

### Book Reviews

Hermann Gunkel, *Creation and Chaos in the Primeval Era and the Eschaton: A Religio-Historical Study of Genesis 1 and Revelation 12*. With contributions by Heinrich Zimmerman. Translated by K. William Whitney, Jr. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006 Pp. xlii, 442. Paper. \$36.00

Originally published in 1895 and reprinted in 1921, Gunkel's *Schöpfung und Chaos in Urzeit und Endzeit* has now finally been translated into English. Thus, one of the great classics of biblical criticism is now available to a wider audience. Since Gunkel's method and conclusions are well known, a legitimate question is what need is there for a review of a work so foundational and well known? Very little discussed has not been covered elsewhere. Even the appendix (pp. 253-83) which provides translations of selected Babylonian myths does not provide readers access to material not available elsewhere, such as Pritchard's *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, or Hallo's *Context of Scripture*.

Nevertheless, a review of this translation is warranted for several reasons. First, the preface by Peter Machinist provides the reader with a brief analysis of both the significance and shortfalls of *Creation and Chaos* (xv-xx). In particular, the reader is informed that Gunkel focused too exclusively upon Mesopotamian mythology for cultural parallels with the Hebrew Bible. Gunkel could not be blamed for not anticipating later discoveries, particularly of Canaanite and West Semitic literature, whose impact on the biblical tradition is undoubtedly more profound than the Mesopotamian or Babylonian parallels (xix). Nevertheless, twenty-first century readers are well advised that the discussion has advanced.

Second, the translator provides several useful notes throughout the text, updating and clarifying Gunkel's work. Particularly helpful are the transliteration and translation of Hebrew and Greek words and phrases. This feature, lacking in the German original, provides helpful assistance for the reader not fluent in the original biblical languages. The notes also include occasional updates of Gunkel's arguments, as well as explanations for the translation. All of these features make the book both more accessible and more coherent to those not up familiar with Gunkel's hypotheses.

Third, since *Creation and Chaos* has been foundational for so much of later scholarship, including A. Yarbro Collins's *Combat Myth in the Book of Revelation*, it is most beneficial for English language students, with no access to the German original, to be able to analyze the details of Gunkel's discussion for themselves. In the process, readers recognize not only where Gunkel was most prescient, especially in his understanding of mythic influence on the creation story of Genesis 1-3, as well as allusions to creation myth in Job and Isaiah, but also where he failed to be convincing. With regard to the latter, while Gunkel's mythological interpretation of Rev. 12 has stood the test of time, his employment of now discredited source criticism (217-219) does not instill current readers with confidence. Furthermore, Gunkel's thoroughgoing mythological interpretation of Rev. 12, 13, 17, has now been superseded. Rather, scholars today do find that John addressed specific objections to the Rome and the emperor cult, not only in Rev. 12, 13, and 17, but in Rev. 18 as well. Finally, the Gunkel's assertion that Rev. 12-13 does not echo the imagery of Dan. 7-8 but that the Seer drew

independently from ancient sources similar to those used in Dan. 7 (128-29; 239-40) is, in light of the work of G. K. Beale and others, no longer credible.

Yet, while scholarship has progressed from the time of Gunkel, *Creation and Chaos*, for all its shortcomings, remains a remarkable work. It set the methodological agenda for later studies. That we can still debate Gunkel's missteps in no way diminishes from his remarkable accomplishment. The book should be read not only as a monument to the history of scholarship, but also as a continuing contribution to the discussion of how the biblical writers interacted with their culture. This dialogue was reflected not only in the way they employed mythological themes, but also how they transformed these images. Whitney has provided a significant service in making this classic available now to English readers.

Russell Morton

Scott J. Hafemann and P.R. House, eds. *Central Themes in Biblical Theology: Mapping Unity in Diversity*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007. 336 pp., paper, \$30.00.

The seven essays chosen for this book all share a common interest in exploring themes significantly attested to and developed in the Bible. As made clear in the introduction of the book, the contributors all share three core convictions: the unity of the Bible as God's word, the ability to synthesize theological concepts to produce a holistic understanding of theology, and the benefit of scholarly collaboration and dialogue in an attempt to do "whole-Bible biblical theology" (see pp. 15-19).

The seven chapters of the book cover six "themes" or "structural ideas" in the Bible. The last chapter is a nuanced contribution to how one perceives a salvation-historical approach to biblical theology. In the first essay, Scott Hafemann discusses the "covenantal relationship" that "provides the *structure* that serves to integrate the interrelated themes developed throughout the history of redemption delineated in the Scriptures" (p. 22). A helpful contribution to theology that Hafemann makes regards how one understands the commands of God in light of his grace. Hafemann, drawing from the covenantal structure of the divine-human relationship, explains that "Although all the promises of God are conditional, the provisions of God that make inheriting those promises possible are given unconditionally" (p. 39). In many ways, Hafemann's first essay sets the foundation for the others and the subsequent discussions both presuppose and affirm a covenantal understanding of biblical theology.

In the second essay, Thomas Schreiner treats the subject of law, but specifically in the context of covenant and thus focuses on "the commands of God." Law, then, is not just what humans are ethically supposed to do, but specifically law-obedience is a covenantal expectation. Even in the new covenant, the law is not something to be freed from, but God ultimately empowers his people to put it into practice (see pp. 77-8). Frank Thielman's treatment of "atonement" comes next with a discussion of the logic of sacrifice and a brief defense of the conceptual framework of substitutionary atonement. Thielman, though, does not argue that substitutionary atonement is the only way to understand NT soteriology, but is nevertheless an important element (p. 123). Next, Stephen Dempster traces the development of the theme of "the servant of the Lord" which he characterizes as "a human being [who] is entrusted with a special task to do God's will" (p. 131). Looking at such servant-figures as Adam, Abraham, Moses, Israel

(as servant-nation), and David, Dempster observes that these servants largely fail in their duties. Christ, however, “is the fulfillment of the anticipated servant-king of the Old Testament” (p. 173). Dempster does not end his essay with the idea that Christ does for his people what they could not and did not do. There is a teleology to this theme in that Christ’s “work, his role, is ultimately to produce servants of his likeness” (p. 173).

In the fifth chapter Paul House pursues the theme of judgment in the Bible with a view towards the idea of “the Day of the Lord.” Interestingly, House argues that there is a multiplicity of temporal aspects to the Day of the Lord as it can be understood to have occurred when God’s people have been judged and punished in the past, and also is yet to occur in a more climactic way (see pp. 219, 223). The penultimate chapter, by Elmer Martens, on “the people of God” is sort of an *inclusio* which returns to the centrality of the covenantal framework of the Bible and its purpose in forming the church. Though Martens offers a number of very rewarding insights, I was intrigued by his statement that, in the Ancient Near East, “gods were usually associated not first with people, but with a given territory,” thus making the Israelite covenant quite unique (p. 232). Also, Martens’ intertextual approach to the theme of the “people of God” is executed with great verve and skill. The final chapter by Roy Ciampa on the “history of redemption” is an attempt to develop a more sophisticated narratological framework for understanding the Bible.

The only limitation I found in this very excellent study is that it was lacking in a chapter focused on “God” as a subject (or meta-agent) in the Bible. Nevertheless, students and scholars will learn much from the essays provided in this most useful exploration of themes in biblical theology.

Nijay K. Gupta, Durham University

John H. Walton, Mark L. Strauss, and Ted Cooper Jr., *The Essential Bible Companion: Key Insights for Reading God’s Word*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005. 150 pp., paper, \$14.99.

Every teacher of God’s Word needs a quick glance at a book that can give them some basics about the books of the Bible, maps of biblical lands, key people of the Bible, themes, timelines, and definitions of terms. Walton, Strauss, and Cooper have arranged this book to give a glimpse of the Old and New Testament, covering all books of the Bible.

The goal “is to go beyond basic Bible content” (7). There are many Bible helps and references that a pastor, teacher, or leader can choose from for their studies. In this book one “will gain not only an appreciation for the central importance of this sacred text, but in doing so will come to appreciate the literature, theology, and history for the contribution they make and the role that they play in the greater story of God’s plan for reconciling his creation to himself, restoring his presence in his creation, and forging a relationship with his people” (8).

The book opens with an overview which covers: What is the Bible All About?; The Garden of Eden; The Covenant; The Burning Bush and Mount Sinai; The Tabernacle and Temple; the Incarnation; Pentecost; and New Creation. The authors emphasize that “the Bible is all about connecting with God” (9). A relationship with God is of utmost

importance and the authors created this tool to assist the person to a greater relationship with God.

Each section is titled with the name of the Bible book along with key concepts, terms, teachings about God, verses and people to know. These are colorful and a timeline is included. The purpose of the Bible book is discussed on one page along with a display of a map and picture to correlate with the book. It has a very artistic design for each book that is pleasing to the eye. Each book of the Bible is briefly shared in a two page spread. This book is well written and designed for a user-friendly approach.

It begins with the Old Testament and includes a midsection of "How the Old Testament Related to the New" (74). These subjects are covered in the midsection of the book: Creation, Fall, and Reconciliation; the Restoration of God's Reign; Old and New Covenants; The Fulfillment of the Law; Jesus Christ: God's Agent of Salvation; and The Final Restoration. The New Testament follows the midsection.

One interesting fact about the book is that all of the books are covered in the two page spread except for Revelation. This Bible book has an extra two page spread entitled, "More about Revelation" (130). These two pages include Genre (Literary Form); Interpreting Revelation; Interesting Facts about Revelation; Author; and Recipients. There is a names glossary and a terms glossary along with an index that concludes the book.

No doubt, the book is true to its name, *The Essential Bible Companion*. It is a practical ministry tool for a layperson to use in preparation for Bible study or for a Sunday School teacher to have a better grasp on the Bible. It was created for use as a companion to *The Bible in 90 Days* curriculum written by Ted Cooper, one of the authors.

Its content is intended for anyone wanting a quick glimpse into the essentials of God's Word. "Familiarity with the Bible has been largely lost to the church. For the most part, we believe that this is true because people don't have time to read it, and when they do, they simply don't know what to do with it. Many people desire to know God's Word, but feel that they are groping blindly as they seek to figure out how to make Scripture relevant to their lives" (7). For this reason, the book has achieved its goal of presenting the background of the Bible in a simple manner for anyone who picks up this book. It is a great Christian education tool for any teacher, whether skilled or just beginning to teach God's Word.

Dawn Morton

David Darom, *Animals of the Bible*. Herzlia, Israel: Palphot, n.d. 47 pp., paper, \$9.99.

Uri Paz, *Birds in the Land of the Bible*. Herzlia, Israel: Palphot, n.d. 48 pp., paper, \$9.99.

*The Dead Sea: Jericho, Qumran, En Gedi, Masada, Sodom*. Jerusalem: Israel Museum, n.d. 72 pp, paper, \$7.99.

*Jericho: Old Jericho, Mt. of Temptation, Hisham's Palace, Wadi Kelt*. [Jerusalem: Israel Museum, n.d.]. 32 pp., paper, [\$7.99].

All of these volumes are collections of color photographs of their respective topics and places. They are of the genre of booklets available to tourists in order to give them some background of things seen and to supplement their own picture collections.

They also provide insight into the land for those who have as yet not had opportunity to visit it in person.

The volume on animals includes numerous biblical quotes (both Old and New Testament) in which various fauna are mentioned, with a picture, English and Latin identification, and at times a brief comment on what is purported to be each species mentioned. Birds are much more difficult to identify exactly with the various terms used in Scripture, and so that volume pictures and discusses birds currently found in Israel, with no attempt at biblical identification.

The two geographically related volumes include maps and plans as well as photos showing both archaeological and contemporary scenes. Brief comments explain each photo, placing them in their biblical and historical context.

The volumes are light on textual content, but can enliven personal and group Bible study by allowing one to see things and places mentioned in Scripture, and so would find a place in church libraries. They are available from Concordia Publishing House ([www.cph.org](http://www.cph.org)).

David W. Baker

John Day, ed. *In Search of Pre-Exilic Israel*. JSOTSup 406. T&T Clark, 2004. 432 pp.

This volume brings together essays that respond to a radical “revisionist” view of the composition of biblical texts and the history to which they refer. This view holds that most, if not the entirety, of the Hebrew Bible was composed during the post-exilic era at the very earliest (and likely during the Hellenistic period) and that the “historical books” are nothing of the kind, but rather fabrications of scribes who composed a national narrative for ideological purposes. The writers in this volume test and refute these claims and the arguments that support them. The opening essay by E. Nicholson provides an orientation for the reader via a succinct and cogent summary of how 20<sup>th</sup> Century scholarship attained and then lost a consensus, yielding a fragmented discussion that is marked, in the extreme, by the arguments of scholars such as T. L. Thompson and P. R. Davies. The subsequent essays advance the mainstream perspective that there remain strong and persuasive reasons to discern authentic historical remembrances in biblical texts (which is a different thing than holding that the texts themselves are accurate factual accounts of “what happened”). Two essays (by G. Davis and A. Frendo) deal with the Bible’s remembrance of Israel’s origins as a nation by discussing what can and cannot be gleaned by bringing biblical texts into conversation with archaeology and sociology on the topics of the exodus and Israel’s emergence in the land of Canaan. The next set of essays then moves to issues related to the monarchical period, namely, the existence of united monarchy under David and Solomon (W. G. Dever), the composition of the so-called “Succession Narrative” (J. Barton) and the Yahwist epic (J. A. Emerton), the “social crisis” that gave rise to prophetic activity in the 8<sup>th</sup> Century B.C.E. (W. Houston), and the aftermath of the fall of Samaria (G. N. Knoppers). Following these are essays that take up a textual focus, with authors assessing how much pre-exilic material can be discerned in the books of Isaiah (H. G. M. Williamson), Jeremiah (D. J. Reiner), Psalms (J. Day), and wisdom literature (K. J. Dell), rounding off with a substantial essay (B. M. Levinson) on the pre-exilic origin of the Covenant Code. The final essays place the emergence of monotheism prior to the exile (B. A. Mastin), examine the relevance of

Mesopotamian texts and their incorrect interpretation and application by revisionists (W. G. Lambert), explain the role of inscriptional material in illuminating the prevalence of writing in pre-exilic Israel (A. Lemaire), and establish the antiquity of Hebrew poetic forms by comparison with Canaanite poetry (T. Fenton). All the essays provide excellent snapshots of the state the discussion between mainstream scholarship and the revisionists and, more broadly, to the larger issues that continue to fuel the attempts to reconstruct the history of Israel and the texts that constitute our primary sources for that history.

L. Daniel Hawk

David A. Leiter, *Neglected Voices: Peace in the Old Testament*. Scottsdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 2007. Pp. 187, paper, \$16.99.

Anyone interested in exploring the concept of peace in the Old Testament will find David Leiter's book a helpful resource. Inspired, in part, by Susan Niditch's development of war ideologies in her book, *War in the Hebrew Bible*, Leiter discusses five peace ideologies that he detects in the Old Testament: "peace and nonviolence, peace after conflict or war, visions of peace, mandates for peace, and peace within the realm of piety" (p. 17). Leiter devotes a chapter to each type of peace, and this comprises the heart of the book. These five chapters are preceded by an introduction and a chapter exploring various uses of *shalom* in the Old Testament; they are followed by a brief conclusion and a bibliographic essay.

One of the book's strengths is its ability to demonstrate that the Old Testament contains many texts related to peace that span various genres and appear throughout the Old Testament. Though one might dispute Leiter's claim "that peace is central to the Old Testament" (p. 154), he demonstrates that it is certainly more prominent than many people realize.

I thought it would have been helpful to include a description of what constitutes a "peace ideology" near the beginning of the book since this is key to Leiter's study. Additionally, I wished Leiter had explained more precisely what he means by the term "peace," since this ostensibly governed what texts were—and were not—discussed. In my estimation, this would have been more useful than devoting Chapter 1 to a study of how the word *shalom* is used in the Old Testament.

In terms of the ideologies he develops, some are especially compelling—such as peace and nonviolence (Chapter 2), while others are less helpful and somewhat ambiguous—such as his discussion of post-violence peace (Chapter 3). As one might expect, a significant portion of each of the five main chapters is devoted to a discussion of key biblical passages that Leiter finds illustrative. Leiter proceeds very methodically in these sections. He quotes the passage under consideration—even when quite lengthy—discusses it, then moves on to the next passage. While this results in a very predictable format, some readers may find it tedious.

Since Leiter is not trying to be exhaustive, it is probably unfair to fault him for not addressing this or that particular text. Still, his argument could have been even stronger at points by appealing to additional passages. For example, Leiter could have included the story of Joseph's dramatic forgiveness (Gen 37-50) and Abigail's massacre-stopping intervention (1 Sam 25) in his discussion of peace and nonviolence (Chapter 2). Leiter might have also reflected on the nonviolent story of creation in Gen 1-2, an

especially impressive example when set against the backdrop of other ancient Near Eastern creation accounts.

I appreciated Leiter's attempt to make contemporary connections at the end of each of the five chapters describing various peace ideologies. The material in these sections provide some useful starting points for considering how the peace related concerns in the Old Testament connect to today's world.

In the concluding chapter, Leiter draws out some important implications of his study, and readers would do well to pay attention to these. One of these concerns the issue of how to "come to terms with the fact that the Old Testament contains passages of extreme violence and passages that are pro-peace" (p. 155). This is a very significant issue that needs more careful attention than it customarily receives.

Overall, Leiter's book is helpful tool for broadening our view of peace in the Old Testament by demonstrating that the Old Testament's interest in peace is not limited to just a few well known prophetic passages. It enlarges our appreciation of the diverse array of passages that are, in one way or another, concerned with issues of peace and justice. Readers interested in these issues will find Leiter's book a convenient guide and a welcome addition to studies that explore peace in the Old Testament.

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Tremper Longman III and Peter Enns, eds. *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Wisdom, Poetry & Writings*. Downers Grove, Ill: InterVarsity, 2008. 967 pp.

