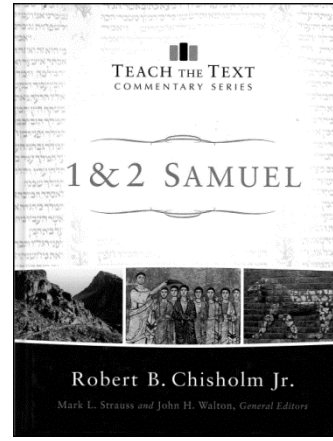
Book Reviews

The *Journal* uses the standard abbreviation 'hc' to denote hard cover. The International Standard Book Number (ISBN) has been included with all books when available. We begin this section with "**Book Reviews**", organized according to the four divisions of theology.

Biblical Theology

1 & 2 Samuel. Robert B. Chisholm Jr. Teach the Text Commentary Series, gen. eds. Mark L. Strauss and John H. Walton. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2013, 352 pp., hc. ISBN 978-0-8010-9225-1



The Teach the Text commentary series is a welcome addition to the range of commentaries that seek to bridge the gap between hardcore scholarship and devotional commentary. Publication of this new series began with four volumes in 2013 and now in 2016 stands at eight Old Testament volumes and six New Testament volumes out of a planned twenty-two and fifteen respectively.

The practical aim of the series is to simplify the task of "pastors who teach the text on a weekly basis" (p. ix). Negatively, the aim of the commentaries is to avoid detailed discussions of technical issues not clearly connected to the main purpose of the text, while at the same time avoiding the "lack of hermeneutical sophistication" (p. ix) often found in devotional commentaries. For the sake of conciseness the commentary for each preaching unit is strictly limited to six pages (p. ix). More importantly, for sound exposition and effective communication, "the commentary is carefully divided into units that are faithful to the biblical author's ideas and of an appropriate length for teaching or preaching" (p. xi).

For each unit the "Big Idea" and "Key Themes" are clearly highlighted. The commentary is divided into an "Understanding the Text" section, a "Teaching the Text" section, and an "Illustrating the Text" section. The "Understanding the Text" section is further divided under the headings "The Text in Context," "Historical and Cultural Background," "Interpretive Insights," and "Theological Insights". In the "Illustrating the Text" sections, the authors provide at least two and sometimes four illustrations for a passage, so usually something will be found helpful. Illustrations come from a wide range of types and sources such as biography and autobiography, poetry, history, classical and modern literature, film and television, the Bible, observations about human experience and culture, personal stories, and Greek mythology.

The endnotes and index are sufficiently detailed to be helpful and the separation of "Recommended Resources" in the bibliography is useful. The commentaries include many colour photos and illustrations of ancient artefacts and biblical sites, which primarily add visual appeal and interest rather than insight.

Chisholm is a well-respected Old Testament scholar. His introduction to 1 and 2 Samuel is brief, but it provides a very helpful overview of how 1-2 Samuel functions as the theological and literary centre of the Former Prophets. After briefly demonstrating that there are many patterns from Judges that the narrator uses to characterize Samuel, Saul, and David (p. 2-3), he provides clear focus for our understanding of 1-2 Samuel when he states, "the narrator's overriding concern is to demonstrate that David (not Saul) is the Lord's chosen king and the heir to a covenant promise that guarantees the realization of God's purposes for his people Israel" (p. 5). Unnecessarily, he expends two full pages of the introduction clarifying his purpose and approach (p. 5-7).

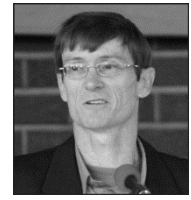
Chisholm consistently and carefully unfolds the place of each passage in relation to the history of Israel recorded in the Former Prophets and in relation to themes developed from the Pentateuch. Thus, he provides many helpful insights from antecedent Scripture and then frequently develops these insights to show how the events and the actions and words of characters in 1-2 Samuel anticipate later events and people in redemptive history. This reveals that Chisholm's key to interpreting each passage is primarily the broad canonical and theological context of 1-2 Samuel.

The author both clearly states and avoids the danger of using Old Testament narratives simply to teach moral lessons or principles that are not central to the purpose of the passage. Thus, for example, 1 Samuel 2:12-36 may be used to illustrate poor parenting, but if teaching from this passage the focus should be on its central theme of respect for the Lord (p. 19). The author also points out that how the Lord does something with someone on one occasion does not make it normative for future believers and situations. Thus, for example, observing what the Lord did with Saul (1 Sam 10:1-6) should not lead present-day believers to expect signs to prove God's will (p. 61).

Chisholm repeatedly reminds the reader that the positive portrait of Samuel is inseparably linked to and essential to the presentation of David as the Lord's chosen leader to replace Saul and to fulfil His covenant purposes (e.g., p. 44, 47). He also frequently highlights the tragedy in the plot concerning Saul. For example, he notes that Jonathan is revealed to be Saul's son only after Saul has forfeited his dynasty (1 Sam 13:16), which means Jonathan's demonstration of such courage, faith, and promise (1 Sam 14:1-15) is all in vain as far as the future of Saul's dynasty is concerned (p. 87).

Chisholm assumes that the first readers of 1-2 Samuel and the Former Prophets as a whole, were the exilic community (see p. 6). Therefore, usually at the end of the Theological Insights section, he interprets the message of the passage for the exilic community (e.g., p. 78), and then, in the "Teaching the Text" section, he effectively translates the meaning of the passage from its original settings to the situations of today's readers.

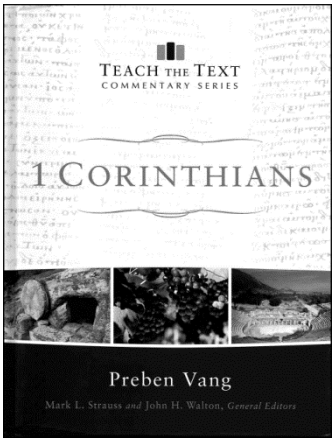
Overall, although I was initially skeptical about a commentary series that could potentially cater for lazy pastors, Bible teachers, and students, I was happy to find that these commentaries still leave readers with plenty of their own work to do. For this reason, I would definitely recommend the Teach the Text commentary series as one of the first resources that preachers and teachers should use to check that they are on the right track with their interpretation and to find those extra insights, pointed applications, and helpful illustrations. In particular, I am impressed by Chisholm's commentary on 1-2 Samuel and would especially recommend it for its attention to the function and message of 1-2 Samuel within its broad canonical and theological context.



Reviewed by Dr. Greg Phillips, a Zimbabwean who is the dean/registrar and a lecturer/facilitator at Dumisani Theological Institute, King William's Town, Eastern Cape, SA.

1 Corinthians. Preben Vang. Teach the Text Commentary Series, gen. eds. Mark L. Strauss and John H. Walton. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2014, 272 pp., hc. ISBN 978-0-8010-9234-3

For general observations on the purpose and format of this commentary series, see the review on 1 & 2 Samuel. The author, Dr Preben Vang, was not known to me before, and has not written any other biblical commentaries, but he has coauthored the book *Telling God's Story: The Biblical Narrative from Beginning to End* (B&H, 1st ed., 2006; 2nd ed., 2013). At the time of publication, Dr Vang had served for seventeen years on the faculty of Palm Beach Atlantic University.



In the introduction to 1 Corinthians, Vang primarily emphasizes the importance of understanding background issues such as culture, literary forms, "historical and social contexts, and religious and theological vocabulary" because "they help us avoid reading our own culture and understanding into the text" (p. 2). In this regard, Vang provides very helpful insights on the status and culture of Corinth as a new Roman city (p. 2). In particular, he highlights that "patron-client relationships … were a significant undercurrent in Paul's relationships with his audience and churches" (p. 4). In fact, this background of the patron-dependent culture, including the idea that God is the Patron of the church, His people (p. 166), remains very much in focus throughout and is definitely one strength of this commentary. Vang's discussion of the pagan background of the issue of veiling in 1 Corinthians 11:12-16 is also illuminating (p. 146-148).

The commentary is divided into thirty-six preaching units for the sixteen chapters of 1 Corinthians. For each passage, besides addressing the relevant cultural context, Vang's interpretation predominantly focuses upon the specific arguments and words (grammar) within each passage rather than on the broader canonical, literary or historical context. He frequently explains individual word forms in order to bring out more clearly the meanings, contrasts and wordplays intended by Paul (e.g., p. 35-36, 52-53, etc.).

In addition to the commentary units, Vang furnishes the reader with five two-page Additional Insights chapters which are well-focused on important issues: Corinthian law; Meat sacrificed to idols; Roman homes and households; Paul's body metaphor; and, Women, worship, and prophecy. Furthermore, Vang adds significant value to this commentary by including several "sidebar" notes within the commentary units that bring refreshing insight and perspective on subjects of interpretation and application. For example, in the sidebar for 1 Corinthians 1:1-3 on "Holiness and Sanctification" he argues against the common understanding that "holy" primarily means separate. Instead, he argues, "holy" primarily means belonging to God and only in a secondary manner means "separate" because what belongs to God is exclusive to God (p. 13). Other sidebars address such diverse topics as "The Corinthian Cliques" (p. 24), "The Body and the Soul" (p. 87), "Guidance for Exercising Gifts" (p. 181), "Baruch and the Resurrection Body" (p. 213), and "Steadfastness" (p. 221).

As a Reformed evangelical, I was generally comfortable with Vang's interpretation of the text, but occasionally I thought the issues deserved more clarification. For example, concerning prophecy mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12:10b he states,

> Nothing in the text itself, however, suggests that Paul equates prophecy with something comparable to a modern-day prepared sermon, although it may certainly include elements of such. Rather, the hints he gives allude to a spontaneous empowerment from the Spirit that allows the gift's recipients to speak words that reveal God's presence and guidance in a specific situation (14:3, 24-25, 30-31, 37) (p. 168).

In this case I think it would have been helpful if Vang had briefly clarified his view and summarized one or two alternative views, especially since his comments on 1 Corinthians 14 do not add much more interpretive precision.

I found the "Teaching the Text" applications by Vang to be very incisive in bringing home the message of each passage for today's audiences. Concerning 1 Corinthians 1:18-31, he says, "We must be constantly aware of the disparity between secular wisdom and Christian wisdom. For example, the book *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* does not become a good Christian discipleship manual just because we add a scriptural proverb to each of the habits" (p. 32).

Another strong challenge to culture-compliant Christianity is found in Vang's comments on 1 Corinthians 4:6-13. He says, "It is easier to apply the culture's success norms to ministry than to risk a 'lack of success' for the sake of one's witness to Christ" (p. 56).

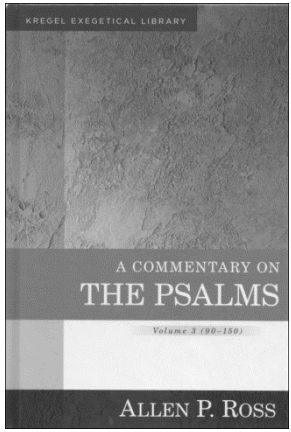
Overall, although this commentary lacks depth in some areas of interpretation, it will provide pastors and Bible teachers and students with many helpful insights on applying 1 Corinthians to the cultural contexts of the Church today.

Reviewed by Greg Phillips

***A Commentary on the Psalms: Volume 3 (90-150)*. Allen P. Ross. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2013, hc, 1018 pp. ISBN 978-0-8254-2666-7**

A. P. Ross is currently professor of divinity at Beeson Divinity School. He taught at Trinity Episcopal School of Ministry and Dallas Theological Seminary. Some of his works include *Creation and Blessing: A Guide to the Study and Exposition of Genesis*, *Holiness to the Lord: A Guide to the Exposition of the Book of Leviticus*, *Introducing Biblical Hebrew*, along with *A Commentary on the Psalms, Volume 1 and 2*, both covering Psalms 1-89. The first two volumes I had the pleasure of reviewing for this journal in 2013 and

2015. For a more extensive review I refer you to my comments in those issues of the journal.[1]



There is no change in the layout of this commentary from the previous volumes. In all three he lays out his chapter studies in the following format:

- In the "Text and Textural Variants" section, he renders a fresh translation of the text and explores a variety of other translations and textural variants that have been a part of the history of the Psalm's interpretation.
- In "Composition and Context" he explores the authorship based on the headings, internal evidence, or use of the psalm elsewhere to pinpoint the where the psalm falls in the history of redemption.
- The "Exegetical Analysis" structures the psalm with headings and sub-headings to allow one to deliver the psalm in preaching.
- The section on "Commentary in Expository Form" focuses our thoughts on words or phrases which bring the main thrust of the psalm to the fore.
- Lastly, "Message and Application", as the title suggests, helps us apply any Christological areas or more generally areas of the life of the believer that the psalm highlights.

