduction. Michael Gorman has not, however, left behind his Christocentric theological reading of Paul. Instead, *Apostle of the Crucified Lord* is a theological introduction to the biography, mission, spirituality, and letters of Paul.

The first section of the book introduces Paul’s frame of reference, overviews his mission, and provides an introduction to his letters that is sensitive to Paul’s social contexts. Gorman has three chapters in this introductory section that deal with Paul ideological mindset: Paul’s gospel, Paul’s spirituality, and Paul’s theology. The chapter on Paul’s gospel forms a good introduction to the current discussion, but it is the latter two chapters that display Gorman’s distinctive contribution within Pauline studies.

Gorman’s acute observation of Paul’s inseparable connection between gospel and life was explicated in depth in his *Cruciformity*, and he focuses the discussion in this theme here. There are six distinctive aspects of Paul’s spirituality that Gorman discusses: Paul’s lived experience is Covenantal, Cruciform, Charismatic, Communal, Countercultural, and (New-) Creational. Gorman’s chapter on Paul’s theology is less specific and demanding of Pauline particularities, but rather draws out twelve key Pauline theological themes that are effective in broadly representing Paul’s theological formulation, even if they are different in scope and form from traditional Pauline theologies.

The second section contains introduction and commentary to the thirteen letters attributed to Paul. As promised, the chapters are theologically focused. This does not

mean that Gorman is ignorant of contextual issues—quite the opposite. Each chapter begins with a brief discussion of academic issues, a description of the geographic and sociological setting, and an overview of the setting of the book within Paul's pastoral ministry. Gorman exegetically summarizes significant chunks of Pauline texts within what he deems to be chronological order. He draws out the theological themes that are significant to Paul's gospel, theology, and spirituality as delineated by Gorman in the first section of the book.

Between the covers of *Apostle of the Crucified Lord* are many of the tools needed to move undergraduate students on the path of reading Paul's letters with theological acuity. Gorman includes numerous maps, lists, pictures, exegetical charts, stimulating quotations, summaries, reflection questions, and introductory bibliographies. This text should suffice as both background reading and reference material for beginning students engaging in Pauline studies. Gorman gives us the best of the conversations taking place in contemporary Pauline studies, but steers completely clear of intimidating vocabulary and purely academic peculiarities.

This attempt at accessibility has a downside. Gorman could have included some footnote discussions to help students in research and to be more forthcoming about where he lands on key academic debates that obviously lurk in the background. This is unfortunate, because *Apostle of the Crucified Lord* represents a key step in the New Perspective on Paul—testing the basic hypotheses of the movement by seeing if it stands up to the test of theological integration and biographical presentation. Gorman is also an example of the positive things that can come of the new focus on narrative readings of Paul, on the question of contextual backgrounds and exegesis, and on social repercussions of Paulinism, both ancient and modern. Much of that background discussion, however, remains veiled to the eager student wishing to pursue those paths.

Apostle of the Crucified Lord is intended as a comprehensive, but accessible introduction to Paul and his writings for undergraduate theological students. In this aim, Gorman has succeeded. To date, I know of no better theological introduction to Paul that opens the student to critical issues yet still roots them in the personal and ecclesial ramifications of Paul's letters, both ancient and modern.

Brenton Dickieson

Douglas Harink, *Paul among the Postliberals: Pauline Theology beyond Christendom and Modernity*. Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2003. 288 pp., paper, \$24.99.

Paul among the Postliberals is a synthesis of postliberal students of Karl Barth, particularly Hauerwas and Yoder, and a synopsis of this postliberal reading with the New Perspective on Paul (NPP). The result is a brilliant picture of how the NPP and postliberal thinking fit together in biblical studies, theology, ecclesiology, and social and political ethics to form a fundamental critique of evangelical and liberal theological formulation.

Methodologically speaking, Harink tries to understand Paul in his contexts while recognizing faithful repetitions of that Word in our world today. The result is five essays tied together by a Barthian-Pauline dialogue. Douglas Harink is a theologian, and admittedly builds his understanding of Pauline studies upon a limited number of scholars within the NPP, particularly Stendahl, Sanders, Dunn, Donaldson, Hays, Schweitzer, Käsemann, Beker, and J. Louis Martyn.

Following the Pauline logic of Barth, Hauerwas, and Yoder, in chapter 1 Harink challenges the traditional Protestant view of justification that is currently being

reconfigured by the NPP. "Justification by faith in Christ" is a phrase that is inappropriately translated. "Faith," for Paul, represents the faithfulness of God in Christ. God's faithfulness is what is contrasted with human works, not an abstract inner justification that takes place within the individual having faith in an objectified Christ. Instead, justification is a community event that represents Paul's all-encompassing apocalyptic worldview in his mission to the nations. Harink demonstrates that the NPP is opening up new possibilities of understanding Paul, but probably goes too far in a critique of traditional Protestant readings.

Harink argues that those who interpret Paul as apocalyptic are reading Paul correctly, a reality that is particularly strong in Galatians. Chapter 2 brings together Hauerwas's Pauline-styled struggle against ideological liberalism with a reading of Galatians by Martyn. Galatians is about Paul trying to enclose the listeners in the apocalyptic event of Jesus Christ and the decisive action of God in Christ which Paul himself experienced. Paul in his apocalyptic thought coherently integrates theology, politics, and ethics to free Gentiles from bondage.

In chapter 3 Harink shows that Yoder's political reading of Paul—imitation of Jesus in pacifism, renunciation of coercive power, and submission to the cross—is essential for the church's contemporary paradigmatic life and mission. The church must be involved in the struggle against the enslaving religious and political principalities of this world in an ethic of body politic where God transforms these world powers in the context of the church and the work of the cross towards a new humanity.

Harink asserts in chapter 4 that Jews continue to be occluded by liberals taking the pluralist option and Evangelicals taking the supersessionist option, both finding their root in Paul. Both of these options, however, are anti-Judaistic and un-Pauline. Harink offers a thoroughly critical reading of N.T. Wright; but an apocalyptic approach demonstrates that God's action in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ both encloses and sustains God's irrevocable election of Israel.

In the final essay, Harink addresses the issue of pluralism. Basic to Harink's presentation is a critique of the understanding of religion itself in modern times. For Paul, what was key was that Christians become a people under the lordship of Jesus Christ, together with Jews in Rome, and within a pagan context in Corinth.

Though not comprehensive in the genre of systematic theology, Harink's synopsis is an essential step for Pauline studies and, dare I say, for the theological disciplines. Outside of contributions to the Jewish-Christian dialogue, what has been lacking in the NPP has been an understanding of how these new developments will look in larger theological systems or in the life of the church. Harink provides for both with a book written for his peers, but with an eye to the student and the clergy.

In so doing, Harink has also provided greater exegetical support for postliberal theology. Because of the limitations of the work, not every aspect of postliberal theology as he proposed it came across as either Pauline or helpful to church life today. Indeed, Harink also offers some critiques of his own Barthian theological movement against the NPP.

Harink is largely uncritical of the NPP. As such, his work will be vulnerable to the rising critical counter-tide to the NPP. But some integration must be attempted, even if it is limited in scope. *Paul among the Postliberals* is a surprisingly refreshing synthesis of two fields in which there are obvious points of dialogue, and it is brought to us by a Canadian scholar who is certainly worthy of attention.

Brenton Dickieson

Scot McKnight and Grant R. Osborne, eds., *The Face of New Testament Studies: A Survey of Recent Research*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004. 544 pp., paper, \$32.99.

This volume is a collection of essays by 22 scholars on a nearly comprehensive list of subjects in New Testament studies. It is divided into four parts, the first of which concerns the "Context of the New Testament." In it are essays on "Galilee and Judea: The Social World of Jesus" (pp. 21-35) by Sean Freyne and "The Roman Empire and Asia Minor" (pp. 36-56) by David A. Fiensy. Part 2 addresses "New Testament Hermeneutics." Contributions include Eckhard J. Schnabel on "Textual Criticism: Recent Developments" (pp. 59-75), Stanley E. Porter, "Greek Grammar and Syntax" (pp. 76-103), David A. deSilva, "Embodying the Word: Social-Scientific Interpretation of the New Testament" (pp. 118-129), and Craig A. Evans, "The Old Testament in the New" (pp. 130-145).

Part 3 is simply "Jesus." Scot McKnight writes on "Jesus of Nazareth" (pp. 149-176), Klyne Snodgrass on "Modern Approaches to Parables" (pp. 177-190), Graham H. Twelftree on "The History of Miracles in the History of Jesus" (pp. 191-208), and Craig L. Blomberg on "John and Jesus" (pp. 209-226).

Part 4, "Earliest Christianity," is the largest portion of the book. The contribution on Acts is by Steve Walton ("Acts: Many Questions, Many Answers, 229-250) who is writing the WBC on that book. The veteran Bruce Chilton lends his expertise to "James, Jesus' Brother" (pp. 251-263), while Donald A. Hagner addresses "Matthew: Christian Judaism or Jewish Christianity" (pp. 263-282). Paul is addressed by Bruce N. Fisk and James D. G. Dunn. The former wrote "Paul: Life and Letters" (pp. 283-325), the latter "Paul's Theology" (pp. 326-348). This is followed by Darrell L. Bock on "Luke" (pp. 349-372), Robert L. Webb on "The Petrine Epistles: Recent Developments and Trends" (pp. 373-390) and Peter G. Bolt on "Mark's Gospel" (pp. 391-413).

George H. Guthrie provides an excellent essay on "Hebrews in Its First-Century Contexts: Recent Research" (pp. 414-443), followed by Klaus Scholtissek on "The Johannine Gospel in Recent Research" (pp. 444-472) and Grant R. Osborne, author of the recent BECNT on Revelation, contributes his experience in "Recent Trends in the Study of the Apocalypse" (pp. 473-504). The volume concludes with extensive indices of subjects (pp. 505-514), authors (pp. 515-532), and scripture (pp. 533-544).

The book gives little or no attention to the Johannine epistles or that of Jude, and the order of chapters seems a bit odd. Nevertheless, this collection of essays provides valuable orientations to entire fields of study by experienced and capable scholars, offering insight into methodological and theological issues. For the busy student, pastor, or scholar, this book is a worthwhile investment to get up to speed on areas outside their expertise. In an age of ever increasing specialization, a book such as this that provides both breadth and depth is a welcome contribution.

Daniel M. Gurtner, Tyndale House, Cambridge, England

Francis J. Moloney, *Mark: Storyteller, Interpreter, Evangelist*. Peabody: Hendrickson, 2004. 224 pp., paper, \$19.95.

Francis J. Moloney occupies the Katherine Drexel Chair of Religious Studies at the Catholic University of America. His *The Gospel of Mark: A Commentary* was the 2003 Reference Book of the Year according to the Academy of Parish Clergy. The 2004 book is billed as a New Testament Commentary but it is not truly that. Only 55 pages of the 224 page text are devoted strictly to commentary.

The book is organized in four parts. Part the first, is entitled "Mark." To the author, Mark is a "shadowy figure" and one cannot be certain as to the identity of this Mark. Nor can it be accurately determined when this story of Jesus first saw the light of day. However, he does posit that this Mark, whoever he is, is a "creative and original thinker." According to the Maloney, Mark never appears as a character in the work or is named. He points out that this is a characteristic found throughout the book with numerous nameless persons as principle characters in the story. Papias' second century reference to Mark gets only passing recognition. Maloney views the work not as history but as a proclamation of the faith of the early church. The desire of the writer of Mark was to communicate a particular theological perspective.

The second division of the book deals with "Mark: the Storyteller." The author views the many summaries in Mark as textual markers delineating the structure of the work. In this section the author sees the Gospel story unfolding in four parts:

1. The Gospel Begins
2. Jesus' Ministry in Galilee
3. Jesus' Journey to Jerusalem, Death, Resurrection
4. Women Discover the Empty Tomb

The first half of the Gospel answers the question, "Who IS Jesus?" The second half of the Gospel presents "The Suffering, Vindicated Son of Man, the Christ, the Son of God."

The commentary is found in Part Three of the work. The limited remarks are helpful and at times provocative. The author asserts that, "Mark, the storyteller has consciously taken material from traditions about Jesus that come to him and shapes them in a way that is referred to as 'chiastic.'" He accepts the fact that Mark concludes at verse eight of chapter six.

In the third section of the book, the author deals first with "Mark, the Interpreter of Jesus of Nazareth" including "Jesus the Christ, Jesus the Son of God, and Jesus the Son of Man." Next in this section are the author's assertions on "Mark the Interpreter of Christian Community" including "The Disciples," and "At the Table of the Lord."

The fourth part of Maloney's work is entitled, "The Good News of the Gospel of Mark." In this section, he sees Mark looking back to the biblical traditions and the events in the life of Jesus to revive the flagging spirits of the struggling Christian Community.

At the conclusion of each of the four sections are helpful and extensive footnotes. The work concludes with a thorough fifteen page bibliography, a three page index to modern authors and a five page index to ancient sources. The work is certainly engaging.

Richard E. Allison

Stephen Pattemore, *The People of God in the Apocalypse: Discourse, Structure, and Exegesis*. Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series, 128. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Pp. xv, 256. \$75.00.

In an important contribution to the study of Revelation 4-22, Pattemore examines the structure and message of main part of Revelation through the aid of relevance theory, an approach more commonly utilized in the context of theoretical linguistics than in biblical studies. The methodological foundation is laid in chs. 1-3 (pp. 1-67). Relevance theory provides an overarching structure to all other theories, where

seeking "relevance is thus a criterion at all levels of language analysis, including the interpretation of literary texts" (p. 22). Relevance theory operates with the assumptions that: (1) the text is a real communication event; (2) relevance theory provides a precise definition of the text; and, (3) relevance theory recognizes there is a "trade off between processing effect and contextual effects [that] can be used to prioritize cognitive environments and thus becomes a criterion for analyzing text" (pp. 47-48).

With regard to Revelation, relevance theory understands both the text-external factors and text-internal features of a text that influence reading. Pattemore is specifically concerned to discuss the structure, understood as a chiasm, as well as how the Apocalypse views the people of God (pp. 62-67). The structure of Revelation is understood as a chiasm, in the tradition of Lund and others (see pp. 62-64). The people of God represent three groups. First, there are the addressees, those Christians who are addressed in 1:1-11 and 22:10-21. Second, there is the audience, the seven churches addressed in 1:12-3:22. Finally there are the actors, those featured in 4:1-22:9. These are those figures featured in the opening throne vision of Rev 4-5. These include the one upon the throne, the heavenly creatures and the Lamb. The saints of God figure prominently in 7:1-8; 9:4; 11:18; 12:1-11; 17:4), the witnesses of Rev 11; as well as the enemies of God including the serpent (Rev 12) the two beasts (Rev 13) and the prostitute Babylon (Rev 17) (pp. 64-67).

Chapters 4-6 build on the theoretical foundation to interpret important passages, including the martyred souls under the altar (Rev. 6:9-11); the 144,000 of Rev 7 and 14 and the New Jerusalem. In the application of relevance theory, the reader sometimes encounters less radically new interpretation than further confirmation of findings derived from other methods. For example, Pattemore's conclusions reinforce Johns's findings that John does not envisage active military resistance against the forces of evil, but that conquest belongs to God alone (pp. 192-93).

More intriguing is Pattemore's analysis of the structure of Revelation 4-22. Pattemore understands the fifth seal of Rev 6:9-11 as providing the structural themes for what follows. Thus, pp. 92-113 focus on how the vision of the martyrs plays out in the rest of Revelation. The story culminates in Rev 20:4-6, with the triumph of the martyrs over their enemies, the serpent, beast and false prophet. It is as the martyrs follow their Lord in sacrificial death (Rev. 5:9-10), that they inherit the promised kingdom (p. 112).

Pattemore concludes with a discussion of the hermeneutical utility of relevance theory. In short, it provides a balance between the excessive claims of historical methodology in the past, and the tendency of some scholars to reject it today. Rather, relevance theory gives

a theoretical basis for the prioritization of the original communication situation and the importance of historical-critical research. RT has helped to avoid the extremes of, on the one hand, a pursuit of "authorial intent" on the mistaken assumption that we have an objective means of discovering it and, on the other hand, abandoning all interest in intentionality in favour of an ideologically driven imposition of meaning (p. 214).

It is, perhaps, in providing such a balanced approach that relevance theory is most useful. It is certainly not a replacement for serious historical critical analysis, as Pattemore would be first to assert. What it does provide is an additional paradigm for understanding the sometimes obscure text of the Apocalypse.

Russell Morton

Stanley E. Porter and Jeffrey T. Reed, *Discourse Analysis and the New Testament: Approaches and Results*. JSNTSS 170; Studies in New Testament Greek 4. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999. Cloth. \$85.00.

This collection of essays explores the theory and practice of discourse analysis, demonstrating its range of applicability and fruitfulness across the New Testament canon in regard to questions of structure, linguistics, narrative criticism, and meaning. Written by established scholars in the field of discourse analysis, it is an excellent introduction to this emerging exegetical discipline.

Contributions include: S. E. Porter and J. T. Reed, "Discourse Analysis and the New Testament: An Introduction"; Eugene Nida, "The Role of Context in the Understanding of Discourse"; J. T. Reed, "The Cohesiveness of Discourse: Towards a Model of Linguistic Criteria for Analyzing New Testament Discourse"; S. E. Porter, "Is Critical Discourse Analysis Critical? An Evaluation Using Philemon as a Test Case"; M. B. O'Donnell, "The Use of Annotated Corpora for New Testament Discourse Analysis: A Survey of Current Practice and Future Prospects"; S. L. Black, "The Historic Present in Matthew: Beyond Speech Margins"; R. E. Longacre, "A Top-Down, Template-Driven Narrative Analysis, Illustrated by Application to Mark's Gospel"; *ibid.*, "Mark 5.1-43: Generating the Complexity of a Narrative from its Most Basic Elements"; W. Schenk, "The Testamental Disciple-Instruction of the Markan Jesus (Mark 13): Its Levels of Communication and its Rhetorical Structures"; J. M. Watt, "Pronouns of Shame and Disgrace in Luke 22.63-64"; G. Martín-Asensio, "Participant Reference and Foregrounded Syntax in the Stephen Episode"; T. Klutz, "Naked and Wounded: Foregrounding, Relevance and Situation in Acts 19.13-20"; R. J. Erickson, "The Damned and the Justified in Romans 5.12-21: An Analysis of Semantic Structure"; J. P. Louw, "A Discourse Reading of Ephesians 1.3-14"; S. H. Levinsohn, "Some Constraints on Discourse Development in the Pastoral Epistles"; E. R. Wendland, "'Let No One Disregard You!'" (Titus 2.15): Church Discipline and the Construction of Discourse in a Personal, 'Pastoral' Epistle"; A. H. Snyman, "Hebrews 6.4-6: From a Semiotic Discourse Perspective"; B. Olsson, "First John: Discourse Analyses and Interpretations"; J. Callow, "Where Does 1 John 1 End?"

David A. deSilva

Robert M. Price, *Deconstructing Jesus*. Prometheus Books, 2000. 284 pp., cloth, \$31.95.

Who was Jesus of Nazareth? A Galilean eschatological prophet? An itinerant Cynic? A Jewish rebel? An Essene hermit? Or, pure myth? Just as the Christian faith has splintered into many sects due to a lack of exegetical unity, the enlightenment tradition of higher criticism has birthed flocks of divergent schools, each with its own interpretation of the "historical Jesus." Scholars have been incessantly remaking the man within the text to the point at which there are now myriad Jesus-models. There are "too many plausible portraits, each centering on a different selection of gospel data" (p. 265). Jesus Seminar member Robert Price boldly stands up in criticism of his colleagues, embarking not to give another trite liberal reconstruction, but instead to deconstruct the fabled figure of first-century Palestine.