It is a pleasure to commend this latest publication in IVP's acclaimed series of dictionaries. In both the breadth and depth of its entries, this is a magnificent volume. The editors have enlisted an impressive list of contributors who, particularly in the major articles, draw from a perspective enriched by a career of reflection and conversation on the topics they address. The books that constitute the focus of the dictionary comprise an array of biblical texts: Psalms, the wisdom books (Proverbs, Job, Ecclesiastes, and the apocryphal books of Sirach and the Wisdom of Solomon), Lamentations, the Song of Songs, Ruth, and Esther. In spite of these diverse biblical materials, the dictionary displays an overall coherence that suggests many significant connections between the books and the issues associated with them. The articles themselves cover all relevant areas of study, including extensive introductions to scholarship on the books and treatments of pertinent topics and themes (e.g. "Fear of the Lord," "Theodicy," "Wisdom and Biblical Theology"), background and context (e.g. "Cult, Worship: Psalms," "Megillot and Festivals," "Sages, Schools, Education"), methods of interpretation (e.g. "Editorial Criticism," "Feminist Interpretation," "Social-Scientific Approaches"), poetic devices and characteristics (e.g. "Ambiguity," "Chiasm," "Meter," "Word Play"), and persons (e.g. "Boaz," "David," "Woman Wisdom and Woman Folly"). A particular strength is the inclusion of articles that give specific attention to aspects of study addressed in summary articles. The reader, for example, may move from a programmatic essay on "Imagery" to more narrowly focused articles on different kinds of imagery (animal, architectural, creation, floral, life, mountain, protection, salvation and deliverance, and warfare). Along similar lines, each of the books in the Masoretic canon is covered by at least three articles which include an introduction to the book and scholarship, the book's ancient Near Eastern or extra-biblical background, and the history

of its interpretation. This dictionary, in short, will surely constitute a valuable and frequently-consulted source for anyone seeking an introduction to the books, an update on the issues and debates that configure contemporary scholarship, or information on their content and interpretation.

L. Daniel Hawk

M. Christine Tetley, *The Reconstructed Chronology of the Divided Kingdom*. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2005. Xiv + 194 pp., hardcover, \$39.50

The author, who has been involved in missionary, educational, and pastoral ministry, revised her 2000 doctoral thesis from the Australian College of Theology to produce this work. It concerns the vexing and longstanding problem of the chronology of the kings of Israel and Judah, as well as their relationship with extra-biblical resources. It consists of nine chapters (introduction, transmission history of the book of Kings, chronological data [with a special discussion of the information supplied by the Dead Sea manuscript c<sub>2</sub>], regnal formulae, a methodology for reconstructing chronology, a relative chronology of the Early and Late Divided Kingdom, and an absolute chronology of the Divided Kingdom) supplemented by no less than sixty supporting tables, and indexes of authors, Scripture, and royal names. It is an important work which will need to be taken into consideration in all future chronological research.

A number of points are controversial, going against current wisdom, which, it must be remembered, has yet to provide a completely adequate answer to the problems, so should not be seen as sacrosanct. Tetley proposes: regnal years are reckoned from the death of the preceding king, with no indication of partial years, interregnums, or coregencies; the dating systems are the same for both Israel and Judah; reigns are calculated in full years, with rounding evident in the text; special account must be taken in reckoning the length of a king's final year of rule. In the area of wider Near Eastern history, Tetley questions the reliability of the Assyrian eponym lists which have been used to establish an absolute chronology for the biblical reigns. These lists are records of different cultic officials who have consecutive, year long responsibilities over the last three centuries of Assyrian history. Mention is made in the lists of an eclipse which we know occurred in 763 BC, enabling an absolute chronology to be established. Biblical records can then be tied to this list by synchronisms, mentions of an event in the reign of king X of Judah happening in the year Y of Assyrian king Z. If the eponym lists are wrong or incomplete, the whole synchronized system comes unmoored.

Through her calculations, Samaria fell to the Assyrians in 718 BC instead of the generally accepted 722 BC, but more drastically, it alters standard Assyrian chronology by 43 years. Historians will particularly question the basis for reconstruction being the biblical text rather than the ancient Near Eastern evidence. While her system seems to hold together based on biblical texts, fitting into its wider context will be a challenge. If nothing else, the volume should make historians aware of the traditional albatrosses with which they are encumbered, and which might need to be jettisoned in order to take a fresh look at an old problem. Due to the technical nature of the topic and the evidence, the volume will find its best home in serious theological libraries.

David W. Baker

Bruce K. Waltke with Charles Yu, *An Old Testament Theology: An Exegetical, Canonical, and Thematic Approach*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2007. 1,040 pp., cloth, \$44.99.

For many, Bruce Waltke needs no introduction. He is a well-respected biblical scholar who has given us excellent commentaries on Genesis, Proverbs and Micah, as well as other solid works. *An Old Testament Theology* is the product of decades of careful exegetical and theological study critically tested in schools such as Dallas Theological Seminary, Regent College (Vancouver), and Reformed Theological Seminary.

As indicated by its title, this book adopts exegetical, canonical and thematic approaches to the development of a theology of the Old Testament (OT). Waltke describes his book as “a profession of faith – a reasoning faith, I hope, and reasonable,” (10) and expresses its objectives as to know God personally, to understand the nature of God’s revelation, to know self, to understand the OT and the NT, and to contribute to spiritual formation. From the beginning the reader anticipates hearing not only the mind of a scholar, but also the heart of a shepherd.

Waltke’s theological perspective is biblical and evangelical. He has a high view of Scripture; he accepts biblical inerrancy and infallibility (77). This work is a biblical theology, rather than a systematic theology; Covenantal, not Dispensationalist (although he acknowledges the usefulness of dispensations); Evangelical, not Liberal, Neoorthodox, Traditionalist or Fundamentalist. Clear distinctions are made between this work and other recent OT theologies, notably those of Walter Brueggemann and James Barr (68-73). Those who begin from a different reference point will likely find much with which they may not agree.

Waltke argues that the kingdom of God is the dynamic, unifying center of the Bible: “the irruption of the holy God’s merciful kingship” (147).

The book is organized in three parts. In Part 1 (Introduction), Waltke sets forth and defends his basis, task and method of biblical theology. He states clearly that the task “is to articulate the distinctive theologies of individual blocks of writings in the Old Testament and to trace the trajectory of their major themes and concepts to their fulfillment in Jesus Christ and his church to their consummation in Christ’s second coming, the Parousia ... that introduces the final eschaton” (20). This part includes valuable summaries of hermeneutics (chap. 3), narrative theology (chap. 4), and poetics and intertextuality (chap. 5) – all necessary components of his method of biblical theology. The concluding chapter of Part 1 (chap. 6) is an insightful overview of the proposed “center” – the irruption, or in-breaking, of the kingdom of God.

In Part 2 (22 chapters), Waltke traces numerous themes through blocks of writing from the “Primary History” being Genesis through to 2 Kings (excluding Ruth), to which he adds Ezra, Nehemiah, 1 and 2 Chronicles, and Esther. Each of these blocks of writing is examined exegetically and then theologically with an eye to demonstrating the centrality of the kingdom of God. Later, I will briefly critique one of these themes.

Part 3, takes up those blocks of writing not addressed in Part 2. These include the books of the prophets, Ruth, Psalms and Wisdom. As in Part 2, the reader is treated to a discerning but brief exploration of these Scriptures, particularly as they contribute to the theme of the kingdom of God.

Thorough indices (71 pages) are provided for works cited, Scripture and ancient literature, subjects, and authors. In addition, numerous helpful charts and several excursuses are provided throughout the text. A table of these charts and excursuses would have been a useful addition to this book.

As indicated, I return to critique one of the themes examined in Part 2 which, hopefully, will give insight into the method and perspective of the book as a whole. The "Gift of Land" is an integral component of the kingdom of God and is considered in three successive chapters. The first of these chapters (chap. 18) is subtitled "Joshua" and is an excellent 22 page mini-commentary of the book of Joshua, but there is no biblical theology as such. As with other themes, exegesis is the initial step for two reasons. First, Waltke argues that exegesis is a necessary prerequisite to biblical theology. Second, many readers are biblically illiterate (21).

Chapter 19 (subtitled "The Old Testament") is a brief, yet masterful, survey of the "Land" in OT and Second Temple literature. Some might question the inclusion within an Old Testament Theology of Chapter 20 (subtitled "The New Testament"), however, this is consistent with Waltke's canonical approach. This chapter provides a stage upon which to explore various issues as well as demonstrate the OT trajectory in the NT. It is here that most of the theology appears to be unpacked in the NT's definition (or, re-definition) of "Land" (viz., spiritually, transcendentally, and eschatologically). In short, Waltke contends that "Land in the Old Testament is a type of the Christian life in Christ" (560).

Although I noted some minor flaws such as the odd missing or inaccurate citation, misspelling, or detracting language (e.g., "twit"), these are mere quibbles. Despite Waltke's explanation for using *I AM* for the tetragrammaton (*YHWH* – 11), my sense is that this translation reduces more than it illumines. My preference would have been to use *YHWH* and provide an explanation of its richness and significance.

I would suggest this is a work which is somewhat larger than its title – it is more a biblical theology with an OT focus than an OT theology. This book is accessible and has much to inform and reward the scholar, student, pastor and diligent Christian. In keeping with my high regard for Dr. Waltke's scholarship and spirit, I recommend this book as a valuable and enduring addition to any serious biblical collection.

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Debra Reid, *Esther*. Tyndale Old Testament Commentary. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2008. Pp. 168, paper, \$16.00.

This is the first in a series of reformatted replacement volumes for the long-standing Tyndale Old Testament Commentary series. A feature of these new volumes is that the commentary on each section of text is structured under three headings: *Context*, *Comment* and *Meaning*. The author is Director of Open Learning at Spurgeon's College, London, UK.

The *Introduction* gives a concise but adequate discussion of such issues as the date and historical setting of the book, its canonical status, literary and textual issues, and its theology and purpose. Against the general current consensus Reid dates the book to the late fifth or first half of the fourth century BC, though admitting that this is a possibility rather than anything more certain. The discussion of the genre of *Esther* leads

to the conclusion that it is unique within biblical literature and that there is no definitive answer to the question of its genre. Reid comments that, 'A historical reading of the Esther story seems coherent with the writer's own intentions' (p. 31). Her comments in the commentary indicate that she sees the author as writing about historical events in a creative way with a degree of poetic licence.

In the section-by-section commentary, the *Context* places each section to its location in the literary structure of the book and the *Meaning* places it in the flow of the plot and the message of the book. The *Comment* provides exegetical comments on individual verses or small groups of verses. There are some helpful 'Additional notes'. Most are on historical points, but there is also a helpful one on 'Feminist interpretations of Esther 1'.

There is an Appendix on 'The Greek Additions' to Esther and the text of the Additions is included in the Jerusalem Bible translation. These additions are interesting as evidence of the early interpretation of the story. Reid comments that as a result of them, 'the God so hidden in the Hebrew text is unambiguously present in the story' (p. 159).

This is a helpful, readable commentary. It is based on good, but not obtrusive, scholarship. In her 'Preface' Reid says that in writing the commentary she was 'surprised again by the present relevance of this ancient story' (p.9). It is therefore a little disappointing that this relevance is not brought out more strongly in the *Meaning* sections of the commentary. There is, however, a helpful section on the 'Theology and purpose' of the book in the 'Introduction', though this leaves the reader to do the application to the modern world. Despite this weakness, this is a good start to the new series of Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries.

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Kent E. Bower and Andy Johnson, eds. *Holiness and Ecclesiology in the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007. Xxiv + 409 pp., paper, \$35.00.

One of the most famous quotations attributed to John Wesley is, "All holiness is social holiness." These words are usually understood as a reference to the need for social action and concern for the poor. While representing one aspect of Wesley's thought, this summary is somewhat misleading, for in his "Discourse Upon Our Lord's Sermon on the Mount. Discourse the Fourth," 1.1. Wesley states

By Christianity I mean that method of worshipping God which is here revealed to man [sic] by Jesus Christ. When I say this is essentially a social religion, I mean not only that it cannot subsist so well, but that it cannot subsist at all without society, without living and conversing with other men [sic]. But if this be shown, then doubtless to turn this religion into a solitary one is to destroy it (*The Works of John Wesley*, vol. 1. ed. Albert C. Outler [Nashville: Abingdon, 1984], 534).

Likewise, in his sermon "On the Wedding Garment" (15) Wesley warns that legalism destroys true holiness, for when things not mentioned in scripture are considered essential for salvation humans will overlook or excuse those things scripture specifically

condemns (*The Works of John Wesley*, vol. 4, ed. Albert C. Outler [Nashville: Abingdon, 1987], 146). Thus, it is truly ironic that in the holiness movement, which claims its inspiration from Wesley, ecclesiology has traditionally been neglected and a legalism of “solitary religion” has been embraced. The essays, edited by Brower and Johnson and constituting a *Festschrift* in honor of Alex Deasley, a longtime professor of New Testament at Nazarene Theological Seminary, address this lacuna and provide a corrective voice.

The introductory chapter outlines the scope of the book and its understanding of holiness. It starts by noting that ecclesiology is understood in both Second Temple Judaism and New Testament Christianity as the communal and public focus of religious life (pp. xvi-xxix). Next, individual chapters fill out the outline, pointing out how holiness and ecclesiology are complimentary foci. The first two chapters, by George J. Brooke and Dwight Swanson provide a brief summary of how in the Qumran literature holiness is actualized in community (pp. 1-39). Swanson notes that Christians and the sectarians of Qumran shared a common understanding that holiness is an expression of communal obedience. Early Christians, however, inverted the Essene understanding of holiness. The former differed from the Qumran community in that they conceived of holiness not as withdrawal from the world, but, rather, as outreach to it. That is, holiness is not defiled by touching the unclean. Instead, it transforms the unclean (pp. 38-39).

The following chapters (pp. 40-362) provide a discussion of holiness in the New Testament documents. Interestingly enough, while Richard Bauckham has written an excellent chapter on the holiness of Jesus and his disciples in John’s Gospel (pp. 95-113), no chapter is provided on holiness and ecclesiology in the Johannine epistles. In light of both the Johannine letters’ focus on community and the central role these NT documents played in Wesley’s theology and ecclesiology, this editorial decision is surprising.

Other fine articles include Michael Gorman on 1 Corinthians (pp. 148-166), Joel Green on 1 Peter (pp. 311-25), and Dean Flemming on Revelation (pp. 343-62). Indeed, Flemming’s conclusions (pp. 358-62) could serve as a summary for the essays as a whole. In particular, Flemming notes that, “holiness has a strong communal emphasis ... a needed corrective to traditions in which sanctification is primarily limited to the inward experience of the individual believer” (p. 359). Gordon Thomas’s essay on Hebrews, on the other hand, is disappointing.

In conclusion, *Holiness and Ecclesiology in the New Testament* provides some stimulating essays on the New Testament’s focus on the communal dimensions of the holy life. For the New Testament authors, the holy life was always lived in God’s eschatological community: the church. This dynamic has, unfortunately, been too long neglected by the “holiness” tradition in favor of an ethic of individualism, sometimes degenerating into legalism. Through their exegesis of the New Testament documents, the authors of this book issue nothing short of a prophetic call to the holiness movement to recognize, along with Wesley, that ultimately, “holiness is social holiness.

Russell Morton

Paul Barnett. *Paul, Missionary of Jesus: After Jesus* (Volume 2; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008). 240 pp., paper, \$14.91.

In this introduction to the life and ministry of the apostle Paul, Barnett sets out to dispute the notion that Paul was the “second founder” of Christianity, as some scholars have purported. Rather, argues Barnett, Paul’s mission derives from the ministry and mission of Jesus himself. This text is unique in that it surveys the life and background of Paul whereas others tend to focus on the message and background of his letters. The twelve chapters progress in chronological order beginning with Paul’s pre-Christian life. Subsequent chapters, respectively, discuss ‘The Damascus Event’, ‘Paul’s Levantine Years’, and ‘Mission and Countermission’; the latter chapters give more focused attention to his ministry in Corinth and his message in Romans.

Barnett, in defense of his thesis that Paul followed the mission of Jesus closely, necessarily engages in what can be known about Jesus from the apostle’s letters. While he offers a helpful list of nineteen items, some of them are highly conjectural. For example, Barnett takes Paul’s language of Jesus being “rich” previously and becoming “poor” to mean that he actually lived in poverty. Also, he suggests that Paul’s use of the language of transformation (e.g. Rom 12:2) is probably an allusion to the transfiguration (see pp. 18-19). Both of these items are speculative.

Another methodological concern is Barnett’s appeal to the passages in Acts that illuminate aspects of Paul’s life, conversion and ministry. While I do not consider it to be a mistake to integrate information in Acts with the letters of Paul, Barnett seems to ignore the history of scholarship that has raised concerns about taking the episodes in Acts at face value. Barnett simply presumes it is “fair game,” so to speak, and proceeds without defending this move sufficiently.

Though there are certainly elements of this book that concern me, I did find a number of very insightful suggestions. For instance, in an attempt to discern why Paul so vehemently persecuted Christians (all the while sharing the “moderate” views of his teacher Gamaliel), Barnett posits that certain events and happenings escalated problems for the Pharisee. For instance, Barnett argues that the conversion of a large number of priests (Acts 6:7) would have raised concern among Jews about the threat of this new sect. This would have been worsened by Stephen’s critique of the temple institution (Acts 7:48). The argument that even more open-minded Jews would have been seriously disturbed by these developments is an attractive one.

On the main issue of defending Paul’s faithfulness to the mission of Jesus, Barnett has offered some excellent points. Though there are methodological concerns with how the book is set up and how his thesis is developed, he has, in the end, provided a sound critique against scholars like Wrede who tried to drive a wedge between the historical Jesus and Paul the apostle. While I would not use Barnett’s book as a textbook or a full-treatment on this issue, I certainly gleaned insights from various sections.

Nijay K. Gupta, Durham University

Rekha M. Chennattu, *Johanine Discipleship as a Covenant Relationship*. Peabody: Hendrickson, 2006. Pp. 304, paper, \$29.95.

Chennattu's study on the prevalence and significance of Old Testament covenant motifs in the Gospel of John may at first glance seem to be nothing terribly new. Chennattu however proposes far more than the simple existence of Jewish themes and influences in the Gospel. Chennattu sees Old Testament covenant themes as being central to John's Gospel—the axis around which it was composed, and central to its vision of what it means to follow Christ.