The titles he gives for each psalm are also worthy of attention. As noted in earlier reviews of these volumes, Ross gives helpful one-sentence summaries, but the titles themselves also provide the same to focus our attention. They are also helpful if we are looking for a psalm on a particular subject. Each one succinctly summarizes the main message of the psalm and provides the exegete with a bird's-eye-view of the psalm. For example, Psalm 90 "Learning to Live Wisely", Psalm 100 "Jubilant Praise to The Lord Our Maker", Psalm 103 "God's Gracious Benefits for Frail and Sinful Believers" or Psalm 119 "The Word of the Lord and the Life of Faith".

One area that has troubled many in their reading of the Psalms is what we call the "Imprecatory Psalms" – those which call for the Lord to punish the wicked. How does Ross view these imprecations? Commenting on Psalm 109 he says, "His (the psalmist's) prayer is written as one who knows what it means to be hounded to death, suffer malicious slander and be repaid with evil for all the good he has done. But it ceases to be personal vengeance as he turns his wishes over to the Lord in a prayer, thereby leaving it to the Lord to deal in justice with his adversary" (p. 326).

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[1] Kent Compton, review of *A Commentary on the Psalms: Volume 1 (1-41)*, by Allen P. Ross, *Haddington House Journal* 15 (2013): 44-47. And, *A Commentary on the Psalms: Volume 2 (42-89)*, by Allen P. Ross, *Haddington House Journal* 17 (2015): 48-49.

Commenting on Psalm 140 verses 9-11, he writes, “It is a prayer in harmony with talionic justice – may they reap what they sow. But it is not an expression for personal revenge, but an expression of God’s just rule” (p. 846). He further states, “The psalmist is only praying for what he knows God does, and will do, in restoring justice to the land” (p. 847) Ross concludes,

> As we have seen with other imprecatory psalms, Christians are cautious about praying down such wrath on their enemies. They have been taught to forgive and to pray for their enemies. And yet when the persecution becomes unbearable, as it is in parts of the world today, praying for God to do now what we know he is going to do eventually seems appropriate. In fact, an imprecatory prayer might sound a warning for those who oppose the faith. (p. 849)

Where do these commentaries fall on a technical level? According to Ross,

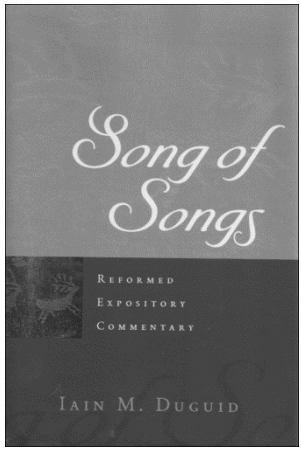
> “The selections made for the bibliography ... were made with the same idea in mind – what resources will be helpful and practical for bible expositors to use in their study of the Psalms. There were many that were popularly written, and many that were technical; my selections for the most part lie between these two descriptions....” (p. 11-12)

In fact, the bibliography is an impressive forty-one pages itself!

The completion of this set provides the church with a wonderful corpus of a pastorally practical and academically rigorous unpacking of the Psalms. This makes the price, I believe, worth it. The Psalms were seminal in shaping the life and thought of the Lord Jesus, shaping the early church understanding of the life of the church, and even today give us a map for Christian life and worship. To have solid resources in such important areas are essential, making these volumes a worthy acquisition that will repay itself many times over!

Reviewed by Kent I. Compton who is the minister of the Western Charge of the Free Church of Scotland on PEI and a trustee of Haddington House.

***Song of Songs*. Reformed Expository Commentary. Iain M. Duguid. Phillipsburg, NJ; P&R, 2016, 168 pp., paper. ISBN 978-1-59638-948-9**



Iain Duguid's most recent commentary on the Song of Songs comes on the heels of an earlier commentary he published on the same book of the Bible in 2015 with the Tyndale Old Testament Commentary series. In his preface to the Tyndale commentary, Duguid explains the relationship that exists between these two books. He says that the *research* that went into studying the Song of Songs formed the content of the Tyndale commentary, whereas the *sermons* that came from his research form the content of this present volume (p. 9).[1]

In keeping with the view set forth in the Tyndale commentary, the book is approached from the perspective of wisdom literature that relates both to human love in all its brokenness and imperfections and, by implication, to divine love in all its glory and perfection. He writes, "The Song is designed to show each of us how far short of perfection we fall, both as humans and as lovers, and to drive us into the arms of our true heavenly Husband, Jesus Christ, whose love for his bride is truly perfect" (p. xx).

The book is arranged into twelve chapters. Instead of providing a verse-by-verse commentary as he did in his earlier book, each chapter develops a central theme addressed in the unfolding drama of these two lovers. Some of the areas considered include: the longing for intimacy and affirmation, the craziness of love, the notion of belonging to one another, the costliness of love and the strength of love. In each chapter, he briefly explains the scene and how this longing of the heart shows itself in our lives today before ultimately pointing to the love of God in Christ and the comfort of resting in His love.

As one might expect, the book provides plenty of practical application for those who are married and those pursuing marriage. But, the reader will appreciate the author's conscious effort to relate to a wider audience in addressing these themes. He speaks about pornography, adultery, divorce, those who are widowed, and those who struggle with same sex attraction. In so doing, he shows that the message of the book is relevant for everyone.

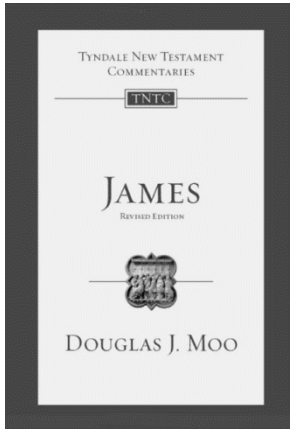
As a commentary, this could provide a helpful model for pastors looking to preach Christ from the Song of Songs. But this book deserves to be read

[1] Iain Duguid, *The Song of Songs: An Introduction and Commentary*. Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries, vol. 19 (Downers Grove, IL, InterVarsity, 2015), 9.

by a much wider audience. I find myself agreeing with Dale Ralph Davis, who writes, "If someone asks me how to best to prepare for marriage, I will be tempted to say, 'Study the Songs of Songs and read Duguid's commentary.'" This book will take the reader by the hand and help them to appreciate marriage and human love without idolizing it. As the apostle Paul points out, marriage pictures the love of Christ for His church (Eph. 5:25ff). The fruit of such a study for the believer would be a fresh reminder that "Jesus' relationship with you is not merely legal; it is also deeply affectionate… God reveals his heart of love for you on the pages of Scripture and desires that you come to know and love him in the same way that he already knows and loves you" (pp. 92-93).

Peter Aiken serves as Pastor of Birchwood Church in Charlottetown, PEI. He is married to Michelle and they have four children.

***James: An Introduction and Commentary, Revised Edition*. Douglas J. Moo. Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, series ed. Eckhard J. Schnable. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2015, 238 pp., softcover. ISBN 978-0-8308-4287-2**



This second edition, published in the Tyndale New Testament Commentaries series (vol. 16), is a revision of the first 1985 printing, occasioned in particular by the appearance of a number of significant contributions to the field of Jamesian scholarship; such as, the work of Bauckham (1990, 1999), Deppe (1990), Hartin (1991), Johnson (1995), Brosend (2004), Taylor (2004), Nienhuis (2007), McKnight (2011) and Allison (2013) to name some. Particularly unfortunate though is the apparent absence of interaction with the notable works of Cheung, *The Genre, Composition and Hermeneutics of James* (2003/2007), and Lockett, *Purity and Worldview in the Epistle of James* (2008), which may be a more recent representation of a growing direction in Jamesian studies.

This work reads easily and divides into an introduction and commentary separated logically by an analysis, which is really a book outline that sets a six-section 'chapter' order for the commentary portion. The introduction covers, in order: the ecclesial reception history of James' letter, its authorship, the letter's circumstance, the nature of the letter and the theology of the letter.

For the purposes of the TNTC series, the introduction suggests a meas-

ured consideration of a selective representation of the scholarly breadth of Jamesian research and the theological issues in the letter.

In the introduction on 'the circumstances of the letter', Moo correctly identifies the unsavory influence of the world, economic inequality and also the class-conflict that was exacerbated by such difference, as part of the socio-cultural context of the addressees. However, Moo seems to forget (pp. 45, 72) that one cannot assert poverty existed to such a proportionally high decree in the communities. That is too much of a sweeping generalization when one reads 4:2-4, 13-14; 5:1-6. Perhaps Moo is here keeping an overly cautious distance from Liberation theology (p. 210). Regardless, this approach raises the concern in this section that conclusions about the social-cultural status of the addressees seem to be rushed, that an adequate consideration of all possibilities seems to be remiss.

Further, concerning the audience, Moo first states James, "sought to maintain good relationships with Judaism" (p. 35) and "the implied Jewish audience of the letter is in keeping with the New Testament and early Christian portrayal of James as one who ministered among the 'circumcised' (Gal. 2:9)" (p. 45) inclusive of non-Christian Jews, yet Moo after states that James' intended audience was "limited" (p. 77) to groups of Christians (pp. 39, 106). It would seem that though Moo entertains the possibility of also a non-Christian audience (p. 35), his exclusively metaphoric interpretation of the expression 'the twelve tribes' and the term 'diaspora' seems to exclude the real possibility that James' letter was designed to include exhortative, pastoral material not just for believers but also protreptic (writing intended to persuade or instruct) material for God-fearing Jews (2:19). This expedited curious approach to the identities of the letter's addressees of course filters into the commentary and guides interpretation.

Understandably the brief treatment of certain issues in the text is determined by the purposes of the commentary series, yet even so some topics would have deserved further development; in particular, the significant topic of double-mindedness. Notable exceptions to this criticism are Moo's favourable treatment of faith and justification and also the topic of prayer in James (pp. 69, 221-236).

The commentary is comprised of six parts or 'chapters', five of which (2-6) each contain multiple sub-sections according to that part's subdivisions. The analysis / outline is: Address and Salutation (1:1), Trials and Christian Maturity (1:2-18), True Christianity Seen in its Works (1:19-2:26), Dissensions Within the Community (3:1-4:12), Implications of a Christian Worldview (4:13-5:11) and Concluding Exhortations (5:12-20).

After the brief introductory section (1:1),the first major portion of James is section two, 1:2-18. This has what Moo calls a 'loose coherence' that is fixed on the theme of trials / temptations. It is James' main concern to encourage Christians undergoing trials to persevere with steadfast endurance rooted in genuine faith, to continue with a loyalty to God resulting in obedience to His word.

The third section of James (1:19-2:26), Moo contends, returns focus to the word of God and the law, and uses it to illuminate the particular issue of discrimination within the community. The end result of this is the well-known declaration that "James rebukes believers who think that they can be justified or saved by means of a faith that does not manifest itself in consistent works" (p. 105), that justification does not occur through or on the basis of works but that neither is one justified without those works (p. 150). According to Moo, 2:26 restates the central theme of the passage: faith without deeds is dead.

Additionally, Moo claims that the 2:14-26 passage in its entirety is the theological climax of James' call to a pure religion. In this section, a number of points could have been addressed with added clarity; for example, the explanation Moo offers for "the word planted in you" (1:21). Though he is correct to note that 'receive the word' is not a command to be converted but to accept its precepts and live by them, he is not as explicit as he could be. That is, the phrase may elicit thought of the Torah (a written copy of the law of nature) and the understanding (as espoused by Philo & Stoics) that all in humanity have received the implanted logos (law of nature), a reference James has capably ameliorated. Unlike the unbelieving, Moo says, they are able to receive the implanted word; they should differ from others in that they have been made able to resist desires and anger and to produce the fruits of righteousness.

Next, Moo judges that the circumstance described in 2:1-13 is more likely a worship service than a judicial assembly, yet the reasons for this consensus choice are rather thin. Also, 2:19 is as Moo observes taken from Deut. 6:4. Yet there is no note of Deut. 6:5, a verse that would have strengthened James' case for the full Christian faith that he writes about.

Moo notes that section four, 3:1-4:12, begins and ends with warnings about the sin of impure speech. Between these bookends, James focuses on the problems of dissensions and disputes; the source of these, as Moo rightly notes, is the central section theme of envy, selfish and arrogance. The importance of envy as the key theme holding together 3:13-4:3 is developed nicely by Moo as he follows the observations of Johnson on the passage's significant features (p.167-170).

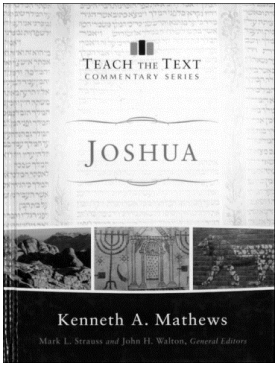
Section five spans 4:13-5:11 and is unified by the theme of the Christian perspective on the period of time in which the Church lives, such that this theme touches each major topic in the section. James here clearly demonstrates his concern with practical theology (pp. 217-218). In the final section, 5:12-20, James treats oaths and prayer, and this is followed by a "fitting", "appropriate" closing summons to action (pp. 236, 237). Moo's observations on the Jamesian presentation of prayer and practice in community are succinct and well balanced.