Price's initial task is to usher his audience into the dialectic eddies of today's liberal scholars. He masterfully maneuvers through their work, always taking routes that lead to the greatest skepticism about whether the Jesus of history can be known. This is consistent with his deconstructionist agenda (in the true spirit of Jacques Derrida), and consequently Price's primary affirmation is that the finished versions of the canonical gospels are actually pastiches of clippings from sources carefully selected by the redactors we know as Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. To add thrust to his case he back-dates some of the *Nag Hammadi* gospels into the first century so that they become contemporary - and in some instances anterior - to the New Testament documents (p. 33), thereby releasing their influence on the early church so that any and all views concerning Jesus are players in the evolution of Christian theology. Price interacts with scholars such as Koester, Robinson, Crossan, and especially Mack, to unfurl a panoply of Jesus movements and Christ cults, each with its own *kerygma* and theological bent, that together manifest the ineffability of any real, historical Jesus.

Price peels back stratum after stratum, untwining variegated styles of mythology (as identified by dogmatic background) from the gospels. This includes an examination of the gradual fabrication of the "cruci-fiction" myth, since it may have been woven into the story during redaction. What we end up with is a wildly syncretic systematization of viewpoints. Price reasons that the gospel-writers realized the necessity to dock their version of Jesus in history in order to make it viable; "the need to concretize and thus to define and control Christian thinking and practice had earlier led to the historicizing of the Jesus figure itself, the result being an earthly 'life of Jesus'" (p. 251).

While Price displays a broad wealth of awareness about Judaism in the ancient Greco-Roman world, he seems eager to theorize the first century into an unlikely zoo of cults and philosophies that all happened to be complicit in the permeation of the Jesus story using mythic interpolation via written sources. Lately, it has become fashionable to vilify traditional Christians and their beliefs while glossing their contraries, and with *Deconstructing Jesus* one suspects that Price truly enjoys pinning subterfuge on orthodoxy's origins. He demonstrably knows how to stir up controversy and entertain the skeptics. His expressions and side notes regularly demean the conservative bloc of scholars; he suggests that the more concrete gospels won out because "simple-minded dogmatism is always more popular" (p. 28). He is also sure to give N.T. Wright a poke in the eye along the way as he jovially tramples on orthodoxy. Price's quasi-sensationalist headings are also redolent of tabloid headlines. He, like many other members of the Jesus Seminar, knows how to attract attention with scandalous revisions of old ideas. He writes new gossip, guaranteed to sell - though it is granted that this is precisely his indictment of the canonical gospels!

Deconstructing Jesus can help scholars build more knowledge of the mystery cults and movements surrounding the locale of Jesus' ministry, and can facilitate the integration of these notions into one's ever widening view of the New Testament. However, it delivers unduly vitriolic blows to alternatives of Price's thought, undermining the overall integrity and objectivity of his scholarship and, consequently, minimizing his impact on the perennial dialogue about the Galilean Jew, Jesus of Nazareth.

Jacob Louis Waldenmaier

Robert H. Stein, *Studying the Synoptic Gospels: Origin and Interpretation*. Second edition; Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2001.

This updated and expanded version of the 1987 edition remains the best introduction to the modern state of the question regarding the Synoptic Problem and its solution. Stein begins with an exploration of the commonly observed similarities and differences between the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) that have made literary interdependence the preferred explanation, and then lays out the cases for Markan priority and the existence of the sayings collection *Q*, although he remains sensibly flexible regarding the exact nature of this hypothetical text (whether oral or written, whether a single collection or multiple collections). He then addresses most sensibly the problem of Matthew-Luke agreements against Mark, which have been put forward as the major objection to Markan priority, and concludes with a review of the value of source criticism (the discipline that largely drives this conversation) and its relationship to the larger program of historical-critical interpretation.

In a second part, Stein presents the discipline of form criticism and the operating philosophy that has tended to guide its application. This opens up a fine discussion of the history of the Jesus tradition from oral to written form, and a conclusion about what we can learn from form criticism. A third part presents a clear and amply illustrated introduction to the theory and practice of redaction criticism, which remains an essential critical skill for analyzing the voice, theological convictions, and pastoral concerns of each evangelist.

This book is highly recommended for all students of the Gospels, but especially for those entrusted with the exposition and proclamation of the Word.

David A. deSilva

Stephen Westerholm, *Perspectives Old and New on Paul: The "Lutheran" Paul and His Critics*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004. Pp. xix + 488, paper, \$35.00.

Westerholm has set out to update his 1988 *Israel's Law and the Church's Faith*, which was a review and refutation of the New Perspective on Paul. This second edition soon took on a life of its own, and has grown by about 250 pages. Those who read *Israel's Law* will recognize the main intent. Nevertheless, unlike the original, this book is divided into three parts.

First there is the new, detailed description of the views of Augustine, Luther, Calvin and Wesley. He lumps these into the general category of the "Lutheran" view. Although this is anachronistic, he has a point: that what is criticized as Luther's invention is the product of centuries of reading Paul through Augustinian eyes. The section is excellent, and from the first pages one notes that Westerholm is the master of articulating the fine distinctions between one thinker and another. He will enter part two as their champion. One omission, in the summary of the often-neglected theology of Wesley, was the crucial doctrine of universal prevenient grace. This is one of the main differences between Wesley and the Reformers with regard to depravity, and it thus forms a cornerstone for his views on election and justification.

The second section corresponds to Part One of the older volume. Here Westerholm applies the same methodology, to try to explain in detailed yet plain terms what are the viewpoints of the proponents and then the opponents of the New Perspective. Originally he had gone from Wrede to Heikki Räisänen. In this new volume,

he shows how the discussion has been able to move past the skepticism of the latter, with some rich developments from roughly 1986-2002. Within this period falls the bulk of the contribution by James Dunn and N. T. Wright for the New Perspective; it has also given the opposition plenty of time to mount a counterattack (Cranfield, Schreiner, Thielman and others). All have had time to evolve in their thinking, and scholars such as Dunn have produced disciples (Bruce Longenecker). Plus there are many other studies that are not aimed at this particular debate but which are of use in the discussion. Westerholm shows a remarkable amount of awareness and erudition. His bibliography by itself is an account of the New Perspective debate, although I noticed one or two small omissions.

Westerholm is gifted at taking in mountains of secondary materials and then digesting them into clear prose. Take as an example the summary of the New Perspective's reading of the "Lutheran" position on p. 117: "From his own experience, and with considerable acumen, Luther had described a religion of works; the pattern, it was supposed, would surely serve for Judaism as well. And in fact, the correctness of the model was thought to be established by the efforts of one or two intrepid souls who culled from rabbinic writings quotations to illustrate each of its aspects. The hermeneutical circle was then made complete when these quotations were taken to provide background material for understanding Paul. The apostle was thus interpreted in contrast with Judaism, which itself was interpreted in the light of the Catholicism of Luther's day, which in turn was interpreted by Luther's reading of Paul. Until recently the cycle showed every sign of being self-perpetuating." I have not seen a more succinct description anywhere.

At the end of Part Two the reader stumbles into the only very slightly tongue-in-cheek "The Quotable Anti-'Lutheran' Paul". Here he lets the various proponents of the New Perspective speak for themselves on some key issues of Paul, grace, the Law, Judaism, and justification.

Part Three is Westerholm's own synthesis and presentation of his ideas. He develops some of the key concepts and terms (righteousness, works of the Law). He offers a fine discussion on the meaning of "legalism," a word that one finds almost universally used without definition. A very useful section is the new Chapter 17 – Grace in Sanders' Judaism. He also goes through the individual epistles to test his model. Finally, Westerholm's conclusion, wonderfully titled "Grace Abounding to Sinners or Erasing Ethnic Boundaries?" is much more nuanced in this version and shows some careful interaction with the insights of his opponents.

Nevertheless, the genius of the book – as with the 1988 version – lies not with the positive contributions of the last part. He is a good exegete, but pedestrian at handling other ancient sources – ironically enough, incarnating a regular criticism directed toward those who reject the New Perspective. Westerholm chooses instead to interact with, for example, the rabbis as the secondary literature touches on them. He merely touches on the Sanders' observation – too often neglected in discussions of Paul and the Law – that the Jews had no doctrine of depravity in the Augustinian sense. This could go a long way to explaining why Paul was relatively so pessimistic about the Law's power to lift up humanity. It is a point developed by Timo Laato (*Paul and Judaism: an anthropological approach*, Scholars, 1995) and others (Westerholm, Chapter 13). Yet Westerholm himself does little to avail himself of these insights which should bolster his own case.

Not everyone will enjoy Westerholm's off-beat sense of humor, but I certainly do. At one point he goes off on a rant about how exegetes imagine they can understand Paul when they can't even understand their own spouses. He can also tell a fine anecdote or story with just the right sense of aptness. The "Whimsical Introduction" is unlike

anything you'll have read in a serious book for a long while. I found this helpful in keeping up the spirits when the data came in so densely.

We must point out that the volume has no topical index, which is a scandal in a work with this amount of detail; I wanted to search for "prevenient grace," *simul iustus*, and Qumran theology, but had to skim the book to find them.

If you can't tell the players without a program, that program is Westerholm's *Perspectives*. No student of Paul can pass this one by, even if it is used as a guide to what others are saying.

Gary S. Shogren

Stephen Westerholm, *Understanding Paul: The Early Christian Worldview of the Letter to the Romans*. 2nd edition; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004. 176 pp., paper, \$14.99.

This is the revised edition of his *Preface to the study of Paul* (Eerdmans, 1977). The subtitle tells the story: Westerholm introduces the reader to Paul's worldview, using the text of Romans as a guide to its major facets. He wants to be able to answer an outsider's question, "what is so big about Paul?" The major impediment lies in worldview: "Contemporary readers of Paul...soon encounter difficulties. Many do not share the assumptions that underlie Paul's vision of life; and to make sense of his train of thought without grasping its premises is no easy matter" (p. 11). Thus the author starts off with some questions that might strike a first-time reader: why does Paul sound so self-important? Why isn't Paul as concerned as we are about feelings of guilt? Why is homosexual activity an offense against God?

The basic "Jewish-Christian worldview" that Paul accepts is that "God is good, and so is his creation; evil represents an inappropriate and disruptive response on the part of moral beings to what is good; the triumph of the Good is ultimately assured by the character of God" (p. 24 note 7).

Westerholm's chapters follow a standard outline of Romans. In each, he begins by asking modern and post-modern questions about truth, reality, responsibility and freedom, and God. He then typically moves on to a description of the Jewish-Christian worldview, usually with reference to the Old Testament. He ends with the specific development of that view as found in Romans.

An outstanding chapter is "3. War against goodness". Here Westerholm delves briefly but carefully into questions of determinism vs. freedom, the language of right and wrong, and the nature of freedom and restraint in a pluralistic society. In the following chapter, he captures the nature of sin and judgment well with "Paul allows that human beings (even Gentiles!) may do good...[but] the very selectivity with which humans sometimes choose to do the right, sometimes the wrong, may itself be seen as an expression of their setting themselves up as moral arbiters independent of God" (p. 62).

At every point, the author takes great care to distinguish a Western worldview from the Pauline one; for example, in his conclusion he shows that Paul's image of sacrificing ourselves to God (Rom. 12:1-2) is one of the hardest concepts for us to swallow, given our obsession with personal freedom and autonomy.

Westerholm writes with his customary humor and parabolic style. He particularly tickles the fancy with stories about an albatross couple (yes, as in birds!) named Jack and Jill, and later about giggly teenaged pals Ashley and Chrystal. The albatrosses help to illustrate what we mean by human freedom, the girls what we mean by sin. His book is fantastic for someone with a college course in philosophy but with little

to no understanding of the Bible or Christianity. It's also of great use for Christians of whatever stage, particularly in helping them to articulate their faith today.

Gary S. Shogren

Bruce W. Winter, *Roman Wives, Roman Widows: The Appearance of New Women and the Pauline Communities*, Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003, 211pp. + bibliography and indexes, \$26.00.

Bruce W. Winter offers a new perspective that is well worth the time for New Testament scholars to consider. He provides access to many ancient sources that present a different picture of first century Roman women than is offered in most New Testament background material. His aim was, "to place before the reader new material, regarded as apposite to the texts, for the consideration of those in the academy as well as those in the church" (13).

This book is a result of research produced in conjunction with the Institute of Early Christianity in the Greco-Roman World, Cambridge. Winter uses extant literary and non-literary sources to illuminate New Testament texts, quoting verbatim ancient historians, epigraphists, papyrologists, and archaeologists who are not normally accessible to New Testament scholars. In his attempt to provide a picture of the ancient world, Winter incorporates information from Roman, Greek, and Near Eastern cultural studies as well as from New Testament studies.

Chapter one lays the groundwork for the rest of the book by defining terms and outlining what he intended to accomplish, sketching a clearer picture of the *Sitz im Leben* of the recipients of the Pauline letters. He divided the remaining chapters into three parts. Part one gives evidence for the emergence of a new breed of wife, one whose lifestyle is considerably different than the traditional ideal, thus the appearance of 'new women'. His fundamental premise is that "new women" appeared in Greco-Roman society first in the imperial household, then through their influence in the rest of the Empire. These flaunted the traditional mores and roles of women, rivaling men in sexual promiscuity. Material from contemporary writers, playwrights, and poets shows some actually endorsed infidelity of married women. Next, he examines legislation by Augustus on sexuality and marriage as evidence of attempts to promote traditional Roman values against a perceived threat to Roman society by the mores of the new emancipated women (57). Concluding part one, Winter examines the philosophical schools' rejection of sexual promiscuity and the counter-cultural teaching of abstinence outside of marriage and fidelity inside of marriage, and that men ought not be less moral than women. They encouraged both men and women to study philosophy since it teaches the cardinal virtues. Their comments in defense of philosophy make it clear that some had charged that philosophy education promoted the headstrong and arrogant women to leave the responsibilities of the home.

Based upon the above information, part two deals with New Testament texts concerning women in the Pauline communities. He discusses the symbolism of removing the marriage veil and its implication in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16. The discussion of the proper woman's appearance in 1 Timothy 2:9-15, appears to have been preventative (120). It proscribes apparel that would signal lack of moral respectability and sexual availability, and prescribes adornment with the female virtues of modesty, self-control, and good deeds. While financial problems led to instructions limiting "honoring" of widows to the old, other instructions dealt with concerns of lifestyle that would discredit

the church in 1 Timothy 5:11-15. The search for the *Sitz im Leben* of Titus 2:3-5 deals with the uniqueness of culture on the Isle of Crete where women enjoyed legal privileges that gave them financial independence and some protection against sexual predators. These verses imply that the young wives had abandoned their responsibilities toward their spouses, children, and households for a lifestyle like the "new women", so now they were being called back to their senses and a resumption of their responsibilities.

Part three concentrates on the new roles of women in public life by examining the crucial epigraphic material and then discusses their possible influence on the opportunities for Christian women in the Pauline mission. He concludes that the evidence, though limited, supports an enabling of Christian women to contribute to a wider sphere of service, (204).

I only had two complaints with this book. I was disappointed that Winter didn't address the implications of "new women" on the discussion of *authentēin* in 1 Timothy 2. I also would have liked for him to delve more deeply into the verses on older widows. He was content to link the stringent requirements for them with financial limitations, and give just a passing comment about the similarity with the requirements of elders. In spite of these defects, I would highly recommend this book. It contains a treasure trove of ancient sources that shed new light upon the *Sitz im Leben* of the Pauline communities. Any serious New Testament scholar would do well to consider their implications upon the standard interpretations of these texts.

Lynne McVay

Ben Witherington III, *The New Testament Story*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004. x + 283 pp., paper, \$18.00.

The New Testament Story is organized into two parts of five chapters each. Part One explains the development of the NT, while Part Two examines the stories within the NT. End material includes a "Basic Acts Timeline," a "Chronology of Paul's Life and Letters," a chart translating biblical weights and measures into their English and metric equivalents, and maps of the Roman Empire, Palestine, and Paul's Journeys. "Exercises and Questions for Study and Reflection" conclude each chapter.

Chapter One presents the ancient world's preference for the spoken word over the written word, and then discusses the tools and methods used to produce, publish and distribute literary documents in the first century CE. Witherington also argues against the evolution of orthodox Christianity from many competing, equally acceptable varieties of Christianity.

Chapter 2 is a model of clarity and brevity. Witherington outlines the Synoptic Problem in two and one-half pages, distinguishes Q from the Gospel of Thomas in a single page, and then provides a three-page outline of Q's contents and main themes. Readers unfamiliar with Q should appreciate this material. Witherington then discusses the Passion narratives and briefly suggests reasons to believe that Paul was familiar with both Q and the Passion material.

Chapters 3 and 4 discuss the authorship, dating and main themes of the individual NT books. Chapter 3 covers the "Letters and Homilies" while chapter 4 treats the gospels, Acts, Rev, and the Johannine letters. The general organization is by chronology rather than author, or canon. Thus, Witherington begins with Gal (seen as an early letter to south Galatia), then Jas, Jude, 1-2 Thess, and so on. Some readers may be surprised by the early dates for Jas and Jude, or by the late date for 2 Pet ("near the end of

the first century," 67), but none are irresponsible.

Chapter 5 ends Part One discussing the canon's formation. Witherington concludes that widespread recognition established the NT canon, rather than formal decisions or decrees. The discussion is basic without being simplistic.

Chapter 6 begins Part Two by examining the NT's use of several OT stories, finding that the NT authors have an eschatological and usually a Christological approach to the OT.

Chapter 7 examines NT stories about Paul and Peter, beginning with Paul's life as revealed in the letters (depending most heavily on Gal and 1 & 2 Cor, with less material from 1 & 2 Thess, Phil, and a very few citations from Rom). Witherington then treats Paul as presented in Acts, focusing on the Damascus Road story found in chapters 9, 22, and 26. This chapter includes a helpful chronology of Paul's life. The discussions of stories about Peter and the "Tales of the Holy Family" (Chapter 8) are sensitive to subtle differences between parallel gospel accounts, as Witherington is throughout the book.

The final two chapters turn to stories about Jesus. First, "Stories of Jesus Outside the Gospels," starts with Paul, especially the hymn in Phil 2. Then, Witherington draws out subtle differences in the public's understanding of Jesus between Luke and Acts. From Hebrews, Witherington discusses material related to Jesus' death, and finally Jesus as seen in Rev chapters 12, 5, and 19.

Chapter 10 covers the gospels' treatment of Jesus. The discussion of Mark sees that gospel raising, then answering questions about Jesus' identity and mission. Witherington ties the presentation of Jesus in Matt to Jewish Wisdom traditions, and stressed the full, universal picture in Luke. Finally, Witherington emphasizes the presentation of Jesus as divine in John.

The book is accessible to a wide audience. The few notes appear at the bottom of the appropriate pages. Witherington frequently refers to his own work, but this indicates the substantial time and thought behind *The New Testament Story*. Occasionally, Witherington seems too confident of things merely possible or probable, e.g., at least four letters to Corinth from Ephesus (60). *The New Testament Story* is a cross between a NT introduction and a NT survey, without being fully either. For this reason while many readers will find the book informative and interesting, it is not a likely textbook.

James R. Blankenship, John Brown University

David E. Aune, ed., *The Gospel of Matthew in Current Study: Studies in the Memory of William G. Thompson*, S. J. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001. Xii + 191 pp., paper, \$25.00

Originally presented at a 1998 colloquium held at Loyola University, Chicago, the essays in this volume are a tribute to an influential Matthean scholar, William G. Thompson. Fr. Thompson, who passed away in 1998, was an energetic scholar, teacher, and pastor, interested in the Gospel of Matthew not only as an academic, but also as a servant of the church. This volume is a tribute, with essays representing various scholarly methodologies. There is also recognition of the church's need to communicate the message of Matthew in a sensitive manner to previously overlooked groups, particularly Jews and women.