Chennattu begins her study with a succinct, gracious but critical survey of the state of Johanine scholarship to date in relation to the covenant motifs in the gospel. Chennattu sees a development and progression of scholarship in this field and gratefully acknowledges the various scholars who have made contributions, but concludes scholarship on this topic to be fundamentally inadequate. She then turns to her study, focusing on three distinct units of John's Gospel as representative of the whole: the call narratives in 1:35-51, chapters 13-17, and chapters 20-21. Of particular importance to the study is Chennattu's treatment of 13-17. Chennattu sees this entire segment as being intentionally modeled after a covenant renewal ceremony. After identifying the covenant language and themes in the call narratives, Chennattu sees the chapters 2-12 as the developing struggle toward identification and decision on the part of the disciples. In Chapter 13 then, the ceremony begins, concluding with Jesus' prayer of consecration in 17. Chennattu then asserts that Jesus reaffirms the covenant with the disciples after his resurrection in chapters 20 and 21, empowering them to move forward and effectively constituting a new covenant community.

The fifth and final chapter of Chennattu's study then engages the relationship between the Gospel of John and the Johanine community specifically in regard to this aspect, showing how the this community (building on general scholarly consensus that it was comprised of a large contingent of Diaspora Jews) produced the gospel in such a way as to reaffirm its identity as the true covenant people in the face of being rejected by the broader Jewish community, which was itself undergoing upheaval in the wake of the Jewish war and destruction of the temple. This socio-rhetorical component of Chennattu's study is an important lynchpin to her argument. The textual based arguments of the previous four chapters are buttressed by a look into the social milieu in which the gospel was produced, adding plausibility to the notion that the gospel does not merely incorporate OT covenant themes, but is in fact consciously built around them. Chennattu then concludes her work with an extensive and well-organized bibliography, as well as three indices, making the study very useful as an aid for further research in the field.

Chennattu's study, while a somewhat dense read and likely not accessible to the average layperson or busy pastor, is very valuable in that it reminds us of the deeply Jewish character and foundation of John's Gospel. In a climate where the average layperson, and many pastors as well, focus on the New Testament almost exclusively, often using the Old Testament only to proof-text teaching primarily based on the New, any study that encourages a more holistic understanding of both Testaments is much needed by the Church. The implications of New Testament discipleship principles being intentionally articulated using Old Testament covenant renewal forms (and understood as such by the ancient audience) are profound. Such exploration has potential to radically

correct the Church's understanding of the nature of the divine-human relationship under the new covenant, both corporate and individual. Studies like Chennattu's are therefore much needed.

Douglas S. Abel

Andrew D. Clarke. *Serve the Community of the Church: Christians as Leaders and Ministers*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000. 305 pp., paper, \$34.00.

Andrew D. Clarke, senior lecturer in New Testament at the University of Aberdeen, has dedicated his research to understanding better how the earliest Christians were shaped by the Greco-Roman world in which they lived. In this work, Clarke takes a particular interest in the question of how patterns of leadership already accepted in various organizations of "secular" society would have affected the structure of burgeoning Christian communities.

Clarke begins by examining leadership patterns in five contexts: the Greco-Roman city, the Roman colony and city, voluntary associations, the family and household, and the Jewish synagogue. In each chapter he discusses the background and nature of the ancient institution (or group) before turning directly to the role, function, and privileges of the leaders. A central conclusion that emerges from these adumbrations of leadership in society and social life in the ancient Greco-Roman world is that "the overlap between the political and the religious was prominent" (p. 32). A second critical consistency in all of these organizations is a persistent preference to favor the socially elite and wealthy as leaders. One may be surprised by Clarke's conclusion that even in the Jewish synagogues "leading figures were recognized and accorded positions of leadership on the basis of their status, wealth and ability to act as patrons" (p. 136).

In the second part of the book, which focuses on leadership in the Christian community, Clarke demonstrates that the early believers in Christ were attempting to discover their own identity within the Roman world and in distinction to the Jewish synagogues. Though many Christian communities undoubtedly defaulted to the patterns in the wider society (as Clarke has argued in an earlier monograph), the apostle Paul desired to adjust such presumptions and tendencies. One specific problem that needed addressing was the common secular criteria of honor-status which was a test for whether or not someone was worthy of being a leader. This, as Clarke notes, can easily be recognized in the "preoccupation" with conferring "honorific titles associated with positions of leadership" (p. 249). The chapters in this second part of Clarke's work concentrate on Paul's conception of leadership and ministry. One important result of this study is the conclusion that Paul did not just reject the common secular patterns. In his conclusion, Clarke suggests that the role of fatherhood was particularly useful as a model for Christian communities. Though the father had authority, the relationship was largely one of love and concern (see p. 251).

Clarke's research not only allows the modern interpreter of the New Testament to gain a better sense of the ancient social environment in which the early church began and grew, but also has serious implications for common scholarly assumptions about the nature of the early church. For instance, it has long been argued that the "Church" began as a grassroots, charismatic, loosely-organized group that gradually became "institutionalized." Many churches today see this "institutionalization" as burdensome and beatify the ostensibly looser model of the earliest church. One implication of

Clarke's analysis is that the early churches were not necessarily void of hierarchical leadership because they had numerous secular models from which to draw. The traditional evolutionary hypothesis seems to neglect this important social situation.

Clarke offers a well-written and stimulating discussion of how leadership worked in the Greco-Roman world and, in his comparison with Paul's letters, directs attention to the important differences between the apostle's concept of it and those of his churches (especially in Corinth). The first half of the book, with its concise discussion of ancient literature, is a remarkable distillation of a large amount of material and many readers will find this the most useful part of the book. Church leaders today will, of course, benefit much from this work.

Nijay K. Gupta, Durham University

James D. G. Dunn and Scot McKnight, eds. *The Historical Jesus in Recent Research*. Sources for Biblical and Theological Study 10. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2005. Xvi + 618 pp., cloth. \$49.95.

As the so-called "Third Quest" of the historical Jesus progresses, students and pastors may wish to gain some insight into Historical Jesus studies. While there are excellent works summarizing academic research into the life and person of Jesus, beginning with Schweitzer's classic, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*, no truly informed conclusions can be reached about the validity of scholars' conclusions without reading their own writings. Yet, these works are not always easy to find. Furthermore, most individuals have neither the time nor the resources to acquaint themselves with the vast bibliography on the Historical Jesus. It is, therefore, very fortunate that Dunn and McKnight have made Jesus studies more accessible to a wider public.

This book is an anthology (p. xii). It is divided into seven parts. These sections are entitled: (1) "Classic Voices"; (2) "Methodology"; (3) Teachings of Jesus: God, Kingdom, Ethics, Parables, and Old Testament"; (4) "Jesus: Who Was He?"; (5) "Jesus: Major Events"; (6) "Jesus and Others" and (7) "Conclusion." Each of the seven parts is provided with a short and informative introduction, which contextualizes the ensuing essays for the reader. The introductions are then followed by extracts of the works of scholars who have made significant contributions to the study of the Historical Jesus. Thus, the reader encounters writings by such luminaries as Albert Schweitzer, Rudolf Bultmann, Martin Kähler, Joachim Jeremias, John P. Meier, James D. G. Dunn, P. M. Casey, G. B. Caird, Marcus Borg, Peter Stuhlmacher, Gerd Theissen, E. P. Sanders, Amy-Jill Levine, and Robert Morgan, to name only a few. The sampling of methodologies is eclectic, ranging from standard historical-critical analysis to more modern methodologies, such as feminist critique.

In any ambitious project of this scope, however, certain lacunae are inevitable. For example, the book contains no contributions by either John Dominic Crossan or Geza Vermes. The editors have also restricted their selection to works readily available in English. Thus, the only "original" contributions are two essays by Peter Stuhlmacher ("The Messianic Son of Man: Jesus' Claim to Deity," pp. 325-44; and "Jesus' Readiness to Suffer and His Understanding of His Death," pp. 392-412.). Both of these were extracted from Stuhlmacher's then forthcoming, *Biblical Theology of the New Testament*. The decision to restrict the selection of essays for anthology to works accessible in English, however, may be somewhat unfortunate. For example, Dunn and McKnight

could have provided a truly significant contribution if a translation of a chapter of K. L. Schmidt's classic 1919 work, *Der Rahmen der Geschichte Jesu* (*The Structure of the History of Jesus*) had been included in their selections. Had they done so they would have provided English readers access to one of the seminal discussions about the composition and outline of the Gospel of Mark.

Yet, while it may be easy to fault the editors on some of their specific choices, one must commend them for daring to accept the daunting task of providing non-specialists with an accessible and helpful anthology. The bibliography of research on the Historical Jesus is exceedingly vast. The attempt to provide readers with some representations of major voices is overwhelming. That Dunn and McKnight have done so with sensitivity is to their credit.

Russell Morton

Susan Eastman, *Recovering Paul's Mother Tongue: Language and Theology in Galatians*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007. Pp. 220, paperback. \$25.00.

While sociological approaches to biblical interpretation have yielded some provocative results, Susan Eastman's *Recovering Paul's Mother Tongue* is a work which brings together the best of sociological insights alongside sober exegetical rigor. She finds Paul's letter to the Galatians replete with "mother tongue"—a concept which uses the language of conversation and relationship (8). The crux of her argument centers on the role of Gal 4:12-5:1 in Paul's larger letter which communicates "the staying power of the gospel" by expressing relational concerns for his audience. Likewise, Paul communicates to his converts the motivation and power necessary to move them from their wavering faith to a faith that "stands fast" (5:1) in its allegiance to Christ alone as the source of their unity and life together (6). The substantive chapters may be summarized as follows.

Chapter two argues that the close affinities between Gal 4:12-20 and other Pauline mimesis texts (e.g., 1 Thess 1:6; 2:14; 1 Cor 4:16; 11:1; Phil 3:17)—motifs of suffering for gospel, concerns for maturity and unity, friendship, and familial language—demonstrate that this verse belongs among the list of imitation texts. As such, Galatians generates a new way of describing Paul's own history, disrupting old continuities and identity markers, but also creating a new continuity that embraces both the past and the future as "in Christ" (56). It is to this way of living that Paul says to his readers, "become like me," (Gal 4:12).

Chapter three explores the linguistic and conceptual parallels between Paul's calling and Old Testament prophetic tradition. The depiction of Paul's calling (Gal 1:15-16) echoes the call of Jeremiah (Jer 1:1-10) and shares the characteristics of being called to communicate a specific message and being sent in God's name (69). Thus, Paul's self-conscious placing of himself within the prophetic tradition is related to his relationship with the Galatians (cf. 4:14) and yields further understanding of his particular mode of proclamation (63).

Chapter four explores the role of maternal metaphors in Paul's "mother tongue." In order to better understand Paul's metaphor in Gal 4:17-20, Eastman investigates the background of "labor pains" imagery in prophetic and apocalyptic texts. She argues that Paul's statement that he is "again" in labor refers to his initial preaching

of the gospel at Galatia which is in danger of being aborted by false teachers (97). Paul's labor pains are also connected to suffering in Paul's own life and lend color to his call to imitation "until Christ is formed in you" (4:19b).

Chapter five examines the contribution of Isa 54:1 to Paul's interpretation of the Sarah/Hagar allegory (4:21-5:1). Eastman argues that the Isaianic text encapsulates the united stories of barren woman and the city Jerusalem which both demonstrate God's transforming power and the promise of a lasting community and habitation for the people of God. Like many others, Eastman sees the allegory as a pivotal moment of the letter, pulling together strings from each previous section and pointing readers toward new life in the Spirit (129).

Chapter six seeks to understand the role of the flesh and the Spirit in Paul's unfolding family tree. Eastman argues that the lineage developed in the Sarah/Hagar allegory has further connections to Paul's contrasts between Spirit and flesh (5:13-6:18). Characteristics of the first family tree are listed in the divisive "works of the flesh," and represent human activity which is part of the "present evil age" (1:4). Characteristics of the second family tree—that of the barren woman—rely on the promises of God for their fecundity and represent the new creation.

While Eastman's book is a welcome addition to biblical studies on Galatians, given the nature of her thesis—listening for Paul's mother tongue—this author would have liked to see more interaction with rhetorical analysis. If Eastman's contention is that Paul's "mother tongue" is employed to make a relational appeal, how might this affect recent discussions of rhetorical structure and analysis of Galatians? While left wanting in this regard, Eastman's proposal brings fresh insights into Paul's letter to the Galatians that should not be ignored.

Seth M. Ehorn, Wheaton College Graduate School

J.R. Daniel Kirk, *Unlocking Romans: Resurrection and the Justification of God*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008. Pp. 259, paperback. \$32.00.

*Unlocking Romans: Resurrection and the Justification of God* is a revision of Daniel Kirk's doctoral dissertation which advances two basic claims: (1) resurrection is the hermeneutical key to understanding Paul's letter to the Romans; (2) resurrection shapes and gives content to the themes and concerns of the letter. Kirk suggests that God must be understood through the particulars (i.e., the God of Romans is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob) and not in theological abstractions. If this is the case, then Romans is a theodicy, because the letter bemoans that the Christian gospel is being rejected among those who are descended from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (10).

In chapter two, Kirk summarizes texts of Second Temple Judaism pertinent to resurrection. He examines a few OT texts (Dan 11:31-34; Ezek 37) and numerous texts from the Apocrypha (e.g., 2 Macc 7:9) and Pseudepigrapha (e.g., 2 Bar 32:1-7). Crucial to Kirk's approach, however, is that he is not concerned to ask *what* resurrection is, but rather *how* does resurrection function in these texts? Four functions are identified and outlined: (1) vindicating people; vindicating God (15-24); (2) undergirding parenthesis (24-28); (3) restoration of the cosmos (28-30); and (4) restoration of Israel (30-31). Thus, Kirk argues that Paul was well supplied with functional ideas when it came to evoking resurrection in Romans.

In Kirk's exegetical chapters which deal with Romans, he first argues that resurrection bookends the letter (33). Paul begins by describing his gospel and exalting Jesus who had been "set apart...by resurrection from the dead" (Rom 1:4). Likewise, so argues Kirk, Paul's citation of Isa 11:10 in Rom 15:12 draws out the theme of resurrection. Kirk acknowledges the difficulty of interpreting "resurrection" in this context, but ultimately finds it convincing because of the proposed rhetorical structure of the letter (50). The *peroratio* (c.f., Rom 15:7-12) is often thought to correspond to the *exordium* (c.f., Rom 1:1-7). So, we might expect to find the corroborating theme of resurrection in both passages. Seven other chapters draw out the function of resurrection diachronically throughout the letter.

The final chapter, entitled "Reading with the Apostle," explores some of the implications for the proposed function of resurrection within the letter to the Romans. Kirk suggests three possible ways: theodicy (216-220), justification (220-227), and unity (227-234). Although many generations of interpreters have seen Rom 9-11 as an extended theodicy, Kirk's proposal has suggested that the *entire letter* of Romans "functions as a defense of the faithfulness of the God of Israel to the promises contained in Scripture" (216).

With regard to justification, Kirk began by defining the issue as "God's vindication of his faithful people which shows God himself to be faithful" (10). God's vindication comes through the resurrection of Jesus as a just action which leads to life (cf. Rom 5:18) (222). Kirk expresses his agreement with N.T. Wright that justification is an ecclesiological category, although perhaps not more than a soteriological one (223). Additionally, Kirk's discussion on the theme of restoration in Second Temple Judaism has provided the opportunity to explore the eschatological contours of justification in Romans with regard to new creation (Rom 8:29) and the future judgment (Rom 8:32; cf. 8:17).

Finally, in reference to the unity of God's people, Kirk appeals to Rom 14:1-9 as purporting a new basis for Christian unity. Whereas appeals to the Mosaic law and so-called boundary markers may have provided the basis for delineating group identity in the people of God, now Paul appeals to the lordship of resurrected Christ as the basis for Christian unity (199-203). Indeed, as Kirk suggests, there is one risen Lord presiding over one people (233).

In sum, this book offers a provocative look at Paul's letter to the Romans positing that using resurrection as a hermeneutical key will unlock the meaning and purpose of the letter. Whether or not Kirk has been successful in doing that is, of course, open to debate. Because *Unlocking Romans* does not argue for, but simply assumes much of the discussion on Paul relevant to the New Perspective, some readers may wish to whet their appetite elsewhere first.

Seth M. Ehorn

Paul W. Meyer, *The Word in This World: Essays in New Testament Exegesis and Theology*. John T. Carroll, ed. New Testament Library. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 2004. Pp. xxx + 338, paper, \$39.95

This volume is a collection of the published work of Paul W. Meyer, who served as a professor of New Testament at Yale Divinity School, Colgate Rochester

Divinity School, Vanderbilt University, and, finally, Princeton Theological Seminary. The book is introduced with a reminiscence by J. Louis Martyn, who had been one of Meyer's graduate students at Yale. Martyn's survey of Meyer's career demonstrates the esteem Meyer has received from his colleagues.

The essays reflect the development of Meyer's thought from 1960 to 1996. The book is divided into five parts. The first is entitled "Essays in Theological and Historical Interpretation" (pp. 5-53). These chapters include such topics as the "This-Worldliness of the New Testament," (pp. 5-18, originally a lecture delivered in 1979), and the problem of Jesus' Messianic self consciousness (pp. 27-40). The latter chapter provides a discussion of the one of the issues deriving from Life of Jesus research up to 1960, namely: Did Jesus have a messianic self consciousness, and if so, what was it? Meyer's insights are interesting, but will certainly need to be updated in light of the "Third Quest" of the Historical Jesus.

Part 2 (pp. 57-148) is a collection of essays on Paul. This section is, perhaps, the most interesting part of the book. The first chapter, "The Worm at the Core of the Apple: Exegetical Reflections on Romans 7" (pp. 57-77) was originally published in 1990. Meyer notes, correctly, that the problem of the Law in Rom 7 is not that it is bad and used by bad people, but that it is good, but its use by good people leads to bad ends, corruption and alienation from God. Another useful article is "Romans 10:4 and the 'End of the Law'" (pp. 78-94, originally published in 1980), where it is noted that the term "end" does not mean fulfillment, but termination, for "Christ and the Torah of Moses stand in same kind of contrary relationship as Christ and Adam in 5:12-21, the one belonging to the new aeon and the other to the old" (p. 93). Finally, the reprint of Meyer's 1995 essay "Pauline Theology: A Proposal for a Pause in its Pursuit" states that the effort to find the coherent core behind the contingency of expression in Paul's theology may be fundamentally wrong headed, for it is the latter which causes the refinement of Paul's thought.