It is always a formidable challenge to put together an equitable study on a Bible book for the benefit of a broad, trans-denominational, non-academic audience. On this count Moo has fared relatively well. Examining a wider

spectrum of research and synthesizing its most salient contributions, Moo has rewritten an introductory commentary that should and will appeal to the Church and pastors alike, helping them to gain their theological footing and assisting them to strive toward a better understanding and application of the Epistle of James.

Reviewed by Dr. Frank Z. Kovács, a visiting scholar at the University of Toronto, Department for the Study of Religion, a senior lecturer for the Greenwich School of Theology, UK, and a trustee of Haddington House.

Joshua. Kenneth A. Matthews. Teach the Text Commentary Series, gen. eds. Mark L. Strauss and John H. Walton, Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2016, 222 pp., hc. ISBN 978-0-8010-9217-6



One could be forgiven for being skeptical about a new commentary series on two fronts. First, the need for such, and second, the ability of the volume at hand to live up to the claim of uniqueness which warrants its production. It was a pleasant experience then to be introduced to the new "Teach the Text" commentary series from Baker Books, edited by Mark L. Strauss and John H. Walton.

I was introduced to this volume part way through my sermon series through the book of Joshua and in hindsight wish I had it earlier on. I found it fulfilled its intent and was a great companion to my favorite balanced commentaries[1] without lacking any of the depth of some of my more technical ones.[2]

When evaluating a commentary, I first ask if the author evidences a relationship with the Author of Scripture and whether the book they are commenting on is in their estimation the inspired, inerrant word of God. Kenneth Matthews gives ample evidence to affirm both of those questions. That being established, I had a level of trust that this commentary would draw me to the text and the God Who stands behind the text, and I was not disappointed. Matthews does an excellent job of giving an overview of the "forest" (theo-

[1] D. Ralph Davis. *Joshua: No Falling Words*. (Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus, 2012) and David Jackman. *Preaching the Word: Joshua: People of God's Purpose*. R. Kent Hughes, gen ed. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014).

[2] Marten H. Woudstra. *The New International Commentary on the Old Testament: The Book of Joshua*. R. K. Harrison and Robert L. Hubbard, Jr, gen. eds. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981) and David M. Howard Jr. *The New American Commentary: Joshua*. E. Ray Clendenen, gen. ed. (Nashville, TN: B & H, 1998).

logical affirmations and themes, historical background, and author biography), covering the material in enough detail without getting bogged down. He then moves systematically through the "trees", providing for each section of the text an understanding of it followed by suggestions for teaching and illustrating it.

Another test of the value of a commentary is how it handles controversial or hard to understand portions of the text. Joshua doesn't have too many of these sections, but Matthews handles the conquest of Canaan very well with an additional insights article on pages 54-55. He also does a good job covering the sin of Achan (pp. 62-67), the Gibeonite deception (pp. 80-85) and the sun standing still (pp. 86-91, with another additional insights article on pp. 92-95).

One caution I would offer is not to use Matthew's illustrations directly as written. Borrowed sermon illustrations are a pet peeve of mine, especially ones that are outdated and outside the culture and context of the audience. While Matthew's illustrations are generally current and personal, I would suggest following his example as opposed to lifting and using his illustrations directly.

I could see this work being used as a college textbook and could serve as the sole commentary for a pastor working through Joshua. I heartily recommend this volume to all exegetes who wish to faithfully proclaim the Word of God to their people.

Reviewed by Jeff Eastwood, the lead pastor of Grace Baptist Church in Charlottetown, PE, Canada. He is the husband of Melanie and father of four. He also serves on the council of The Gospel Coalition (TGC) Atlantic Canada.

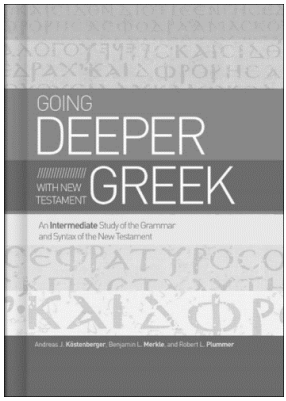
***Going Deeper with New Testament Greek*. A. J. Köstenberger, B. J. Merkle, and R. L. Plummer. Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2016, 550 pp., hc. ISBN 978-1-4336-7908-7**

This new volume is intended to fill a gap between introductory grammars of Koine Greek (of which there are now several of very good quality) and technical, reference grammars (of which there are few, and, as far as I am aware, none published recently in English). For many years, I have used a 'reader' of NT Greek by William Mounce (Zondervan) as a textbook for students who wished to progress in their knowledge and experience of Greek. But that was primarily a collection of annotated texts; there was little teaching material. The more recent reader by Rodney Decker (Kregel) is similar in form, though it includes a wider range of texts and some more developed teaching material.

Köstenberger, Merkle, and Plummer have now written a book that at-

tempts to gather together the strengths of various kinds of books in a way that will stretch the intermediate student of Greek without being overwhelming. The authors are all experienced teachers of Greek. Köstenberger is well known as the author of several excellent commentaries and other books. Plummer has become well known as a result of his excellent 'Daily Dose of Greek' videos (https://dailydoseofgreek.com), which are highly recommended to all who wish to work on their Greek skills.

The book is composed of fifteen chapters, most of which deal with a particular feature of Greek. So chapter titles include, 'Genitive Case', 'Tense and Verbal Aspect', 'Participles', and 'Infinitives'. The final three chapters are somewhat different and deal with broader issues: 'Sentences, Diagramming and Discourse Analysis', 'Word Studies', and 'Continuing with Greek'.



In most chapters, the format is similar. First, there is a short discussion of how understanding of the feature of Greek helps to make sense of a particular verse or passage. Then, following a brief statement of the objectives of the chapter, there is a substantial portion of explanation of the various ways in which the particular element of the language is used. The discussion is typically arranged in a clear, orderly manner by using many section headings and frequently presenting material in helpful charts. Plenty of examples are included, all of which come with English translation. Thus even students who lack confidence in reading Greek may benefit from the discussion. There is usually a brief explanation of the particular point illustrated by the example. Following the discussion of the grammatical feature, a summary of the material is laid out in a clear chart. In the next section, knowledge of the grammatical feature that has been studied is reinforced through exercises based on portions of the Greek NT (without translation). Then comes a section of vocabulary, broken into 'vocabulary to memorise' and rarer 'vocabulary to recognise'. Finally, each chapter concludes with a reading passage from the Greek NT (usually around ten to fifteen verses, depending on the passage). This passage is accompanied by quite extensive notes on the text (a total of around ten to fifteen pages for each passage, depending on the complexity of the issues it raises). The notes parse more challenging forms and briefly discuss textual variants, possible translations, and grammatical or syntactical features. This reading with guidance notes accomplishes much the same function as the Mounce's reader, but now the readings are integrated into a more structured teaching (and, to a certain extent, reference) tool.

I have adopted this book as the main text for a 'Greek Texts' module (3rd year Bachelor's degree level) at Highland Theological College, and I look forward to giving the book a full trial as a teaching tool and to receiving feedback from my students. At this stage, I think that there are a number of

notable features of the book. The first is that it has been written to be read (see the comments of the authors on pages 1-2 of the preface). The text is written with a warm, engaging tone, with an emphasis on clarity and encouragement. While this leads to a longer book, it also makes the book particularly valuable to those who may have studied Greek in the past and now wonder if there is any way they can revive it. The second is that it is well-informed on issues that have been debated in recent scholarship on Koine Greek. Thus, there is a valuable, up-to-date discussion of 'verbal aspect' (pages 229-41) that would be particularly valuable for preachers who learned Greek some years ago to read. Likewise, with respect to the middle voice, the concept of 'deponency' is questioned, supported by relevant references to recent studies (pages 196-97). This is not to say that the discussions are complete or that all scholars would agree with the positions adopted, but this book will alert readers to major issues in Greek scholarship and, hopefully, save preachers from perpetuating untenable positions on the meaning of particular passages in the Greek NT.

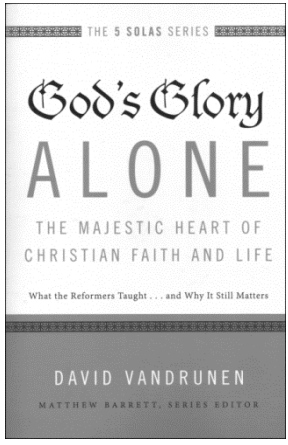
Interestingly, like the proverbial bus, after a distinct lack of such a book, two came along at once! A book with a similar intention, written by D. L. Mathewson and E. B. Emig, entitled *Intermediate Greek Grammar, Syntax for Students of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2016), was published within a few months of the book by Köstenberger, Merkle, and Plummer. Mathewson and Emig's book provides many of the same benefits as *Going Deeper with New Testament Greek* and is itself a very valuable resource. Theological libraries should certainly hold both volumes in their stock. If an individual is unable to purchase both books for herself or himself, it is quite a fine judgement as to which one to choose. I would generally recommend that readers try to view a portion of both books and decide from experience which one they prefer. I would slightly favour *Going Deeper with New Testament Greek* because it is somewhat more accessible for a reader who requires some extra encouragement to develop competence in Greek.

It is a good time to be a life-long student of Greek! I hope that *Going Deeper with New Testament Greek*, along with the many other excellent resources that have recently become available, will be widely used so that many people will become better readers of the Greek NT.

Reviewed by Dr. Alistair I. Wilson, lecturer in New Testament, Highland Theological College UHI, Dingwall, Scotland. He has recently completed the manuscript for a commentary on Colossians and Philemon.

Systematic Theology

God's Glory Alone: The Majestic Heart of Christian Faith and Life. David VanDrunen. The Five Solas Series, ed. Matthew Barrett. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015, 186 pp., paper. ISBN 978-0-310-51580-7



The subtitle of David VanDrunen's book *God's Glory Alone* motivates the Christian heart and mind. Christians desire to know and practice the "majestic heart of the Christian faith and life," and VanDrunen's work both teaches and stirs Christians on the subject of God's glory. His aim in the book is simple: "We have set out to contemplate the glory of the Lord and the Reformation theme that all glory belongs to God" (p. 24). VanDrunen accomplishes his aim with a heartwarming effect.

God's Glory Alone: The Majestic Heart of Christian Faith and Life is the second volume of The Five Solas Series published by Zondervan and edited by Matthew Barrett. The purpose of the series is to remind today's church that the five *Solas* of the Reformation are biblical doctrines fundamental to the Christian faith and to inspire today's church to live out these truths.

VanDrunen's work meets these goals by first showing that the truth of *soli Deo gloria* runs throughout all Reformed theology. As he writes, "*Soli Deo Gloria* can be understood as the glue that holds the other *solas* in place or the center that draws the other *solas* into a grand, unified whole" (p. 15). To prove his case, VanDrunen alerts the reader to the glory of God in the writings of Edward Leigh (1602-71), Jonathan Edwards (1703-58), Herman Bavinck (1854-1921), and the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms. VanDrunen's entire thesis in his first section is that the Reformation (and all biblical Christianity) is about God and His glory from first to last because, in all His works, His chief end is to glorify Himself. Humans' labors for God are ultimately saved and comforted by Him for His glory.

Second, VanDrunen meets the goal of this series through his exegesis of Scripture. The source of *soli Deo gloria* is Scripture. VanDrunen writes,

"The other Reformation *sola*, *sola scriptura*, drives us behind Reformation theology to explore its source" (p. 44). Consequently, VanDrunen's second section highlights the glory of God as revealed in key events of the redemptive history recorded in Scripture. He describes God's special appearances in the cloud, the tabernacle, the temple, and the Incarnation. His chapter on "The Glory of God Incarnate" is especially edifying. Jesus is the revelation of the glory of God both in His humiliation and exaltation. Jesus is the fulfillment of all God's promises; thus, the glory of God seen in the cloud, the tabernacle, and the temple is fulfilled and surpassed in Jesus the God-man. Through the cross and resurrection, He is the "brightness of the Father's glory" (p. 83).

The third section of VanDrunen's volume is the practical pastoral section. This section also meets the goal of the Five Solas Series by inspiring the Christian to live for God's glory. His reminders that worship and prayer are for God's glory and his challenge to Christians to glorify God in this present age as they make their pilgrimage to heaven give clear directives to live a faithful Christian life for God's glory alone. His chapter on the glory of God and narcissism was of particular help to me. VanDrunen, knowing the seduction and saturation of narcissism in Western culture, confronts it with the fear of the Lord. Biblically, the fear of the Lord is what VanDrunen defines as "'reverential awe,'or a 'filial fear'" (p. 134). Christians will grow in this godly fear as they increasingly admire the glory of God. Narcissism deceives people, but people who love the truth about God and His glory are brought to reality – namely that only God is glorious. This truth brings Christians to humility and peace.