The first essay, by T. H. Tobin (pp. 1-4) is a brief biographical sketch of William Thompson's life and ministry. It is followed by: D. Senior, "Directions in

Matthean Studies" pp. 5-21; A-J Levine, "Matthew's Advice to a Divided Readership," pp. 22-41; G. N. Stanton, "The Early Reception of Mathew's Gospel: New Evidence From the Papyri?" pp. 42-61; "D. J. Harrington, "Matthew's Gospel: Pastoral Problems and Possibilities," pp. 62-72; E. Wainwright, "The Matthean Jesus and the Healing of Women," pp. 74-95; R. S. Ascough, "Matthew and Community Formation," pp. 96-126; W. Cotter, "Greco-Roman Apotheosis Traditions and the Resurrection Appearances in Matthew," pp. 127-153; J. D Kingsbury, "The Birth Narrative of Matthew," pp. 154-165; and A. J. Saldarini, "Reading Matthew Without Anti-Semitism," pp. 166-184.

While all the essays are of high quality, three deserve special mention Levine's essay was particularly stimulating. On the one hand, it is a call for traditional scholars not to neglect feminist contributions to Matthew. On the other hand, it reminds feminists not to misrepresent Judaism so that Matthew continues to be used as an anti-Semitic tract. Kingsbury points to the importance of the genealogy of Mt. 1:1-17, that ties Jesus, Mary's son, who is adopted by Joseph, into Israel's history. Here the reader finds a consciousness of Jesus' ultimate origin in God (pp. 164-65). At the same time, Matthew informs the reader of Jesus' origin, ancestry, and ultimate eschatological importance (p. 165). Finally, Saldarini provides an agenda for reading that allows the interpreter to be aware of the unfortunate use of Matthew's gospel in the past. He reminds us that Matthew's polemic was against the Jewish leadership and not the Jewish people. He also provides a program for blunting that polemic for contemporary readers. This essay should be considered by any minister who wishes to preach or teach from Matthew in a manner that is both true to the gospel's message, and also sensitive to Jewish concerns.

In conclusion, this collection of essays is a worthy memorial to Fr. Thompson. It provides stimulating intellectual fodder, but not at the expense of isolating the academic pursuit of truth from the church's proclamation. The collection of essays is a useful tool both for scholarly research and pastoral reflection. Fr. Thompson would have approved.

Russell Morton

Craig S. Keener, *The Gospel According to John: A Commentary*, 2 vol. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2003. xlviii + 1636 pp., cloth, \$79.95.

Keener's massive commentary, perhaps the most comprehensive since Schnackenburg's, presents the reader with a formidable task. The bibliography is enormous, consisting of 167 pages in itself (pp. 1243-1409). The introduction, likewise, is a monograph in itself, consisting of 330 pages. Yet, despite the length, Keener's work demonstrates a remarkable amount of methodological unity. The limitations of scope, as outlined in the preface (pp. xxv-xxx), are followed through the entire commentary. The method followed is to examine the Gospel of John in its broadest possible context. The emphasis is upon the Gospel in its final form. As a result, source theories are rejected, and the unity of the final form, with the exception of 7:53-8:11, which is acknowledged as an interpolation (pp. 735-38), is affirmed. This judgment includes John 21, which Keener affirms as belonging to the original gospel (pp. 1219-22), and reflects a historical incident (1222-24), as opposed to many scholars who consider it to be an appendix by a later hand.

Keener sets the Gospel of John in its Mediterranean context. In the course of his discussion, two specific contexts are considered: the Hellenistic/Roman environment

and the Jewish or Jewish/Christian setting. Major themes, such as “Son of God,” the “Spirit,” the Paraclete, etc., are examined in terms of how the language would have been understood in both a Gentile and Jewish environment. To fulfill this purpose, Keener engages in a skillful and thorough employment of the ancient sources. His familiarity with the primary materials enables Keener to avoid the pitfalls of reliance on standard works such as the *TDNT* and Strack-Billerbeck, in view of these sources’ problematic character, especially with regard to Judaism. The citations pointing readers to original sources alone make the commentary worthy of scholarly attention.

Keener does not avoid controversy. In rejecting source critical conclusions as unreliable, Keener also concludes that complicated theories of authorship, such as Brown’s, are not helpful. Rather, the Gospel of John could very well contain eyewitness reminiscence. This witness is not a simple reporting of the “facts.” “The eyewitness has clearly taken liberties in the telling of the story, probably developed over years of sermon use; but a strong case can be made for Johannine authorship and therefore that the Gospel contains substantial reminiscences, as well as theological interpretations, of Jesus” (p. 115). While other scholars conclude that the Gospel of John represents the reflection of a Johannine community that originates with a disciple of Jesus, Brown’s “Beloved Disciple,” few will be so bold as to state that the Gospel was actually written by an eyewitness to Jesus’ ministry. Indeed, in consideration of the difficulties in reconciling the Johannine Jesus with the Synoptic portrait, most scholars would affirm the opposite. In light of J.P. Myer’s reconsideration of the value of the Gospel of John for the historian of the life of Jesus, especially its portrayal of Jesus as a disciple of John, perhaps Keener’s reconsideration of this staple of critical orthodoxy is timely.

Keener also gives more credence to the accounts of the miraculous in John than scholars who are still bound by the enlightenment view of reality. “As a former atheist who has personally witnessed, occasionally experienced, and is regularly exposed to reliable testimonies of instantaneous supernatural phenomena within circles where such phenomena regularly occur ... often through my work in Africa or among Pentecostals, I confess my own skepticism toward the prevailing anti-miraculous skepticism of Western culture” (p. 267). Thus, Keener is able to exercise a critical sympathy, rather than critical distance with the text.

Such critical sympathy enables Keener to write a work that is not only rigorous in its historical method, but also offers theological insight to the reader. The work is certainly not a devotional commentary, but does represent an empathy with the author and theological sensitivity not always present among commentators. The work, thus, is helpful not only on an academic level, but also to pastors who are willing to wade through the detail of the commentary to plumb the depths of John’s Gospel. This labor is only appropriate for a gospel, which, as one of the great church fathers is reported to have said, can be waded into by the simplest child, but contains more depth than the deepest sea.

Russell Morton

Ben Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998. 874 pp., \$54.00

Witherington’s book does not represent the traditional, verse-by-verse commentary typical of modern scholarship, but instead is written as a running exposition. As such the writing style flows nicely and is very readable. The difficulty is that the lack

of chapter and verse markings from section to section make it difficult to find a particular discussion on a specific verse or verses. Since a commentary is inevitably used as a reference, this makes it more difficult to use it as such. The text itself is typical of Witherington's thorough style, while footnotes are reserved for more technical points. In addition, he frequently offers excursuses throughout the text entitled, "A Closer Look," in which he delves in more detail on a particular subject germane to the discussion at hand. For example, following his discussion of the Jerusalem church's early experiment in communal sharing, Witherington takes "a closer look" at the social status of the first Christians (pp. 210-213).

The technical discussion of Greek is reserved for the footnotes, and is helpful for those familiar with Greek. Yet, those not versed in the biblical language will not be hindered by such discussion in the body of the work. Also helpful for those who do not have access to ancient works are the rather long quotations from ancient sources, where necessary (e.g. Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, 8.626ff. on pages 421-422). The one disadvantage to this format, of course, is that it can make for a confusing read as one moves from text to footnotes to excursuses and back to text. Also of interest are black and white photos of various landmarks, sculptures and artifacts.

Witherington views the author of the Gospel of Luke and the author of Acts as one and the same person, a point not much debated today (p. 5). He also takes the view that Luke-Acts are meant to be two volumes of one work as opposed to two separate writings. Also, it is likely that Luke did not have a third volume in mind (pp. 807-810). The author wrote "the first volume...with at least one eye already on the sequel" (p. 8). Acts (along with the Gospel) is primarily an example of ancient historiography (particularly earlier Greek historiography with similarities to Hellenized Jewish historiography; p. 39). As far as date is concerned, Acts may have been written in the 70s, but the early 80s is a stronger possibility. Witherington is not persuaded by arguments that Theophilus, to whom Luke and Acts are addressed, is a kind of Lukan community. That Theophilus is an individual seems clear. He could likely have come out of the synagogue and have been a recent convert to Christianity (p. 64).

As is typical for Witherington, he employs and dialogues with a large number of varied resources, so the book is a bibliographic treasure-trove. Witherington's commentary is a fine piece of work and will aid anyone in a closer study of Acts.

Allan R. Bevere

Douglas J. Moo, *Encountering the Book of Romans: A Theological Exposition*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002. 203 pp., paperback, \$21.99.

Douglas Moo's theological exposition of Romans is aimed at upper level college students. It exhibits excellent, contemporary and evangelical scholarship. While presenting factual content the work also introduces historical, geographical and cultural background material. Dealing with critical issues it substantiates the Christian faith. The work features illustrations, photographs, maps, figures, tables, charts sidebars, excursuses, chapter outlines, chapter questions and objectives, a glossary and a bibliography.

Pictures include a model of Rome, Jerusalem, a Torah scroll, Sinai, a model of the temple platform and many others. Examples available of diagrams are "Paul's Target in Romans," "Following the Argument of Romans," and "The Two Israel in Romans." Sidebars include "Paul's Situation in Rome," "The Righteousness of God," "The Ring Composition of Romans 508," "Jews and Gentiles," and "The Weaker Brother." Excursuses

include "Jewish Condemnation of Gentiles," "Salvation Through Works," "Modern Answers to the Human Dilemma," "Keys to the Christian Life," "Old Self, New Self," "Realm Transfer," "Law and the Christian," "Applying Romans 7," "Sinful Nature," "God's Decision and Ours," "Romans and Capital Punishment."

The sidebars identify issues and apply material in Romans to the issues. Chapter outlines begin each chapter of the text and provide the author's overview for the reader. The brief list of objectives at the beginning of the chapter tends to focus the reader's attention. The study questions provide further study suggestions. The glossary is a very helpful definition of otherwise more technical terms.

The study of Romans is similar to taking a long excursion. For both, a person needs adequate preparation. The author helpfully provides introductory material. He begins by identifying Romans as a letter to a particular people (Gentile Christians and Jewish Christians residing in Rome) but a particular author, (Paul). He carefully explains the difference between ancient and modern letters. There is an extended discussion on the current debate about Romans as to the Reformation Approach (a focus on individual salvation) and the New Perspective Approach stating that the real concern in Romans is that of adding Gentiles to God's people without disenfranchising the Jews.

Dr. Moo, Professor of New Testament at Wheaton Graduate School is the author of a number of books. A major accomplishment is his volume in the New International Commentary on the New Testament entitled *Epistle to the Romans*. His Ph.D. is from the University of St. Andrews. This is an exceptionally helpful and readable commentary for use by anyone looking to enhance their knowledge on the New Testament book of Romans.

Richard E. Allison

Ben Witherington, III with Darlene Hyatt, *Paul's Letter to the Romans: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2004. 421pp, paper, \$36.00.

Dr. Ben Witherington is professor of New Testament at Asbury Seminary, Wilmore, Kentucky. He has written numerous books some of which are socio-rhetorical commentaries on Mark, Acts, Corinthians and Galatians.

The inimitable Witherington has done it again. He has authored a readable commentary that contributes great socio-rhetorical insights. This work displays a vast knowledge of early Jewish theology, the historical situation of the first century and the rhetorical forms of the era. He draws heavily on Quintilian for the latter. The book of Romans, according to Witherington, opens with a common epistolary opening and greeting followed by Exordium, Narratio, Propositio, Probatio with Arguments I and II, a Recapitulation, Arguments IV-VIII, Refutatio with Arguments IX-XII, Peroratio concluding epistolary greetings and Final Benediction.

Witherington focuses on the contribution that social and rhetorical devices make in interpretation. Rhetorical devices identified include among others insinuation, diatribe and impersonation. He maintains that the last one is the key to understanding Romans chapter seven. All of this is an attempt to hear Paul on his own terms.

The various sections of the commentary contain a new clear translation of the text, an extensive commentary, copious explanatory notes of technical and controversial topics and a part entitled "Bridging the Horizon." This is filled with suggestions for contemporary application of the text. A twenty-three page comprehensive bibliography

appears in the frontal material. This is followed by a twenty-five page introduction dealing with language and style, audience, social level of Roman Christianity, Rome and its Christians, structure and rhetoric. Witherington quotes 179 modern authors, 98 ancient writers and writings along with seven pages of index to Old Testament and New Testament scriptures plus Apocryphal references. Thus Witherington exhibits his vast knowledge of Jewish and Greco-Roman literary works as well as secular and ancient church scholars and modern exegetes.

Professor Witherington describes Romans as a "deliberative discourse which uses an epistolary framework." His outline of the book is as follows:

- Chapters 1-4 The Gospel to the Jew First
- 5-8 The Gospel to the Gentiles
- 9-11 Rejection of the Message by Most Jews
- 12-5 Correction of Theological Assumptions
- 16 Opposition to Those Creating Division

The overall theme is that God is impartial, caring about justice and redemption for all. This is a major exegetical study that takes seriously the Wesleyan and Arminian readings of the text. The author contends that far too long the Augustinian, Lutheran and Calvinistic readings have prevailed. This is especially true in chapters 8-11 where Witherington takes his cues instead from early Jewish discussions affirming both divine sovereignty and human freedom.

Richard E. Allison

Mark J. Edwards, ed., *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. New Testament VIII: Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999. Cloth. \$40.00.

Peter Gorday, ed., *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. New Testament IX: Colossians, 1-2 Thessalonians, 1-2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000. Cloth. \$40.00.

Gerald Bray, ed., *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. New Testament XI: James, 1-2 Peter, 1-3 John, Jude*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000. Cloth. \$40.00.

Thomas C. Oden serves as the general editor for a truly new and needed series of commentaries on the Bible, bringing together relevant samplings of comments and reflections on Scripture made by early church leaders of the first through the eighth centuries CE. Ecumenical in scope, this series anticipates covering the Old Testament in thirteen volumes, the Apocrypha in two, and the New Testament in twelve. In an age in which scholars stress the importance of "hearing" the Scriptures not only from within one's own social location (e.g., interpretation within the Western tradition of more or less elite male readers), but from other social and ideological locations as well (e.g., Asian Christianity, Latin-American Christianity, feminist interpretation, and other post-colonial interpretations), this series provides an often-overlooked dimension, enabling a far more global approach to interpretation insofar as it makes the readings of interpreters from other times and from the varying cultures of the circum-Mediterranean available and accessible.

The volumes are organized much like standard commentaries, with the Scripture text broken down into manageable sections (pericopes), followed by the editor's overview of the kinds of questions that guided patristic interpretation. Short selections from the works of such fathers as Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Epiphanius, Tertullian, Cyprian, Victorinus, Ambrose, John Chrysostom, Gregory of Nyssa, Jerome, Augustine, and many others follow, each with a brief subheading that provides the focal point of the selection. Using this resource alongside modern critical commentaries helps balance the important, yet often atomistic, insights from exegetical study of the Scriptures with the theological, ethical, and ecclesiastical reflection on the same texts that occupied the minds of those who forged the Great Church. This kind of resource is also a helpful balance to the reading of the texts from a particular, narrow, and often rather "recent" theological perspective, providing the truly ecumenical perspective of those who, in the main, reflected on Scripture before Orthodox and Roman Catholicism split, and long before Protestant movements separated from the Roman Catholic Church.

David A. deSilva

Thomas R. Yoder Neufeld, *Believers Church Bible Commentary: Ephesians*. Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 2002. 400pp., paper.

The author graduated from Mennonite Brethren Colleges, the University of Manitoba and received his M.Div. and Ph.D. from Harvard Divinity School. His dissertation was on Ephesians. He has pastored and is currently director of Graduate Theological Studies at Conrad Grebel College in Canada. The commentary is the result of "reflecting on, analyzing, dissecting, preaching and teaching" the book of Ephesians.

Following development of the address and opening greeting, the author moves to a hymnic and poetic passage that is worshipful in character and capped by a great prayer. Next comes the description of sinners and oppressive evil and an exposition of the two ways. Chapter two concludes with the definition of peace as a radical relationship to Christ. The author believes Ephesians views the church as a community of holy ones whose thrust is ministry. The second half of Ephesians "anticipates the believers response to God's grace." The armor of chapter six receives a proper application to the church as opposed to the general view of applying it to the individual Christian.

A number of excellent essays on such title as "Apocalypticism," "Cosmology," and "Gnosticism" plus seven others add much to the content of the work. In addition, there are twenty one pages of bibliography plus references to Old Testament, Apocryphal and New Testament cited in the work.

The author's love for Ephesians is apparent and challenges the reader to encounter the book.

Richard E. Allison

Gene L. Green, *The Letters to the Thessalonians*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids / Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2002. 400 pp., cloth, \$42.00

Green's work is a full commentary, both up-to-date and well documented. He has a firm grasp on issues relating to the church at Thessalonica and its context. Without a doubt, the longish and fascinating Introduction is the equal to that of any commentary

on these letters. He enters into the details of historical, archaeological and sociological research in a winning fashion, presenting fresh conclusions even with the customary caveat that these letters are already much commented on.

As can be seen at a glance, his study of the Greco-Roman world occupies a dominant place in the development of the letters. For example, what was the nature of the Thessalonians' refusal to work? Traditionally it has been regarded as an outgrowth of their eschatological perspective. Green, in agreement with scholars such as Wanamaker, rejects the supposed link between the "laziness" of the Thessalonians and their false expectation of the last days. Yet Green is not simply going along with the new trend. The complete and updated Bibliography reveals that he spared no effort to carry out extensive research of his own and to extend the application further than did Wanamaker. He concludes that the believers' dependence on the system of "clientalism" was why the authors pressed the believers to honest work. In this institution, individuals would associate with a patron of relatively higher social position and better financial solvency, expecting from him benefits such as food and representation; meanwhile, they would give to the patrons honor and augment their social level by greeting them each morning and lending them their allegiance (208). With this background Green denies that the uncertainty of the members of the church of Thessalonica with respect to the Day of the Lord motivated them to abandon their work responsibilities. In fact, the authors never associate the work issue with eschatology. Therefore, the apostles were attacking directly this economic and social dependence that characterized the relations between clients and patrons (341).

Although it is clear that Green has done his exegetical homework, there is not much emphasis on the analysis of grammar and syntax. Greek terms have been transliterated into English. Nevertheless, he provides a highly-detailed, fresh, clear exposition that will prove useful to pastors, students and exegetes.

For those who wish to go deeper in the Greco-Roman background, specifically that which relates to Macedonia, this is the work to consult. If in addition to this strength there were a more detailed analysis of the Greek text, it would have been a monumental volume.

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San José, Costa Rica

Erland Waltner and J Daryl Charles, *The Believers Church Commentary: 1-2 Peter and Jude*. Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1999. 352 pp., paper, \$19.99.

Erland Waltner is the author of the commentary on 1 Peter. He has served in ministry as a pastor, Bible teacher, president of the General Conference Mennonite Church, professor of New Testament at Mennonite Biblical Seminary and president of the Mennonite World Conference.

Waltner views 1 Peter as a letter of encouragement to persons experiencing painful encounters. He correctly views the suffering of Christians in Asia Minor not as the result of a wide ranging political persecution but resulting from living in a hostile environment. They were being falsely accused, mistreated and abused for no other reason than that they were Christians. The author views the book as a call for hope in such a situation and based on the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The call is to be triumphant in trouble by responding properly to experiences of suffering foregoing retaliation.