Part 3 (pp. 149-218) is a reprint of Meyer's commentary on Romans, originally published in the *Harper's Bible Commentary* (1988). The reader is left to wonder why the editor felt a need to reproduce this material, since it is has already been reprinted in the 2000 release of the *HarperCollins Bible Commentary*.

Part 4 (pp. 219- 274) is entitled "Exegetical and Theological Essays on the Gospel of John." While the first essay "'The Father': The Presentation of God in the Fourth Gospel" (pp. 221-239) was published in 1996, the other essays in this section originally saw the light of day in the 1960's. As a result, the chapter on "The Father" is the most interesting to current readers, as it demonstrates a feature often neglected by interpreters, the theocentric character of John's gospel.

The final section, (pp. 275-302) is entitled "Shorter Exegetical Studies and Sermons on the Gospels." These essays are reprints of exegetical essays from *Interpretation*, as well as a selection of published sermons.

While this collection of essays is a noble assembly of the work of a beloved colleague and teacher, one wonders why this book was published in a series such as the New Testament Library. There is little that is new. With the exception of two sermons everything in the book has been published earlier and is accessible via databases such as ATLA and ATLA Serials. The minor updating of the essays, such as notations in the footnotes of English translations of German works, does not in itself justify their republication. Perhaps the main reason for issuing the book is the love and respect Meyer

has received from his colleagues over the years, and their desire to make his thought more accessible to a new generation of scholars.

Russell Morton

Mikeal C. Parsons, *Body and Character in Luke and Acts: The Subversion of Physiognomy in Early Christianity*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003. 191 pp., paper, \$22.00.

Parsons' project on physiognomy—the pseudo-science of judging inner qualities by outer appearance—is both an interesting study and much needed word. He begins the study by surveying and unpacking various writings in antiquity that encourage the judging of others by physical traits, and which outline the specifics of how to do so. This alone is incredibly fascinating and the detail sometimes amusing, sometimes humbling.

Parsons' survey begins with ancient Greek and Roman sages, who taught principles of physiognomy and even selected students solely based on them. The reader learns that there were actually “handbooks” written by ancient sages that detailed exactly what various physical features meant, for good or ill, to be used by the discerning teacher or leader in choosing disciples and associates well. Parsons also shows how many early church fathers practiced physiognomy. For instance, Ambrose chose his students and friends based on physiognomic principles just as Pythagoras did centuries before, and advised others to do the same. And in *The Acts of Paul and Thecla* we find a description of Paul that in modern times we have often assumed to be unflattering (and therefore safe to accept as fairly accurate) because he is presented as short and bald, but which by Parsons is revealed to be deeply colored by physiognomic principles of the day, designed to present Paul as a strong, shrewd and upright person over and against his two companions, before a word is even quoted from him.

Parsons' point to this discussion is not to merely survey significant thinkers and their opinions on physiognomy, but to demonstrate how deeply entrenched physiognomy was in ancient culture in preparation for the next phase of his study. It is a long standing, largely unquestioned, pervasive cultural phenomenon in the ancient world, such that the average person in such a context would be making judgments of others based on their physical features intuitively and assumptively on a daily basis. It was not only a well established “science” of the time in elite circles, but a part of the very “cultural air” the every-day person breathed. It is in this environment that scripture is being written and passed down, and in which Luke writes.

Parsons devotes the remainder of his book to 4 pericopae in the Lucan material: the story of the Bent Woman, the story of Zacchaeus, the healing of the man lame from birth in Acts 3, and the story of the Ethiopian Eunuch. In each case Parsons explores a familiar Lucan theme—advocacy for the oppressed and marginalized—from an unfamiliar perspective: the subversion of physiognomic principles. In each case Parsons observes Luke “setting up” the audience by the use of the physical descriptions of these characters, then subverting those assumed judgments by showing how the inner condition of the person does not match what their physical traits would suggest. In these 4 stories, Luke presents Jesus, and later Jesus' followers, as ones who see through and subvert prevailing physiognomic cultural wisdom and reveal the true character of the person.

Parsons' study suggests to us that the principle in 1 Sam 16:7 is not lost to Luke, who is actively working to subvert prevailing preconceptions in his ancient context.

While Parsons' book can be a dense read at times, it contains valuable historical information and analysis that has direct relevance to present day study and preaching. While the book is focused specifically on the Lucan writings, it invites the reader to consider the impact of physiognomy in writings throughout the Old and New Testaments and extra canonical contexts, and to consider how principles of physiognomy still operate in our culture today. Parsons invites us to observe and follow the example of the Lucan Jesus and his followers in becoming more aware of and subverting these forces. He invites us to connect with this aspect of the Gospel—to look past the physical traits by which we so quickly judge others, and see each other through God's eyes.

Douglas Stephen Abel

Brian S. Rosner, *Greed as Idolatry: The Origin and Meaning of a Pauline Letter*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007. Pp. 214, paper, \$22.00.

In this interesting exercise in exegetical interpretation with a view towards New Testament ethics, Brian Rosner investigates the much-neglected, but highly provocative statement “greed is idolatry” in Colossians 3:5 (see, similarly, Eph 5:5: “the greedy person is an idolater”). Acknowledging that a host of interpretive, historical, and theological questions are raised by this terse phrase, Rosner approaches his study on the analogy of mountain climbing. This involves looking at the models of other climbers (ch 2: history of interpretation), collecting maps and supplies (ch 3: methods and hermeneutical approaches), comparing similar peaks (chs 4-7: backgrounds and origins of concepts), and the surveying of the immediate surrounding regions (chs 8-9: the direct exegesis of the given passage).

Rosner's exhaustive exploration of the interpretive history of this phrase yielded six distinct meanings of the association between greed and idolatry in Col 3:5: “greed is as bad as idolatry, leads to idolatry, entails the worship of the demon or god of mammon, like idolatry involves forbidden service and obedience, like idolatry involves inordinate love and devotion, or like idolatry involves misplaced trust and confidence” (pp. 46-7). Provisionally dismissing the “nonmetaphorical” options as viable interpretations, Rosner finds the latter three options to be most probable. Thus, in terms of method, he devotes a major section to how and why analyzing the phrase in question as a metaphor is profitable.

As a large portion of the book involves a survey of the concepts of “greed” and “idolatry” throughout the Old and New Testaments (and early Judaism), Rosner nearly develops a biblical theology of wealth. No textual stone is left unturned as he explores key biblical texts (e.g. the Ten Commandments, the incident of the worship of the golden calf, etc.), comparative Jewish texts such as Philo's writings and the Dead Sea Scrolls, and the New Testament milieu (including portions of the gospels, Revelation, Romans and Philipians). In terms of origins, Rosner draws the broad conclusion that Jewish traditions such as the first commandment are foundational.

When looking at the immediate epistolary context of the criticism of greed, Rosner concludes that the reference probably involves the sharing of possessions in the “family setting of the early church” (p. 128). On the basis of his analysis, then, Rosner is able to develop a “profile” of the greedy which pertain to “those with a strong desire to

acquire and keep for themselves more and more money and possessions, because they love, trust, and obey wealth rather than God" (p. 129). In Colossians and Ephesians, the linking of greed to idolatry is meant, then, to expose the greedy as those who refuse to offer God the exclusive right of love and trust (see p. 148). In the concluding chapter Rosner offers some theological reflections on how the modern church can profit from a focused concern with greed and the relationship between attitudes toward material possessions and religious worship.

This book is a very welcome contribution to New Testament ethics and a masterful example for students especially regarding how to do biblical exegesis. His mastery of hermeneutical tools, his detailed knowledge of both ancient biblical and non-biblical text, his comprehensive analysis of early and modern interpretations, and his pastoral and theological sensitivity are admirable. Perhaps a couple of small quibbles are worthy of notice, though. Rosner's dismissal of the option that the phrase is meant to view money as a god may have been a bit too hasty. The line between speaking *metaphorically* of a god and *literally* may be more hazy than we presume (see Acts 17:18). Secondly, Rosner seems to treat the phrase "greed is idolatry" in Colossians as an idiomatic phrase and, thus, not too directly tied to the argument of the letter altogether (though he is interested in the *sitz im leben* of the phrase in the early church). He does not offer, then, a verse-by-verse analysis of the phrase in its literary context (as one might see in a commentary). However, the inclusion of this sort of section in his book may have enabled him to ground his argument more closely in its immediate context.

In the end, though, the exegetical strengths of this book far outweigh the very small criticisms mentioned, and students and pastors alike will find this work intellectually stimulating and theologically refreshing.

Nijay K. Gupta, University of Durham

Ben Witherington III. *The Letters to Philemon, the Colossians, and the Ephesians: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on the Captivity Epistles*. Grand Rapids/Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2007. Xii + 382 pp., paperback, \$38.

This book is another in the series of New Testament commentaries written nearly single-handedly by Ben Witherington (the exception being David DeSilva's *Perseverance in Gratitude*, on Hebrews). As with the previous works in this series, Witherington calls what he does "socio-rhetorical commentary," where he uses parallels in ancient rhetorical sources and understandings learned from the social sciences and social history to assist and guide his interpretation. This approach is different than the "Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation" that has been emerging in the writings of Vernon Robbins and others in recent years. The book has a lengthy Introduction and a comprehensive Annotated Bibliography followed by commentary in the historical order of the letters, first with Philemon, then Colossians, then Ephesians.

The Introduction explains what is the primary distinctive of the entire commentary, the view that Philemon, Colossians and Ephesians, as letters for recipients who lived in the Asian provinces, employ "Asiatic Rhetoric" characterized by vivid expression and terminology, long, rhythmic sentences, repetitions and redundancies, polysyllabic words, and a high level of emotion and ornamentation. Witherington tracks the complex Asiatic style of the three letters, making a persuasive case for its intentional

use, thereby explaining the expansive rhetorical style of Colossians and Ephesians in particular. Witherington takes the view that both Colossians and Ephesians are genuinely Pauline, written during the early 60s C.E. He argues that the Asiatic character of Colossians and the epideictic nature of Ephesians make it likely that Paul is responsible for both letters. The Introduction draws attention to social features relevant to interpretation, focusing particularly on slavery and the concern about an opposing “philosophy” in Colossae. Interestingly, while the main commentary considers the letters in their presumed chronological ordering, the Introduction works in the opposite direction, from Ephesians, to Colossians, to Philemon. Additional introductory material is included at the beginning of each of the commentary sections on Colossians and Ephesians. The Annotated Bibliography is a particularly helpful feature—not often found in commentaries—that guides readers to the most useful secondary materials.

The commentary for each of the letters is impressive in its fullness, drawing on a massive secondary literature and covering much technical detail. It clearly shows the importance and power of the rhetoric of the letters and indicates that the social sciences and social history are critical for interpretation. Witherington analyzes Philemon, Colossians and Ephesians according to the categories and structures set out in the ancient rhetorical handbooks. Philemon and Colossians are thus seen to be deliberative discourses and Ephesians epideictic discourse. Emerging Christian rhetoric did not always match the classical usage, and alternative rhetorical structures could be proposed. For each of the letters, Witherington begins and ends with epistolary rather than rhetorical analysis. He describes epistolary prescripts before the exordia (e.g., Col 1:1-2) and epistolary postscripts following the perorations (e.g., Col 4:7-18), the effect of which is to analyze oral/rhetorical material as embedded within epistolary structures, leaving out the rhetoric of pre- and postscripts.

There are a number of helpful “Closer Look” sections where focused discussions of the social contexts are particularly useful. On the other hand, Witherington does not always deal as fully with the nature of the argumentation of the rhetorical sections he considers. The style occasionally seems a bit wooden and the sections of commentary sometimes show signs of having been written separately, with some of the joints still showing (e.g., variations in referencing styles). While the book is explicitly concerned with providing rhetorical and social interpretation, it continues the tradition of historical critical commentary and surveys of scholarship that can be traced back to the nineteenth century work of Lightfoot and others.

This is a fine commentary that is characterized by clarity and depth. The emphasis on Asiatic rhetoric sheds much light on why Philemon, Colossians and Ephesians look like they do and how they are meant to function. The insights that readers gain from this commentary will enhance their understanding and move them to deepened appreciation of the three letters.

Roy R. Jeal, Booth College

Stephen E. Fowl, *Philippians*. The Two Horizons New Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008. Pp. 254, paperback. \$20.00.

*Philippians*, by Stephen Fowl, represents the fourth commentary published in the Two Horizons New Testament Commentary series (the others being: 1 Peter, 2 Peter & Jude, Colossians & Philemon). From first page to last, the work is unlike many other

commentaries. Introductory issues such as authorship, dating, provenance are addressed only in passing. Secondary literature is (admittedly) given only cursory treatment (p. 7). The text is treated in its canonical form *as is*. Apart from these lacunae and beyond the comments on specific chapter and verse, Fowl includes a final section which summarizes the payoff of theological reflection with respect to one aspect of Pauline theology in Philippians: friendship.

Fowl contends that a theological reading of Philippians can help generate a rich theology of friendship by: (1) demonstrating that friendship must be based upon the character of the triune God as displayed in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus (p. 209); (2) showing that seeking the benefit of others is a decisive way in which Christ displays the form and glory of God to us (p. 215); (3) helping each other understand and narrate their lives in the context of God's economy of salvation (p. 218); and, (4) offering an account of the striking emphasis on joy in Philippians (p. 233).

What is evident throughout the entire work is the paradigmatic role for which Fowl understands Phil 2:5-11. These verses account for roughly fifteen percent of the commentary proper and serve as the theological grounding for Fowl's theology of friendship. Problematic to Fowl's theological reading, however, is the extremely binitarian nature of this (alleged) pre-Pauline hymn. That is, Fowl's reading of this text attempts to place it within a Trinitarian understanding and yet Phil 2:5-11 concerns only the identity of *Jesus* in relation to God. The Spirit, although mentioned in Phil 2:1, is not readily apparent in this marked section. To be sure, Fowl's development of the nature of the triune God as *expressed* through Jesus still stands. However, the connection to friendship becomes cloudy if the character of the Triune God is to be understood on the basis of this passage alone.

Fowl's development of how Paul works to help the Philippians understand and narrate their lives in relation to God's economy of salvation provides a basis for understanding one's own suffering in the world. In fact, within the context of suffering for the sake of Christ, Paul finds grounds for rejoicing (cf. Phil 2:18-19). For just as God is seen to be God in both the exaltation and humiliation of Christ, it is at this conjunction that believers also ground their relationship with each other.

The proliferation of the writing of commentaries in the modern era has, perhaps, yielded a situation where readers are "embarrassed by riches." Yet, in the sea of commentaries being written, only a select few endeavor to blend exegetical work with the task of theological reflection. The former being marked by technical discussions of grammatical-historical exegesis; the latter being concerned with how texts are to be interpreted theologically. Fowl's *Philippians* blends both tasks in one helpful volume, offering fresh insights and a constructive model for future commentators in this new series.

Seth M. Ehorn, Wheaton College Graduate School

Rebecca Skaggs. *The Pentecostal Commentary on 1 Peter, 2 Peter, and Jude*. New York/London: T & T Clark/ Cleveland: Pilgrim, 2004. Xiv + 175 pp, paper, \$24.00.

Dr. Skaggs has produced a brief commentary on the epistles of the Apostles Peter and Jude. Because this commentary claims to be "Pentecostal," I will evaluate it by its contribution to a Pentecostal understanding of Christianity. The Holy Spirit's role in

Christianity is vital, and I appreciate anyone who helps develop a greater awareness of His work in Christ's Church. Depending on what translation is used, Peter refers to the Holy Spirit six times at 1 Peter 1:2, 1:11, 1:12, 1:22, 3:18, 4:14, and 2 Peter 1:21. Jude refers to the Spirit twice at verses 19 and 20. Dr. Skaggs comments on these verses in particular will be very relevant as well as her three sections devoted to the Holy Spirit (see pp. 14-15 "The Holy Spirit in 1 Peter"; 90-91 "The Holy Spirit in 2 Peter"; and 154-155 "The Holy Spirit in Jude").

"To the exiles...chosen and destined by God the Father and sanctified by the Spirit for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood" (1 Peter 1:1, 2, RSV). This is the Apostle Peter's first mention of the Holy Spirit in his first letter to those under his care. Peter is telling Christ's sheep that they are "chosen," "destined" and "sanctified" so that they may be obedient to Christ and be "sprinkled with his blood," a critical Old Testament reference to holiness. These are important themes for the Apostle and a wonderful opportunity for us to better understand the Spirit's role in our Christian life. The phrase "sanctified by the Spirit" is an important theme to Pentecostals because of their deep roots in the Holiness Movement of the 1800s. Skaggs, however, offers us only one sentence regarding this theme: "Satisfaction means a setting apart, and however the theological concept is viewed by scholars, it is quite clear that the author is saying that the readers have been set apart by the Holy Spirit according to God's plan" (16). I refer to commentaries because of the "theological concept" that is elaborated upon. Skagg gives us no such help. She merely restates here what the Apostle has said.

The next reference to the Holy Spirit occurs in 1 Peter 1:11, "they [the OT prophets] inquired what person or time was indicated by the Spirit of Christ within them..." Skaggs gives us a little more insight here. She reports that this title for the Holy Spirit is unique in the New Testament and serves as an experiential bridge between Peter's suffering believers and the suffering OT prophets. "Indeed, it is by means of the work of the Spirit that Peter's suffering readers are participating in the sufferings and future glory of Christ which were prophesied by the prophets" (21). This spiritual relationship is not spoken of further than this. This is a missed opportunity to really advance Pentecostal understanding of the relationship between the Old and New testaments.

1 Peter 1:12 ("...those who preached the good news to you through the Holy Spirit sent from heaven...") is not even mentioned in Skaggs' commentary! As we remember, Peter was the one who stood up from among the eleven and preached on the day of Pentecost about the good news of Christ having ascended and who was pouring out His Spirit upon His Church (Acts 2:14ff.). No mention is made of this obvious connection. And no scholarly comment upon this verse means a possible vital furtherance of our understanding of Pentecostal homiletics is missed.