This book reminds today's church that our lives are to be lived for God's glory alone because He alone has perfect glory. I encourage you to take it up and read it.

Reviewed by Henry Bartsch, minister of Trinity AR Presbyterian Church in Chatham, Ontario. Henry is married to Tammy; they have six children and two grandchildren.

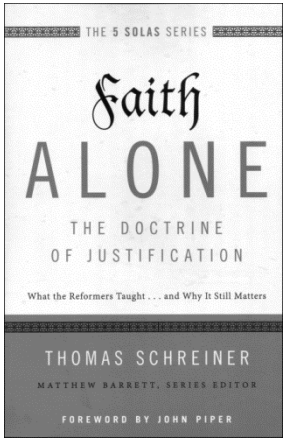
***Faith Alone: The Doctrine of Justification*. Thomas Schreiner. The Five Solas Series, ed. Matthew Barrett. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015, 288 pp., paper. ISBN 978-0-310-51578-4**

In commemoration of the 16th century Reformation and in service to the modern church, Matthew Barrett, as series editor, and Zondervan are publishing a detailed explanation on each of the Reformation's *Solas*. The aim of this five-volume series is not to merely be historical or exegetical but also practical. The editor and authors hope this series will help the church "renew theological bearings and find spiritual refreshment" (p. 9). Tom Schreiner's

work *Faith Alone: The Doctrine of Justification* is the first volume in this series.

This volume is helpful to both church leaders and laymen because its writing and layout are direct and clear. Schreiner expounds on the doctrine of faith alone and its corollary doctrine justification in three parts. First, he gives a historical overview of faith alone and justification. Second, he gives an exegetical defense of these Reformation doctrines. Third, Schreiner cites and rebuts the contemporary challenges to faith alone and justification.

Like most books, *Faith Alone: The Doctrine of Justification* contains strengths and weaknesses. Fortunately, Schreiner's book contains far more strengths than weaknesses. This review will highlight three key strengths and then describe one weakness.



The first strength. In the historical overview, Schreiner's account of Luther's doctrine of justification by faith is first-rate. He highlights Luther's rejection of Gabriel Biel's semi-Pelagian view of justification, which asserted that God's covenant is a gift of God's grace but man still has the capacity to meet the terms of that covenant – namely the works of the law. In response to Biel and Erasmus, Luther correctly linked justification to predestination. Humans cannot will to come to God for justification unless God gives them faith to receive Christ and the obedience to keep the terms of the covenant. Salvation is of grace from beginning to end, so predestination is connected to faith alone. Luther knew that God gives the grace needed as well as the atonement, faith, and repentance to those whom He predestined (p. 39). Schreiner also stresses that "Luther's vision of God was the foundation for what he thought about everything else, and because of his view of God Luther believed justification was the doctrine by which the church stands or falls" (p. 40). God's holiness and justice and God as Creator of all are woven throughout Luther's theology. In connection with justification, Luther maintained that a sinful person is justly condemned before a holy God, and only when God satisfies His justice by His grace in Christ and then received by faith alone can a sinner be made right with God. Furthermore, Schreiner identifies the modern Finnish view on Luther's justification doctrine, and he shows it to be contrary to Luther. The Finnish view collapses sanctification and justification into one. Contrary to Luther, the Finnish theology rejects *simul justus et peccator*; also contrary to Luther; it asserts a deification of Christians due to union with Christ.

The second strength. Schreiner's exegetical defense of faith alone and justification is the longest and finest section of his book. He is detailed in his Scripture exegesis and thoroughly orthodox in his doctrine. Many sections were especially helpful to me. First, he clearly explains the New Testament phrase "works of the law" and why works don't justify; they don't justify

because "people fail to perform what the law requires" (p. 111). Second, preachers would do well to study Schreiner's section on Paul's teaching on faith. Paul clearly emphasized faith alone in his writings, and one of Paul's main teachings is that righteousness is granted to those who believe. Schreiner has no shortage of Scripture citations to show this. For Paul, as our author explains, true faith always has the Person of Jesus Christ as its object; Paul teaches that "what makes salvific is the object of faith" (p. 122).

Another helpful chapter was chapter 10, "The Importance of Justification in Paul". The reader should know that Schreiner's work has an apologetic thread throughout. He defends the Reformation doctrine of justification by faith alone against attacks from modern theological movements. In chapter 10, Schreiner confronts the positions Albert Schweitzer, James Dunn, Michael Gorman, N.T. Wright, and Doug Campbell, who all reject the Reformation doctrine. These theologians assert that justification by faith alone as defined by the Reformers was not central to Paul's theology. Schreiner shows their assertion to be misguided, and he posits that, though justification might not be central to Paul's theology, "it is sufficient to say that it plays a crucial role in his theology" (p. 135). Schreiner then goes on to give a masterful, biblical eight-point defense for this view.

Chapter 13, entitled "Righteousness Is Forensic", is a tour de force apology for the forensic view of justification by faith. Some modern protestant scholars understand Paul to teach transformative righteousness, which means believing sinners are not legally declared righteous before God but are actually made righteous. Being transformed by God to live righteously is a biblical doctrine; however, as Schreiner shows from the New Testament, that forensic justification is the basis for the transformative. This forensic view of justification is taught in the Old Testament, and "this prepares us for Paul's use of the term" (p. 163). Paul clearly teaches that faith is counted to the believer as righteousness, not that faith is his righteous work; by faith, the believer trusts in Christ, and Christ's righteousness is then imputed to his or her account. That believing sinner is then legally righteous before God.

The third strength. Schreiner gives a warning against uniting with the present Roman Catholic Church; she still denies justification by faith. Schreiner's last section, which deals with contemporary challenges, takes on three movements that downplay justification by faith alone. They are the modern movements which seek to bring the Roman Catholic and Protestant church to closer unity: N.T. Wright and the New Perspective on Paul (NPP), and the NPP in relation to imputation. Schreiner's interaction with the NPP is competent and fair. He gives credit to N.T. Wright's groundbreaking work in New Testament studies and says, "there are many things we can learn from N.T. Wright" (p. 256). Nevertheless, Schreiner shows the NPP to be off the mark in teaching ecclesiastical justification, the idea that justification is about how someone becomes part of the family of God rather than being declared righteous and having the imputed righteousness of Christ by faith in Christ

alone.

Another strength of this section is Schreiner's interaction with those movements seeking to bring Romans Catholics and Protestants together. Schreiner's concern is maintaining the forensic doctrine of justification by faith alone. He documents that the Joint Declaration of the Doctrine of Justification, a document signed between the Lutheran World Federation and Catholic Pontifical Council for Christian Unity, compromised and then surrendered the Reformation doctrine of faith alone. Schreiner also documents that the Evangelical and Catholics Together (ECT) movement of America and parts of Europe also compromised justification by faith alone. Their documents asserted justification by faith, but their meaning of justification differed from the Reformed doctrine, and they omitted the word "alone". By "alone", the Reformers meant justification without the works of the law but by the Person and word of Jesus Christ alone, received by faith alone. "The omission of the word 'alone' from ECT constitutes a fatal flaw"(p. 224). Schreiner shows the truth that in both these movements and their documents, the Roman Catholic view of justification did not change.

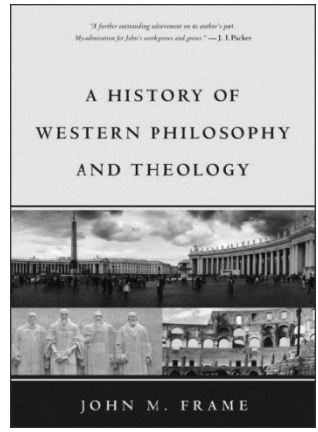
We now turn to a weakness of this book. In his historical section, Schreiner discusses the controversial question, "Was the doctrine of faith alone taught and preached in the early church?" T.F. Torrance's book *The Doctrine of Grace in the Apostolic Fathers* seeks to show that the early church was not in agreement about justification by faith alone. Schreiner asserts that Torrance's thesis is not fully correct, but he should have been stronger on this point. In a cumulative way, he does try to show that the key Early Church Fathers did teach about justification, but, in the end, this seems to support Torrance's thesis. It seems to me that more work needs to be done in this area of patristics.

Schreiner's *Faith Alone* is a satisfying, comprehensive book. Those who read it will be reminded of the biblical doctrine of justification by faith alone and hopefully will rejoice that they are sons of God through Christ alone because they have received Him by faith alone.

Reviewed by Henry Bartsch

***A History of Western Philosophy and Theology*. John M. Frame. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2015, 875 pp., ePub. ISBN 978-1-62995-085-3**

In *A History of Western Philosophy and Theology*, author John M Frame seeks to demonstrate what it means to "take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor 10:5) as he evaluates the history of western thought in light of biblical theology.



Frame is professor of systematic theology and philosophy at Reformed Theological Seminary in Orlando, USA and previously taught at Westminster Theological Seminary (Philadelphia and California). He has authored numerous books including *Apologetics: A Justification of Christian Belief* (P&R Publishers 2015) and his *Theology of Lordship* series (P&R Publishers). He hosts www.frame-poythress.org, which provides resources for apologetics, theology, and philosophy, including access to many of his own writings.

In the first chapter, Frame constructs a biblical approach to worldview, that is a Christian epistemology. The remainder of the book is simply an application of that paradigm to philosophy and theology in the west from ancient Greece to modern times. The book is essentially one long case study contrasting Christian and non-Christian thought in light of biblical teaching.

Frame first outlines his paradigm of a truly Christian epistemology and worldview.

> Christian philosophy begins in Scripture itself, with the two-level worldview of Genesis 1. God is the Creator, the world the creature. God is absolute tripersonality, and he is Lord of all that he has made. His Lordship entails control, authority, and presence. Sin leads people to think they can replace God's lordship with their own autonomy, and their rebellion extends to their philosophical thinking. The natural consequence is that their thinking becomes what Scripture calls foolish. We can see the foolishness of unbelief in many areas of metaphysics, epistemology, and value theory. Unbelieving thought is caught up in a dialectic of rationalism and irrationalism – principles that conflict with each other but nevertheless require each other. (p. 86)

This is the lens through which Frame will read and evaluate the history of thought in the west through the rest of the book.

Essential to Frame's paradigm is the claim of irreconcilable antithesis between Christian and non-Christian philosophy. Frame traces this antithesis as it is expressed in the three traditional areas of philosophy – metaphysics (biblically, God is both the transcendent creator and the immanent covenantal presence in His world), epistemology (God's transcendence implies that He is the ultimate criteria of truth and establishes the conditions of knowing; His immanence permits our competent knowledge of God and His world), and ethics (only a personal sovereign can impose moral norms). To summarise the antithesis: "non-Christian philosophers are seeking alternatives to God,

making the discipline of philosophy an exercise in idolatry" (p. 30). There is little wonder then why Frame so often refers to the apologetic task as spiritual warfare.

Throughout the book, Frame demonstrates the antithesis between Christian and non-Christian thought by depicting the autonomy of reason, by demonstrating how rationalism inevitably leads to irrationalism (following Cornelius Van Til), and by showing how non-Christian thinking often blurs the Creator-creature distinction. Frame is not afraid to criticise Christian theologians from Justin Martyr to Bultmann for supporting an unbiblical approach to theology.

Frame fully admits his bias (pp. xxvi, 560). Though he assures his readers that he is fair in presenting the ideas of each thinker, Frame does not evaluate each thinker or movement neutrally. He applies his paradigm rigorously in this perspectival reading of the history of thought. If his readers accuse him of circular reasoning (beginning with his conclusions about philosophers and then finding those conclusions), Frame counters, "that's the way it is in philosophy and in all of life: we can't step out of our skins" (p. 2) and all philosophers argue from within their worldview, which he seeks to demonstrate through the pages of this book.

With this paradigm before the reader, beginning in Chapter 2 Frame launches into a chronological presentation of western thought through the Greek, Early Christian, Medieval, Renaissance, Reformation, Enlightenment, and Modern eras.

As Frame presents 19th and 20th century philosophers, he discusses theologians who might not be found in traditional histories of philosophy but who would be of special interest to readers of this book, most of whom are likely more interested in theology than exclusively in non-Christian philosophy – including von Harnack, Barth, Brunner, Bultmann, Tillich, Bonhoeffer, Moltmann, and Panenberg. The book closes with a presentation of the contributions of modern Reformed thinkers – Kuyper, Dooyeweerd, Clark, Van Til, Plantinga, Poythress, and others.

The section on Cornelius Van Til (pp. 529-537) is especially useful as well as Appendices D ("Transcendental Arguments") and T ("Van Til Reconsidered") as the entire book seeks to apply Van Til's transcendental apologetic approach to the history of philosophy.