J. Daryl Charles is the author of the commentary on II Peter and Jude. He teaches religion, culture and Christian Thought at Taylor University. His doctoral work was done at Catholic University of America and Westminster Theological Seminary. Charles believes the often neglected books of II Peter and Jude have much to say to contemporary "confusion in matters of faith and morality." The author calls for the church to rediscover and reexamine these epistles. His reasons are threefold. First is their relative obscurity. Little time is spent in the literature sorting out their "cryptic references." Secondly, historical-critical scholarship has relegated the two letters to the second century and therefore not authentic. Thirdly, their emphasis on eschatology relates them to ethics where in the literature they have been overlooked. Interpreting these letters requires an understanding of their respective backgrounds. Jude is to be understood against a background of "Palestinian Jewish-Christianity." II Peter is written to persons living in a "pagan Gentile environment." Thus it deals with ethics rather than doctrine. Presented also are pastoral insights on how to live in a "pagan society, communal accountability and discipline, spiritual authority, moral formation and the relationship between doctrine and ethics." Unfortunately Jude is the neglected epistle while II Peter is the misunderstood epistle. The commentary is a reader-friendly approach exhorting Christians struggling in a pagan social environment.

Both of these works are accompanied with insightful essays on pertinent subjects, an expanded bibliography and finished off with an extensive eleven page index to Ancient Sources.

Richard E. Allison

Simon J. Kistemaker, *Revelation*. New Testament Commentary Series. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic Press, 2001. x, 635 Pp. \$39.99.

Kistemaker's commentary can best be described as a "traditional" analysis of John's Apocalypse. Authorship is ascribed to the Apostle John (pp. 18-26, 91). Likewise, use of Greco-Roman or Babylonian mythology, even in Rev. 12-13, is rejected (pp. 353-54). Furthermore, Kistemaker expresses a reserve, if not discomfort, with the "preterist" interpretation of Revelation, that understands John's vision as exclusively addressing the events of the Seer's own time (pp. 38-40). This judgment differentiates Kistemaker from some of the more critical scholars on Revelation, although they would not use the term "preterist."

Nevertheless, Kistemaker is no fundamentalist. If he rejects a Neronian allusion in the mark of the beast in Rev. 13:16-18, he also rejects a literalism that says in the end all unbelievers will receive a literal mark on their hands or foreheads. Rather, the mark is understood as symbolic (see pp. 30-32; 392-96). Similarly, the millennium of Rev. 20 is viewed as symbolic, in accordance with traditional amillennialism (see pp. 45-48; 533). Thus, if Kistemaker is uncomfortable with the "preterist" view of Revelation, he is also has some discomfort with the "historicist" interpretation, that sees Revelation as an outline of church history (pp. 40-41), as well as the extremes of the "futurist" view (pp. 41-42), so common in popular theology. Rather, Kistemaker accepts a reserved form of "idealistic" interpretation. He interprets John's vision symbolically, portraying the heavenly reality behind earthly events (pp. 42-44). Yet, while visions of Revelation are symbolic, they nevertheless portray important truths.

While Kistemaker's understanding of Revelation as a symbolic vision is correct, his rejection of John's employment non-Jewish traditions in formatting his vision

is unfortunate. John is very likely utilizes imagery from all the corners of his cultural environment, particularly ruler cult and some astrological allusions in Rev. 4-5 and combat myth in Rev. 12-13. The result provides even greater impact upon readers intimately acquainted with these themes. While John's primary source is the Hebrew Bible, particularly Daniel, Ezekiel and Isaiah. The Seer is also a creative artist who utilizes not only biblical themes, but extra biblical imagery and invests it with new meaning.

Yet, Kistemaker's commentary has positive value. Although it is highly traditional, it does not fall into the trap of pseudo-literalism or fantastic prediction so common among some popular writers, particularly those of dispensational leanings. Kistemaker is no Tim LeHaye, and his commentary will surprise readers of the "Left Behind" series. Kistemaker also provides useful analysis of Greek terms at the conclusion of each discussion. This feature is particularly helpful to those readers lacking access to some of the helpful exegetical tools.

In conclusion, Kistemaker's commentary possesses serious weaknesses, in part driven by its ideology. Nevertheless, it provides a necessary corrective to some of the more extreme interpretations of Revelation. Its perspectives would make it more acceptable to some of those hitherto inclined to a literalist reading, perhaps opening perspectives to a more helpful understanding of John's Apocalypse.

Russell Morton

Grant Osborne, *Revelation*. Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic Press, 2002. Xx + 869 pp., cloth, \$49.99.

Osborne's commentary is the third massive work on Revelation that has appeared since 1997. From 1997-1998, Word published David Aune's massive 3 v. commentary in the Word Biblical Series. In 1999, Beale's commentary was issued in the New International Greek Testament series. In 2002, Osborne's book on Revelation appeared. All of these commentaries have their strengths and weaknesses. Osborne's work, as the most recent commentary, reflects the contributions of both Aune and Beale, yet with his own perspectives.

Perhaps the most interesting feature of Osborne's work is his eclectic methodology. He accepts certain features of historical critical analysis of Revelation. He recognizes that Revelation was written in the first century, in opposition to the imperial cult. Yet, at the same time he employs the "futurist" exegesis (pp. 21-22) characteristic of both dispensational and classical premillennial interpreters. In making this methodological combination, he continues in the tradition of G.E. Ladd, whose commentary likewise represented a combination of classical premillennial and historical critical method. Like Ladd, Beale attempts to reach a broad, evangelical audience. Yet, one wonders if, in the end, also like Ladd, he has produced a commentary that in its acceptance of multiple methods, does result in confusing inconsistency for the reader.

This methodological confusion is most evident in the discussion of Rev. 12-13 (pp. 454-522) and ch. 20 (pp. 696-725). In both cases Osborne recognizes that John addresses Christians of the first century. Thus, the beasts of Rev. 13 represent Rome and the emperor cult. Yet, Osborne also ascribes a double meaning to the texts to preserve a literalistic future reading. Thus, he accepts the theory that Rev. 13 predicts a personal antichrist, and that Rev. 20 predicts a literal millennium. Both of these assertions place him in a distinct minority among academic interpreters of the Apocalypse

One of Osborne's most helpful contributions is his analysis of the text, where he attempts to avoid imposing a structure, but lets it arise from his reading of the text. Rather than imposing a seven fold structure on the book, Osborne sees Revelation as consisting of five units: 1. Prologue (1:1-8); 2. Churches addressed (1:9-3:22); 3. God in majesty and judgment (4:1-16:21); 4. Final judgment at the arrival of the eschaton (17:1-20:15); and 5. Epilogue (22:6-21) (pp. 30-31). The outline has the advantage of recognizing the transitional character of Rev. 4-5. Nevertheless, it fails to recognize that 17:1-19:10 also describe God's judgment, with the eschaton beginning in 19:11 rather than in 17:1.

Likewise, despite a tendency to embrace some of the more questionable features of "futurist" exegesis, Osborne maintains a focus on the central message of Revelation, which is a call to God's people to endure impending persecution in holiness, and that "holiness is the antithesis of political compromise and demands unswerving allegiance and faithfulness to God alone" (p. 43). This feature is a regular theme of the "summary and contextualization" sections that conclude the discussion of each passage. Here readers from evangelical or fundamentalist communities are especially well served and challenged to think of Revelation in new ways.

In conclusion, it must be remembered that Osborne's commentary is addressing a specific audience that may not be familiar with the critical approach to John's Apocalypse. Osborne introduces critical themes, especially Revelation's focus upon the demand for uncompromising loyalty to God in the face of a hostile society, in a manner that will be congenial to these readers. He thereby entices them to think of Revelation in a manner that does justice to John's text. In the process he may be opening the true riches of John's vision to those who have not previously seen them.

Russell Morton

James P. Mackey, *The Critique of Theological Reason*. Cambridge University Press, 2000. 333 pp., hardback, \$59.95.

As scientific progress soars over horizons of human ingenuity and discovery, postmodernism has emerged as the vanguard philosophical framework through which much of the secular world sees reality (or the lack thereof). Consequently, the *modus operandi* for intellectual thought has become the deconstruction of language – and of thought itself – culminating in the very death of the subject. God, then, who was once the cornerstone of metaphysics, has been dismissed along with all the other outmoded infatuations of the West.

But James P. Mackey suggests that theology has dwelt within the postmodern formulation all along. God has actually never fallen by the wayside; in fact God has thrived through it. The dichotomy between philosophy and theology is erroneous. To demonstrate this, Mackey provides this tour de force in which he attempts not to work around postmodernism, but rather *through* it, to construct a new theological methodology. The synthesis of philosophy and theology is quite akin to the incarnation of Word into flesh.

The book's two sections are first "historical-critical" and then "critical-constructive." The historical-critical part is an intriguing account of postmodernism's evolution that traces the subject in its trajectory through the modern era's philosophical gauntlets from Descartes to Sartre. Mackey highlights some functional motifs which have shifted our conception of the subject such as Cartesian dualism, Kantian and

Hegelian phenomenology, and existentialism. He then explores the ramifications of David Deutsch's psychobiological analysis of the human consciousness.

In the critical-constructive part Mackey dons the postmodern cloak to reconstruct theology, of which he successfully argues philosophy was never actually rid. The book's title takes a cue from Immanuel Kant's *The Critique of Pure Reason*, in which Kant examines *a priori* knowledge derived by reasoning alongside (yet distinct from) empirical experience. Kant put faith in the human ability to reason through emotional subjects such as morality, and now Mackey cautions that we have in Western thought removed such humanity from theology. Hence he advocates the theological use of human creativity in expressions like the arts. Art is after all a mode of reason which can reveal the morals and mysteries concomitant with allegiance to God. Mackey in this way moves toward an experiential theology encapsulating the reality that what it means to be made in the likeness of the Creator is to be creative. Even the classical Western philosophical proofs for God's existence are not proofs, but aesthetic expressions borne of human artistic (linguistic) inspiration. Theological reason is therefore essentially postmodern. Mackey asserts that 21st-century theology should integrate "the best" of what philosophy, science, and art bring to humanity's table.

This is a sophisticated essay that employs ideas and terminology with which only readers of philosophy would be familiar. However, Mackey does well to articulate the concepts in such a way that any novice philosopher or theologian may grasp them as the book moves along. Insightful, relevant, penetrating, and at times refreshingly witty, *The Critique of Theological Reason* is an availing addition to any theological repertoire.

Jacob Louis Waldenmaier

Gerhard Sauter, *Gateway to Dogmatics: Reasoning Theologically for the Life of the Church*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003. 310 pp., paper, \$27.00.

The introductory sentence of Gerhard Sauter's book invites the reader to a "workshop in dogmatics", a workshop that is "not for instruction but for gaining experience". Most educators wrestle mightily with putting our best teaching on paper for others to use, but Gerhard's effort is notable, not so much for how its success might be judged, but for the sheer joy and scope of the effort itself. I might be hard-pressed to decide how to use this book, but it sure whets the appetite for gaining the experience Sauter celebrates in its pages.

Sauter invites the reader to use the book in a variety of ways, and it would be my recommendation that the reader start with the second section, "Dogmatics in the Church". This section follows the first section "Dogmatics as a Phenomenon" which I found laborious to read as well as refreshingly insightful. Sauter makes a case in this first section for dogmatics as a child of the canon, the "fruit of the confession of Christ". In this, and throughout the book, Sauter is certainly Barthian, Christocentric, generously orthodox, and ecumenical within the guardrails of tri-*sola* Lutheran expression of the faith. He makes a careful, respectful, and hopeful argument that dogmatics will be experienced in the church and the academy as a source of freedom to ask better questions, offer better ideas, and engage the world more wisely *because* of the limitations rendered by sound theological thinking. The historical texture of this first section is daunting in scope, but Sauter does a masterful job of avoiding oversimplification or cause-effect reductionism that robs God's history with his people of its dynamic messiness.

Sauter takes this sense of messiness to new heights of both insight and humility in the second section of the book which focuses on the Church. Sauter organizes his *tour de force* by outlining Luther's "marks of the Church":

baptism, the Lord's Supper, the gospel, the forgiveness of sins, mutual conversation and the comfort it gives, the office of preaching, prayer and confession, the cross and suffering, the acknowledgement of marriage and of the political order, the sufferings of the church in the world, and the renunciation of retaliation (98).

He then deals with each of these in turn and with varying degrees of depth, but in this section, the usefulness of the book was made clear. This is a solid textbook for use in a variety of practical theology or pastoral theology classes. His resistance to marketing in the church from worship erosion to theological laziness to need-based church programming is passionate without lapsing into ax-grinding judgementalism.

A few pithy examples will have to suffice from this eloquent section: "An orientation to needs makes for lasting alienation from the question of the inner basis of the church's being"(97). "The inner grounding of all proclamation is surprise, surprise at the interjection of God that is so full of promise" (121). "Proclamation is admonished by dogmatics to let the answer given by God be heard clearly and not to lose sight of its ramifications" (128). "...the aim of pastoral care is not simply to heal and purify a subjectivity that has regained control. Pastoral counseling takes place with the hope that the no longer disintegrated and divided individuals belong in their wholeness to God's kingdom (146-7).

Sauter obliquely addresses some of the more evangelical complaints that arise from Barth's work, the epistemology of Scripture and soteriological universalism. Although much mistrust on these points comes from forgetting Barth's much-needed historical corrective, Sauter contributes to a careful dialogue with his historical predecessor at Bonn and works hard to preserve the essential paradox of revelation while adding a clarifying apologetic for the proclamation and demonstration of the gospel as the mission of the Church. An example of Sauter's skill is affirming that "though God has reconciled the world in Christ, not all are included in this reconciliation...an all-inclusiveness of this kind would be a fundamental mistake. Why? ...it would make 'others' an element in defining my own position... communication means primarily perceiving others as truly others. It means seeing them as they are..." (178-179).

Sauter's third section is "'Dogmatics Put in Motion'" and he focuses on three areas where he finds historical dogmatics wanting in a variety of ways: pneumatology, anthropology, and "giving an account for the hope that is in us". Sauter sees the latter with soteriological implications grounded in hopeful kingdom eschatology.

The penultimate section of the book is titled "Dogmatics in Crisis: False Trails and Dead Ends" and focuses on the idea that

Theological integrity means not promising more than we can perform, not feigning an insight that cannot properly be attained, not allowing for errors and confusion in thinking or discourse even for the best of purposes (239).

The last section is "Dogmatics as Vocation," and Sauter makes a warm and inviting case for academic theologians to serve the church as those who equip pastoral ministers to be good diagnosticians for the work, witness, mission, thinking, and leadership that are all a part of equipping the saints for redemptive ministry in the world. This section is followed by informative appendixes and indexes.

Throughout the book, Sauter centers on the sovereignty of God and God's unrivaled providential grace. Reformed theologians like myself find much to celebrate, but Sauter doesn't forget to remind us at every turn that these very attributes of God are the grounding for much needed humility, too.

The only thing that bothered me throughout much of the book, however, was what I consider a bit of sloppiness in his trinitarian language. More than a few times the Trinity was described in functional terms such as "creator, as redeeming reconciler, and as life-giver". I came away with the impression that Sauter's efforts at inclusive language did marginalize the scriptural revelation of God, particularly regarding Father and Son language. I forthrightly admit that, as a woman whose doctoral work was in trinitarian theology, I am attentive to this dynamic, but Sauter's evasion of this language is so pervasive (with rare exception) that I must register this deference to an otherwise very fine and compelling "workshop" experience!

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N. T. Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003. Xxi, 817 pp., cloth \$49.00

The third volume of N.T. Wright's *Christian Origins and the Question of God*, this volume is both the most readable in the series as well as the most stimulating. Originating out of a series of lectures at Harvard, and at first expected to be only a short volume (see the preface, pp. xv-xxi), the present magisterial work presents a comprehensive analysis of the meaning of resurrection in the early Judaism and Christianity in general, as well as a comprehensive analysis of the meaning of the resurrection of Jesus in particular. In the process, Wright gives a full analysis of what resurrection meant and what it means.

Wright begins his analysis with a detailed discussion of death in the ancient world (pp. 1-81). He points out that the ancients, far from possessing a naïve belief that death could be overcome, were fully cognizant of the fact that death is a "one way street." Indeed, in ancient literature, there is no place for resurrection outside of the Old Testament, particularly in the later material of Daniel, and in Second Temple Judaism (see pp. 85-206). Thus, the commonly held assumption of many New Testament scholars since the Enlightenment, that the resurrection is a reflection of an ancient world view that did not understand the permanence of death, is incorrect.

In Part 2 (pp. 207-398), Wright discusses the resurrection in Paul. This is the natural place to begin, since many scholars understand Paul's teaching on the resurrection, particularly in 1 Cor. 15 as meaning that the resurrection was a spiritual manifestation or appearance, and that it is not physical. Wright goes into great detail to show that such an interpretation is precisely what Paul did *not* mean, and that such an analysis is a misreading of the apostle's language, and a misunderstanding of Paul as a Jewish writer. Rather, Paul's understanding of the resurrection is intimately connected with his view of God as Creator. Furthermore, the whole thrust of 1 Cor. 15 loses its strength if Paul is speaking about a "spiritual" rather than physical resurrection. The view presented by Paul, while thoroughly monotheistic, is also connected with Jewish ideas of Jesus as Messiah and Son of God. In fact, the only reason these titles can be applied to Jesus in Paul's thought is because God has acted and raised Jesus from the dead.

Part three (pp. 399-584) discuss the resurrection outside of Paul, both in the New Testament and the early Christian fathers. Again, the scholarly consensus that the

resurrection was not originally understood as being a physical act, but a “spiritual” one that only later was understood as physical is not upheld by the evidence. This point is made especially clear in part 4, the story of Easter (pp. 585-684). In the analysis of the “strange stories” of the resurrection, Wright points out that no one in the ancient world would have made up stories like the resurrection accounts to justify the later doctrine of the physical resurrection of Jesus. While each story reflects each gospel author’s interests, they, nevertheless, point to some original event that occurred, contrary to the expectations of the first disciples, to propel them into proclamation of the message of God’s resurrection of Jesus from the dead.

Finally, Wright recognizes that an attempt to reproduce the events of the past is not the sole concern of the historian. Events have significance only if they have meaning, and it is the meaning of the resurrection that Wright examines in part 5 (pp. 685-738). The resurrection is not a safe doctrine for private devotion. Nor is it a comforting belief in an afterlife in heaven. Rather, the resurrection matters because creation matters, and creation matters because the creator matters (p. 737). The resurrection represents God’s dynamic act. After the resurrection, it is impossible to say that Caesar, or the state, or any human organization or pretension is Lord. Only God is Lord, and loyalty is due only to his son, the Messiah, Jesus. Such a proclamation flies in the face of all human arrogance.

No wonder the Herods, the Caesars and the Sadducees of this world, ancient and modern, were and are eager to rule about all possibility of actual resurrection. They are, after all, staking a counter-claim on the real world. It is the real world that tyrants and bullies (including intellectual and cultural tyrants and bullies) try to rule by force, only to discover that in order to do so they have to quash all rumours of resurrection, rumours that would imply that their greatest weapons, death and deconstruction are not, after all, omnipotent. (p. 737)

Thus, the resurrection not only provides assurance of what God has done in Christ, but also presents a challenge to Christians today to live in absolute loyalty only to God and Christ, and not to allow themselves to be compromised by the counter-claims of state or class or comfortable Christianity. It is this claim that provides a bridge between traditional affirmation that God raised Jesus from the dead and the challenge to a post-colonial church to live according to the demands of that proclamation.

Russell Morton

Jeff Astley, David Brown and Ann Loades, eds., *Problems in Theology: Creation*. New York: T&T Clark, Ltd., 2003. 119 pp., paper, \$19.95.