For a reference to the Holy Spirit in 1 Peter 1:22 we have to look to the King James Bible: "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love..." Granted, Skaggs is not using the King James Bible for her commentary text, but this is an important verse because many Pentecostals use the King James Bible and hold it in very high regard. Skaggs does not comment at all on this important textual tradition. The link between the Spirit's work, the Christian's obedience, and love is a strong one, heavily supported by the New Testament writers.

There are two usages of the phrase "in the spirit" in 1 Peter 3:18 and 4:6. It could be argued that these verses are not talking about the Holy Spirit, but the human

spirit as opposed to the carnality of human “flesh.” Nevertheless, when a Pentecostal reads the phrase “in the spirit,” the Word of God has effectively grabbed their attention and rightfully so. (Skaggs does not have a section in her commentary on 1 Peter 3:18-22, but is actually included in her section on 13-17.) Skaggs does, however, capitalize “Spirit” in 3:18, so in her mind it is a reference to the Holy Spirit. Here our commentator does give us somewhat to sink our teeth into. She refers to “in the Spirit” as “the area in which the Holy Spirit works without human limitations, whereas the sphere of the flesh is characterized by suffering and death.... Hence, the phrase ‘in the Spirit’ must refer to the existence in and to which Jesus was raised when the power of God was able to work without the limitation of human existence” (51). She then relates the believer’s being “made alive in the new existence in Christ” to Christ’s own being “made alive again in the Spirit” (51). Skaggs’ gives us something to ponder here. How does the Holy Spirit work in spite of our human limitations to bring us into this newness?

If 1 Peter 3:18 is a reference to the Holy Spirit, we can assume that the very same phrase, “in the spirit,” in 4:6 is also a reference to the Spirit of God. Skaggs does admit that the terms “flesh” and “spirit” are used here in the same sense as they are in 3:18, but she does not comment on what the phrase signifies here in 4:6, save that “in the final time of judgment, God will reverse the negative judgment of humans and these [“the dead” to which “the gospel was preached”] will live in the new resurrection life” (57). But the phrase Peter gives us in 4:6, “they might live in the Spirit like God,” is rich with joyful and hopeful meaning.

Chapter four, verse fourteen is the last reference to the Holy Spirit in Peter’s first epistle; it tells us that the “Spirit of glory and of God” rests upon those who suffer reproach for Christ’s sake. How believers respond to suffering has been the main theme of Skaggs’ commentary and will continue to be the theme she uses to unite all of Peter’s sayings together into one cohesive message. She rightfully comments that “when you are abused, you are blessed, *since* then the spirit comes as support to help you and gives you a share in God’s glory” (65, italics hers). Skaggs further comments of God’s glory, “one of the main characteristics of God is glory...which is revealed in Jesus.... Glory is also a significant theme for Peter” (65). She mentions three times when the Apostle Peter uses the idea of “glory” (1:7, 5:4, and 5:10). Glory, or the Shekinah Glory, is very important to many Pentecostals. It harkens back to the glory of God in the Holy of Holies. It harkens back to the Mount of Transfiguration. It is a wonderful expression Peter gives us: “the Spirit of Glory.” Further comment by Skaggs about the relationship between the Holy Spirit and the Glory of God would be most welcome.

The Holy Spirit is only mentioned in 2 Peter once: 1:21. It speaks of OT prophets being “moved by the Holy Spirit.” This reminds the reader of 1 Peter 1:11-12. Because Pentecostals believe that the Spirit still moves people to prophesy, whether interpreting a message of tongues, outright prophesy, or a message of knowledge or wisdom, this verse is very important. Skaggs admits that the Holy Spirit is the source and origin of prophecy, and she makes a clear distinction between human and Holy Spirit (111-112). There are certain keywords that knowledgeable Pentecostals gravitate toward, and prophecy is one of them, and further comment about the relationship of OT prophecy and NT prophets, in the Pentecostal sense (see also Acts 11:27, 13:1, and 15:32; 1 Cor. 12:4-11), would be well received. Further comment about exactly how the OT prophets were “moved by the Holy Spirit” would be most useful as well.

In commentaries, I do not think that mere restatement of the biblical text is very helpful. One generally looks for deeper connections and insights when referring to a commentary. Skaggs has continually fallen short of this type of help concerning obvious Pentecostal themes in 1 and 2 Peter. To her credit, she does include a section entitled “The Holy Spirit in 1 Peter” (14) and “...in 2 Peter” (90) where she summarizes her understanding of the Spirit’s role in the believer’s life according to what Peter has said. She tells us that “the Holy Spirit for 1 Peter is the means by which the relationship between the believer and God is made possible” (14-15), and “the Holy Spirit (divine power) is the means by which the godly life is developed and maintained” (91). These are obvious doctrinal understandings that can be derived from most of the NT writers. But I looked for the actual “meat” in the text of the commentary, and I was disappointed. Too many wonderful opportunities for a “Pentecostal Commentary” were not taken advantage of or were missed completely.

We have yet to look at the Holy Spirit in Jude, and a strong Pentecostal distinctive is mentioned by the Apostle Jude in verse 20: praying in the Holy Spirit as well as a reference to those who are “devoid” of the Spirit in verse 19. Skaggs, first, deals with those teachers who Jude must rebuke who do not have the Spirit of God. Again, she merely restates what Jude has said: “Jude himself clarifies his particular use of the word by adding the phrase ‘not possessing the Spirit.’” (170). I understand that false teachers do not have the Spirit, but more could be said here about the relationship between the Spirit and truth. Consistently, whenever the Spirit is mentioned, Skaggs misses opportunities to make her commentary truly “Pentecostal.”

“Pray in the Holy Spirit” is a phrase that jumps off the page to most Pentecostals because it speaks directly to their experience of praying in tongues. Skaggs merely says, “It is very likely that this phrase refers to the special prayer in the Holy Spirit known as glossolalia. In any case, the readers’ prayer in the Holy Spirit contrasts vividly with the claims of the false teachers that they are led by the Spirit” (171). There is a world of distinctly Pentecostal experience, Scripture reference, and opportunity that Skaggs chooses not to include in her comments. It is obvious to most Pentecostals that Jude is talking about glossolalia, it is of no use to merely state this.

In conclusion, I am not sure what makes Skaggs’ commentary “Pentecostal.” I do not believe she has advanced Pentecostal scholarship. This is regrettable.

Bryan Miller

Ben Witherington III. *1 and 2 Thessalonians: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006. 286 pp., paper, \$30.00.

Ben Witherington, professor of New Testament at Asbury Theological Seminary, is not just a prolific writer, but a prolific *commentary* writer who wishes to cover every book of the New Testament in his lifetime – and he is currently a good way along! His approach is technically a *niche*-commentary as his subtitle demonstrates, but Witherington is always attentive to the basic exegetical and historical issues that arise from the text. Nevertheless, he has become famous for his “socio-rhetorical” approach. His method is “rhetorical” in the sense that he wishes to be attentive to the rhetorical categories and conventions that Paul works with in constructing the arguments and language of his letters. Whereas many scholars have leaned heavily on the paradigm of

"Paul as letter-writer" (i.e. epistolary analysis), Witherington makes the argument that in the first century the sending of letters was still seen as "oral textuality." Thus, Paul's epistles were "surrogates for oral speech, surrogates for what Paul would have said if he were with the recipients" (p. xiii). How does this affect the interpretation of the letter? Witherington brings this to bear on a number of levels, not least of which in appealing to early rhetoricians (like Quintilian) and demonstrating that Paul acknowledged and employed many formal rhetorical tools. A central concern of ancient rhetoric was in the *type* of speech (i.e., deliberative, forensic, and epideictic). Witherington is so insistent that this greatly affects how one reads Paul's letters such that "failure to recognize the species of rhetoric Paul is using and such crucial matters as where the thesis statement or final summary of the speech is leads to all sorts of misinterpretation of these documents" (xiv). The "social" aspect of the methodology of commentary is meant to bring out the context of the letter and how Paul's rhetoric is meant to address directly the problems, questions, or happenings in the churches.

The commentary is always exegetically rich and written in a smooth style that is not bogged down with overly technical comments. Any appeal to the Greek text is transliterated and footnotes, for the most part, are brief. The reading level of the commentary suggests that it is geared towards pastors and students with a view towards theological issues and the enrichment of personal devotion. A number of helpful features are certainly noteworthy. In the introduction, Witherington includes an annotated bibliography that comments on the most useful commentaries, monographs, and theological studies. Secondly, on several occasions, the reader encounters helpful excurses (called "A CLOSER LOOK") on various theological problems such as the language of election, the supposed problem of anti-semitism in 1 Thess 2:14-16, the *Parousia*, and the "Restrainer" in 2 Thessalonians, among others. Thirdly, Witherington includes, on occasion, a section called "Bridging Horizons" which looks to bring the ancient message of the text into the modern world and explore the theological and pastoral applications of the passages in view.

In terms of the overall orientation of the commentary, Witherington shows a fine balance of appeal to the Old Testament backgrounds, the contemporary Jewish and Greco-Roman contexts, and modern interaction with other commentators (especially I.H. Marshall, A. Malherbe, C. Wanamaker, and to a lesser degree, F.F. Bruce, E. Best, and J.B. Lightfoot). Witherington defends the Pauline authorship of both epistles and the canonical orders as the correct historical ordering as well (with 1 Thessalonians written before 2 Thessalonians; *contra* Wanamaker). He labels 1 Thessalonians as "epideictic" and 2 Thessalonians as "deliberative," with the latter addressing social and eschatological problems.

Witherington writes in such a pleasing style that this commentary is enjoyable to read (unlike many very workmanlike, reference commentaries). His approach covers a range of issues and opens the reader's eyes to the ancient world as well as the intertextual fields of discourse happening in the text. If I have one concern with the commentary, it is that Witherington has pressed his rhetorical approach too far. Though he has established that a rhetorical approach is needed, it is not clear that Paul would be quite so familiar with the detailed techniques demonstrated by Cicero or Quintilian. Where did Paul learn such techniques? Also, the reliance on determining the type of rhetoric seems too rigid for Paul, though one could see how a more tentative hypothesis can be insightful.

Overall, in a world stuffed with commentaries (especially on Paul's letters), this work will have no trouble defending its place as supplementing other rhetorically-driven commentaries and also culling theological insights from these fertile texts. Pastors and seminary students will find this an excellent guide to the Thessalonian epistles.

Nijay K. Gupta

Richard Briggs, *Reading the Bible Wisely*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003. 118 pp., paper, \$14.95.

All Christians struggle with reading the Bible, regardless of their church or denomination. Typically Christians read the Bible for two reasons: "it will tell them about God, and it will help them understand how to live" (2). Briggs suggests there are two other questions that should be asked: "how should we read the Bible, and what should we think about the Bible" (2)? The three sections of this power packed book discuss interpreting the biblical text, thinking theologically about scripture, and Revelation.

Briggs shares his thoughts about hermeneutical applications in the first section of the book. What is the context? Is it historical, literary, or theological? In Chapter one he uses Luke 24:13-35 (The Road to Emmaus) to discuss reading the Bible as Christian scripture. In Chapter two, Briggs shares Luke 18:9-14 (The Pharisee and the Tax Collector) and how to read the Bible as a historical book. Chapter three concludes section one with Luke 9:51 (Luke's Orderly Account) and how to read the Bible as a literary work.

The second section of the book considers specific doctrines about the Bible and how to think theologically about scripture. The author looks at "its clarity, its inspiration, and its authority" (6). Chapter four considers problems in Romans which demonstrates the difficulty and clarity of scripture. Chapter five discusses 2 Timothy 3:16 which considers inspiration and canon of scripture. Chapter six bears in mind the authority and application of scripture.

The last section of the book includes the final chapter, along with a hermeneutical postscript, notes, references, and a further reading list. Chapter seven considers the book of Revelation, which according to Briggs "is the place where it all comes together: theologically, historically, literarily, imaginatively and hermeneutically" (99).

The point of the book is that the Bible should be read with eyes open, considering all sides of context, theological foundations, and studying scripture with wisdom. Wisdom is needed to read God's Word. Haphazardly reading the Bible with a light surface style of reading will only end in an incorrect understanding of God's Word. One must consider the underpinnings of scripture and the importance of studying the Bible.

In a day and age of devotional reading, many are neglecting the deeper reading of the Bible. As Christian educators we need to help people move beyond just knowing about God through the reading of scripture. Knowing about God is not the same as knowing God in a personal manner. While it is good that people are reading the Bible to understand how to live their lives for Him, the average person does not read the Bible on a daily basis nor do they study theology and critically think about scripture. This leaves the person with the difficulty of interpreting the biblical text. If interpretation is difficult,

then it is complex to understand how to live our lives for God, thus missing the deep beauty of God's Word.

Although the book is easy to read for those that understand theology, scripture, and other concerns of reading the Bible; this is not necessarily a book for a new believer, which is disappointing. The introduction gave such a wonderful beginning for the book, but then the chapters are more difficult for a new believer to understand. It would be a deep study of the Bible for those that are new to the faith. However, for a Christian educator, this would be an excellent tool to consider adult curriculum, reading of God's Word, theological principles that enhance scripture, and application of the Bible. A Christian educator considers such questions and assists the students to understand how to read the Bible. Using the principles in this book could mean a change from immature to mature Christians.

The ending of the book is the essence of the book. "Wisdom is not a cheap option, and according to Proverbs 4:7 it will cost all we have. 'Whatever else you get, get it,' says Proverbs. The wisdom to be Christ-like....The wisdom to read the Bible as God would have us read it, with open eyes, or better: with eyes opened, just like the disciples on the road to Emmaus" (114).

Dawn Morton

John J. Collins, *The Bible after Babel: Historical Criticism in a Postmodern Age*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005. 201 pp., paper, \$22.00.

This book is a result of the Gunning lectures delivered at the School of Divinity of the University of Edinburgh in 2004. As the subtitle indicates Collins seeks to address the challenges faced by Historical Criticism in the Postmodern age.

In chapter 1 he does a great job outlining both the essence of the Historical Criticism and the nature of its engagement with the "mixed blessing" of postmodern approaches to biblical studies. Collins succinctly summarizes the character of Historical Criticism under three principles. These are the *autonomy* of the historian, *principle of analogy*, and *principle of criticism*. The autonomy appeals to the freedom to do research without any sort of ecclesiastical imposition. The analogy implies continuity between the past and the present, as the texts are seen as human products. Thus Collins can state, "we can assess what is plausible in an ancient situation because we know what human beings are capable of" [6]. Finally, the principle of criticism highlights the heuristic nature of scholarship. According to Collins, "the historian tries to establish the most probable account of the past, but absolute certainty is never available" [6]. Thus the provisional nature of research that could be overturned as new data comes into play. Having outlined the character of Historical Criticism, Collins goes on to describe the postmodern challenges that it faces. They are discussed under the headings of *Postmodernism*, *Deconstructive Reading*, and *Ideological Criticism*. Collins' analysis of postmodernism is careful and fair. Those familiar with the modernism/postmodernism debate will find typical arguments against postmodern mode of doing Biblical studies like the critique of Lyotard and Fish engaging in "irreconcilable language games" [17]. In the end Collins finds that historical critics and postmodern thinkers have much to learn from each other and in some ways need the other, even if Collins is not ready to go all the way with Derrida's deconstructive reading or Cline's skepticism.

Four chapters that deal with various topics in biblical studies follow the introductory chapter. Collins himself admits that these four issues are neither specifically precipitated by the postmodern turn nor do they exhaust the pool of possible discussion topics [vii]. Yet one would have to agree that the topics of the nature of biblical historiography, exodus and liberation, gender studies, and the role of a goddess in Israelite religion do give a good account of the major trends and changing ways of thinking in Old Testament scholarship. One might strongly disagree with Collins' conclusions, but he is an informed and erudite guide to the modern scholarly consensus, however narrowly and heuristically that might be defined.

The last chapter wrestles with the question of whether biblical theology is possible in the postmodern context. Collins' answer cannot be boiled down to a simple "yes" or "no". He is both aware of the accomplishments of the postmodernism and its dangers. He sees the main gain of postmodern criticism as making room at the table for new voices from the margins. Yet he wonders about the dinner table conversation degenerating into a "cacophony of voices, each asserting that their convictions are by definition preferred, because they are their convictions" [161]. Collins thinks that this danger could be avoided. He thinks that biblical theology and ethics need to be "more skeptical and self-critical in the wake of postmodernism", but in the end still remain vital for those willing to enter into conversation in pursuit of consensus.

Reading this book one is reminded of William Spohn's plea for hermeneutic of appreciation. He insists that we are better known by our friends than by a prosecuting attorney. Well, Collins strikes one as a well-informed, witty, and engaging prosecuting attorney of the Scriptures. It seems that from the onset he sets up his case in such a way that limits what data would be admitted to the court. On pages 10 he delights in the fact that Historical Criticism "has created an arena where people with different faith commitments can work together and have meaningful conversations." Yet one wonders if the principles of *autonomy* and *analogy* could lead to a lone scholar with earplugs separating herself from the rest of the world in the privacy of an academic library sorting through interpretive potions and discarding everything that does not have a point of reference in her limited experience. Then she emerges out of this solitary existence looking for others who can validate and share her point of view. What starts out as a celebration on page 10 becomes alarming by the time one reaches page 129 where a chilling realization hits that not everyone is allowed to share freely at the table. Some like Francis Watson are hastily gagged for advocating a "peculiarly narrow and dogmatic view of Christianity" [134]. In essence Christian scholars and theologians are invited to come to the table only if they leave their narrow, dogmatic, Christological formulations at home. But would it be a stretch to say that Eichrodt's pejorative comment about Judaism having only a torso-like appearance in separation from Christianity could be now applied to Christianity? Does the RSVP to the biblical soirée call for only torso-like Christian scholars?

While the notion of God being active in the world being bracketed out for the sake of academic historicism has its value one is aware of dangers connected with it. It seems that as a result of this bracketing the only explanations that could count are those that have the obvious modern reference points. In our chaotic and violent world the language of power and oppression appears to be the only ready-made explanation for how things happen. So, for example, in Collins' analysis one observes the typical casting of the adherents of orthodox monotheism as historical winners, who "suppressed" other

expressions of faith [129]. The notion of God working in the midst of the polytheistic context to bring about focused worship does not have any plausibility structures in Historical Criticism by which to process it.