Frame concludes that his excursion through the history of western philosophy has been bleak. The history is dark as it has demonstrated over and again that humans are fleeing from their Creator, their foolish hearts are darkened, and their worldviews are incoherent or ultimately undercut themselves. But he closes the book with hope and a challenge.

> But God has not abandoned the world of thought. Through all this time, faithful pastors, church teachers, evangelists, theologians, and fathers and mothers have maintained the authentic biblical gospel.

> Hearts have been transformed, and Christian people have spread abroad the love of Christ. (p. 512).

The final three hundred pages of the book comprise twenty appendices, which contain ten of Frame's previously published discourses on philosophy, seven book reviews, and assessments on Thomas Oden, Gordon Clark, and Cornelius Van Til. Each chapter concludes with a helpful list of key terms, study questions (useful in the classroom context), print and online bibliography, recommendations on primary source reading, and famous quotes of thinkers highlighted in each chapter. Chapter content closely follows Frame's lectures at Reformed Theological Seminary and is freely available through iTunes (p. xix).

Frequent diagrams assist the reader to visualise abstract concepts. The running outline and brief summaries in the margins help the reader follow the flow of argument. Frame's constant citing of primary sources demonstrates his grasp of the perspectives he is evaluating. The brief conclusions at the end of each major era of philosophy allow the reader to see the big picture of Frame's philosophical paradigm in application.Some degree of previous knowledge of theology, apologetics, and the history of philosophy would help students before they read this book.

Frame writes in conversational style as if he were lecturing in class, including numerous personal reflections and asides (mainly in the plentiful footnotes). This style will bother readers who are looking for a more technical or detached analysis, but it does give the book "personality" and allows the reader the chance to "watch the author think" as he writes.

Whether a reader agrees with Frame's Reformed theology or his presuppositional apologetic approach, one will benefit greatly from the vast scope of the work and the helpful summaries of each thinker presented. The volume of information presented allows the book to be used as a quick reference guide to theology teachers and students.

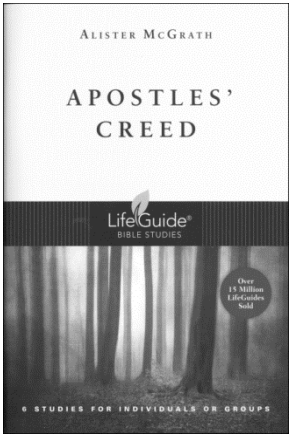
Having lectured in philosophy in a tertiary theological institution in Africa, I am naturally interested in the usefulness of Frame's book for teaching philosophy and theology on this continent. How relevant is *A History of Western Philosophy and Theology* for theological education in Africa? On the surface, a reader might judge that the book is irrelevant to engage the philosophies, worldviews, or social concerns on the continent. The book does not reference a single modern African thinker, nor does it engage traditional African ontology or social concerns. And isn't "Western" in the title an immediate turn-off in light of recent pan-African renaissance?

I believe a case can be made for the usefulness of this text in Africa for a number of reasons. First, African life and thought have engaged western philosophy for generations, for better or for worse. There is likely no university on the continent which does not interact heavily with western thought. Providing students with a Christian perspective on western thinking will be a

helpful evaluative tool. Secondly, Frame's book provides African students of theology, philosophy, and apologetics with an example of how to approach any philosophy from Africa, such as the spirit-world/phenomenal-world, the ontological concepts of identity-in-community and identity-in-ethnicity. Frame's approach to the creator-creature distinction, autonomy of reason, and idolatrous fleeing from God are an integral part of the specific concerns in the African philosophical agenda. The first chapter itself could be used as a stand-alone text in a course on theological or philosophical prolegomena. Given the issues the continent faces today, which have deep philosophical and worldview roots, we could easily welcome a follow-up to Frame's work, applying a biblical paradigm to the philosophical concerns in Africa with a view to take every thought captive.

Reviewed by Karl Peterson. Karl Peterson lectures at the Bible Institute of South Africa in Cape Town. He received his D.Min. from Westminster Seminary in Philadelphia, PA.

***Apostles' Creed: 6 Studies for Individuals or Groups*. Alister McGrath. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2016, 47 pp., paper. ISBN 978-0-8308-1095-6**



Apostles' Creed is a short work that is part of the larger Life Guides series published by Inter-Varsity Press. It's a series which includes many books of the Bible, topical studies, and character studies.

This particular volume is by Dr. Alister McGrath, who along with being a theologian is a biochemist. He holds the chair in theology, ministry, and education at the University of London. He is the author of *Christianity's Dangerous Idea*, *In the Beginning*, and *The Twilight of Atheism* amongst a long list of books.

This short work (forty-nine pages) explores each phrase of the Apostles' Creed. Each section begins with a summary passage from the Bible which undergirds the phrase, a one-page commentary of the particular phrase in the Creed, followed by two pages of questions for study and refection. Included as well are suitably large spaces to write one's answers.

The copy given for review happens to be a leader's guide. This contains helpful approaches to leading the study as well (for those lacking leadership abilities) and appropriate answers to the questions at the back.

McGrath states the purpose for these studies: "Leading a Bible discussion can be an enjoyable and rewarding experience, but it can also be scary – es-

pecially if you have not done it before." He continues, "These studies are designed to be led easily. As a matter of fact, the flow of questions through the passage from observation to interpretation to application is so natural that you may feel that the studies lead themselves." (p. 35) McGrath says the studies can be used with people from professionals, students or church groups, with each chapter designed to take about forty-five minutes in duration.

If this volume is any reflection of the wider series, they will serve as a wonderful way to bridge the gap between a beginner's level and a more involved study of God's Word.

As in any series, the quality of each one has to be determined on its own merits depending on the author, and so if being led by a novice, a good suggestion might be to consult with someone with more experience as to the suitability of the content. But strictly judging by this study, they can and should be widely used across the life of the church.

Reviewed by Kent I. Compton

A Review of Three Books on Aspects of Global Theology

***Theology without Borders: An Introduction to Global Conversations*. William A. Dyrness and Oscar Garcia-Johnson. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2015, 208 pp., paper. ISBN 978-0-8010-49323**

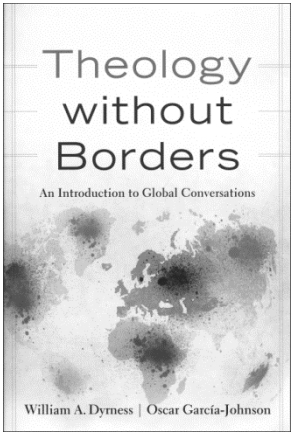
***Jesus without Borders: Christology in the Majority World.* Eds. Gene L. Green, Stephen L. Pardue, and K.K. Yeo. Majority World Theology Series. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014, 208 pp., paper. ISBN 978-0-8028-70827**

***The Trinity among the Nations: The Doctrine of God in the Majority World*. Eds. Gene L. Green, Stephen T. Pardue, and K. K. Yeo. Majority World Theology Series. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015, 182 pp., paper. ISBN 978-0-8028-72685**

In the 21st century most Christians are found in the Majority World. While there are some signs of renewal and church growth in the "First World," the projected growth in the West is very slight in comparison to the dramatic – and even, explosive – growth of the church in other parts of the world. Nevertheless, the vast majority of theological writing and publishing still is found in the West, largely due to the accumulated wealth and resources for such production there. Thus, the vast majority of publications still embody a

Western perspective on theology. In addition, theology and biblical studies as taught in the Majority World has largely not taken account of this new global situation. This needs to change.

Something that will change this unfortunate situation is the availability of non-Western theological voices in Western publications. The insights of theologians from diverse contexts and socio-cultural situations expressing the meaning and applications of the gospel in their situations are needed to expand the Western understanding of the Christian faith for a global church. This has slowly begun to happen. The three books which we examine in this review essay are significant contributions to this expansion of the Western theological perspective and to the global theological conversation.



Theology without Borders: An Introduction to Global Conversations is written by William A. Dyrness and Oscar Garcia-Johnson. Dyrness has taught at theological schools in Manila and Nairobi, as well as a number of Western seminaries, and is currently a professor of theology and cultures at Fuller theological Seminary. Garcia-Johnson was born and raised Honduras and moved to the U.S. as a young man. He is associate professor of theology and Latino/a studies at Fuller, and recently became associate dean of the Center for the Study of the Hispanic Church and Community. They wrote this book as a catalyst to promote greater dialogue between theologians in the West and the Majority World.

Each author writes an introductory chapter indicating his concerns in doing theology in general and in writing this book. Garcia-Johnson challenges Western theology to end its dominance in the theological field and to engage in fair and respectful interaction with theologies of the Majority World. His use of the language of postcolonial and critical studies – terms such as the subaltern, transoccidentality, transnationality, and glocality – makes the thrust of his arguments somewhat opaque and dense. But his essential points are important – that any framework that produces clear and fruitful cross-cultural theological dialogue must accept that all theology is shaped by its historical and socio-cultural context. Thus, every theology must humbly and respectfully listen to the insights of the theologies arising out of other contexts to have a richer – global – understanding of the gospel.

Dyrness repeats the concerns and goals of Gracia-Johnson. He wants Western theologians to appreciate how deeply committed Majority World theologians are to applying theology not merely to personal evils but also to the social evils in their own settings. While there are perennial questions that theologians answer in all ages and cultures, the methods of doing theology in

the non-Western world arise out of the conditions of persecution, injustice, and corruption in which these Christians find themselves.

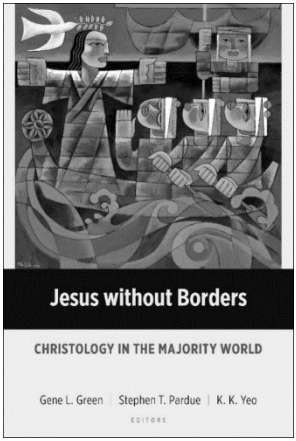
There are two themes that the authors explore in the remaining four chapters: applications of theology to the specific socio-cultural conditions in the Majority World and ways that the beliefs and values of pre-Christian indigenous traditions have shaped theology around the world. These themes are set against the background of criticism of Western Christianity. Some of these criticisms are accurate: that church traditions and practices were imposed on indigenous peoples; that the gospel was presented in individualistic terms; and that Christianity was used to justify coercive imperial conquest. But others are highly questionable. Among the latter are: that the cultural and social assumptions of church leaders shaped what the 4th and 5th century councils found in the Bible concerning the doctrines of Christ and of the Trinity; that American Christianity was shaped by the Enlightenment and its ahistorical perspectives; and that Christian missionaries were indifferent to the injustices that colonial powers practiced in the Majority World. Concerning this last claim, while it is certainly true that this was true of many missionaries, there were also many missionaries who worked to protect the indigenous peoples from the unjust and abusive treatment of colonial interests. The recent work of sociologist Robert Woodberry has brought this important aspect of proselytizing missionaries to light. This book could have been more balanced in noting the positive impact of Western Christians and their theology to the Majority World.

The second theme of the book – the role of the beliefs and values of pre-Christian indigenous traditions in shaping the theology of Majority World Christians – is both enlightening and a source of caution. The authors acknowledge that, even in the Majority World, theologians differ on the role that these pre-Christian beliefs and values should play. For example, the African theologian Emmanuel Katongole views the gospel as an alternative to idolatrous indigenous African beliefs, while Kwame Bediako considers Christianity as fulfilling Africa's deepest indigenous aspirations. It is one thing to contend that, due to general revelation and common grace, many beliefs and values of indigenous peoples have a strong resemblance to Christian beliefs. Examples of these are: the Mezoamerican belief in a supreme Creator Being who guides all humans; the African belief in the importance of the spiritual world, of community, and of being connected with the natural environment; and the Asian belief in a divinely-given code for harmonious human relationships. But it is another thing to argue that these beliefs should shape the character of non-Western theology. For example, the authors appeal to the African notion of ancestors as spirit guides to be incorporated into theology to understand the communion of saints. This is obviously a significant problem for Protestant theology.

Even with the caveats noted, this book contains many helpful insights to open Western theologians to humble dialogue with theologians from the Ma-

jority World. Theology is always contextual; it should be applied to social and cultural issues to effect positive change; and it must draw upon the insights of indigenous beliefs in transformative ways so as to shape beliefs in a culturally winsome manner. Insofar as this book unfolds these themes in biblically faithful ways, it is a helpful tool in promoting truly global theological conversations.

The next two books reviewed here are the first in The Majority World Theology Series published by Eerdmans. Each book opens with a chapter on the specific doctrine by a leading Western theologian. This is followed by chapters from theologians in the Majority World in which they indicate how their socio-cultural context shapes the significance of the doctrine for their setting. Both books have the same goals as *Theology without Borders*: to provide a forum in a Western publication for the expression of Majority World theology and to foster dialogue and mutual enrichment for Christian scholars from around the world.