Problems in Theology: Creation is a reader with articles from many theologians. The selections reflect a broad spectrum of the different theologies on creation that have presented themselves over the years. This reader contains approximately thirty-five excerpts from biblical passages and a range of Christian thinkers through the centuries.

This book has been divided into four chapters, all dealing with separate issues that are currently debated. The articles deal with ideas such as the meaning of creation, the Gaia theory, process theology and creation in the New Testament and in Christian thought. Some voices heard in this book are John Macquarrie, Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Karl Barth, to name just a few. The general layout of each chapter is an overview of the

topic, then articles from authors supporting the idea, and finally those in contention with each idea and articles containing tensions and criticisms of the ideas.

The articles in this reader flow well when read as a whole, but would also be very useful and easily accessible if used individually. This reader, though eclectic, has a definite Christian undertone throughout, as can be seen in the introduction and especially with the placement of the problems and critiques at the latter part of the chapters.

Problems in Theology: Creation is a great book for teachers and students who wish to look at current issues concerning the theology of creation. The discussion questions at the end of each chapter are appropriate for educational settings. This book as a reader will facilitate conversation among pastors, teachers and serious students interested in creation theology.

Amy Kinder

Philip F. Esler, ed., *The Early Christian World*. 2 volumes. London: Routledge, 2000. 1342 pages. Cloth.

The Early Christian World is a compendious introduction to the first four centuries of the Christian movement and the social, cultural, and political world that surrounded it. It has pride of place as the standard reference work to the topics it treats, and draws from the ranks of contributors who are well versed in social-scientific, cultural-anthropological, and ideological criticism, thus bringing new interdisciplinary paradigms to the study of early Christian history in addition to the foundations of historical-critical, tradition-critical, and other more established avenues of inquiry.

The volume is divided into nine parts. The first sets the Christian movement solidly in the context of the Mediterranean world of late antiquity, including the following contributions: "The Mediterranean context of early Christianity" (Philip Esler); "Armies, emperors and bureaucrats" (Jill Harries); "Graeco-Roman philosophy and religion" (Luther Martin); "Jewish tradition and culture" (James Aitken). The second part examines topics relevant to the development of early Christianity, with essays on "The Galilean world of Jesus" (Sean Freyne); "Early Jewish Christianity" (David Horrell); "Paul and the development of gentile Christianity" (Todd Klutz); "The Jesus tradition: The gospel writers' strategies of persuasion" (Richard Rohrbach); "Christianity in the second and third centuries" (Jeffrey Siker); "From Constantine to Theodosius (and beyond)" (Bill Leadbetter). Part three looks more closely at the institutional expansion of Christianity through "Mission and expansion" (Thomas Finn), "The development of office in the early church" (Mark Edwards), "Christian regional diversity" (David Taylor), and "Monasticism" (Columba Stewart, OSB). Part four attempts to balance the more diachronic approaches of parts two and three with topical explorations related to "everyday Christian experience." Here one finds essays on "Social levels, morals and daily life" (Bruce Malina), "Sex and sexual renunciation" (Teresa Shaw), "Women, worship and mission: the church in the household" (Gillian Cloke), "Communication and travel" (Blake Leyerle), and "Worship, practice and belief" (Maxwell Johnson).

Parts five and six examine the intellectual and artistic heritage of the early church, the latter section representing a truly innovative balance to the typical interest only in the "ideas" of the patristic period. Contributions to Part Five include "The Apostolic Fathers" (Carolyn Osiek), "The Apologists" (Eric Osborn), "The early theologians" (Gerald Bray), "later theologians of the Greek East" (Andrew Louth), "Later

theologians of the West" (Ivor Davidson), "Creeds, councils and doctrinal development" (Trevor Hart), and "Biblical interpretation" (Oskar Skarsaune). Part Six explores "Architecture: the first five centuries" (L. Michael White), "Art" (Robin Jensen), "Music" (James McKinnon), and "Imaginative Literature" (Richard Bauckham).

The seventh and eighth sections offer analyses of challenges to the emerging Christian movement from outside (with essays on "Martyrdom and political oppression" by W. H. C. Frend, "Graeco-Roman philosophical opposition" by Michael Simmons, and "Popular Graeco-Roman responses to Christianity" by Craig de Vos) and within (with essays on "Internal renewal and dissent in the early Christian world" by Sheila McGinn, "Gnosticism" by Alastair Logan, "Montanism" by Christine Trevett, "Donatism" by James Alexander, and "Arianism" by David Rankin).

The final section offers profiles of leading Christians from the second through the fourth centuries, including Origen (Fred Norris), Tertullian (David Wright), Perpetua and Felicitas (Ross Kraemet and Shira Lander), Constantine (Bill Leadbetter), Anthony of the Desert (Columba Stewart, OSB), Athanasius (David Brakke), John Chrysostom (Pauline Allen and Wendy Mayer), Jerome (Dennis Brown), Ambrose (Ivor Davidson), Augustine (Carol Harrison), and Ephrem the Syrian (Kathleen McVey), closing, perhaps a bit subversively, with Julian the Apostate (Michael Simmons).

Written by acknowledged experts in each field, this work is a necessary resource for every institutional library.

David A. deSilva

Richard L. Crocker, *An Introduction to Gregorian Chant*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000. 256 pp., hardcover + compact disc, \$37.50.

In recent years, modern listeners have been attracted to ethereal and tranquil sounds of chant. Several recordings of chant, in fact, have been listed on best-seller charts. This introduction to Gregorian chant will engage both casual listeners and students of the style. Richard L. Crocker, professor emeritus at the University of California at Berkeley, is one of the foremost scholars in the area of chant, having spent more than forty years in the study of this genre of music. In this well-written volume, he offers an excellent introduction to the history of chant and its meaning and function in the liturgy. His long career of teaching and writing enables him to explain with clarity and authority how chant developed, how it was written down, and its past and present usage in worship. He does not shy away from technical information and subtleties of style, but the author brings the novice along with graceful definitions of the terms needed in the discussion. Crocker makes it clear that he assumes the reader will be listening to chant alongside the reading of this text. Accompanying the book is a compact disc containing 26 tracks of chant recorded by Crocker, Markika Kuzma and The Orlando Consort. For each of the tracks, Crocker provides a succinct commentary on both the melody of the chant and the text, providing both the Latin and English translation and situating the text in its liturgical context. Occasionally in the historical discussion and in the commentary Crocker shows the melodic contours of the chant. Instead of traditional musical notation however, he uses graph-like charts that illustrate well musical contours while being more accessible to readers who are not musicians.

A glossary and index are useful tools for the reader searching for particular information, and Crocker provides a brief bibliography. Carefully chosen plates of manuscript pages illustrate the discussion. He states in his Acknowledgments, however

that he depends in large measure on long held tradition in the performance styles of the music; readers who wish to explore fuller documentation of those performance traditions may consult David Hiley's *Western Plainchant*, a recognized standard in the field. The gift of this book is Crocker's ability to discuss the complex matters of musical style and notation, liturgy and worship, and monastic traditions in ways that are more like listening to an engaging conversation rather than reading a scholarly tome. This introduction will be appreciated by those who simply enjoy listening to chant as well as those who are engaged in formal study. It will be a valuable addition to both undergraduate and graduate studies in music history, liturgy, and church history.

Deborah Carlton Loftis, Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond, Virginia

Columba Stewart, *Cassian the Monk*. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 1998, pp. 286, \$25.00.

William H. Shannon, *Anselm: The Joy of Faith*. New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1999, pp. 189, \$15.95.

Karin Maag, ed., *Melanchthon in Europe: His Work and Influence Beyond Wittenberg*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1999, pp. 191, \$17.99.

A frequent problem in book reviewing is an over-supply of books by publishers to institutions who publish academic journals. Many worthy books accumulate on shelves unreviewed long after the date that they should have come to public notice. Having located several of these books on our journal shelf, I have decided to give them brief attention in the hope that some will want access to them for their own study or purchase. Fortunately, all three are still readily available, either from the publishers or through internet sources.

Cassian the Monk gives justifiable notice to one of the more prominent monastic figures of the late fourth and early fifth century. He served as a bridge between the Eastern monastic tradition and the developing Western establishment of monasticism. He and Germanus had come to Rome bearing a letter from John Chrysostom, which asked for the pope's help in his battle with the imperial and ecclesiastical powers that were trying to depose him. Cassian remained in Rome for some time and then became prominent in the monastic structures in Gaul, where he drew upon his monastic life in Egypt and the teaching of his mentor, Evagrius Ponticus, in developing a theology and a pattern of monastic life for the monks under his influence.

Stewart portrays the tensions that affected Cassian at this time. Origen, from whom he borrowed much, had fallen from favor in both East and West. And Augustine had repelled Pelagianism with his strong views of sovereign grace. Cassian's views can best be described as semi-Pelagian, so he had to do his work as one who had limits placed upon his theological utterances.

The major contribution of the book is its use of Cassian's two major treatises for the monks under his instruction: his *Institutes* and his *Conferences*. Stewart's knowledge of these texts, the details of monastic life, and the theological themes of the time are outstanding. He helps his readers see the connections between Cassian's theology and the regular features of monastic life. *Cassian the Monk* becomes a lens through which to see the monastic institution of the time as well as the traditions that grew out of those beginnings.

It is not an easy book to read since it aims to elucidate detailed teachings in Cassain's texts. It will have its greatest appeal to students and scholars (the book has 89 pages of reference notes and another 30 pages of bibliography). But it will appeal to those who have an appreciation for the monastic tradition. Here contemplative Christians can uncover their roots in Christian antiquity.

Anselm: The Joy of Faith also reflects the monastic tradition through another of its great leaders. Anselm followed Cassain by seven centuries, and, though born in Italy, his career became notable in northern France and then England, where he became the Archbishop of Canterbury. Shannon's object in writing the book is to demonstrate Anselm's place in history, as he lived at a time when new thinking was about to flower in the church and the culture. He also wants to highlight Anselm's contributions to Christian thought (p. 13). Specifically, the author wants to highlight Anselm's spirituality as that which can transcend time and speak forcefully to a modern readership (p. 34). By spirituality the author means a consciousness of God that infuses all of life with meaning and purpose (pp. 35-36) and not just certain devotional practices.

Anselm's career is set in the context of three great movements of the eleventh century. The first is the monastic reform that began at Cluny and spread throughout the church. Anselm's spirituality is both a result of that movement and a cause of its enhancement. Secondly, he supports the vision of the papacy as the supreme office of God's kingdom upon earth. It is because he represented allegiance to the pope as the universal shepherd of the people of God that he experienced difficulty with the Norman kings of England. This highlights the third tension of his time: the investiture controversy. Because he defended the church's right to appoint bishops against the kings who claimed it as their traditional feudal right, he had to twice flee from his duties at Canterbury and take refuge in monastic and papal support on the continent.

Entwined as he was with these movements and events, he lived his life as service to God and helped others (monks above all) to experience a life infused by God. What he left through his writing helps us appreciate his contribution to his age. On the one hand, we have his *Proslogion*, where he developed the classic proof for God's existence (which Kant later called the "ontological argument"), and his *Cur Deus Homo*, in which he approached the mystery of atonement through the concept of the "satisfaction theory" (Christ alone met both the human and the divine requirements for salvation). Shannon's explorations of these theological concepts are very helpful, especially for those whose background in theology is limited. On the other hand, the author also wants us to see Anselm at prayer, as a letter writer, and as a person who highly prized religious friendships.

Shannon maintains that both these contributions reflect the "joy of faith" for Anselm. In the first he is an early example of a new rational approach to theology. Yet, for Anselm (as also Augustine) it is reason at the service of faith, understanding what one already believes. His prayers, letters, and friendships also explore the "joy of faith" as they show the soul in communion with God and with fellow pilgrims of the religious journey. These two elements, so often polar opposites in many lives, are bound together in Anselm. That is why the author feels he is such a good exemplar for those who today seek to find a unifying approach to life.

Shannon's book will appeal to a larger audience than Stewart's for a number of reasons. It is more brief; it appeals to those outside the monastic lifestyle; and it is written in a more reader-friendly style. The book pulls the reader along; one does not need to push through dense thickets in order to make new discoveries. The piety of both

these monastic leaders is equally genuine; but the Anselm of Shannon's book is more accessible.

The book on Melanchthon moves time on by five more centuries. It is definitely not monastic in outlook. Melanchthon was immersed in the new humanist approach to Christianity. He was schooled in the university, not the monastery. He served a long career as a writer and teacher at Wittenburg, the seat of the Protestant reformation and a decided foe of the monastic system.

Melanchthon's role as Luther's subordinate and as a chief architect of Lutheranism after Luther's death is generally recognized in the scholarly world. The purpose of this book is to appreciate Melanchthon's interaction with and his influence upon the wider Protestant reform in Europe, particularly in his interaction with leaders of the Reformed tradition of Protestantism.

The eight essays that comprise the book were delivered at two lecture events in 1997 to celebrate the 500th year of Melanchthon's birth. Four were given at the Meeter Center for Calvin Studies in Grand Rapids, Michigan, and the remainder at the Sixteenth Century Studies Conference in Atlanta, Georgia. Karin Maag is to be congratulated for bringing these papers together in their present form, as the fifth book published in the series of *Texts and Studies in Reformation and Post-Reformation Thought* (for which Dr. Richard A. Muller of Calvin Theological Seminary is the series editor).

Each of the essays concerning Melanchthon is of considerable interest and reflects profound scholarship. A student of the Reformation could be well-served by noting the sources referenced in the various studies. The chapters in general cover three areas of interest. First, they note where Melanchthon was willing to take a path separate from Martin Luther and the conflicts and tensions this created within the Lutheran movement, particularly after Luther's death. Secondly, and more importantly, they probe the limit of Melanchthon's compatibility with the Calvinistic Reformation and the notable people within it, like John Calvin, Heinrich Bullinger, and Martin Bucer (whose moderate stance and ecumenical spirit were attractive to Melanchthon). Finally, they try to explain the uniqueness of Melanchthon's theological methods. His commitments to Renaissance humanism and to rhetorical analysis, in particular, are noted as factors that shaped his person and his scholarship.

As Karin Maag notes in her introductory chapter, Melanchthon suffers – like the other second generation leaders of the Reformation – from being critiqued for his agreement with or divergence from the founder. This often means that he is not appreciated in his own right as a leading figure of the Reformation (pp. 15-16). This book goes a long way in helping to correct this defect.

Luke L. Keefer, Jr.

Peter Day, *A Dictionary of Christian Denominations*. London: Continuum, 2003. 516 pp., cloth, \$75.00.

The one volume dictionary by Australian-born Peter Day, a member of the Russian Orthodox Church, contains information on over one thousand Christian denominations and movements. These begin with articles on the "Aaronic Order" and continue through to "Zwinglians." Included are mainstream historical churches, heretical sects, cults and groups that sprung up around charismatic leaders. An Appendix contains alternate names of the groups treated in the main body of the work.

The carefully written, informative articles include readily recognized groups as well as the following lesser known groups: Agapemites, Manazarites, Angel Dancers, Body-Felt Salvation Church, seven different Churches of Christ, twenty one different Churches of God, Doukhabors, Ephrata Society, Familists, Grant Brethren, Henricians, Illuminati, Jumper, Koinonia Partners, Lehrerheut, Madaeans, eight Methodist groups, Navigators, Old Order Dunkers, Priscillianists, twenty two Reformed groups, Stundists, Today Church, fifteen United Church groups, and Voice of Elijah.

Richard E. Allison

Renate Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer: A Brief Life*. Translated from the German by K. C. Hanson. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004. 88 pp., cloth, \$12.

Renate Bethge, author and editor of this work, is the niece of Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the widow of Bonhoeffer's close friend, the late Eberhard Bethge, expert on Bonhoeffer. In this volume, Bethge sensitively sketches Bonhoeffer's dramatic life and his personal witness against Nazism during World War II. She portrays Bonhoeffer's life as a symbol of Christian resistance against Hitler. Bethge offers sympathy for and deep understanding of Bonhoeffer's authentic struggle.

Bethge chronicles Bonhoeffer's life in this brief volume. She focuses on his major life movements from childhood and youth to the beginning of the Nazi era. Then she details the period of the Preacher's Seminary in Finkenwalde and his trips to America. She concludes with his conspiratorial trips, resistance activities, imprisonment and execution.

Bethge describes Bonhoeffer's life events with pictures, personal letters, and autobiographical notes on nearly every page of this short work. This material makes the book a valuable treasure in Bonhoeffer studies and biographies. The reader enjoys personal glimpses into the actual life of Bonhoeffer in a clear, accessible way.

This work is a beautiful treasure only a family member could produce. It is a gift of Bonhoeffer's great witness to Jesus Christ. The work is accessible for clergy, laity, professors and students of Bonhoeffer. The book offers gems of insight into the life of Bonhoeffer.

JoAnn Ford Watson

Stanley Hauerwas, *Prayers Plainly Spoken*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1999. 132 pp., paper, \$17.00.

This book was published because of Hauerwas's students who initially began asking him for copies of his written prayers given at the start of each class, and who then encouraged him to publish his prayers. Initially, Hauerwas resisted the suggestion, chiefly because he did not want to appear pious (which, quite frankly, has never truly been a problem for Hauerwas); his concern being that "in our time 'holiness' is too often one of the ways the truthfulness of religious claims is lost" (p. 13).

Hauerwas suggests that the lack of "holy" language in these prayers (i.e. pious tones and set formulas often associated with saying a prayer) is one of the reasons students wanted them. He states, "If anything, these prayers are plain. They are so because I discovered I could not pray differently than I speak. In other words I thought it would be a mistake to try to assume a different identity when I prayed" (p. 14).

Hauerwas lays a theological foundation for prayer in his introduction (pp. 11-18). The aspects of that foundation are that prayer is taught, that any theology that does not help Christians to pray cannot be Christian, that "God wants our prayers and the prayers God wants are *our* prayers" (p. 17), and the language of prayer enhances our lives, because our very lives are indeed prayers to God.

The prayers in this book were written with reference to specific occasions, sometimes with attention to the specific topic being studied in class, and other times in response to world and community events, as well as happenings at Duke Divinity School and the University. In other words these prayers involve "simply the stuff of life" (p. 16). Accordingly, after the introduction, the prayers are categorized into three sections: Beginnings (pp. 21-35), Living In Between (pp. 39-114), and Endings (pp. 117-132). A few examples of prayers from the book highlight the different occasions for which these prayers were written.

In a prayer entitled, *Save Us from Dullness*, written at the start of a new class, Hauerwas writes,

Our Only Father, humble us Mary-like before the cross of your Son, our Lord, Jesus of Nazareth, so that through the Spirit we may be joined in the one body, the church, thus becoming your one mighty prayer for the world. Gracious God, whose grace terrorizes us and sustains us, we pray for courage as we begin this course. Invade our lives, robbing us of fear and envy so we might begin to trust one another and in the process discover a bit of truth. In this serious business grant us the joy and humor that comes from your presence. And for your sake, save us from being dull. Amen (p. 26).

Several prayers for peace are contained in the book. A particularly interesting one is *A Plea for Peace with Chickens*.

Sovereign of All Life, we pray that you will give us the patience to stay still long enough to witness the beauty of your creation. Help us to live at peace with your world, especially with our brothers and sisters in and without your church. Help us to live at peace with those creatures not like us—that is, dogs, pigs, and even, God help us, chickens. And help us live in peace with ourselves. Amen (p. 57).

One prayer in the book is offered in reference to what Hauerwas describes as "a particularly egregious act by a member of the divinity school community that brought shame on the school (p. 84).