Another example of the prosecuting attorney at work is the fact that the weight of history is brought in when it fits Collins' arguments, but left out when it points to other realities. He can see the Bible as a dangerous tool for doing ethics partly because it has been used as a means of oppression in the past. But is that a fair argument? This disregards all of the moral and social achievements brought about by faithful Jews and Christians. Does the news of wild forest fires in Los Angeles necessitate a removal of all fireplaces in Ohio because the same substance of "fire" being involved? These sorts of conclusions that have derived with a priori exclusion of their voices would horrify millions of faithful Jews and Christians. In the end, Collins is wise in calling us to exercise caution and careful reading of the Old Testament texts that encourage ethical stances that would be deplorable by any moral standards. Yet he seems to offer no help for the believing communities in how to go about reading these texts theologically and faithfully today. But in the end it is not a job of the prosecuting attorney to do that. That is what the friends are for.

Bacho Bordjadze

Kenton L. Sparks, *God's Word in Human Words: An Evangelical Appropriation of Critical Biblical Scholarship*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008. 415 pp., paper, \$26.99.

This work is an attempt of a member of the new generation of evangelical scholars to wrestle seriously with the issues of faith and critical thinking about the Bible. Referring to Mark Noll's work, Sparks' chief concern is that "we avoid a grave theological error, which uses the *legitimate scandal of faith* as basis for our *illegitimate intellectual scandals*" [13]. In the end the book seeks to point a way for evangelicals in the scholarly guild as well as in the church to read the Bible faithfully while gleaning the findings of the critical scholarship.

How does he go about his task? Chapter 1 discusses the issue of epistemology and hermeneutics. Sparks argues that true human knowledge is possible. Following scholars like Newbigin he argues that the Cartesian demand for perfect knowledge betrays its god-like aspirations. He writes, "Our mediated interpretations of reality contrast sharply with our Creator's immediate knowledge of things." [54]. Sparks states that any human knowledge is limited and imperfect due to our fallen capacities. For him this is not a point of despair. He insists that while the entirely perfect divine knowledge is not available to us we do have the entirely adequate human knowledge. The next few chapters seek to show the ebbs and flows of this sort of human knowledge as it relates to biblical studies.

Chapter 2 seeks to demonstrate that historical criticism is not some sort of isolated prejudice against the Bible, but rather belongs to the larger world of critical scholarship that emerged since the Enlightenment. Sparks demonstrates that by considering the discipline of Assyriology. Chapter 3 outlines key issues raised by critical scholarship that present problems to the traditional evangelical reading of the Bible. Sparks carefully documents most of the issues familiar to those in the academic guild

ranging from the authorship of the Pentateuch to the authorship of the Pastoral epistles. Chapters 4 and 5 outline ways that evangelicals have responded to the issues raised by critical scholarship. From this point on Sparks moves to outlining his own project. Chapters 6 and 7 deal with human and divine dimensions of the biblical text. Sparks demonstrates how the understanding of various human genres brought about by the critical scholarship helps one better understand the text. Yet the genre analysis still leaves the question of why the one true God who does not err would speak through human authors who do so? Here Sparks appeals to the concept of Divine Accommodation that according to him goes back to early Church Fathers like Justin and the Reformers like Calvin.

Chapters 8, 9, and 10 get to the heart of Sparks' work. Here he lays out his own methodological agenda that focuses on "the context of the whole" and its dialectical relationship with the Bible. According to Sparks, "the best interpretations of Scripture are those that read Scripture in relationship to its context, and that context is not merely Scripture's immediate context- the worlds of David, Solomon, Jesus, and Paul- but the context of the whole, which comprises both the created order and any special revelation that God has provided to humanity" [326]. The process of negotiating this larger context via reliance on tradition, creation, and reason enables the readers to hear God's univocal Word in the midst of disparate and sometimes contradictory words.

The impressive aspects of this work can be summed up by two words, breadth and courage. His work reflects a reasonable mastery of a field very diverse and complex for any one person. He moves freely from ancient Near Eastern historiography to systematic theology to philosophical hermeneutics. The likes of Jerome, Derrida and Zimmerli are picked up as conversation partners. Here is a true scholar at work in a multidisciplinary fashion. Yet Sparks is also a courageous follower of Jesus inviting his readers into a dialog. For evangelicals today to wrestle with issues of critical scholarship is analogous to learning to play the violin in public. Sparks' work raises the issue of what exactly makes one evangelical. How broad is that umbrella really, and who gets to rest under it? He is courageous enough to enter the public square and practice his scores in full view of the watching evangelical world. May the response to him be generous and gentle, for his is a courageous yet necessary step.

On the critical side, Sparks' analysis is at times uneven and his judgments unjustified. For example von Rad and Brueggemann are dismissed in three paragraphs while Barr gets three full pages. Even more striking is the absence of some of the contemporary scholars wrestling with the issue of reading the Bible as Christian scripture like Watson, Hayes, and Moberly. N.T. Wright provides a quotable garnish for Sparks' own position, but is never picked up as a conversation partner. At least some readers familiar with Provan's work might wonder if it is really Provan that is being critiqued or a proverbial straw man. Finally, one wishes for Sparks' tone towards other evangelicals to be more generous. To hypothesize that evangelical scholars have often chosen Jewish institutions and British universities to avoid facing critical issues borders on speculation and does not encourage a congenial dialog. If he plans to play his violin in evangelical circles, Sparks will need to find ways to navigate the context of the whole of the evangelical world and not just some of its segments.

Bacho Bordjadze

Tony Campolo and Mary Albert Darling, *The God of Intimacy and Action: Reconnecting Ancient Spiritual Practices, Evangelism, and Justice*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2007. Pp. 256, paper, \$14.95.

In a technological age in which people often locate solutions to problems in the latest gadget, devise, or technique, it is refreshing to encounter an exploration of authentic Christianity that seeks to ground discipleship in a powerful, personal relationship with the living God. This foundation of authentic Christianity, discussed by Tony Campolo and Mary Albert Darling in *The God of Intimacy and Action*, not only connects the believer with other faithful followers of Jesus in community, but insists upon the integral nature of ancient spiritual practices, evangelism, and justice. Campolo and Darling present a holistic vision of Christian spirituality and life that embraces connections—vertical and horizontal connections—and remind the reader of perennial connections across the spectrum of time that are life-giving and character-shaping.

Campolo opens this examination of intimacy and action with three chapters that articulate the mystical way of knowing God intimately. He defines the Christian mystic as “one who experiences God in transrational and nonempirical ways” (4). For the mystic, the Spirit breaks into the consciousness with new insights, establishes a growing awareness of the wondrous nature of life, fosters a desire for intimacy, and nurtures humility, tender love, and commitment to justice. In his development of a holistic vision of life in Christ, Campolo connects mysticism with personal evangelism. The mystical cultivation of a “spiritual first love” must precede and ground evangelistic practice or it will become “nothing more than a legalistic lifestyle to uphold or a duty to be performed” (26). Likewise, commitment to the reign of God and working for justice in the world must accompany saving faith and spiritual transformation or the gospel remains truncated and denuded of its power and purpose. Campolo uses John Wesley’s model for Christian renewal to illustrate a holistic gospel that refused to separate personal salvation and social action.

In the second part of the volume, after delineating the connections between this holistic gospel and the mystical way, Darling discusses the importance of cultivating holy habits—intentional, regularized practices that form disciples in Christ-likeness and nurture love of God and others. She describes three spiritual disciplines, in particular, the prayer of examen, *lectio divina*, and centering prayer, all of which are ancient practices that enable the Christian believer to live in and for God’s vision of shalom with great intensity and devotion. The founder of the Society of Jesus (or Jesuits), Ignatius Loyola, figures prominently in these discussions and his *Spiritual Exercises* provide important keys to a reawakened understanding of the Christian life as devotion. She provides step by step guidance in terms of habituating these practices in daily life. The prayer of examen, rooted in Psalm 139:23-24, focuses recollection on the events and encounters of a specific and limited span of time. It involves sifting through joys and sorrows, struggles and delights in an effort toward great self-understanding and intimacy with God. The practice of *lectio divina*, divine or sacred reading, refers to a particular way of reading the Word of God. It entails a meditative process through which the Word sinks deeply into the consciousness and resolve of the believer, moving contemplation of scripture into action in life. In the 1970s, Trappist monks rediscovered the ancient practice of centering prayer, the third spiritual discipline that Darling examines, the purpose of which is reducing obstacles in times of contemplation. “Centering prayer can create an intimacy

with Christ,” claims Darling, “that many who practice it say they rarely find elsewhere” (142).

In the final section of the book, Campolo and Darling instruct the reader on how to take intimacy with God into the world. Christian spirituality, they argue, involves balance; one must always safeguard oneself against the temptation to separate intimacy and action. Intimacy without action leads to a narcissistic spirituality, while action without intimacy leads to spiritless service. The spirituality of Martin Luther King, Jr. demonstrates the centrality of a community in the maintenance of this balance, and contemporary movements such as Iona, Renovaré, emergent and new monastic communities provide models in which evangelism and commitments to social justice are interwoven faithfully and effectively. Campolo and Darling provide a compelling vision of a holistic gospel that refuses to separate prayer and mission, intimacy with God and gospel-bearing in a broken world.

Paul W. Chilcote

Dennis Okholm, *Monk Habits for Everyday People: Benedictine Spirituality for Protestants*. Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2007. 144 pp., paper, \$13.99.  
Peter E. Roussakis, *United in Prayer: Understanding and Praying the Lord's Prayer*. Burlington, IN: Meetinghouse Press, 2007. 206 pp., paper.

These two books, appearing in the same year, treat important complementary aspects of spiritual formation.

Dennis Okholm (Ph. D., Princeton Seminary) is a Presbyterian pastor and professor in California who is also a Benedictine oblate (associate). He begins by describing his Protestant journey in monastic spirituality and the importance of the Benedictine tradition. The body of the book expounds such “monk habits” as listening, poverty, obedience, humility, hospitality, stability, and balance. These do not exist for personal gratification, but to change the world. In a historical afterword Okholm sets out why the Reformers (some of them former monks) opposed the monasticism of their day while praising early leaders of monastic orders. The author writes in a clear, engaging style with endnotes to document sources and explicate details. He offers suggestions for further reading and for developing a personal rule of life along Benedictine lines. If one wishes to understand the current interest in monastic practice among Protestants, this book could be a good place to start.

Peter Roussakis (Ph.D., Graduate Theological Foundation), is a Brethren pastor and professor in Indiana. He opens his treatment of the Lord's Prayer with an overview of it and description of its Jewish setting. He devotes substantial attention to God's name and what it means to enter and increase in God's kingdom. Two chapters are given to imagining the kingdom of glory and how a Christian's death means passing from the kingdom of grace to the kingdom of glory. Exposition follows on depending on God for provision, seeking forgiveness and forgiving others, praying for leniency and deliverance, and praising God. Concluding chapters offer helps on teaching the prayer to children and the value of using it in corporate and individual worship. There are questions for reflection and discussion, while an extensive bibliography shows the breadth of the author's reading. Roussakis draws heavily from older, classic writers (Luther, Watson,

Calvin, and Wesley), but he does not ignore contemporary authors. The broad research and orderly pastoral presentation of *United in Prayer* give it a solid, workmanlike feel.

Both books offer growing disciples another look at aspects of Christian spirituality that should become, in the best sense, habitual (“customary, steady”).

Jerry Flora

Frances M. Young, *Brokenness and Blessing: Towards a Biblical Spirituality*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007. 140 pp., paper, \$18.99.

Frances Young is eminently qualified to write this book. An internationally known scholar of the early Christian movement (now retired from the University of Birmingham), she is also a British Methodist minister and the mother of a severely disabled adult son who lives at home. While working on the lectures which comprise *Brokenness and Blessing*, she also dealt with major health issues suffered by her husband and her aged mother. The result is a small volume that combines academic acumen, personal disclosure, and pastoral sensitivity.

Using classic Methodist technique, Young employs scripture, tradition, experience, and reason to examine and elucidate some features of a biblical spirituality. The book’s subtitle is important, for the treatment is aspectival rather than intending to be the last word on the subject. Her expertise in New Testament and patristics is to the fore, as she attempts to move beyond some contemporary scholarship. “My idea,” she writes, “was that exploring the ways in which the earliest theologians and preachers read the Bible would enable us to follow their approach, ... reopening the question whether the ‘spiritual’ meaning of the text may not be more important than the ‘literal’ or ‘historical’ meaning” (p. 7).

With that aim in mind, chapter one, “Desert Spirituality,” sets out a typological or “figural” reading of scripture, focusing on persons and patterns that have functioned in liturgy, hymnography, and private devotion. Viewing life in the world as a journey through unknown territory, the author urges readers to “move beyond an easy spirituality of personal well-being, comfort and happiness to rediscover the wilderness way that lies at the heart of the Bible” (p. 34). The desert is where we face our fears, confront temptation, and also encounter God.

Chapter two, “Wrestling Jacob,” opens with Charles Wesley’s classic poem of that title. Young summarizes the patristic approach to Genesis 32, then asks, “Are there parallels, ‘types’ or possibilities that enable this story to speak to our condition in the (post) modern world?” (p. 49). She addresses the possibility of spiritual growth through being disabled – a reality for all believers from Jacob onward. And yet, for her as for Wesley, “the name of the one with whom I struggle is indeed LOVE” (p. 59).

“The Way of Jesus” is the third chapter’s topic. As previously, the author begins with writers of the early church, finding in them a variety of approaches to the Jesus of history. Young suggests that today, instead of emulating popular icons of prowess or success, followers of Jesus might better imitate his life of self-emptying. It is “the way of *kenosis* rather than self-aggrandizement” (p. 79) which truly reflects the divine self-emptying in creation and redemption. Only God’s grace can make this happen in us, but it often appears disguised in the persons we meet every day.

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“Strangers and Exiles” with “Desires Frustrated and Fulfilled” constitute the remaining two chapters. To be an alien or exile or disabled can be embarrassing, isolating, and painful, but the author is never sentimental or maudlin. Instead she writes, “A biblical spirituality requires the discovery of the soul of the *ger* – the stranger within ourselves” (p. 100). Human longing (as exemplified, for instance, in the Song of Songs) may tease the heart into love of God, but the Holy One is always elusive, leaving our desires frustrated as well as fulfilled. “Disability is the condition of blessing” (p. 121), and satisfied or not, we will always be in need of grace.

This is a meaty little book – lean steak which requires some chewing. Dr. Young seasons it with a glossary, bibliography, endnotes, and an index. That still allows for 100 pages of text. She can’t say all that might be said, but she offers much wisdom that needs to be heeded in our time. “A biblical spirituality is never achieved, never self-satisfied, never comfortable, always longing ... [*sic*] yet in the Christian tradition, it is also always grace received, the fulfillment of promises, the acceptance of Christ” (p. 110).

*Brokenness and Blessing* is a valuable corrective to ideas that biblical spirituality is all about praise or feeling good. Among recent books this one deserves a niche of honor (to pick up an earlier statement) for its academic acumen, personal disclosure, and pastoral sensitivity. It is wisdom for the long journey distilled from decades of study, suffering, and service -- and perseverance in it all.

Jerry Flora

Justo L. González and Catherine Gunsalus González, *Heretics for Armchair Theologians*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008. 166 p.p., paper, \$16.95.

Ben Quash and Michael Ward, eds., *Heresies and How to Avoid Them: Why it Matters What Christians Believe*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 2007. 148 p.p., paper, \$16.95

Given the multicultural perspective of the Western world and its high view of tolerance, books on heresy are not anticipated as literary products that can sell well enough to meet publishing costs. And yet, a surprising number of books on heresy have appeared in the last decade and include prestigious authors like G. R. Evans (Cambridge University) and Justo and Catherine González. How is one to account for this? Maybe the writings of G. K. Chesterton at the dawn of the twentieth century and of Dorothy L. Sayers at its mid-point provides us a clue. They seem to suggest that times of relativity, when all claims receive equal value-- and corresponding equal indifference – are precisely the moments of history when truth needs to be articulated if a community, and especially the church, is to survive. These recent releases thus fit a need of the times.

Both books focus upon the heresies that emerged in the church in the first five centuries of its existence. The books differ, however, in their intended audience. Justo and Catherine González, as the title of their book suggests, write for ordinary Christians who have little or no academic training in church history or theology. Part of the book’s humorous appeal comes from the cartoon illustrations drawn by Ron Hill. The book edited by Quash and Ward resulted from a series of sermons preached at Peterhouse Chapel at Cambridge University in England in the fall of 2006. Various ministers and professors associated with the university, all but four being Anglicans, presented

messages in this series. Their sermons were directed toward students and reflect a more challenging academic level of treatment. The surprisingly positive response of students and professors was the stimulus for publishing the book.

Both books provide a helpful context for understanding heresy as an issue that demands the attention of thoughtful Christians. Violence against heretics is rejected and bigotry is scorned. Heresy, both books assert, reflects how difficult it is for the church to formulate and propagate its beliefs. Proper faith is seen as that which results dynamically over time, having been tested by competing versions of the mystery of godliness. Heresy is more isolated: less able to hold complimentary truths in tension, more tied to a particular time or location, and represented by spokespersons that cannot generate majority approval for their point of view.

Both books merit a careful reading. Either would serve well for a small group study for those who want a better grasp of Christianity through the centuries. The González book will appeal to high schoolers and new Christians. The book by Quash and Ward would work for mature Christians, collegians, and ministers.

Luke L. Keefer, Jr.

Gordon T. Smith, ed., *The Lord's Supper: Five Views* Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2008. 180 pp., paper, \$18.00.

This book is an exercise in ecumenism. Representatives from five major Christian traditions present their differing understandings of the Lord's Supper, then respond to each other's views. In the process these theologians learn from each other. The outcome is a lucid portrayal of this central observance of the Christian faith--variously known as the Lord's Supper, the Eucharist, Holy Communion, a sacrament, an ordinance--certain to enlighten every reader. The five interpretations and their presenters are Roman Catholic (Jeffrey Gros), Lutheran (John R. Stephenson), Reformed (Leanne Van Dyk), Baptist (Roger E. Olson), and Pentecostal (Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen).