Jesus without Borders is divided into two parts. Part I contains chapters by theologians reflecting on Christology with Scripture, philosophy, history and culture. Part II contains chapters by biblical scholars reflecting on Christology by interacting with biblical texts that have Christological significance.

Kevin Vanhoozer begins Part I with a presentation of historical Christological developments in the West, with a concern for the continuity that is important to maintain for Christian worship and proclamation. He argues that the Chalcedonian formulation – two natures in one person – is essential for the global church's confession of Christ today. Yet, he notes that this confession is not the whole truth about Christ in that it leaves room for specific applications and emphases that relate to diverse social contexts. Vanhoozer rightly notes that these applications and emphases must always uphold the biblical ontology embodied in Chalcedon, which confesses the divinely revealed identity of the person of Jesus Christ.

The next three chapters in Part I present the views on Christology by three non-Western theologians. While they reflect specific concerns arising from their contexts, it should not be assumed that their respective views are shared by all theologians in their specific global settings. V. Ezigbo presents three contextual models which represent the major assumptions of African Christology: Christ who negates African indigenous beliefs, Christ as Mediator-Ancestor, and Christ as Revealer of true divinity and humanity. Ezigbo argues for the third view.

Timoteo D. Gener notes a number of themes that resonate with Asian Christians. Some of these are: Jesus as human who makes God accessible to

humans (for Hindus), Jesus as Monk (for Buddhists), Jesus as prophet (for Muslims), the suffering Jesus (for Chinese), and Jesus as Lord of the spirits (for many Asians). J. Martinez-Olivieri notes the themes of Jesus as liberator and judge which speak to the realities of oppression, injustice, violence, and corruption in Latin America. Christology must combine both the Christ of faith with the Jesus of history, ontology and ethics, the personal and the social vision of salvation.

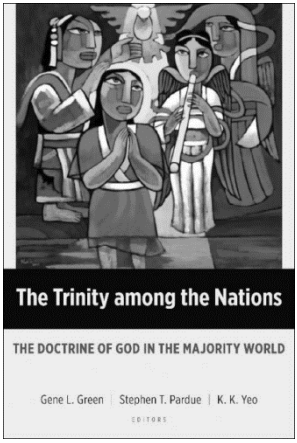
Part II contains chapters by biblical scholars that ponder the Christological significance of particular biblical texts for their contexts. The chapter on "Reading the Gospel of John through Palestinian Eyes" by Yohanna Katanacho could be more candidly entitled, "The Inclusive Christology of the Gospel of John, with Brief Application to the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict." By noting echoes of Old Testament themes in John, and parallels between Moses and Jesus, Katanacho shows how John's gospel takes the ethnic, religious, and geographical specificity of the Israelite hope of redemption in the Messiah and expands it in the person of Jesus to proclaim a Redeemer and a redemption that encompasses all people. Katanacho has a very brief conclusion with application to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. His exegetical insights are quite good, but they are not actually a reading of the gospel through Palestinian eyes.

"From Artemis to Mary: Misplaced Veneration versus True Worship of Jesus in the Latino/a Context" by Aida Besançon Spenser examines the role of Mary as intercessor in the Latina feminist evangelical perspective. Her central argument is that the growth of the view of Mary as mediator between humans and God stems from a deficient Christology, where stress is laid upon Jesus' divinity and where his humanity is greatly diminished. People sense that their prayers of petition require a human intercessor. Latino Catholics pray to Mary so that their prayers may be brought to the attention of a distant Christ and an even more distant Father. This clearly contradicts passages such as 1 Tim 2:5-6, Heb 1:2-14, and Heb 10:19-22 that affirm the human and divine Christ as the only Mediator between God and humans. Spenser also presents some insightful history on the rise of the veneration of Mary in the context of goddess worship in the ancient world and of the cult of Artemis in the city of Ephesus, where the historical evidence indicates that the veneration of Mary first arose. Spenser rightly concludes that Mary can be understood as the advocate of liberation, as reflected in the Magnificat (Luke1:46-46), and as the one whose heart is pierced in suffering with the suffering of her son (Luke 2:40). But she must never be construed as intercessor.

Andrew Mbuvi draws upon the language of blood and sacrifice (related to purity) in 1 Peter to draw parallels with African concerns for purity, Christ as the perfect sacrifice, and victory over the spirit world. There is nothing controversial in these claims. In another chapter, K. K. Yeo disagrees with Vanhoozer's claim that the ontology of Chalcedon encompasses the richness

and variety of the New Testament Christologies. Thus, Yeo argues that Chalcedon cannot provide a comprehensive Christology for the global church. But he seems to want to have it both ways. He maintains that there is a diversity and variety in the Christology of the gospels and of Paul's epistles. Yet, he also claims that there is a harmony and unity in these diverse Christologies. He is not clear in what he is getting at. If there is a unity and harmony in the diversity of facets of New Testament Christology, then this unity can be embodied in a church confession about the person of Christ such as that of Chalcedon. If not, then one wonders what meaning such a "unity and harmony" means.

This book is a helpful one for further dialogue on Christology in a global context. While some chapters are quite controversial, most are helpful in expanding the perspective of Western Christian readers on the significance of the crucified and resurrected Christ for comprehensive salvation.



The second book in the Eerdmans series, entitled ***The Trinity among the Nations: The Doctrine of God in the Majority World***, also has as its goal a global conversation – now focused on the doctrine of the Trinity. The first chapter, "One God in Trinity and Trinity in Unity," by Gerald Bray presents the substance of the traditional teaching of the Council of Chalcedon on the nature of God: God is one; the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit coexist within the divine being; the three persons are equal in divinity but distinct in their persons in the ontological Trinity and in their functions in the economical Trinity. Bray notes that this Chalcedonian formulation has been the standard for the church.

The remaining the chapters are expressions of various emphases and applications of this doctrine to the concerns and contexts of non-Western cultures. Some are relatively benign in their comments, but others make suggestions that are quite controversial. In the first category, I place the chapters by Kunhiyop, Gonzales, Ewell, and Panikkar. In the second category, I locate the chapters by Woodley, Asano, and Wang.

The chapters in the first category expand Western notions of the Trinity by examining and applying then in Majority World settings. "The Trinity in Africa: Trends and Trajectories" by Samule Waje Kunhiyop laments the disregard, in practice, of the classical Trinitarian in Christian Africa. The emphasis tends to be on a belief in a supreme being along with a belief in a community of gods. In light of these heresies, and in light of Muslim monotheism, he contends that Trinitarian theology should be actively taught and applied in African Christianity.

Both Antonio Gonzales in "The Trinity as Gospel" and Rosalee Ewell in "Learning to See Jesus with the Eyes of the Spirit" argue for teaching the social dimensions of the Trinity in the Latin America setting. It should especially be applied to its social and economic problems, notably the oppression of the poor. To reinforce this, the Trinity should form the basis for human community, for the promotion of social justice under the reign of the triune God, and for mercy and compassion for the poor. The authors contend that through our participation in the life of God through Christ, the Spirit makes the transformative life of Christ a reality in these contexts.

"In "Asian Reformulations of the Trinity: An Evaluation" Natee Tanchanpongs reviews the contextual Trinitarian formulations by four Asian theologians. He finds the constructions of Raimundo Panikkar (India) and Jung Young Lee (Korea) to be syncretistic, absorbing the biblical teaching into the cultural ideas. The work of Brahmabandhab Upadhyaya (India), a Thomist, is more biblical as he struggles to rethink the ideas of the Vedanta school of Hindu philosophy according to orthodox biblical teaching. The author concludes that the best work is being done by Nozomu Miyahira (Japan) as he reshapes the Japanese concern for unity and community according to the pattern of the unity and differentiation of the Trinitarian persons.

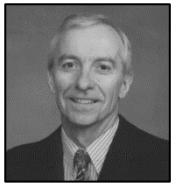
Three chapters are more controversial in their proposals for contextual Trinitarian thought. In "Beyond *Homoiousios* and *Homoousios*" Randy Woodley argues that the North American indigenous concepts of the shalom community – several examples of which he presents in detail– are better than those derived from Chalcedon. He defends this by arguing that neither Jesus nor the early church promoted an enforced orthodoxy of belief. This is patently false. He also espouses the typical liberationist arguments that a single male sky god promotes male supremacy, racial hierarchy and a "single, non-complex divine ontology." The underlying liberal assumption in his claims is that the portrayal of God in the Bible is not the revelation from God but merely the historically conditioned expression of how men in the past construed God. This assumption contradicts the views of the church throughout history, and opens the door for all manner of doctrinal reformulation. It is beyond the pale of biblical orthodoxy.

In "Motherliness of God: A Search for Maternal Aspects in Paul's Theology" Atsuhiro Asano seeks to find "motherly" aspects of the character of God in Paul's letter to the Galatians. While there is some validity in noting the feminine, motherly dimensions of God's character, not only in Paul's epistles but throughout the Bible, it is important to do this in a manner that follows biblical revelation. This means noting that God is always designated by masculine pronouns, titled with masculine terms (Father, King, Lord, Ruler, Master, Shepherd, etc), and predominantly described with masculine metaphors. The feminine designations are always metaphors – God is like a woman in childbirth (Is 42:14) or like a woman comforting her child (Is 66:13) – and God is never titled with feminine terms (Mother, Queen, Shep-

herdess, etc). Asano fails to do this in his exposition of Galatians, leading him to faulty conclusions about the equality of metaphorical male and female notions of God in this epistle.

In "How to Understand a Biblical God in Chinese Cross-Cultural Hermeneutics", Zi Wang argues for the contextualization of the Christian God in the Chinese Confucian setting. Unfortunately, the way that Wang promotes dialogue between the two results in syncretism between the Christian Trinitarian revelation of God and the Confucian concept of God as creator and creation, with only minor critique. The transcendence of God is compromised, and God becomes merely a catalyst for the Confucian concern for social harmony and hospitality.

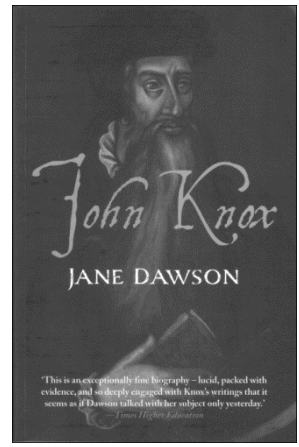
This book is a more diverse presentation of global Trinitarian theology than *Jesus without Borders*. While, as noted, it does have some helpful chapters for global dialogue, there are three chapters which, in this reviewer's opinion, go beyond the boundaries of Trinitarian orthodoxy. They should be read with careful analysis and biblical criticism. And they certainly do not provide any convincing arguments from a non-Western context for revising the church's universal acceptance of the nature of the Trinitarian God as expressed most clearly in the Chalcedonian formulation. In fact, they serve as examples of how concern for one's context without faithful commitment to the biblical message can lead to compromise and syncretism.



Reviewed by Guenther ("Gene") Haas, Professor of Religion and Theology, Redeemer University College, Ancaster, Ontario.

Historical Theology

John Knox. Jane Dawson. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016. 321 pp. & indices, paper. ISBN 978-0-300-21970-8



Jane Dawson's impressive biography of Knox, first released in cloth covers in 2015, is now available in paper covers at a more modest price. That this edition has followed so rapidly after first publication is an indication of the demand for the biography, penned by the Reformation historian of New College, Edinburgh. This biography is noteworthy not because it is the first life of Knox to be written by a female writer: that honor belongs to Elizabeth Whitley, whose *The Plain Mr. Knox* appeared in 1960 (and is happily still in print). But Dawson's work is the first major biography of the Scottish Reformer written by an academic historian since 1974, the year when the Canadian historian, W. Stanford Reid, released his *Trumpeter of God*.

Does the elapse of forty years, by itself, warrant a new biography of this famous Scot? The drastic numerical decline of the Church of Scotland in those intervening decades would suggest a diminished interest in the biography of this man about whom Scots have long been deeply divided. Yet, there are two reasons for insisting that the appearance of Dawson's *Knox* is especially noteworthy.

The first is that it represents 'part two' of a writing project that commenced with Dawson's release of a volume in the 'New Edinburgh History of Scotland': *Scotland Re-formed: 1488-1587* (2007). There she displayed a comprehensive grasp of the political, military, and religious history of Scotland in this period. Her *John Knox* both benefits from and reflects the spadework in the earlier volume. Has a Knox biographer ever come to the task better prepared? There is also a second reason.

It is that there is fresh discovery serving as the basis for the release of this new volume; Jane Dawson happily discovered a trove of documents which were the possession of Knox's former associate, Christopher Goodman (1519-1603). Goodman was the English Marian exile theological professor

with whom Knox – also a Marian exile – became fast friends at Geneva in the years when English Protestant leaders who remained in England were being tried and burned. Goodman had returned to Scotland with Knox and served at Ayr and St. Andrews before being forced to return to his native England in 1565. Their friendship, forged in shared adversity, resulted in a literary legacy only recently discovered by Dawson at Chester, England. This Goodman material shed considerable fresh light on Knox – both as a fugitive in Europe – and as leader in Scotland's tempestuous early Protestant years.