Weird Lord, you never promised us a rose garden, but right now we could use a few daisies or zinnias. We feel confused, unsure of where we are, angry because a wrong has been done, and we are unsure who (sic) to blame. It ought to be somebody's fault, but even the one who is to blame is so pathetic it hardly seems worth the effort. So we are left with ourselves. Work on us to make us a community of truthfulness, a community where friendships flourish, a community of joy in the good work you have given us. Help us to know how to go on, confident that you have made us characters in the best story since creation, since it is (Hauerwas' emphasis) the story of creation. It is good to be your people. Amen (pp. 84-85).

Not one to avoid controversy, Hauerwas writes several blunt prayers on various issues. One was given “during the celebration of the five hundredth anniversary of Columbus’s ‘discovery’ of America” (p. 25).

Dear God, our lives are made possible by the murders of the past—civilization is built on slaughters. Acknowledging our debt to killers frightens and depresses us. We fear judging, so we say, “That’s in the past.” We fear to judge because in so judging we are judged. Help us, however, to learn to say no, to say, “Sinners though we are, that was and is wrong.” May we do so with love. Amen (p. 25).

Hauerwas employs stark language in his theological reflections. This is seen in particular in one prayer entitled, *Stuck with a God Who Bleeds*.

Bloody Lord, you are just too real. Blood is sticky, repulsive, frightening. We do not want to be stuck with a sacrificial God who bleeds. We want a spiritual faith about spiritual things, things bloodless and abstract. We want sacrificial spirits, not sacrificed bodies. But you have bloodied us with your people Israel and your Son, Jesus. We fear that by being Jesus’ people we too might have to bleed. If such is our destiny, we pray that your will, not ours, be done. Amen (p. 90).

In his last section on endings, Hauerwas writes several prayers on the occasion of the deaths of different individuals, including that of Henri Nouwen in 1996, who at the time of his death was the chaplain at Daybreak, a home for the mentally handicapped in Toronto.

Lord of Life, Lord of Death, we give you thanks for the life, the ministry, the witness of Father Henri M. Nouwen. His life was constituted by words, but he longed for silence. You have now constituted him by your eloquent silence, by naming him a member of that chorus called the communion of saints. We pray for his friends at Daybreak, who will rightly feel the silence of his death as loss. May they look into one another’s faces and see your unfailing presence. So seeing, may they rejoice in the life of this strange man, who so willingly exposed his life so that we might rejoice in the life you have given us. Amen (p. 124).

There will be some who find Hauerwas’ clear and blunt prayer language offensive, particularly his addressing of God as “weird,” “strange,” and “terrifying.” Others will no doubt also find some of his prayers quite controversial, particularly in reference to war and violence. Perhaps what Hauerwas has written on page 17 of the introduction may be offered as a response. “We do not need to hide anything from God, which is a good thing given the fact that any attempt to hide from God will not work. God wants us to cry, to shout, to say what we think we understand and what we do not.”

Prayers Plainly Spoken is a book worth reading. It is to be added to that great company of prayers offered by the saints throughout history, those prayers that improve the praying of all believers.

Allan R. Bevere

Bradley P. Holt, *Thirsty for God: A Brief History of Christian Spirituality*. 2nd ed. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005. 226 pp., paper, \$18.00.

The original 1993 edition of *Thirsty for God* received a brief notice in this journal which said in part, "This is an ideal short survey, the best of its kind in print" (*ATJ* 33 [2001]: 83). The second edition is even better in almost every way. The author's preface singles out for attention new material, the introduction of maps, and more suggestions for spiritual practice.

After an initial chapter on spirituality and Christianity, two new chapters appear. The first discusses what spiritual formation is -- being, relating, and doing -- while the other concerns Jesus Christ and the Bible. Both of these strengthen the foundation for what follows. They open up what Christian spirituality (description and analysis) and spiritual formation (process and experience) are about, and the canonical material which underlies them. At the end of the book, the discussion of the twentieth century has now become two chapters: "The West since 1900" and "The Non-Western World since 1900." This gives more opportunity for Dr. Holt to develop one of his strong points: Christianity beyond the English-speaking world. A former missionary educator in Nigeria, he is biblically, historically, and theologically convinced that the Christian faith must be international, with all the diversity that entails.

The structure of the central part remains as it was: "The Beginnings of a Global Community" [the ancient church], "The European Era" [the medieval church], "Protestant and Catholic Reform," and "The 'Modern' Era." There is enough new material to increase the book from 150 pages to 226, with slightly larger page size. The author highlights new or expanded discussions of "Celtic spirituality, medieval women mystics, J. S. Bach, the holiness movement, Oswald Chambers, Therese of Lisieux, C. S. Lewis, Henry Nouwen, Rosemary Radford Reuther [sic], Pope Shenoudah III, and Desmond Tutu, among many others" (p. vii). Dr. Holt also includes more of his own personal comments and opinions throughout the book.

Another significant improvement is that ten maps appear in the opening pages. Each map is keyed to one of the chapters and identifies significant places mentioned in the discussion. For example, the map of modern Europe shows the location of Dietrich Bonhoeffer's secret seminary in Germany (Finkewalde), the ecumenical monastic community at Taizé, France, and sites where the Holy Mother has been said to appear in France (Lourdes), Portugal (Fatima), and Croatia (Medjugorje). This new feature is extremely helpful and will be welcomed by all readers.

The third improvement to which the author calls attention is the more extensive descriptions of spiritual practice. These come at the end of each chapter, making this more than just a brief history of Christian spirituality. It can function as a first text for learning the spiritual disciplines which historically have nurtured believers. A larger variety is introduced beyond the first edition -- not only corporate worship and meditative reading, but also writing letters for social justice and going on a pilgrimage.

But Holt's first purpose remains: to provide an introductory survey of the rich history of Christian spirituality, and to do it broadly and inclusively. This he has accomplished better than any author I know. The only exception worth mentioning is that some dates -- in both editions -- are wrong. They show up in the text's discussion and also in the helpful timeline at the back of the book. For example, it is generally agreed that Ignatius of Antioch died in the decade A.D. 110-120, but the dates suggested for him (160?-220?) are very near those given for Tertullian (160?-225). Hildegard of Bingen was born in 1098, not 1109; Julian of Norwich was almost certainly born in 1342,

not 1353; Ignatius of Loyola died in 1556, not 1531; and Richard Foster is not nearing eighty (he was born in 1942, not 1928). Inexplicably, Augustine, who was included in the first edition's timeline, is omitted in the revision. Hopefully such uncorrected errors will not detract from the otherwise excellent changes in this second edition.

Bradley Holt has performed an outstanding service for both church and academy in producing this revision of *Thirsty for God*. Now more than ever it is "an ideal short survey, the best of its kind in print."

Jerry R. Flora

Henri Nouwen, *Turn My Mourning into Dancing: Finding Hope in Hard Times*. Ed. Timothy Jones. Nashville: Word Publishing, 2001. Xvi + 111 pp. Hardcover, \$16.99.

This wonderful book of Henri Nouwen's collected writings was compiled posthumously by Timothy Jones. It is a gift on the subject of hope in a hurting world. To compile these thoughts of Nouwen, Jones gleaned the archival holdings at the Henri Nouwen Literary Center and the Henri J. M. Nouwen Archives and Research Collection at the John M. Kelly Library, University of St. Michael's College in Toronto.

Nouwen's thoughts are gathered as treasures of a life lived in the compassion of God in service to humanity. Jones states that after Nouwen's death in 1996, interest in Nouwen's work has grown immensely. In the preface, Jones states, "More than anything, I believe, the continued interest grows out of who he was: a heart broken before God and opened for his fellow friends and readers" (p. xi). Jones writes that Nouwen was "a man with a heart that constantly reached out to hurting souls" (p. x.). Jones describes him this way: "Henri was complex and unfinished; he knew it well and did not pretend otherwise. But still, he also knew, there was ministering to be done. Suffering to care for. Hope to bring to bear in life's dark places" (p. xi).

Jones learned that digging through Nouwen's notes in the archives provides glimpses from his pen and life (p. xii.). He writes, "As we learn from this chronicler of the possibilities of a human life lived vibrantly with God, may our sorrows also turn to expectancy and even joy" (p. xii).

Jones arranges Nouwen's thoughts in the book in five movements through hard times entitled, "From Our Little Selves to a Larger World, From Holding Tight to Letting Go, From Fatalism to Hope, From Manipulation to Love, From a Fearful Death to a Joyous Life" (p. v). In the introduction, Nouwen describes the meaning of these movements. He writes, "But these steps in the dance of God's healing choreography let us move gracefully amid what would harm us, and find healing as we endure what could make us despair" (p. xvi). Nouwen continues, "We can ultimately find a healing that lets our wounded spirits dance again, that lets them dance unafraid of suffering and even death because we learn to live with lasting hope" (p. xvi).

The strength of the book is Nouwen's call to hope throughout life's ups and downs. Growing up, Nouwen was captivated by the trapeze artists at the circus. Nouwen writes of the trapeze, "But the real hero is the catcher. The only thing I have to do is stretch out my hands and trust, trust that he will be there to pull me back up" (p. 43). Nouwen's thoughts here turn to God as he writes, "We can say no less about the God who encircles our little lives and waits to catch us and hold us—in the hard junctures and the good, in the precarious moments and the times we soar" (p. 43).

Throughout the work, Nouwen resounds his theme of hope. He tells us that memory speaks of God's faithfulness in the past and gives us courage for the present and the future. Nouwen writes, "Memory also reminds us of the faithfulness of God in the hard places and joyous moments. It lets us see how God has brought good from even the impossible situations. Remembering in this way allows us to live in the present" (p. 59).

Nouwen also focuses on the power of hope. He continues, "Hope makes you see God's guiding hand not only in the gentle and pleasant moments but also in the shadows of disappointment and darkness" (p. 60). Nouwen promises everlasting hope in the Risen Christ. He states, "For the journey of Christ did not end on the cross. On the road to Emmaus we see the picture changed from despair to hope...That allows us to hope that the journey from life to death leads finally from death to life" (pp. 103-104).

Nouwen beautifully concludes this wonderful collection of thoughts on hope with the movement from death to eternal life. He states, "Confronting our death ultimately allows us better to live. And better to dance with God's joy amid the sorrowing nights and the hopeful mornings" (p. 110).

This book is a precious gift of Nouwen's works on spirituality that is accessible to clergy and laity interested in Nouwen's spirituality. This book is a treasure of the great legacy and contribution that this extraordinary man of God left for us. As Jones gleaned this work from Nouwen's unpublished writings, what a beloved gift of hope he discovered from this legendary spiritual guide.

JoAnn Ford Watson

Dallas Willard, *Hearing God: Developing a Conversational Relationship with God*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1983. 228 pp, paper.

More than anything else, it was the title that prompted me to read this book. Now, I am glad that I did. I have often wondered if everyone "hears" God in the same way. What does God's voice sound like? How do we hear God?

Dallas Willard attacks these and many other questions Christians may ask in his book *Hearing God: Developing a Conversational Relationship with God*. This book was previously published under the classic title, *In Search of Guidance*. The former title, the one it is currently being published with, is a great title for the material included in the book.

Willard does not shy away from the difficult questions that people of faith often ask when we think of developing a conversational, intimate relationship with God. He states that they key to hearing God is building a close and personal relationship with God. It is not surprising to find that Christians live in the tension of knowing that hearing from God is crucial to a personal relationship with God and yet not clearly knowing how to develop that personal relationship with God through hearing and listening to God. What does hearing from God sound like? Willard is keenly aware that this tension exists and he does not try to diminish this fact rather he addresses it head-on. Willard then moves us to a deeper understanding of what hearing from God is not to encouraging the reader that everyone can have a full, satisfying, and glorifying relationship with God when we understand what it means to communicate *with* God and not *to* God. He states, "We must never forget that God's speaking to use, however we experience it in our initial encounter, is intended to develop into an intelligent, freely cooperative relationship between mature people who love each other with the richness of genuine *agape* love" (pg. 31). It is this relationship with God that Willard helps us develop through this book.

The book has nine powerful chapters dealing with everything from using Scripture to hear God, from understanding our redemption, to recognizing the voice of God. He especially does a great job dealing with the issue of silence from God in chapter nine. Each chapter is followed by a set of questions to help us process the material and to examine our own personal relationship with God. This makes *Hearing God* a great book to use for small groups or Bible studies as well as a personal spiritual formation tool. There is no question that after reading this book, you will have a more spiritual walk with God what will be gratifying to you and glorifying of God. I highly recommend this book for pastors or for anyone who wants to develop a more formative relationship with God through prayer and silent times.

Vickie Taylor

Rowan Williams, *The Dwelling of the Light: Praying with Icons of Christ*. Grand Rapids, Mi.: Eerdmans, 2003. 84pp., cloth, \$16.00.

Like the icons it studies, this little book opens succinct yet inviting gateways into the depths of God. While many books on icons explain conventions and symbols or offer personal reflection, this one brings the reader into an encounter with the profound theological and spiritual beauty of its subjects. This is a book that explains both icons and the incarnation of Christ with a simple and engaging style that provokes, prods, and suggests but never fully elaborates. Williams begins with an introduction that reflects on the Incarnation as it reviews the early arguments for and against representing divine images. Put simply, icons do not attempt to depict God through pictures and images. Rather, they depict humanity saturated with God and transformed by divine life. With this in mind, Williams undertakes conversations with four icons, each of which brings out treasures both old and new. A meditation on an icon of the Transfiguration confronts the reader/viewer with a glimpse of God's glory in Christ, a glimpse of "violent force" that interrupts and overthrows our assumptions about God and humanity. An icon of the Resurrection shows us a Savior who comes out of the depths of the divine life and overcomes humanity's frozen divisiveness and hostility. Rublev's icon of the Hospitality of Abraham brings us into the dynamic circle of the divine life, in which we are drawn by the Son to the Father and into the Father's breathing out of the Spirit. Finally, an icon of Christ as Pantocrator (Ruler of All) confronts us with the Truth that longs to be known, the love that welcomes, and the gaze that helps us to see who we really are.

This is a book for contemplative readers. Williams' comments, like the icon reproductions that introduce them, nourish when savored. Regrettably, the small size of the book blurs and condenses the icons to such an extent that their beauty cannot be fully apprehended. Williams' reflections, however, will certainly encourage readers to seek, appreciate, and encounter for themselves the spiritual splendor of icons of Christ.

L. Daniel Hawk

Robert Wuthnow, *Creative Spirituality*. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2001. 297 pp., \$45.00.

While much study has been done on the relationship of religion and the arts, there is very little that explores the spiritual journey of the artist. A more apt title for this book would be the spirituality of creative people, for it does not describe an innovative

approach to spirituality, but rather the varied spiritual paths of artists. What makes this book most interesting is its energy. Based on material from interviews with at least fifty living artists, Wuthnow weaves together a series of mini-biographies of a wider than expected range of artists. From dancers to musicians, poets and painters, sculptors, woodcarvers, actors and more, he engages the reader by reporting the story of their lives, their spiritual turning points, and dilemmas they have faced or face now. This is not simply a book for artists; it is for all who are on a spiritual search. By reflecting on the discoveries of artists, one can find direction, confirmation and insight for one's own spiritual walk.

In each chapter, some of the personal searching of each creative person is explored. More than just a glimpse into a creative life, one begins to get a feel for their art and how it defines them as persons. The book is an endeavor to show how human giftedness reflects upon one's pursuit of God, faith, and spirituality in general. Wuthnow masterfully weaves together the particulars from each artist's journey, making comparisons and showing parallels. He seems to glean insight in order to create a tapestry of spiritual understanding. One example is that several of the artists the reader is introduced to promote some element of mystery in their spiritual journey.

The strength of this book is that it draws you in. One finds himself/herself caring about the individuals whose lives are being told. Each person's journey is different, and many were quite compelling. The compiler is unbiased. This does not come off as a "Christian" book about art. The descriptions of peoples' faiths are given enigmatically, but not to sway the reader as to their legitimacy. Wuthnow is fair to the faiths, and describes both those who are disenchanted with the religion of their upbringing and those who remain faithful to it. In this sense he deals honestly with his subjects, not avoiding or denying pain, struggle or injustice. As a result, a shared learning occurs.

Outside of a few writing excerpts, the only thing absent from this work was anything visual. It is difficult to describe the work of creative artists without being able to see or hear or sample their work in some way.

Reading *Creative Spirituality* was alluring and captivating. Anyone interested in the arts and aware of how the study and pursuit of the creative affects the human spirit, or simply concerned about the development of faith and spirituality, will certainly find this a stimulating gem.

Jonathan Mathewson

Herbert Lockyer, Jr., *All the Music of the Bible*. Peabody, MS: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 2004. 209 pp., paper, \$14.95.

This is a rare find in a book, a functional and purposeful survey of almost all the music in the Bible. Herbert Lockyer, Jr. offers this useful tool in the tradition of his father's "All Series" books. Arguably, the book covers at least the most important music of the Bible, from Moses' Song of the Sea to John's Hymn of Victory in Revelation. He opens with a brief history of ancient music that will allow all readers, musician or not, to grasp the context and importance of the Biblical passages to come. Also included is a chapter on hymnody in the church. While this is one of the lengthiest chapters in the book it is a straightforward presentation of several centuries of Christian music that is brief by contrast to other books on the subject.

Lockyer's style is simple and succinct yet delivers a tremendous amount of practical information. The comparison between this book and other histories of church music is tantamount to comparing Tchaikovsky's popular "Nutcracker Suite" to his Symphony No. 2--both are amazing works of art that can be enjoyed by all. However, while most people may never have heard the latter, nearly everyone has at least heard the "Nutcracker Suite" while roaming the mall at Christmas. Other histories are laden with lists, dates, exegeses, politics, and doctrine; Lockyer's treatment is one that will be equally useful to the lay reader or the pastor seeking illustrations for Sunday's sermon. Music directors will want to refer to this book over and over again as a foundational source on musical passages. Songwriters will want to flip through the pages to find references to dozens of inspirational songs and hymns. Each passage covered also includes some historical and theological essentials, but just enough to be easily digested in a sitting. It would be an excellent study for church music groups or choirs, and equally engaging for non-musicians desiring a better understanding of the musical/poetic passages of the Bible that are often overlooked.

All the Music also contains a chapter on musical instruments in the Bible, complete with Bible references and known facts about each. The author includes chapters on the Song of Isaiah, the Song of Songs, and Songs of the New Testament. Students and teachers of sacred music will find great interest in the five comprehensive appendices - Psalms That Mention Song or Singing; Well-Known Songs and Hymns of the Bible; Songs of the Bible Mentioned Only by Name; References in the Bible to Instruments; and Great Hymns and Songs of the Church. Also enjoyable are three sections from Herbert Lockyer, Sr.'s notes on musical topics, including a chapter entitled, "Bethoven and the Blind Girl."

This is a melodious offering that should find its way on to the shelves of every church library. It will be music to the ears of students and pastors for its straightforward and unpretentious style. It is the everyperson's comprehensive source on Biblical music, leaving the minutiae to other sources and providing a well-rounded and inclusive foundation that will inspire readers to spend more time making music than reading about it.

Christine M. Martin

Milton C. Moreland, ed., *Between Text and Artifact: Integrating Archaeology in Biblical Studies Teaching*. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003. 243 pp., paper, \$34.95.

The archaeology of the land of the Bible has always held a soft spot in the heart of biblical studies. Ever since the birth of "biblical archaeology" (the archaeology of a specific region - Syro-Palestine - during a wide range of periods of time - Late Bronze through the Roman Era) in the first half of the twentieth century, biblical scholars, students, and church members alike have taken a special interest in this field and have attempted to utilize it in their lectures, papers, sermons, and Sunday school lessons. However, the well of biblical archaeological information has not been fully taken advantage of in most biblical studies classroom settings. Why? Perhaps the quest of integrating the two fields appears too daunting. Or perhaps the instructor is fearful of conflicting information? Or maybe it is the instructor's lack of personal archaeological experience that keeps him / her at bay?