The first two are clearly sacramental. Despite the fundamental differences supposedly imposed by the Protestant Reformation, one is struck by the liturgical and ontological similarities between the Catholic and Lutheran approaches to sacramental theology. The case is quite different with the Reformed tradition which presents a span of options around Zwingli who proposed a symbolic interpretation, Bullinger who focused on communion as a testimony to divine grace, and Calvin who viewed the elements as instruments of grace. Baptist diversity precludes any absolute agreement, but all seem to affirm the Lord's Supper as symbolic and memorial. Baptists, like Mennonites and other Anabaptists, tend to stress the service of the Lord's Table as "an event in which Christ is present and active in strengthening participants' faith" (p.95). Pentecostals are said to have devoted little attention to sacraments in general or to the Lord's Supper in particular, but appear similar to Zwingli and the Baptists in what they prefer to speak of as "ordinances." A distinct Pentecostal insight is "the idea of connection between healing and the celebration of the Lord's Supper" (p.127) through the agency of the Holy Spirit.

The Pentecostal contribution, in my estimation, is the most dynamic chapter in the book, and also the most ecumenical. The Pentecostal perception is appropriate and

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appreciated, not least in light of significant global expansion of Pentecostal religion in the twenty-first century.

Gordon T. Smith encourages excellence in theological education in the developing world. He was formerly academic dean and associate professor of spiritual theology at Regent College, Vancouver, Canada, where he taught "The Meaning of the Sacraments."

This book is an easy read for college students, lay persons, and scholars wanting to know about possible meanings of the Lord's Supper. It is highly recommended for small groups, and is certain to evoke lively discussion.

Roger E. Hedlund, Director of the Dictionary of South Asian Christianity project at the Mylapore Institute for Indigenous Studies, India.

Erwin Fahlbusch, et. al., eds., *The Encyclopedia of Christianity*, vols. 3 and 4, Translated by Geoffrey W. Bromiley. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Erdmann's Publishing Company, 2005 and 2008. Hardback. \$100.00.

Since volumes 1-3 were reviewed in earlier volumes of the Ashland Theological Journal (vol. XXXII, 2000, pp. 157-158 and XXXV, 2003, pp. 180-182), this review is in the order of a book note. These volumes represent the completion of the English translation of the Evangelisches Kirkenlexikon, which was published in Germany from 1986 to 1997.

Special recognition is due Geoffrey W. Bromiley, whose translation work on this encyclopedia runs to approximately 5,000 pages. So, at the end of his distinguished career, he has again earned the acclaim of English speaking academics as he did at the beginning of his career, when he gave us the Theological Dictionary of the New Testament in nine volumes as a translation of the German work Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament.

He has also made The Encyclopedia of Christianity of greater interest to American scholars by including articles written by English speaking writers that were not a part of the Evangelisches Kirkenlexikon. Thus, people, events, and perspectives of relevance to America get a greater hearing under Bromiley's supervision (and the team who assisted him). His inclusion of statistical data by David B. Barrett makes the set more valuable for those who wish to assess the contemporary church throughout the world.

The greatest usefulness of this set of encyclopedias will be as a reference source in librarians. It will also prove valuable for professors and students. Most general readers will lose interest when they note the price of the volumes.

Luke Keefer, Jr.

Samuel Hugh Moffett, *A History of Christianity in Asia*, vol. 2. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Press, Hardcover, 2005. \$65.00.

Volume two covers Asian Christianity during the years 1500 to 1900, completing the story begun in volume one that set forth the beginnings of Christianity in Asia up to the year 1500. Already the completed history has received academic acclaim;

it will update and replace the relevant sections of Kenneth Scott Latourette's massive studies: *A History of the Expansion of Christianity* (7 vols.) and *Christianity in a Revolutionary Age: A History of Christianity in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries* (5 vols.).

Contrasting Moffett's history to those of Latourette is instructive in several ways. Both authors engaged in immense research. But, while Latourette's writings became something of an epic, Moffett aims to tell a story in more compact form. For modern students and readers Moffett's work will therefore be more appealing. He keeps the reader interested in the story.

In both volumes Moffett follows a chronological approach over significant periods of time. He then looks at particular countries and cultures within that broad period and traces out particular developments. He notes in passing similarities and differences between the countries that are studied. He keeps alert to the chief concerns of the faith and how the church lived it out in its witness. What results is a work that could well be used as a text in Church History or for classes on missions. It will be an essential book for libraries, with appeal to both students and general readers. Its price will mean that students will be reluctant to purchase it unless forced to do so by course requirements.

Orbis Press is to be commended for the high quality of its publishing work. It is a book virtually free of errors. The geographical misplacement of Siam as between "Burma on the east and Vietnam to the west" (p. 49) stands out as an exception to the rule for the book as a whole.

This book (along with volume 1) was eagerly anticipated by those who teach and study Christianity in Asia. The finished product has satisfied well these expectations.

Luke Keefer, Jr.

Hershel Shanks, *The Copper Scroll and the Search for the Temple Treasure*. Washington, D.C.: Biblical Archaeology Society, 2007. xii + 112pp., cloth, \$24.95.

What does one make of two heavily oxidized copper rolls, two millennia old, written in sloppy Hebrew letters (and some Greek!) that describe buried treasure? Hershel Shanks, founder of the Biblical Archaeology Society and dean of all things archeological related to biblical studies, has provided another fine and fascinating study of this intriguing topic addressed to the general reader. This book, like his *Mystery and Meaning of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Washington, D.C.: BAS, 1998), is not a comprehensive scholarly resource but an entry point for the general reader to join the author as he relates the tales of intrigue and suspense frequently surrounding the DSS. Of course, Shanks himself was personally involved with many of the personalities and events surrounding the disclosure of the Scrolls and is uniquely qualified and gifted to tell the stories which, as he acknowledges, are often stranger than fiction.

The style of this book is vintage Shanks: filled with anecdotes of various facets of the enigmatic "Copper Scroll" (CS). With no less than 51 illustrations, this book is replete with descriptions of everything from personality conflicts among scholars to deciphering the text (which may have been created by an illiterate "scribe"), providing readers with a sweeping summary of most issues pertaining to the CS.

After a forward by David Noel Freedman, Shanks begins by introducing the book as a story of both the enigmatic scroll and the search for its hidden treasures. The

first chapter, “The Scholars Win One,” summarizes the discovery of the scroll. Chapter 2, “From Rolls to Scrolls” recounts the transport and “unrolling” of the CS for reading. Chapter 3, “Squabbling Scholars,” addresses the problem of what the CS said—and did not say—and some of the fantastic tales spun about them in popular media. Who had the right to release the contents, what was released and when are addressed in Chapter 4, “Publication Rights—and Wrongs.” Shanks discusses whether the treasures reported in the CS are “Folklore or [genuine] Temple Treasure?” (Chapter 5). He summarizes a number of excavations to find the various locations reported in the CS (Chapter 6, “Locating the Treasure”) and focuses on one particular excavation of a mysterious tunnel thought by excavators to be the locus of one cache of treasure (Chapter 7, “Tunnel Mystery”). Included at the end is an appendix where an English translation of the text of the Copper Scroll is produced in full.

Admittedly, scholars will find some of Shanks’ treatment of various subjects rather simplistic and will disagree at key points. Yet the book is not intended to be a scholarly tour de force, and Shanks’ carefully cited endnotes with complete bibliographic material will give the dissatisfied scholar much to excavate on his/her own. As usual, Shanks has done a great service in making an enigmatic relic from antiquity come alive with lucidity in a way that makes reading this small book a delightful use of an afternoon.

Daniel M. Gurtner, Bethel Seminary, St. Paul, MN

Robert J. Morgan, *Evidence and Truth: Foundations for Christian Truth*. Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2003. 126 pp., paper, \$12.99.

This book is part of a series entitled, *Biblical Essentials*. What could be more essential than opening with a thought provoking question, “Can Christianity be proven (7)?” After a time of uncertainty and questioning in his own ministry, Morgan discovered the facts and uncovered the evidence of his faith. Morgan shares, “The body of evidence for the truth of Christianity is staggering” (7). He summarizes the evidence in his book.

Chapters one and two discuss the resurrection of Christ and the empty tomb, along with the eye witnesses to the resurrection. Evidence comes from the reliability of historians, the diversity of accounts, the empty tomb, and the presence of the guard. Luke is respected by scholars as a legitimate historian of the life of Christ. “To reject the Resurrection, you have to disregard the demonstrated reliability of one of the foremost historians of the first century” (13).

Eyewitness accounts are indisputable as one could not argue with those who had seen the risen Savior. Christ appeared to His disciples, but He also appeared to those who were skeptic of his resurrection. The account of Thomas is a clear indication that not all believed unless they could see it with their own eyes (John 20:25). “In addition to the secular historians, we have the writings of the Apostolic Fathers ... all of them living in the first century and attesting to the historicity of the risen Christ” (23).

Chapters three and four look at the existence and the complexity of creation, showing there is a master creator. “The universe is billions and billions of times more complex than a wristwatch; hence, the complexity of the universe is itself powerful and indisputable evidence for the existence of a creator” (31).

of this picture? Haught rejects two general ways of responding to the question: either to ignore the findings of science or to discard faith and theology in the face of them. His approach is to see in the scientific picture an invitation 'to an unprecedented magnification of the sense of God, creation, Christ and redemption' (p. xiv).

Of the two Christian 'motifs' he mentions Haught concentrates much more on *futurity* than on *descent*. This is primarily an 'eschatological' theology of nature, although there is an 'incarnational' dimension to it. Haught recognises that there is a potential problem in that for Christian faith *futurity* means hope in a God who is 'the inexhaustible font of renewal' (p. 5) and who does what is genuinely new. However, in science 'every future occurrence, no matter how strange, will be an exemplification of timeless laws and previous physical circumstances, so by itself science simply cannot see clearly the perpetual newness of creation' (p. 5). As a result science tries to explain such dramatic new phases as the appearance of life and of consciousness in terms of nonliving and unconscious physical processes. His proposal for overcoming this problem is that science needs to be supplemented by a 'wider empiricism', which he defines as 'a way of seeing or experiencing that is sensitive to the insideness of things as well as to the genuine novelty that emerges, sometimes explosively, in natural history' (p. 57). This 'wider empiricism' is not opposed to science but seeks to take into account dimensions of reality that the scientific method ignores.

As Haught seeks to work out his proposal in the context of discussions of modern cosmology and evolutionary biology he has much to say that is interesting and thought-provoking. In particular, for this reviewer, there are his discussions of: 'limit questions' (pp. 26-29), 'lawfulness and indeterminacy' (pp. 57-59), 'layered explanations' (pp. 141-146) and the use of 'the analogy of information' (pp. 147-149). More speculative are his attempt to theologise about the evolutionary process in term of the humble, self-emptying God revealed in Jesus (pp. 91-95) and his proposal of an 'eschatological panvitalism' (pp. 172-175).

Haught makes clear that his thinking is influenced considerably by the work of the Jesuit palaeontologist Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, most of whose writings were censored by his superiors and not published until after his death in 1955. This reviewer found some of Teilhard's key ideas (e.g. the 'insideness of things', his Christology and soteriology) rather incoherent when first read in the 1960s. They are not greatly improved by Haught's re-presentation of them. Despite this caveat this is a book that is well worth reading because it is a thought-provoking discussion of some of the important issues which modern science raises for thoughtful Christians, and which Christian faith raises for thoughtful scientists.

The Revd Dr Ernest C. Lucas, a former biochemist, is Vice-Principal and Tutor in Biblical Studies, Bristol Baptist College, England.

Albert Borgmann, *Power Failure: Christianity in the Culture of Technology*. Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2003. 144 pp., paper, \$14.99.

Borgmann, a professor of philosophy discusses theology, sociology, and philosophy in the midst of contemporary culture. His definition of technology is "not just an ensemble of machines and procedures, but a type of culture" (7). It is the culture in which we live as Christians. The heart of the book is clearly stated, "Making room for

Christianity is in fact the most promising response to technology. We should neither try to demolish technology nor run away from it. We can restrain it and must redeem it (8).”

The book is in two parts: Part 1: The Circumstances of the Culture of Technology; and, Part 2: The Place of Christianity in the Culture of Technology. The first part of the book discusses subjects such as invisibility of contemporary culture, moral significance of material culture, and communities of celebration are discussed. Words such as: contingency, grace, power, care, liberty, festivity, poverty, courage, and fortitude are shared with the reader in the latter part of the book. The final chapter considers the culture of the word and the culture of the table. The book ends with notes and an index that are helpful to the reader.

*Power Failure* is an intriguing title. Has Christianity, a powerful influence upon society failed in the midst of contemporary culture? Borgmann defines contemporary culture as “the technologically advanced style of life (11).” Chapter one discusses the invisibility of contemporary culture. Consideration of progress, patterns, and precision of technology are explored.

Moral significance of material culture is investigated in chapter two. Philosophy is at the heart of this chapter. There are moral consequences in a materialistic culture. So who is responsible? Citizens of the culture are responsible. All of us should “take responsibility for the large design of our culture” (34).

Communities of celebration are a part of our culture, according to chapter three. But they are hindered by the culture and can become passive, therefore, dying. Borgmann shares his thoughts on communal celebration in a variety of settings, giving examples throughout the chapter.

What is the place of Christianity in the culture of technology? That is the question for the remaining part of the book. Chapters four through seven disclose words that describe the culture of Christianity and how it should be integrated into the culture.

Chapter eight closes the book with a look at the practices of “conversation and reading” (119). This is called the culture of the word. There is a need for more attention to the language and to God’s Word in our society. “The culture of the table, the careful preparation and the daily or festive celebration of meals, has been invaded by the commodious flexibility and variety of foods that are bought ready-made, stored safely and easily, and prepared in an instant” (121). No doubt there is a loss of family time, especially table conversation.

Is technology evil? No. There is a place for technology, although Borgmann states, “the benefits of technology have become thinner” (122). Then we must ask, as the author did, What place does Christianity have in the culture of technology? Christianity must not lose its power in the culture. Unfortunately, Borgmann is correct that family has been affected by technology and culture.

In Christian education, families are important. We want to minister to families: Parents, children, grandparents, and grandchildren. However, what we fail to realize is that families are struggling with just having time to cook a meal and eat together. Why? The culture is pulling them in a variety of directions with sports, extracurricular activities, and technology. Children as young as 10 years old are getting their first cell phone. Not only do they want to call their friends but texting is popular. Technology has become the new language of the next generation.

Has technology reshaped our family and church values, or communal celebrations? Yes, technology and the culture have reshaped our values. As Christians,

we must consider are we still having an influence upon our culture? Or is the culture of technology influencing us? The question can only be answered after careful examination of our own lives.

Dawn Morton

Joseph R. Myers, *Organic Community: Creating a Place Where People Naturally Connect*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2007. 190 pp., paper, \$13.99.

Community is a word discussed at great lengths, yet many churches struggle with providing or finding natural community, and not forced through programs. How does a church create a natural environment of community? The church wants a fool proof plan of action, yet Myers states a “master plan tries to manufacture life, whereas organic order is an invitation to live” (28). In chapter one, organic order is the solution according to Myers for true community to take place among people. The master plan is “a specific kind of plan” (28). Many churches want specific plans in order to produce life, yet the author wants to invite people to live their lives, which creates community.

Recognition of patterns assists leaders to find natural community. Myers suggests that “forcing connections among people is awkward and uncomfortable” (39). While that may be true, churches are providing a different model in which community is prescribed for the person. Chapter two presents the idea of creating “environments and spaces that encourage the patterns of belonging and allow people to connect naturally in all kinds of ways” (48).

Chapter three suggests that “many church leaders have spent too much time on the art of getting people to participate and too little time trying to understand how people participate” (53). Myers gives five elements of how people participate in community (55).

Measurement is reflected upon in chapter four. Myers suggests that churches concentrate on numbers more than other measurements such as what is happening among people. He states that “reducing living organisms to a census count demeans the way we were created” (77).

Growth is not a new aspect to the church. In fact the church is very much concerned about growth. In chapter five, Myers gives two types of growth labeled as “large-lump models” and “piecemeal models” (84). He wants the reader to understand that the “piecemeal model is considerate of the environments into which it plans to introduce growth” (93).

Chapter 6 discusses power and authority. Typically in churches, we have a hierarchy of power and it trickles down from the top of the power chart. The author discusses a “revolving power” that “brings the security of knowing that you are not the only one the project is relying on” (106). Revolving power considers the value of people and each part of the project.

Chapter seven is entitled *Coordination* which brings some confusion as it seems that *Collaboration* should be the title. He states that “the spirit of cooperation is a rigid spirit, one that stifles creativity and discovery” (117). Collaboration considers the process of belonging, which is vital in creating community.

Accountability is a discussion held at most churches. In chapter eight, Myers suggests that “edit-ability” is needed instead of accountability (138). Partnerships are

needed in community. Partnership means there is a spirit of “grace, not law” (138). Finding health is needed in community.

The church must contemplate language in our culture. “Almost all Internet language describes relational activity” (149). Myers discusses the “noun-centric” to the “verb-centric” concept and how churches need to from one to the other (154).

Chapter ten states that resources depend on the mindset of “scarcity” or “abundance” (161). Myers lays out the tools of organic order for review and reflection.

The purpose of the book is “to help you shift your thinking from a mindset of programming community to one of using organic order to develop an environment where community can emerge” (169). Notes and selected bibliography concludes the book.

Myers is writing for the *Emergent* church. It is difficult to say this is for all who read it, since everyone does not embrace emergent church concepts. It does have valid points of concern when discussing the word community and it is a challenge to churches who are caught in a traditional mode of church. The practicality of the book may sound good in theory, but living it out could be a bit more difficult for churches. While challenged in thought and theory, it is left up to the church as to the model it will follow.

Dawn Morton

Pete Ward, *Liquid Church*. Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 2002. 112 pp., paper, \$14.95.

Pete Ward is an influential author for the church, challenging in methodology and theology, so that the church will become effective within its culture. It is not surprising that Ward challenges the church with a *bold vision of how to be God's people in worship and mission*. His phrase to describe a solid church is “a shift towards structures, institutions, and meetings” (2). Although the historical church exists because of such formations, Ward suggests that church is much more than an organized institution. The author sees a spiritual hunger in the US and UK that the solid church is not able or equipped to handle. “Existing patterns of the church fail to connect” with culture and its search for spiritual truth (3).