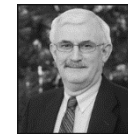
The reader of Dawson's *Knox* will plow through more than three hundred pages of text. It is worth noting that the smaller page size of the paperback edition (pagination is standard) does make the reading more arduous. As one reads, he or she experiences a pendulum-swing of reaction at the Knox presented by Dawson; he is alternately fierce and yet vulnerable, bombastic and yet capable of being tender. It is the very assiduity of Dawson in drawing on so many original sources (among which are Knox's own tracts and his *History*) which gives the reader the sense of being overwhelmed with detail about Knox. But there is not only detail beyond what we could imagine or ask for (e.g. about Knox's role as chaplain in the religious war which secured the Reformation by August, 1560, or as minister of St. Giles in the civil war that fragmented the nation later that decade over the divisive course pursued by Queen Mary); there is also interpretation and it here that different readers will judge Dawson differently.

Dawson cannot fairly be reckoned an admirer of Knox; recall that she is a female historian investigating the one who is remembered for his *First Blast of the Trumpet against the Monstrous Regiment of Women* (1558). She makes no apologies for Knox, who with his friend, Goodman, was definitely a misogynist as to female rule. The question then becomes one of whether, in her determination to be thorough (an aim at which she succeeds admirably), Dawson also portrays Knox in a judicious way. This reviewer concludes that Dawson has been judicious. No one will say that she has "buffed" the legacy of Knox; but most should grant that she gives us a Knox who – rather than appearing in black and white – appears in many shades of tint.

I appreciated several features of Dawson's *Knox* above others. She shows that Knox's English ministry in the years 1549-1553 were years in which he had already taken up the stance of a nonconforming Anglican. The conflicts over ministerial costume and adherence to the *Book of Common Prayer* – having begun in England – were merely continued in a kind of "round two" in exile at Frankfort. Again, Knox (with Goodman) as co-pastors among the Marian exiles at Geneva are portrayed as the detailed preparers of the very service book and Psalm book which will be put to use in Scotland from 1560 onward. Knox and Goodman are depicted as being definitely schooled at Geneva in the matter of how the reformation of a compact region such as Geneva can possibly serve as the template for the reformation of the nation of the Scots. Knox and Goodman were in this sense like the French pastors-in-training who were at Geneva awaiting assignments in Catholic France. Most

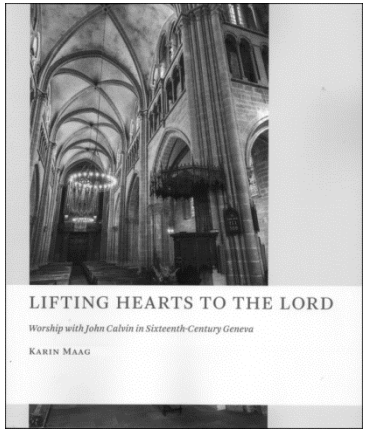
profoundly, Knox is shown from his 1549 period onward to be the Reformed preacher who consciously prefers the gathered church of the like-minded rather than the folk-church embracing the totality of the population.

Dawson's Knox provides an up-to-date and complex portrayal of what may be known today about Knox and Scotland's early Reformation era. It will not easily be surpassed.



Reviewed by Dr. Kenneth J. Stewart, Professor of Theological Studies in Covenant College, Lookout Mountain, Georgia.

***Lifting Hearts to the Lord: Worship with John Calvin in Sixteenth-Century Geneva*. Karin Maag. The Church at Worship: Case Studies from Christian History, eds. Lester Ruth, Carrie Steenwyk, John D. Witvliet. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016, 209 pp., paper. ISBN 978-0-8028-7147-3**



Karin Maag is a fine scholar of the 16th century and one with an amazing ability to communicate that scholarship in a comprehensible manner. She currently serves as the director for the H. Henry Meeter Center for Calvin Studies and is professor of history at Calvin College, Grand Rapids. For readers of 16th-century Reformed thought and practice, Maag has furnished us with a most engaging and well researched text.

This volume is part of The Church at Worship: Case Studies from Christian History. This series ranges very widely with current studies and forthcoming volumes dealing with a variety of worship case studies both ancient, (for example, 4th century Jerusalem) and contemporary, (for example, Anaheim Vineyard Fellowship).

The series dictates much of the form and thus a standard structure emerges, one which must be added is very well thought-out by the editors and will be most helpful for classroom work, not just personal study. As specific case studies the goal is to allow "specific trees" in the "forest" of liturgical history to speak and not present a full forest perspective, as there are many other works which endeavour to do such.

The chief features of each volume are to first orient readers as to the time frame of the particular case study, including cautionary advisement; next, focus is upon the participation of that entire church community in worship (the key word here being "participation"); then follows primary sources, un-

der a whole range of categories and also attempts to be as interdisciplinary as possible; and finally the volume concludes with a section for devotional use and group discussion.

The overall layout of each volume is a wide-print text with sidebar comment or question done in red text and a glossary of names at the back and a listing for further study and sources cited. All of the above make for a highly readable and interesting series to allow many to benefit from such a study. My one disappointment was with the index, which I found very sparse, at least in this particular volume under review in the series.

Some specifics now about this volume by Maag. The time frame is basically 1541 to 1564, the years in which John Calvin returned and spent in Geneva following his three-year sojourn in Strasbourg. The bulk of the text concerns the worshipping community of Geneva during this time period as explored from the following angles: people and artifacts, worship setting and space, descriptions of worship, orders of services and texts, sermons, theology of worship documents, and polity documents.

Maag has clearly focused upon Calvin but not exclusively; other voices are brought into the picture. One of the most intriguing I found was *Managing a Country Parish: A Country Pastor's Advice to His Successor* (pp. 66-72). I think in part it was because it showed the practical realities of rural ministry in the Swiss Reformed context and helps one be much more realistic and less uniform in describing worship in this period and ecclesiastical grouping. I say this because sometimes one encounters today a perspective that we must duplicate everything in this time period in churches of this tradition without actually being fair and honest to context. Some of the details in the book help to dispel some of these attitudes. For example, I rarely hear anyone today advocating separation of men and women in worship services in the West. It may be customary for some within Anabaptist traditions in the West or amongst some Presbyterian and Reformed churches in the global south, but I do not think the latter for sure are doing it out of following the Genevan practices!

Two other details I found also intriguing were about godparents at baptism, and also naming children at baptism and the names which were banned from being used. Both points could make for some very interesting discussion today, and I also suspect dissent from Genevan ways. Again, this reinforces my point: general principles are one thing but debate in the applications of those principles may not always be universal and binding. There is often an historical context and a reason for such. For example, a godparent was often a good patron for your child. Some may advocate such today, but it is doubtful if one can find a scriptural text to demand the practice. So this does raise some questions about the regulation of worship and its application which readers will need to face.

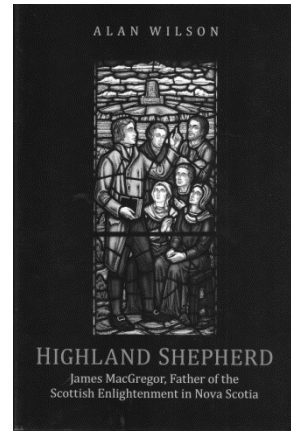
This book should be included as a text for all senior-level liturgics and worship courses at seminary level, especially in institutions which are Presbyterian or Reformed and should be in the library of any such colleges and

seminaries. It will also serve as a good theme text for Reformation Church History classes or Calvin courses. Working pastors will also benefit from the work and find helpful thoughts to enhance their worship leadership. It will also make for deeper thinking overall and less caricature.

There are several illustrations which enhance the text. The author's introductory comments are in italic and are very precise, reliable, and never overtake the documentary sources. Overall a most helpful and well-published book at a reasonable price. One could find many of the sources in many other places but the benefit of this text is that it brings many of these together in one book. Some are in a new translation by the author and always read very well.

Reviewed by Jack C. Whytock

***Highland Shepherd: James MacGregor, Father of the Scottish Enlightenment in Nova Scotia*. Alan Wilson. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015, 256 pp., hc. ISBN 978-1-4426-4451-9**



When I was appointed in 1963 by the Presbyterian General Board of Missions as a requirement for ordination to serve a five-point pastoral charge on the East River of Pictou County, I had mixed feelings and no experience in a rural congregation. Almost as soon as I arrived, I was told about James MacGregor, missionary to Nova Scotia, who came there at the same age I was at the time (25) and equally a greenhorn. He was annually commemorated in a service at an Elm Tree in Bridgeville on property owned by our Clerk of Session. I would preside over five such services, endeavoring each time to appeal to his example as an Evangelical preacher and missionary. The legends were many, the respect deep, the tradition strong, but MacGregor's faith needed to come alive.

Now we at last have a biography that does James MacGregor (1759-1830) justice and paints a vivid canvas of the early days of the Christian faith in the Maritime Provinces. Almost nonagenarian Professor Alan Wilson, founder of the History Department at Trent University in the early 1960s, has produced a scholarly work, weighted down with detail and an encyclopedic knowledge of relevant Scottish and early Maritime history that is truly phenomenal and also eminently readable. Dr. Wilson displays a grasp of 18th-century Scottish religious and cultural life that helps us to understand MacGregor's background, explaining the complex development of the Anti-Burger denomination as it split from both the established Church of Scotland ("the Kirk") and

the Burgers. What is fascinating is the reality that this small sect actually had the original vision and missionary commitment to reach out to the new colony of Nova Scotia, whose religious life was dominated by the Church of England with few viable alternatives for the Scottish settlers then arriving by the boatload except for the occasional Secessionist minister. Only later would the established Church of Scotland seek to recoup its losses in an unseemly rivalry with Scottish Dissenters, which Wilson chronicles in his book.

As a church planter, frontier preacher, and tireless evangelist, James MacGregor was a phenomenon, which comes out clearly in Wilson's book. From Pictou along the North Shore, to Stewiacke, and then reaching out to Cape Breton, over to Prince Edward Island, and on to New Brunswick, he appears to have covered most of the territory's Scottish settlers. He had a knack for finding and developing lay leadership, as I discovered five generations later. A direct descendent of Robert Marshall, one of the signatories of the Pictou Petition of 8 November 1784 that made MacGregor cross the Atlantic (never to return), Fraser Marshall of White Hill, Middle River, to whom I owe so much, was my mentor and guide in those early years of ministry. Indeed, as I myself travelled throughout Pictou Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church in Canada as Moderator subsequently, I got to know the congregations. So much of what Wilson says about those early days is confirmed by my experience of the seemingly unchanging characteristics of those communities. I found myself wishing that I had had all this information a half-century ago!

Wilson fully credits the "passionate evangelicalism" (p. 113) of MacGregor as the motivation for his entire life and labours, something that is not always recognized in other treatments of the same material. A telling sentence on page 196 summarizes beautifully MacGregor's burden as a gentle shepherd: "Like other ministers of the gospel he was a lonely man: he could never put off the role of shepherd which to some degree set him apart from the flock." Wilson has mastered the Communion season as a central part of Highland church life. His explanation of closed communion and the importance of MacGregor as a Secessionist no longer insisting on it very much grasps its spiritual significance. Wilson, in describing MacGregor's first communion service, shows an acquaintance with the Scottish Psalter which for someone like myself brought up on it is impressive and moving.

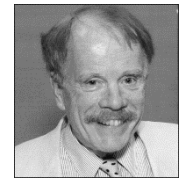
But Wilson stumbles when it comes to the theological and biblical context of MacGregor's ministry. From the telling citation of the last book of the New Testament as "Revelations" (p. 122) to his brief treatment (p. 191) of MacGregor's eschatology and his robust and responsible postmillennialism, he fails to show how that theology nurtured and strengthened MacGregor's whole mission and vocation. MacGregor's *Essay on the Millennial Age*, a topic (as Wilson says) that was very dear to him, deserves at the very least a doctoral student's Ph.D. thesis, placing it in the context of 18th-century, Scottish secessionist postmillennialism. He refers to "Thomas Hodge of Princeton University" as the author of a three-volume Systematic Theology (p. 191) –

presumably meaning Charles Hodge of Princeton Theological Seminary. Citation of some of MacGregor's Gaelic poetry is a brave move, which I discovered when writing about another minister-turned-poet. Gaelic spelling is fluid and unpredictable. But MacGregor's skill as a bard must be celebrated.