Cast your fears aside, whatever they may be, for the Society of Biblical Literature has added a new volume to their repertoire. *Between Text and Artifact*:

Integrating Archaeology in Biblical Studies Teaching is a collection of thirteen essays written by biblical archaeologists and biblical scholars of both testaments on how to incorporate archaeology into the biblical studies classroom. These essays range in scope through the Hebrew Bible, gender, the Christian New Testament, and the Dead Sea Scrolls. A few essays from *Between Text and Artifact* are worthy of noting.

Anne Killebrew's essay "Between Heaven and Earth: Educational Perspectives on the Archaeology and Material Culture of the Bible" provides a necessary background into the emergence of biblical archaeology and how it evolved into the discipline that it is today through an examination of its "classical publications".

The contribution of Carol Meyers focuses on a hot topic - gender. Entitled "Where the Girls Are: Archaeology and Women's Lives in Ancient Israel", Meyers writes about how archaeological evidence can provide information on the daily life of the ordinary women, and men, of ancient Israel. In order to listen to the voices of the not-so visible women of the Hebrew Bible, archaeological data provides necessary tools to do so and to communicate it to biblical study students.

J.P. Dessel provides a sort of top-10 of biblical archaeology text books of the past, present, and the future in "In Search of the Good Book: A Critical Survey of Handbooks on Biblical Archaeology". Each book is given an overview of their content, pros and cons. This essay should prove to be helpful to any biblical studies instructor searching for some reliable archaeological material.

Of particular interest to biblical scholars who teach in faith-based colleges, universities, and seminaries is Scott Starbuck's essay "Why Declare the Things Forbidden? Classroom Integration of Ancient Near Eastern Archaeology with Biblical Studies in Theological Context". Starbuck addresses a more specific issue than most of the other contributions: the relationship between biblical studies, biblical archaeology, and faith. He is honest in his opinion that incorporating archaeology into biblical study classrooms that are of a faith tradition can be difficult. Starbuck writes, "This article offers empathetic and practical reflection for biblical studies instructors who recognize the integral relationship between theological reflection and the assessment of archaeological realia but are perplexed if not beleaguered by student resistance to the task (99)." Starbuck provides observations from his experience, with four primary outcomes to this merger and attempts to provide a possible answer to these dilemmas.

For those of us attempting to bring together biblical archaeology with New Testament studies, Milton C. Moreland presents the reader with highlights of topics of interest and daily life in his essay "Archaeology in New Testament Courses". Moreland is especially interested in the archaeological data that illuminate the daily life of the Galilee Region during the time of Jesus of Nazareth. Moreland gives hope to New Testament instructors by stating, "In the classroom, I have found that the more I am able to integrate this material into my teaching, the more students are able fully to grasp the settings and meanings of the New Testament texts..." (149).

This is just a taste of the rich information, resources, and advice that these essays hold. As a biblical studies instructor and archaeologist, I genuinely appreciate the insight and care that was put into this volume. I highly recommend integrating biblical archaeology into any biblical studies classroom and this is just the book to help you get there.

Cynthia Shafer-Elliott

Suzanne Richard. ed., *Near Eastern Archaeology: A Reader*. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2003. xviii + 486 pp., hardcover, \$45.00.

One could argue that the work under review has not been correctly named. This 'reader' of Near Eastern archaeology is more appropriately called a 'handbook' of Syro-Palestinian archaeology (from the Palaeolithic to the Byzantine Periods), as it has over sixty brief articles on a myriad of subjects that are focused around the archaeology of Syro-Palestine (but not Mesopotamia and Egypt, for instance). However, one will become immediately sympathetic to Richard when one understands the long and arduous process that was undertaken along the road to publication. The project actually began over a decade ago with another editor as a one volume encyclopedia of Syro-Palestinian archaeology. Inherited by Richard, the original project folded and she was left with over 400 entries, but no publisher. However, the project was salvaged when it was recast 'as a reader (or better, "handbook")' and was significantly reduced in size. In essence, it is a classical 'rags to riches' story, as the work has been recognized by the American Library Association's "Choice" magazine as an "Outstanding Academic Title".

As stated, *Near Eastern Archaeology: A Reader* is a collection of articles under two extremely broad and somewhat vague sub-headings, 'Theory, Method and Context', and 'Cultural Phases and Associated Topics'. In essence, the subjects range from archaeological theory and methods, descriptions of selected peoples groups (e.g., Samaritans and Nabateans), and discussions of archaeological periods. In addition, there are numerous entries on specialized topics, such as archaeozoology, paleoethnobotany, scarabs, epigraphy, languages, weaponry, and religion. However, the organization of the volume leaves something to be desired, as topics such as jewelry, mosaics, and numismatics are in the 'Theory' section, while 'Theory in Archaeology: Cultural Change at the End of the Early Bronze Age' is in the 'Cultural Phases Section'. Moreover, the articles appear to be grouped somewhat haphazardly (unless, of course, this reviewer has missed the rationale for the organization of the book), as 'Archaeological Survey in the Southern Levant' is sandwiched in-between 'Everyday Life' and 'Restoration of Ancient Monuments: Theory and Practice'. In addition, some articles do not appear to adequately reflect the contents therein (e.g., 'Levantine Archaeology' and 'Everyday Life'), thereby making the volume less useful for handy reference. The articles also vary somewhat in size, from about three to nearly twenty pages. Though there are some illustrations and maps, although the articles on 'Geography of the Levant' and 'Roads and Highways' oddly contain none.

Despite the organizational deficiencies, this is a good single-volume reference for Syro-Palestinian archaeology, appropriate for both student and specialist. Richard has recruited many of the top people in the field (e.g., Dever, Rast, Hopkins, Rolfe, Leonard, Younker, and Berlin), and has noteworthy articles on 'Paleoenvironments of the Levant', 'Archaeozoology', and 'Palaeoethnobotany'. Each entry has a basic overview of the subject in question, as well as a detailed bibliography which provides a reference point for further study (although annotations for the bibliographic entries would have made them more usable). This volume is not, however, appropriate for a textbook on Syro-Palestinian (or Biblical) archaeology, but as a resource for students and teachers alike. For all practical purposes, this reviewer expects to employ this handy reference tool in courses on ancient Israel.

Mark W. Chavalas, University of Wisconsin- LaCrosse

John MacArthur, ed., *Think Biblically! Recovering a Christian Worldview*. Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2003. 368 pp., \$19.99.

This series of essays written by faculty members of the Master's College, and edited by John MacArthur, attempts to engage and motivate readers to adapt a worldview based on scripture. The book covers a very wide range of topics from creationism to worship and music to how Christians should view history. In an age of ever-changing philosophies and worldviews, the attempt to establish a Christian worldview is a noble cause.

This book should keep a reader engaged and thinking throughout the entirety of its reading. Several of the essays are really quite excellent, particularly those about Church and State, Biblical Approaches to Economics, and the essays on Christian femininity and masculinity. The church and state essay, for example, poses this question: "The view that God has some kind of covenant relationship with America, a predominant view in the nineteenth century along with postmillennialism, still lingers today. But is this road to political power clearly marked out biblically"? (291)

The essays are written from a very conservative Christian point of view, which will help the reader to understand where the writers are coming from, particularly if they do not share so conservative a point of view. This may mean, however, that rather than being in constant agreement with the authors, readers may find the need to be forming their own stances on the issues addressed. Stances taken within the book of a literal six day creation and an almost complete rejection of any theories of modern psychology will likely differ from the perspectives of many others within the faith.

Generally it is a very engaging and interesting book; however, there are some positions taken that may annoy some readers. Statements such as "rampant crime, drug abuse, sexual perversion, rising suicide rates, and the abortion epidemic....These trends are directly traceable to the ascent of evolutionary theory...." (73) are made but not well defended. A reader might wonder if the world was perfect until Charles Darwin came along. At times certain scriptural interpretations are made and not well defended, while any opposing views are treated in an unapologetic manner.

There is certainly a need for a Christian worldview and the book makes a valiant effort at doing so. Its conservative stance will offend some potential readers. A person with a sound grounding in the Scriptures would benefit from a reading of the book, whether to stimulate thinking through certain issues or to gain a better understanding of the positions of other Christians.

Michael Bertsch

Stanley Grenz, *The Moral Quest: Foundations of Christian Ethics*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1997. 379 pp., cloth, \$24.99.

This is a book for the intellectually minded, but carefully enough written for anyone who is open to mending heart and mind together in living an authentic Christian life of virtue. *The Moral Quest* will enhance, inform, and challenge any reader's understanding of the deep foundations of ethics, or more particularly, the foundations of a post-modernist moral theology. The book is the "comprehensive statement of a Christian ethic," a "vision" of Christian morality as a community-based ethic (228). It is, to be sure, easy to agree with Grenz that the deepest problems of the modern mind and contemporary life are connected with the collapse of the objective, traditional foundation

of ethical value. However, Grenz does not describe the historical collapse of the objective foundation of ethics as clearly as he might.

Briefly, the objective foundation of ethical value and the intrinsic value of persons has, for 2,000 years, been grounded in the substantial, immaterial soul, made in the image of God. The substantial soul has an essential ethical nature, an innate moral power, capacity, and teleology, which makes moral experience, moral knowledge, and moral development possible—not to mention communion and a relationship with God. The immaterial soul is one's person, an enduring subject and owner of experiences, knowledge, character, and virtue. Post-Darwin, substance dualism was largely given up by the academic intelligentsia—either because it was deemed a non-natural substance and not accessible by “the scientific method,” or because it did not fit into either a methodologically naturalistic, or atheistic, worldview. Post-Bultmann and John A.T. Robinson, academic theologians quickly gave up dualism and adopted the now fashionable view of holism (Physicalism in various forms). Only in the past few decades has the intelligentsia, including theologians, started to realize that the death of the soul entails the death of the intrinsic value of persons. Thus, we now find ourselves in the midst of the modern crisis of the collapse of the foundation of value, wherein Grenz offers a communitarian foundation of ethics.

Also, be advised, this is not a book in applied ethics. There are no refined arguments offered on any particular ethical issue. In fact, this feature reflects Grenz's sense of our historical place and contemporary needs, as he joins the “growing number of ethicists [who] no longer see the task of ethical discourse as determining the proper response to ethical quandaries the moral agent faces in the here and now. Instead they see their task as drawing from a vision of who we are to become...” (203). Here a critic might reply, for example, that instructing someone in the midst of an ethical quandary over adultery or euthanasia about your eschatological vision of their future, is unhelpful if not the recipe for a temporal moral disaster.

Grenz's moral quest is “to discover what a truly biblical vision of the ethical life entails within the contemporary context...to develop a community-based ethic of being” (205). He is attracted to “the newer voices” which instruct us to give up “the quest for the one true ethical theory” and adopt “a new focus on the community” (209). Why should we be enticed to adopt the latest fashion in ethics? Grenz co-opts the answer of Wayne Meeks here: “individuals do not become moral agents except in the relationships, the transactions, the habits and reinforcements...that together constitute life in community” (209). Later, in his own words, he tells us that post-modern communitarianism has discovered the foundations of ethics: “Ultimately we derive our personal convictions from the community from which we gain our understanding of virtue and goodness...the principles or worldview of that community reference” (230). This is a positive, if vague, way of asserting the doctrine of the Blank Slate (*tabula rasa*), a fully naturalized theory dominant in psychology and sociology. It is the theory that the human mind is the functioning brain, which has no essential rational nature, no innate ethical structure, no inherent moral content, and no innate knowledge of God. Put another way, if the Blank Slate theory is true, then the traditional doctrine of being created in the image of God is false. According to Meeks, Tillich, post-modernism, and Grenz, we are Silly Putty at birth (a morally blank, unstructured biological organism) that will likely get ethically imprinted and molded by culture, i.e., by a tradition, a story, or a community. This is, of course, the foundational axiom of Cultural Relativism as taught by Ruth Benedict and Margaret Mead, i.e., that our moral nature is ultimately a cultural product. The ultimate moral agent is not the individual but the amorphous thing called

society, culture, or community. Enculturation imprints our blankness. It gradually turns us into moral beings, i.e., communitarian beings. On this theory, we are born as 0% moral beings, and we gradually become a moral being by degrees, as we become enculturated. (For a refutation of this now out of date [?] theory, see Steven Pinker, *The Blank Slate: The Modern Denial of Human Nature* [Viking, 2002]).

The overall argument Grenz offers is historically organized—from ancient Greek philosophers to the moral theologies of Augustine, Aquinas, and Luther, to contemporary post-modern philosophers and theological ethicists. Throughout the various chapters, Grenz argues subtly against all the elements of the traditional foundation of ethics and for his post-modernist replacement theory. He does not, however, refer to his view as a theory of ethics; rather he presents it as “the biblical” and “the Christian” view throughout the book. Since he could be more forthcoming to help the non-professional academic reader understand just when and where he is standing inside and outside of orthodoxy, the following short list of his post-modern doctrines might be helpful to the typical reader. Grenz either asserts or argues: that we are not created in the image of God (194-195, 258, 265) but only become *imago Dei* after we encounter a community, a “narrative,” or a “story” (261-262, 264, 268, 275, 345 note 79); that there is no substantial soul (263-264); that we have no innate ethical nature (258); that there is no universal human ethic (294); that we do not have intrinsic ethical value (252, 258); that we are born moral blank slates (230-231); that we may be humans at birth but only subsequently do we become persons because personal identity is only constructed “through our participation in communities of reference” (272); and, if we assume his theory is correct, then a newborn child gradually becomes a person as the external, contingent, relative, communitarian environmental “chemical” (my word) somehow morphs the amoral, non-person into a moral agent, enculturating us into “our fundamental existence as persons-in-relationship,” as per Tillich (264, 345 note 79; but also 194-196, 203, 209, 228, 251-253, 265, 298). (For a critique of holism, Physicalism, and the psychosomatic unity theory, see Howard M. Ducharme, “The Image of God and the Moral Identity of Persons: An Evaluation of the Holistic Theology of Persons,” in *Law and Religion*, edited by Richard O’Dair and Andrew Lewis [Oxford University Press, 2001], pp. 1-25).

Howard M. Ducharme, University of Akron

Christopher J. H. Wright, *Old Testament Ethics for the People of God*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2004. 520 pp. hardback, \$19.95.

After thirty years of research and writing on Old Testament ethics, the author has drawn together his life-work in a single volume. More than a revision of his groundbreaking *Eye for an Eye* (British title: *Living as the People of God*, 1983), *OTE* includes five revised chapters from *Walking in the Ways of the Lord: the ethical authority of the Old Testament* (1995) and a valuable expanded review of literature (ch. 13). Two important chapters, “Ecology and the earth” (ch. 4) and “Hermeneutics and authority in Old Testament ethics” (ch. 14) are also new. “Further reading” sections conclude each chapter. All this is done in a lucid, flowing style with a well constructed outline.

While researching his Cambridge dissertation (1977) the author was told, “the subject [of Old Testament ethics] doesn’t exist.” Since then Wright has helped to lead the renewed interest in Christian ethics and the Old Testament. More than seventy percent (as he notes in the preface) of the hundreds of titles in his valuable bibliography have been

published since that time. The many emendations and the final chapter engage this ongoing scholarly discussion.

Wright sets out “to provide a comprehensive framework within which Old Testament ethics can be organized and understood” (p. 11). He accomplishes this goal in three parts. Part one, “A Structure for Old Testament ethics” describes the *social shape of Israel* as the paradigm by which Old Testament ethics may be organized. This social shape is a triangle of relationships that emerges from biblical theology: the theological (God), social (Israel), and economic (land) angles. At the corners of the theological-social-economic triangle stand God-Israel-Land. *God* is the creator-redeemer, to whom the *land* and *all in it* belonged and belong. *Israel* was made in *God’s* image for relationship, but rebelled and brought evil consequences into their life and *land*. These relationships, good and bad, form the foundation for ethical discussion today.

Part two, “Themes in Old Testament ethics,” develops themes of Old Testament theology as ethical resources for today by means of his paradigmatic relational framework. The God-Israel-Land relationships are described under the following titles: “Ecology and the Earth” (ch. 4), “Economics and the poor” (ch. 5), “The land and Christian ethics” (ch. 6), “Politics and the nations” (ch. 7), “Justice and righteousness” (ch. 8), “Law and the legal system” (ch. 9), “Culture and family” (ch. 10), and “The way of the individual” (ch. 11). In order to make this paradigm useful beyond the Old Testament, the triangle is enlarged by degrees to include three larger sets of relationships: 1) a New Testament typology (God-Church-*koinonia*), 2) the inclusive paradigm (God-fallen humanity-Earth), and 3) the eschatological (God-redeemed humanity-New Creation).

Part three, “Studying Old Testament ethics,” surveys other Christian approaches to the Old Testament and ethics. He surveys confessional approaches from the early Church, the Reformation, and the present day (ch.12). Chapter thirteen is an up-to-date survey of literature that Wright has found helpful in his own work. The final chapter is entirely new, engaging critical issues of methodology, ideology, hermeneutics, and authority. It will be of interest to scholars, but the section on authority will be more widely appreciated for its cogent argumentation.

Does the subject of Old Testament ethics exist? Wright has made a persuasive argument for “an organic unity, a broad harmony that holds the vast and varied edifice together” (p. 445). His book title, however, continues to belie the complexity of the task he has engaged so well. The Old Testament is a witness about God and his people and not primarily a text on ethics. The academic discipline of ethics does not usually use ancient theological texts as primary sources. Wright uses the Old Testament as a resource and witness for the constructive task of ethics yet retains the descriptive moniker “Old Testament ethics.” Some shift in his self-understanding is clear in the subtle but important refinement of the subtitle in part one from “*The Framework of Old Testament ethics*” (1983) to “*A Structure for Old Testament ethics*” (2004).

The title’s phrase *Old Testament Ethics* also suggests that the gap between the competing and developing ethics of Old Testament peoples and present Christians has been systematically bridged. I wish that more of the diversity of the ancient voices, contexts, and genres could be carried over the historical distance. The competing biblical voices of the “protest groups jamming in the wings” (Goldingay) are not so evident. If Christian character is to be formed and built up by means of the Old Testament, these also must be heard. Wright has intentionally chosen the clear and major voices of Scripture. The most difficult texts and genres are left untouched. Even his appendix,

“What about the Canaanites” really defers the theodicy question. He hints at a new book to deal with difficult texts. I hope he writes it.

This significant book will serve well as a textbook for theological colleges and clarifies the scholarly discussion. Buy this book (and his next one).

J. K. Bruckner, North Park Theological Seminary

Henry Cloud and John Townsend, *Boundaries Face to Face: how to have that difficult conversation you've been avoiding*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003. 266 PP, hardcover, \$22.99

Boundaries Face to Face takes the principals established in Cloud and Townsend's *Boundaries* to a level in which one can begin to feel comfortable having difficult conversations with others as Jesus would have had them. Cloud and Townsend build upon their belief that when you decide to have a confrontation, you decide to face issues in the relationship and deal with a portion of the relationship that needs to be addressed, with the specific purposes of improving the relationship, intensifying intimacy and developing more love and respect between two people.

This book goes into depth when describing how to handle the conversation and offers specific tips and examples. It is also helpful that they explore reasons behind the desire for a confrontation and speak about pitfalls to avoid. The information in this book is backed by scripture and the authors relate the information and the scripture well. This book takes the time to adequately define the needed components of a good conversation and how to develop those components. The book defines the difference between forgiving and trusting others, something so many Christians struggle with. Christians have often been taught that forgiving means forgetting, and Cloud and Townsend make it clear that this is not the case. This is a common sense how-to book that would benefit both professionals and lay persons.