A new definition of the church focuses upon communication and building relationships. *Liquid Church* will challenge most churches in theology and methodology. It is defined as an organism that is not dependent upon buildings, meetings, and structure; but takes the approach of building relationships, communication, and living out the gospel in everyday life.

Ward is not concerned with those inside the church doors, but those that have never stepped inside these doors. The culture in which we live is a liquid, flexible organism that is not tied to the solid church. The religious institution is not liquid. Frustration exists for those on the outside because people desire informal relationships, thus it is no surprise that internet communities are so widely used in our culture; such as My Space and Face Book.

Chapter one provides a detailed description of the solid and liquid modernity. Is the church “part of the problem or part of the solution” (13)? Relevancy is critical for the church. “To be a liquid church means that we are able to combine with water to become fluid, changeable, flexible...We need to embrace and internalize the liquid nature of the

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culture...Only by locating church within culture can we find ways to develop a distinctive Christian expression within that culture” (15-16).

Chapter two discusses the mutations of the solid church: heritage, refuge, and nostalgia. Heritage is based upon holding onto our traditions, our historical culture, thus preserving what we have been given for future generations. Refuge is concerned with people finding a place of safety, togetherness, emphasizing a Christian atmosphere in all parts of life. Nostalgia deals with the conception of the church; looking at the past and what the church believed about itself.

Chapters three, five, and seven build the theological foundation for the Liquid Church, while chapters four, six, and eight are concerned with the sociological underpinnings of the new church.

Chapters nine and ten conclude the book along with notes and a bibliography. The final chapters share concerns of understanding the work of the Holy Spirit and what the liquid church would look like. Examples are given which clearly paint a picture of a new church.

Ward provides a good foundation to understanding the solid and liquid church. Some may view this book as a negative view of the solid church, but it is clear that our culture is desiring much more than the institution of religion. It desires involvement in practical ways through worship and expression. Our culture is liquid. Unfortunately many churches are not willing to make changes in order to effectively reach their culture. These churches will continue to thrive in mutated stages, yet, not effective in reaching those that are spiritually hungry for truth. A new way of evangelism is needed.

The challenge of this book is not just for the churches, but for the leaders, pastors, youth pastors, and Christian educators of churches. Christian education is concerned with the teaching of God’s Word so that others may growth in their walk with Christ. As Christian educators we must be creative and flexible with methodology, yet, not compromising the message of Christ. Let us all be persons of influence in our culture. Let us become liquid, flowing with Christ and flexible to His call so that others may be fed and filled with His Word.

Dawn Morton

David S. Young. *Springs of Living Water: Christ-Centered Church Renewal*. Foreword by Richard J. Foster. Scottsdale: Herald Press, 2008. 389 pp., paper, \$16.99.

How to bring renewal to stalled congregations is an ongoing challenge. Some leaders opt for revival fires, which often burn out quickly. David Young prefers bubbling springs which refresh and renew for long-term growth. He finds a model in the story of Jesus and the Samaritan woman (John 4). Four movements emerge from his reading of that account: thirst, encounter, transformation, and mission. Using these, he has developed an approach to church renewal which has many strong elements. Thorough exposition plus nearly 70 pages of appendices, notes, and index make this a chunky book, but one rich in detail of both perspective and planning.

What is fresh, and possibly unique, in Dr. Young’s approach is that he puts spiritual formation -- often considered a private matter -- at the heart of corporate renewal. He is intent on “Christ-centered church renewal,” and he stresses this from first to last. More than a program, he offers a process that will take at least four years.

“Renewal is never a quick fix,” he writes, “and never follows a straight line” (p. 40f.). It is “not linear but multifaceted ... an art rather than a science” (p. 46). Using Richard Foster’s threefold model of personal spiritual growth, Young sees congregational renewal as a movement that must be upward and inward before it can proceed outward.

This means putting spiritual formation first with much attention to prayer and discernment of where God is leading. It is refreshing to find the author challenging churches to concentrate on their strengths, not their weaknesses. He encourages them to create occasions to celebrate the good that is happening within them. Leaders are servants in the outlined process who do not dictate, but engage in extensive ongoing dialogue and discernment. The goal of such Christ-centered renewal is quality before quantity, depth first and then breadth. To that end, Part 3 (Transformation) ends with “Experiencing Deep Transformation” while Part 4 (Mission) finishes with “Claiming the Deeper Journey.” The book concludes with “Postlude: The Deeper Joy.”

In all of this, Dr. Young draws heavily from his own ministry as a seasoned pastor who has taught renewal in several seminaries and worked with dozens of churches in various denominations. This is not his first foray into writing, but with *Springs of Living Water* he shows himself to be “the master of a household who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old.” Each chapter is informed by wide reading in both theoretical and practical literature, as the extensive notes demonstrate. Numerous references and quotations represent the best of spiritual formation literature as well. In fact, by reading selectively one could almost use this as a manual for personal growth developed out of the author’s decades of dedication to his own growth.

From my acquaintance with him, I can testify to the attention this pastor-teacher gives to his own spiritual life, and his book shows the fruit of that. Richard Foster has affirmed this in his warm endorsement of David Young’s work. Church leaders looking for an approach to renewal that is spiritual at the core, discerning in process, and geared to long-term growth can profit from this meaty, personal, clearly written manual.

Jerry Flora

David E. Garland and Diana R. Garland, *Flawed Families of the Bible: How God’s Grace Works through Imperfect Relationships*. Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2007. 235 pp., paper, \$14.99.

Families are looking for guidance of how to model themselves after those found in the Bible. Unfortunately, the families in the Bible are not perfect and “the family tree of the Messiah reveals a family whose closets seem to be bursting with skeletons” (11). So where does the family look for an example of the family loved and redeemed by God? The Bible is the answer. Many have not grown up with the basic Bible stories and therefore have missed the richness of God’s Word. The Bible has stories of families, their positive and negative experiences. “Once we begin to understand them, their stories and experiences may seem to mirror our own lives. We can see reflections of ourselves in their messy and troubled escapades” (13). Understanding the families of the Bible will bring understanding to our own family life.

The stories covered in this book are: Sarah’s and Hagar’s Stories: Hope versus Hopelessness; Leah’s Story: When Your Spouse Loves Another and You Feel Unloved

and Left Out; Dinah's Story: The Horror of Rape and Living through Family Shame; Tamar's Story: Commitment to Family against All Odds; Michal's Story: With a Family Like This, Who Needs Enemies?; Bathsheba's Story: Surviving Abuse and Devastating Loss; The Stories of Jephthah's Daughter and David's Daughter Tamar; When Parents Fail; and The Ethiopian Eunuch: God's Message of Good News. The book ends with references cited which provides a solid group of resources for the subject of the book.

David Garland has a theological and scriptural educational background while Diana Garland brings an understanding of social work and dynamics of family ministries. The uniqueness of the book is outstanding. It mixes theology and sociology in a practical way, reaching out to families in today's society. Many books written with theology and sociology as a blended thought tend to be in theory only. This particular book merges the two subjects in a beautiful way and extends God's grace to the family.

The theological subject of God's grace is discussed throughout each Bible story. "Grace allows us to receive what comes in life with gratitude. God helps us to accept that the 'Okay' in life embraces it all, the good and the bad, the joyful and the painful, the holy and the not-so-holy. Grace from God gives us the strength to get through it all and survive, and lets us leave the future in God's hands" (35). Many families are wounded and broken in our society, yet a glimpse of the Bible characters with their families, gives us the same picture of the family. Wounds, hurt, bitterness, hatred, murder, rape, incest, jealousy and the list continues on. The point of the book is that "through the grace of God, the working of the Spirit in the imperfect places, change happens. Families can be places of redemption rather than places of wounding, places of reconciliation rather than places of betrayal" (68).

The telling of the story of the family can bring hope to others who are listening in on the story. "It is in the telling of our stories that the wounded find healing and that we encourage others to know that their own voice can be heard, too" (101). Expressing and sharing our family stories brings a reality to situations today. It allows the family to understand that God loves the family and has a plan for the family, even with all of its flaws and imperfections. "God takes broken families of all kinds of shapes and sizes and works processes of perfection through them" (230). Yes, grace is for the individual, but it is also for the family which God has designed to reveal His perfect grace at work.

Christian educators work with families in churches. Families are distraught and broken from many different aspects of life. Reading this book gives hope that if God has worked His grace through the families of the Bible, then He can and He will work His grace through the families in our churches.

Dawn Morton

Nancy Jean Vyhmeister, *Your Guide to Writing Quality Research Papers: For Students of Religion and Theology*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008. xii+ 264 pp., paper, \$16.99.

Students entering into the world of theological or religious studies are often overwhelmed by their writing assignments. They often wonder where they can begin to find instruction on writing their papers. This problem is magnified by the breadth of subjects covered in the course of theological education. The requirements for an exegetical paper will be different from those of a theological research assignment, which in turn is quite different from the expectations in courses on practical theology. Where

may the confused neophyte turn for advice on how to engage in research and format its results? The second edition of *Your Guide to Writing Quality Research Papers* provides a good starting place for such bewildered students.

Vyhmeister, who has been instructing students in the United States and abroad for forty-five years on the intricacies of research, is well equipped to write this guide. Chapter 1 is an introduction to the question of what research is. Vyhmeister begins with a definition of research “as a method of study that, through careful investigation of all evidence bearing on a definable problem arrives at a solution” (p.1). She also warns students that “[r]esearch is not simply a compilation of quotations” (p. 5). Nor is it a rewriting of previous work. Neither is it a sermon or the defense of one’s own opinions. Rather, it is the systematic analysis of materials, presented in an effective presentation.

To accomplish research, one needs to utilize the major resources. These include the library (chapter 2). Vyhmeister introduces the student to the wide array of materials, both electronic and print. Keeping up to date on electronic resources is especially difficult, for this chapter includes a section on CD-ROM indexes (pp. 15-16), a technology quickly becoming obsolete. Fortunately, online indexes are also mentioned (p. 16-17). Students, however, should be careful not to limit their review of literature to electronic searches, since numerous subject specific print bibliographies are also available, as mentioned briefly on p. 17. In addition to the resources found in the library, this new edition includes an expanded discussion on electronic resources, as seen in chapter 3, entitled “Taming the Internet” (pp. 21-28). Students are advised both on how to evaluate internet material and how to cite it (pp. 25-28).

Chapters 4-13 describe the research process. Students are advised on how to choose a topic, how to prepare their bibliographies, how to read and take notes in an appropriate manner, how to prepare footnotes and bibliographies and how to write and format their papers. These chapters are among the books most useful. Chapters 8 (research reading), 9 (footnotes), 10 (reference notes and bibliographies), and 12 (writing the paper) provide information helpful to any student of theology and religion.

Chapters 14-21 discuss specific types of research. Chapter 14 on biblical exegesis provides a brief overview of the steps of exegesis and the presentation of its results. While not a substitute for such standard works written by Michael Gorman, Gordon Fee or Douglas K. Stuart, the chapter provides a quick reminder to students of the steps in the exegetical process. Other topics discussed include program development, case studies, statistics and the writing of theses and D. Min. projects. Chapter 19 on statistics is very brief, and is perhaps the least helpful in the book and Vyhmeister seemed somewhat uncomfortable in discussing computer applications for statistical research. Students employing statistical method would be well advised to read one of the standard works on statistical analysis, as well as become very familiar with their computers’ statistical programs. The discussions of masters theses and doctoral dissertations and D. Min. projects were, likewise, somewhat superficial. Nevertheless, students are provided with a quick overview of the intricacies of this type of research. Again, they cannot use Vyhmeister in lieu of the thesis manuals of their respective institutions. The book concludes with appendices, include notes on citation style. This section is also useful, although no substitute for the most current Turabian or APA manuals.

In conclusion, *Your Guide to Writing Quality Research Papers* provides a useful overview for students beginning to engage in theological research. It is not able to

cover every topic in detail. On the other hand, as an introductory text for seminary or theological students, it is an invaluable introductory aid.

Russell Morton

Elaine A. Heath, *The Mystic Way of Evangelism: A Contemplative Vision for Christian Outreach*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008. Pp. 207, paper, \$19.99.

Three particular areas in the academic study of evangelism dominate the publishing landscape today: concern for the interface of evangelism and postmodernity, holistic concepts of the practice that avoid unhelpful bifurcations of the biblical vision, and the rediscovery of ancient practices that have immediate and future application. *The Mystic Way of Evangelism*, by McCreless Assistant Professor of Evangelism and Director of the Center for the Advanced Study and Practice of Evangelism at Perkins School of Theology, Elaine A. Heath, touches on each of these areas. It connects contemporary Christianity with an ancient aspect of the Christian heritage often neglected with regard to the practice of making Christian disciples, offers an expansive vision of evangelistic ministry more faithful to the biblical witness, and provides a substantive response to the decline of Christendom in the West in the context of an emerging postmodern worldview.

Heath reclaims the wisdom of great Christian mystics who can function as mentors by the way they shape our understanding of the theory and practice of evangelism today. The threefold contemplative or mystic way of purgation, illumination, and union constitutes the basic framework for her discussion of serious issues that the church faces today as it struggles with its own "dark night of the soul." Heath views the current malaise in the Western church as a time of refinement and an opportunity for Christian communities to rethink church, rediscover their true vocation in the world, and transition from a moribund Christendom model to a more fully contextualized, biblical model of life in Christ based upon contemplation or abiding in Christ. This purgative movement paves the way for a new breakthrough of the Spirit.

In the more fully developed Parts Two and Three, Heath provides the contemplative prescription for the diagnosis of Part One. Under the overarching theme of illumination, she examines five sub-themes of the contemplative life: the experience of God's love, life shaped by eucharistic practice, identity formation in coming home to God, the church's need of confession and forgiveness, and the healing of the earth. Two spiritual mentors illustrate each of these themes in the respective chapters; Julian of Norwich and Hans Ur von Balthasar, Phoebe Palmer and Father Arseny, Thomas R. Kelly and Henri Nouwen, Julia Foote and Mechthild of Magdeburg, and St. Bonaventure and John Woolman. In her imaginative discussion of union, Heath narrates the fictional account of a divorced parent of a teenage daughter who comes in contact with a church embodying the contemplative life that Heath envisages. Each of the five chapters in this part describe how Sam learns about the nature of God's love, the Christian life of self-emptying service, the safety and intimacy of prayer, the presence of the Holy Spirit, and the care and redemption of our earthly home. Somewhat reminiscent of the conversational style of Brian McLaren's *A New Kind of Christian*, Heath's narrative methodology in Part Three not only articulates her contemplative vision for Christian outreach, but invites the reader into the larger story of God's grace and love.

Several features of this book contribute in unique ways to a fuller understanding of evangelism as a missional practice of the whole church. First, Heath draws not only upon the insight of significant men, but introduces the reader to female mentors who are of equal value and importance in the rediscovery of vital Christian discipleship. She provides a more highly textured portrait, therefore, that mitigates against the stereotypical, male-dominated, soul-conquering face of evangelism from the Second Great Awakening. Heath also transcends the individualistic ambiance with regard to the presentation of the gospel and properly locates the task of evangelism squarely in the church; she calls the church to become holy, believing that the very life of the community has the power to draw and witness to the truth of the gospel. Without direct reference to the Second Vatican Council, her vision certainly reflects its concern for the integrity of the church, particularly the winsome character of genuine holiness and purity of character. While based upon careful and incisive scholarship, Heath makes the vision of contemplative evangelism accessible to anyone serious about Christian discipleship in a postmodern context. In a culture that has tended to stress the importance of action, she offers a vision of evangelism in which “doing” is thoroughly grounded in God’s call to “be” purified, illumined, and united to the Triune God in whom we dwell.

Paul W. Chilcote

Elizabeth MacKinlay. *Mental Health and Spirituality in Later Life*. New York/London/Oxford: Haworth Pastoral Press, 2002. 154 pp., paper, \$24.95.

I found this collection of articles by Reverend MacKinlay informative, instructional, and stretching. The book is divided into two parts. The first contains three papers discuss theology, culture, and mental health in the later years. The second part has several papers written by “carers” as described in the book and their methods of reaching both patients and staff serving the patients in old-age facilities. The subjects and facilities referred to in the text are all Australian. It is my opinion the findings and conclusions reached can be generalized to other western cultures including the United States.

The articles gather information from theorists like Victor Frankl and Eric Erikson as well as current data from private and governmental studies. They also blend in anecdotal accounts of trial methodology.

Much has already been written about the underdiagnosis and misdiagnosis of depression of the elderly, but this collection paints a portrait of what this depression can look like in the communal setting of a nursing home. Part of this painting includes the underpaid staff who provide direct care for the elderly. The authors’ abilities to bring the value of focusing in on added training, increased responsibility, and value of these staff were both encouraging and surprising. Their data suggested as much improvement in the patients’ symptom reduction and overall wellness with the added attention given to the direct staff as additional attention to the patients.

Several articles touched on the spiritual condition of the patients. Most effective was the article by Christine Bryden. She suffers from fronto-temporal dementia and speaks about her loss of self and her fears of loss of relationship with God. Others in the book use the passage Luke 22:19, “Do this in remembrance of me,” as an example of those suffering from Alzheimer’s or dementia losing relationship with God as they lose

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their ability to remember about God and His Word. Bryden separates the frail body from the eternal spirit and says the verse implies the action of doing more than remembering. She and others strongly suggest that patients continue to take the sacraments and participate in liturgy even when their memory may fail to make the connection as to the purpose of such actions. She states further that just as the Holy Spirit intercedes "with groans that words cannot express" (Romans 8:26) He will also replace the memory loss "in all acts of remembrance" (73).

The last article speaks to the importance of pastoral care given to this population. Many times their only visitors are clergy. The paper gives an outline for helpers to guide their members to find meaning in their lives when it is most difficult to identify any positive aspects of life. Finding this meaning can prove to be lifesaving by reducing suicide in a population with some of the highest rates of self-harm.

This book sheds light on the subjects of depression and suicide in the elderly that will continue to increase as the population ages if we do not address these issues. It offers possible solutions as well as ideas on how to proceed in discovering new solutions.

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