In a time where a lot of people struggle with holding other's accountable for their actions and are timid about confrontation, this book gives you the sense of how Jesus would have handled needed confrontation. The book reminds us that there is nothing loving about avoiding confrontation or not holding others accountable. As Christians, this is our duty, when done in love and for the right reasons. It is our duty and responsibility to hold others accountable to live a Christ-like life. I would recommend this book to those who want to learn how to do just that, confront with love and respect.

Elaine Bednar

Junieta Baker McCall, *Bereavement Counseling: pastoral care for complicated grieving*. New York, London and Oxford: The Haworth Pastoral Press, 2004. 306 pp., paper.

This book proves to be an important tool for anyone who will have the opportunity to work with the bereaved in a pastoral setting. Understanding that loss is part of the human experience, Dr. McCall is kind and insightful as she addresses difficult types of grieving with suggestions as to best help those grieving loss. The book is a hope filled book to assist the bereaved through the stages of grief and on to recovery. I particularly was encouraged with Dr. McCall's ability to intertwine clinical suggestions, spiritual direction and hope.

Dr. McCall is aware that when one's grief becomes "complicated and dysfunctional", help becomes even more necessary to assist one to get disentangled from a challenging grief process. This process entails disengaging one's self from dysfunctional coping behaviors, problem causing coping behaviors, dysfunctional thoughts and those thought related feelings. Dr. McCall is emphatic about the need to work through the above barriers to prevent permanent damage, distress and disease.

This book is founded on four basic assumptions:

- 1) Grief is natural but not simple, can be painful and upsetting, hard to recover from, and that some never recover from this grief.
- 2) Many times, help is essential to recover from significant loss and should be timely and offer variety of means of help.
- 3) All health care providers should maintain continuing education in this area to further understand grief, helpful interventions and proper timing.
- 4) That there could be a benefit for advanced training on grief and loss for clergy and spiritual care providers, the people that are most often turned to in a time of crisis and grief.

The ability to discern between normal grief, complicated grief, and dysfunctional grief precludes the ability to provide helpful and specific interventions. Dr. McCall uses an ample amount of examples/vignettes to help increase the care givers discernment. This book offers a no nonsense guide to assessment, treatment strategies, standard interventions, and increased technical skills. With a person-centered position that promotes meaningful interactions to facilitate positive outcomes, I believe this book would be useful to all who interact with difficult grief.

Elaine Bednar

Thomas P. O'Connor and Nathaniel J. Pallonc, eds., *Religion, the Community, and the Rehabilitation of Criminal Offenders*. New York, London and Oxford: The Haworth Press, Inc., 2002. 283 pp., paper.

This book is a composite of fourteen articles, many that contain research backed by studies, on the interaction of religion and corrections in regards to the White House's faith-based initiatives and a number of religious groups that have an effect on the criminal justice system. The collection has the specific purpose to look at the relationship between religion, the community and offender rehabilitation and then answer four questions 1) What is it?, 2) Is it so?, 3) Is it loving? and 4) is it good?. In other words, is the relationship intelligible, truthful, ethical and religious?

The collection begins with an accurate historical essay as to how the penal system developed and how it was religiously based. One article found that religion in the penal system is varied albeit extensive. Another article found that there is a continuum of sincerity as to why inmates attend services, possibly because religion helps to alleviate deprivations found in the penal system. Another article found that prison Chaplains, through their work, cut down on recidivism. There is also a discussion in two articles about the role that Islam has played in the prisons as well as comparing male to female participation. There are three articles that debate whether or not religion influences

rehabilitation and the results vary from a substantial yes, to a position of maybe, but only with certain classes of crime. The two articles concerning how the studies should be done give advice as to which research methods to use and the validity/reliability of study data collected. The remaining articles discuss how rehabilitation must be based on love and building community.

This collection of articles, while being thought provoking, do not answer the questions that they have set out to answer. Methodologically, the majority of studies had good sample size however the sample size dwindled in the articles on how rehabilitation affects recidivism. There is a danger of losing support for religious activities in the penal system when one begins to use words such as love, without explaining the meaning of its use. The penal system needs to understand the difference between the person and the behavior, a concept that is often struggled with. One conclusion is that recidivism is directly correlated to the internalization of religion, and perhaps that is the research in which the penal system has a need to evaluate to further "allow" religious activities for it's inmates.

Elaine Bednar

Todd E. Johnson, ed., *The Conviction of Things Not Seen: Worship and Ministry in the 21st Century*, Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2002. 236 pp., \$22.99.

Ask anyone who attends church on a regular basis about worship, and they will almost certainly have an opinion on how they think worship should, or more commonly, should *not* be done. Those involved in ministry will be more familiar than they might like to admit with the various worship debates and arguments, and they will surely have a few war stories to share from their own church. Worship is perhaps the most widely disputed topic in the church today, making this book an incredibly timely and useful resource for pastors, worship leaders, seminarians, and lay leaders.

This provocative and enlightening volume is a compilation of essays written as a tribute to Robert Webber, a leader in worship studies and renewal. Johnson calls it a *festschrift*; it is indeed a celebration, not only of Webber's work and inspiration, but also of what has been and what is to come in the worshipping church. Voiced by a collection of writers with varied voices and experiences, this book is an invaluable resource for anyone who "does" worship.

While each of the offerings in this book can easily stand alone, the flow of the book from beginning to end offers the reader an edifying journey through the worship spectrum. The chapters cover a wide range of information: evaluation of the culture and times we are worshipping in, the need for discernment rather than debate, the importance of rituals, worship as pastoral care, and our visual culture, to name a few. Yet each topic flows seamlessly into the next, allowing every reader, regardless of prior knowledge to understand the dynamics of the many-faceted debate. Each author has artfully followed Webber's approach of engaging the history of the church in every discussion, encouraging the reader to learn from history rather than simply trying to rewrite it.

This book presents a means to enter into the dialogue of worship with greater understanding and vocabulary. Constance Cherry's essay on culture and tradition offers an enlightening explanation of post-modernism that sets the stage for her colleagues to follow. John Witvliet's offering on music in worship argues that "music is not God," but acknowledges its great importance in worship and encourages church musicians to think, question, and imagine greater purpose for their art in the worship setting. Worship as

pastoral care is the subject that William Willimon employs to engage his students in the worship debate, and he shares his ideas on the importance of ritual in personal growth and spiritual formation. These represent just a few of the brightest spots in a book that offers constant enlightenment.

What some will find to be the greatest strengths of this book, others will consider its major weaknesses. The authors have a clear motive in encouraging a change in worship that better reflects the rapidly changing culture. They encourage readers not only to engage in the debate, but to lead the movement towards worship renewal and revival. The book offers few answers, but presents a plethora of hard questions. It challenges us to move beyond the controversy we find ourselves buried in over music and media, hymnals and “high church,” and to enter into the deeper issues that are at the heart of the matter. The warning label on the book might read: “The contents of this book may be a choking hazard. Prophetic voices will cause spiritual discomfort.”

This approach will not seem so radical to those who recognize that the church is already in a state of discomfort that requires attention. Readers will find that Webber’s approach to worship renewal is no more radical than the early church was. In fact, his theory of “an ancient-future worship” calls us to learn from our past and return to our roots, not to discard the old for the new as many fear. *The Conviction of Things Not Seen* poses a challenge to question the status quo, but with humility and discernment. It pays a warranted tribute to a man who has inspired many, but even more so, moves us to dialogue with one another and to imagine ever greater ways to honor the God who alone is worthy of our worship.

Christine Martin

Irving Hexham, Stephen Rost, & John W. Morehead III, gen. eds., *Encountering New Religious Movements: A Holistic Evangelical Approach*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2004. 322 pp. paper, \$18.99.

In an increasingly pluralistic world, confrontational evangelism is often considered distasteful if not wrong. Within Christian circles deeply committed to evangelism and world missions, there are increasing questions about the effectiveness of aggressive apologetic witness. On both accounts readers will welcome the tone and the message of this book. Its central concern is effective evangelism, with the conviction that a missiological commitment to incarnational ministry gets better results than an apologetic approach that frequently antagonizes the people it wants to convert.

The book is arranged in three sections which investigate evangelism in terms of its history, its methods, and its applications. The basic thrust of the first two sections is that contextualization is a better approach to evangelism than confrontation is. However, chapters five and six are a cautious challenge to this thesis. Sin is embedded in every particular culture. Some elements of a pre-Christian religious culture are barriers to evangelism rather than bridges for the gospel message. Contextualization has limits; some fear that accommodation can result in syncretism.

The third section of the book, which is the largest, uses case studies of how one might approach a Christadelphian or a follower of La Veyan Satanism. Other chapters are narrative in nature as they relate strategies that have been useful for Mormons and various types of New Age groups.

The book is provocative because it is calling Christians to consider whether their methods of evangelism are effective, especially when confronting certain people

whose religious convictions are deep. This is a legitimate concern, since evangelism and mission occupy the borderland between theory and practice. The writers and editors are not pushing an esoteric agenda. Several of them belong to the Issue group on new Religious Movements that is part of the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelism. They are mapping out new evangelistic territory for many evangelical Christians around the world. The book is a "trip-pic" for the journey ahead of us; it is not, and does not claim to be, a travelogue of a mission successfully completed.

Encountering New Religious Movements should be read by Christians who have a keen interest in sharing their faith with neighbors near and far. Having used it in a seminary course on New Religious Movements, I can report that students responded positively to its tone and its contents. Hopefully it will receive a wide readership, for it raises vital questions that Christians must be addressing.

Luke L. Keefer, Jr.

Robert E Weber, *Ancient-Future Evangelism: Making Your Church a Faith-Forming Community*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2003. 218pp., paper, \$14.99.

Webber, a noted author and lecturer has written this book, second in the *Ancient-Future Series*, as a response to questions posed at the 1999 meeting of The International Consultation on Discipleship. Two questions that he addresses in this book are the large number of converts to Christianity that fall away and the "paradox of growth without depth."

In setting the stage for his premise, he compares the post-Christian culture of today with the culture in the first, second and third centuries, in that they both are non-Christian, culturally diverse, and relativistic. During the first centuries the culture was pagan, and Christians were part of an alternative culture that evangelized the world in unparalleled numbers. Most of these converts remained in the faith. He asserts the need to draw on the past to learn for the future.

His approach to evangelism is based on a second century model from Hippolytus' work, *The Apostolic Tradition*. It is a process that begins with conversion, continues with instruction in discipleship, and leads to a mature faith formation. The final step in the process is for one to come to a vocation within the church and beyond the church. The transition from one step to another is marked by a rite of passage, the final one being baptism. His model is a return to the unitive process of the Hebraic tradition and teaching of the early church that follows the pattern of "believing, belonging and behaving." It is a process that takes time.

Weber then focuses on the content of teaching. As in the first book in this series, *Ancient-Future Faith*, he calls for a return to proclaiming the story of God's mission to rescue humanity and Jesus' death, resurrection, and second coming as the core of all teaching and worship. His passion for worship is evident as he admonishes churches to "pay attention to worship" in telling the story each week. Participating in this kind of worship leads to greater depth of faith and commitment within the congregation. At this point the church is ready to reach outward to bring this process to its own indigenous culture.

Weber uses charts to concisely reiterate his points on theology or process. Each chapter concludes with questions that challenge honest reflection of one's own church, and which help to point in the direction of intentional evangelism. It is a helpful

guide for church leaders and pastors who desire to re-form their church into a community committed to faith building from within in order to reach out with lasting impact.

Mary Elizabeth Nau

Terry W. York, *America's Worship Wars*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2003. 138 pp., paper, \$16.95.

In recent decades, the conflict within congregations over differing preferences in the style of worship has escalated to the point that the conflict is often described as "war." The upheaval resulting from this conflict has polarized Christians and divided congregations. For ministers and congregations who find themselves in the midst of this conflict, Terry W. York draws on his knowledge as musician, minister, and educator to offer a thought-provoking examination of the threads of influence that escalated into war. Though the discussion of the historical developments of the conflict is written mainly from the perspective of the free church tradition, and Southern Baptists, in particular, York does draw on the experiences of other Christian communions at salient points, most notably Roman Catholic and Lutheran struggles.

York rightly identifies the struggle in terms of the pressures that cultural changes exert on our understanding of worship and theology. Using the language of warfare throughout the book, York identifies the two sides of the conflict as "veterans of the fort" (those who are comfortable within the sanctuary and traditional forms) and "veterans of the front" (those who want to take the central biblical message to the streets, embracing cultural changes). He points out the influences of large non-denominational evangelical movements such as the Billy Graham Crusades, the radical nature of the Jesus Movement, and the attraction of para-church youth ministries. York argues that in the 1970's and 1980's theo-political shifts within denominations were reflected by shifts in worship style by congregations. That on occasion those shifts were imposed by the minister without consensus from the congregation increased tension levels. Other significant influences discussed are Contemporary Christian Music, the church growth movement, the impact of televangelism, and shifting patterns of language.

In looking toward a "negotiated peace" York emphasizes that the leaders of the Church must effect the coming together. He points out the work of several leaders who, in his opinion, are working toward that peace: Graham Kendrick, Sally Morgenthaler, Donald Hustad, Harold M. Best, Marva Dawn and Robert Webber. For those who are just now beginning to explore the field of worship studies, his brief discussion will point the reader to a wide range of further reading.

York is most insightful as he discusses the status of Christianity within American culture. In past decades, the Church enjoyed a highly respected position at the center of American culture. Increasingly in recent decades, however, Christianity has been pushed to the margins of our culture, no longer enjoying the same position of status. York reminds us, however, that this is not necessarily bad. He suggests that historically Christianity has been more effective in its mission when it was at the edges of society. Worship practice, though, is in transition and this process is far from over. It is in the transition that conflicts arise. Though he asserts that the worship wars were inevitable, York is convinced that there are ways to end the wars and offers a theological vision for resolution. Perhaps rightly, he leaves the practical application of his theological vision up to individual congregations to implement.

This slender volume is accessible to both clergy and laypersons interested in the conflict over worship. It could form the basis of congregational study groups and would be enlightening reading for worship committees. York's work will also be useful in college religion classes that discuss the intersection of Christianity and culture and seminary classrooms engaged in the study of worship in the free church tradition.

Deborah Carlton Loftis

Jerome Berryman, *Godly Play*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Press, 1995. 158 pp., \$11.00.

Religious education begins in the Sunday School classroom. Whether children annoy us or delight us, they are the church of today. How we teach and engage them spiritually will determine the plight of the church and, most importantly, the future of our students' faith. For this reason, I was drawn to this slightly older book about religious education. Children have changed over the years. Problems such as Attention Deficit Disorder are much more common. Teaching methods in schools have gradually changed along with them. It seems clear then, that our approach to Sunday School must also adjust to the needs of children.

Godly Play takes a new and innovative approach to this long enduring practice of Christian Education. Berryman relates learning to games. We play games from the time we are children, and we adapt to them quickly. The rules are often gathered simply by experiencing the game. We are constantly acquiring new games: the math game, the science game, the music game, the religious game, and the ministry game. Berryman calls us to uphold one game differently: the godly game. The acquisition of spiritual understanding will determine the type of spiritual faith-walk we will have throughout life. He invites us to join in the play as an adult, allowing the children to witness how we play and to play along with us. The book contains significant material on how one learns and applies religious language. The book is sub-titled "An Imaginative Approach to Religious Education," and he gives both practical and theoretical tools for engaging both the teacher and the students' imagination. While his writing and the life history he includes is not limited to one type of congregation or denomination, Berryman definitely falls in a mainline and liturgical category.

For the most part, the book is a practical philosophy of Christian education. The author writes autobiographically, giving insights into how he created this and the companion curriculum. Largely borrowing from the Montessori Method, which involves more individualized learning, he draws you into the thinking behind the lesson. The book is fascinating in that it helps the Sunday school teacher realize and recognize what is going on inside children's minds. It shows how to interpret their response to the lesson, combining philosophy, psychology and biblical truths. What makes this book appealing is its depth. It helps the teacher or Christian educator understand the why behind the how and what of the lesson. In effect, it teaches the teacher how to be creative and how to better involve students in the learning process. Surprisingly, Berryman includes a great variety from church history, theology and ecclesiastical material.

This is no simple Sunday School manual, although it was not a difficult read either. I would recommend this book as an excellent resource to pass on to that tired or discouraged Sunday School teacher. A slightly different approach to the preparation of the material might revive what has become a tedious practice. In addition, it might help

them regain the interest of students who have come to expect a certain approach to the lesson each week. Let's face it, kids play the game too.

Jonathan Mathewson

Richard & Renée Durfield, *Raising Pure Kids in an Impure World*. Bloomington, Minnesota, Bethany House Publishers, 2004. 188 pp, paper, \$12.99.

Raising Pure Kids in an Impure World is an updated version of an earlier book by the Durfields titled *Raising Them Chaste* (1991). The title implies that the book is a broad collection of strategies for child rearing in a fallen world, but instead it is the description of the authors' particular strategy of using "Key Talks." The "Key Talk" strategy is designed to approach young people as they transition from childhood into the teenage years and all of the sexual pressures, internal and external, that they face at that time. Parents, or other persons of influence in the lives of young people, are instructed to prepare a time of frank, one on one discussion in a formal and public environment, often a restaurant, in order to emphasize the seriousness of the topic to be discussed. The authors outline such a discussion and list several basic elements that form a nexus of discussion and a number of optional elements that may be included, depending on the young person's personality and specific questions. Central to the "Key Talk" strategy, is a fairly in-depth discussion on the nature and meaning of covenant making, and the presentation of a key shaped ring sealing the young person's covenant with God.

The particular strategy laid out in *Raising Pure Kids* might strike some parents as over the top and may not appeal to everyone, but within it is valuable, practical advice on many subjects of interest to the parents of children approaching, or within, this difficult time of transition. Addressed are issues such as when and how to have "that talk" with your child, discussions on prayer and advocacy for your child, as well as dating guidelines.

Despite the title, and what seemed to be the outline of a specific strategy, I found this book to have considerable value for its advice and encouragement. This would be a useful addition to the library of any parent struggling to help their children make the transition to adulthood.

John Partridge

Anne B. Keating, *The Wired Professor: A Guide to Incorporating the World Wide Web in College Instruction*. NY: New York University Press, 1999, 256 pp.

The web has been used in teaching for a few years now. The question surrounding this use of the web is this: is it being used well? *The Wired Professor* is a great book detailing how the web can effectively be used in higher education. As the Director of Technology Resources for Ashland Theological Seminary, I was immediately interested in what this book could offer me and the faculty in regards to using the web to enhance our classroom instruction.

I found the book to be written for people like me as well as people with limited understanding or experience with the Internet. Chapters one and two focus on the history of the Internet, and the so-called information highway as well as a guide to how the internet works. Chapters three through six focus on issues of curriculum, web-site development, instructional design and conclude with a great chapter of tips and tricks.

The book even has a companion website which gives information at your fingertips when creating or updating a website. The site even includes examples of faculty websites they consider outstanding that one can view. However, it is apparent that this site is not updated regularly if at all.

A good web-page for higher education would help students find the information on the web that is useful and accurate as well as provide forums for communication, tutorials for added instruction, and research tools. *The Wired Professor* guides one through the different tools and gives instruction on how to use these tools effectively in the classroom as well as outside.

I would recommend this book to educators who want to enhance their teaching by using tools that speak to the current generation and will assist other generations in developing their understanding of the power of technology tools as well as giving them some much-needed hands-on experience. I would recommend, however, that the reader be patient while getting through the mounds of information provided by this book. It is thorough and detailed and for those not accustomed to reading technical material it may seem overwhelming.

Vickie Taylor