There is another issue I have with the book. Understandably, Wilson wants to catch (and keep) the reader's attention through a mass of detailed information. In doing so he fictionalizes some encounters: going beyond what we have specific evidence for, second guessing what was thought, where people were located, and even what they were saying. In a day of fake news, historians have to be careful to provide information that can be substantiated by hard evidence. This is particularly germane because this autumn two committees of the Presbyterian Church in Canada have been considering a denominational apology for past mistreatment of the LGBTQ community. Such discussions of the past must be based on facts, not skewed by political correctness.

The MacGregor Elm Tree is gone, killed by Dutch Elm disease. So is the MacGregor family church in New Glasgow, Westminster Presbyterian (before 1925 named United Presbyterian). On 8 January, 1986 that ornate MacGregor family church, full of their memorials, located on Temperance St., New Glasgow was destroyed by fire. It was located midway between two other Presbyterian churches (first, a union of several congregations including James Church, named after MacGregor, and the Kirk). The site of the MacGregor family church is now occupied by the charismatic "Lighthouse Ministry Family Worship Centre." And the East River pastoral charge, where I once served, has staggered Sunday service hours and a non-resident minister, their Manse having been sold. The faith and vision of James MacGregor calls out for renewal.

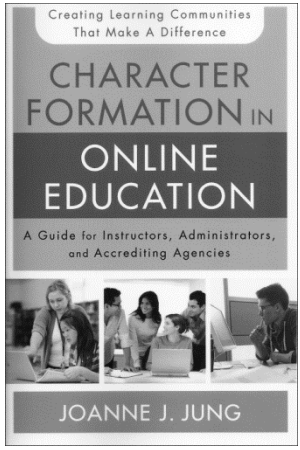
For Christians, particularly those of us of the Reformed faith, this biography is an engrossing narrative of the days when Protestant Christianity was first planted on our shores. Dr. Wilson is to be congratulated on a readable, informative, and fascinating treatment of a great and neglected Canadian original, giving James MacGregor his rightful place in the galaxy of Canadian pioneers. We look forward to his life of Peter, James' son, a founder of the Presbyterian Church in Canada in 1875. Wilson is making a valuable contribution to our understanding of our heritage.



Reviewed by Dr. A. Donald MacLeod research professor of Church History at Tyndale Seminary, Toronto. He is a widely published writer and biographer.

Applied Theology

***Character Formation in Online Education: A Guide for Instructors, Administrators, and Accrediting Agencies*. Joanne J. Jung. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015, 142 pp., paper. ISBN 978-0-310-52030-6**



There is little doubt that professors and college administrators world-wide continue to grapple with the implications of on-line learning. How can those who have taught for years in traditional settings (and who have so much to offer spiritually and academically) be made comfortable with teaching through technology? How can students form meaningful bonds with their mentors and their peers when they never meet face to face? How can Christian spiritual formation be advanced in an online community of learners? Dr. Jung, associate professor of biblical and theological studies at Biola University in California has skillfully set out the answers to these and many other questions in her book *Character Formation in Online Education*.

The book is divided into three parts. Part one deals with the actual challenge of planning and preparing an online course. Even professors who are not involved in online learning will benefit from the three chapters in this section as Dr. Jung summarizes universal teaching goals before applying them specifically to the development of an online course. Chapter 3, entitled "Partnerships That Deliver: Tag-Teaming with a Course Designer", is especially helpful and should prove to be a great encouragement to any professors who desire to move into online learning but feel woefully inadequate in terms of the technical knowledge required to get there. The author even provides a job description for course designers so professors and administrators know what to look for in terms of skills, experience, and character.

Part two takes the reader to the heart of the book: the challenge of creating online learning communities that are effective in character formation. The five chapters in this section of the book present a helpful combination of theory and practice as Jung moves from arguing the importance of develop-

ing "heart" in the learning community to practical methods and examples of how to achieve this important depth and development in the online learning experience. Chapter 5 on collaborative learning tools is extremely helpful in thinking through the process of getting students involved in meaningful discussions that apply course material. Chapter 6 discusses hybrid learning – a combination of traditional classroom time with online collaboration as well. This chapter helps the reader to move away from an either/or type of judgment and to think creatively about ways to combine the best of both worlds.

Part three deals with the very important topic of assessment. Once again, professors and administrators of any college will benefit from reading this section, only one chapter, as the importance of effective assessment is emphasized as an essential element of effective teaching. It is refreshing to note that Jung calls for course assessment as well as student assessment. In fact, she provides ten questions to consider that are designed to assess the overall effectiveness of the course and help those involved to increase relevance in future deliveries of the same material. It would have been good to include a discussion on "voice" and the development of teacher/student relationships in the online learning community as a valuable tool for assessing the authenticity of student submissions. Jung provides a helpful recommended reading list for college professors who want to be inspired to be better teachers. Even the titles are inspiring in and of themselves.

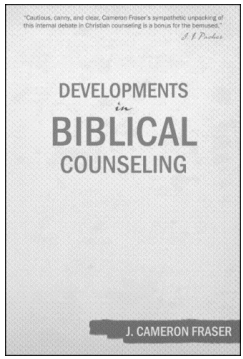
The two appendices make this book even more valuable. The first is a glossary of terms that will not only help the reader to navigate the present work but will also serve to educate in the general vocabulary of online learning. The second appendix provides a link and a list of resources available from Biola to further explore the concepts and issues of character formation in online learning.

It would have been helpful to include a discussion on the role of the church in this matter of education and character formation. How can the church "on the ground" be mobilised effectively to support the online learning experience and development of her members? It is somewhat disappointing to think that such an important link is not included as an essential and even obvious element of this topic.

Jung has shared her considerable wealth of experience and training in a practical and approachable format. This book is essential for all who are considering the topic of character formation in online learning. Highly recommended.

Reviewed by Nancy J. Whytock

Developments in Biblical Counseling. J. Cameron Fraser. Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage, 2015, 124 pp., paper. ISBN 978-1-60178-385-1



At 124 pages this is a must read and resource to have in your personal or theological college library. Many of us feel there are enormous gaps in our understanding of the development of the biblical counseling/nouthetic movement. Fraser's work is like the primer that we must now read to gain a context for facing this subject. I would encourage all evangelical theological institutions to place this small book on the required reading list for all introductory-level courses in biblical counselling.

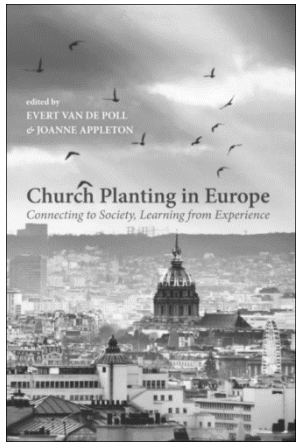
In four chapters Fraser as a "reporter" succinctly captures the essence of what we need to know to set us onto further discovery and understanding. The author gives a helpful introduction before launching into the chapters. Chapter one's theme is to lay out the "basic themes of nouthetic counselling as originally developed by [Jay] Adams" (p. 15). Chapter two is on "Some Criticisms of Nouthetic Counseling", and chapter three deals with developments within the nouthetic "school", even to the point where some have dropped the term "nouthetic" (p. 59). This is followed by Fraser's irenically written fourth chapter to present a "modest" presentation on "how some of these developments have a certain affinity with [some] Puritan approaches to counselling that Adams rejects, but which may in fact point in a more consistent biblical direction" (p. 15). Fraser introduces the reader in this chapter (amongst others) to Timothy Keller's article, "Puritan Resources for Biblical Counseling" (1988). This is really Fraser's gracious way of offering his adjustment to the nouthetic model or the "cure of souls". Here the reader will have to make their assessment and come to their own convictions.

Fraser has included a bibliography which again a careful read-through will help newcomers to navigate through this world of the last fifty years in biblical counselling.[1] I believe the author "reports" well (he has served twice as a magazine editor) and appears to be fair and even-handed. Throughout the book he demonstrates a pastor/shepherd's heart to the subject – he has been a pastor of thirty-plus years in western Canada. For many of us who have not explored this subject, biblical counselling, the way we should or could have, Fraser's work is now our go-to primer.

Reviewed by Jack C. Whytock

[1] Many will not take the time to master the large work by David Powlinson, *The Biblical Counseling Movement: History and Context*, (Greensboro, NC: New Growth Press, 2010), 331 pages and double columned!

***Church Planting in Europe: Connecting to Society, Learning from Experience*. Eds., Evert Van de Poll and Joanne Appleton. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2015, 280 pp., paper. ISBN: 978-1-4982-0199-5**



Church Planting in Europe is a collection of essays born out of a significant and large symposium held in Leuven, Belgium in 2014 on the topic of church planting and mission development in Europe. The nineteen chapters are based on the lectures, workshops and discussions generated from the symposium. The editors point to the gap in missiology literature on European-focused church planting/replacement planting and the attendant cultural gap. This forms part of the rationale for the publication with two clear objectives for readers: 1. Readers will be equipped for church ministry and where needed, church restoration. 2. To relate this ministry to the spiritual needs and opportunities in multicultural and postmodern Europe.

The editors have helpfully divided the book into three parts, beginning with "Biblical Reflections", "Church in Europe", "Church Planters", and concluding with "Case Studies". A discernable theme of reflection runs through all four sections, with writers often considering best practices as well as the failures of various church planting strategies in Europe. The editors note that "[w]hen it comes to mission, evangelization, and church development, things do not work the same way here in Europe as they do elsewhere" (p. 2).

The socio-cultural and religious context to Europe is expanded upon in part two of the book, which, for many readers, will contain the most interesting and pertinent chapters. Of particular note is Evert Van de Poll's chapter, "Typical Barriers and Bridges for the Gospel in Europe". He finds a fundamental paradox that sets Europe apart from other mission fields and thus requires a specific missions strategy: Europe is the most Christianized continent, while at the same time Europe is marked by the abandonment of Christianity more than any other part of the world; in a word, secularization.

Van de Poll suggests five barriers to Christian faith for most Europeans and then suggests five bridges for mission outreach. Interestingly, Van de Poll's barriers and bridges often align; for example, he includes Christianity's long and influential history in Europe as both a barrier and bridge. Much of Europe's Christian heritage is misunderstood today, but we, as Christians, have the Bible to help unlock the meaning of this rich cultural heritage.

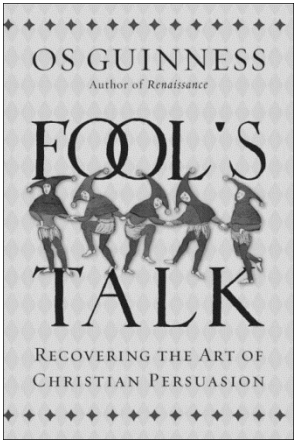
Likewise, postmodernism is both a barrier and bridge. Van de Poll posits that at its heart, European postmodernism is a reaction to the totalitarian regimes and absolutist claims of 20th century Europe. The questions associated with a postmodern worldview provide openings for Christians to engage and bring to light the pretensions of secular scientific rationalism.

While the focus of the volume is on European missions, there are crossover points for those involved in church planting in other geographies. Andrew Pownal's chapter, "The Church in a Multicultural Society", is particularly relevant for those involved in city church plants. Also, Jim Memory's chapter, "How Can We Measure the Effectiveness of Church Planting?", is based on research conducted on European church plants, but the methodology presented is extremely valuable and one that could be replicated and adapted in other regions and locales.

In summary, this volume provides practical advice and guidance for how our Christian brothers are approaching the gospel call in Europe with relevant lessons and practices for other church planters as well.

Reviewed by Ian A. Whytock who lives in Halifax, Nova Scotia and attends Bedford Presbyterian Church. Ian works with a public policy consulting group and Asoko Insight.

***Fools Talk: Recovering the Art of Christian Persuasion*. Os Guinness. Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press, 2015, 270 pp., paper. ISBN 978-0-8308-3699-4**



"We are all apologists now" – this is the opening line of Os Guinness' 2015 book, *Fools Talk: Recovering the Art of Christian Persuasion*. Guin-Guinness turns his attention in this book to a sweeping tour of Christian apologetics and cultural analysis of the globalized world in which Christians now live. Guinness points out that we are living in a grand age of secular apologetics brought about by globalizing forces such as social media and Internet sharing and communication. These disruptive forces have been most influential in the way that we communicate, and as such, Christians must critically examine the methods and strategies we are using to communicate the gospel message.

Guinness' book is squarely in the Christian apologetic tradition but with a focus on the communication or persuasion aspect of apologetics, a component which Guinness believes is sorely lacking in modern Christian apologetics. Guinness does not divorce the message from the medium but merely makes the point that such a powerful message demands powerful persuasion

techniques and these techniques must be adapted to each historical age. In Guinness' own words, "Proclamation and persuasion must never be separated" (pg. 27). To make his point, Guinness provides ample biblical evidence and points to Jesus as the exemplar communicator.

Readers looking for an absolute how-to guide on presenting the gospel will be sorely disappointed. Guinness notes that there is no one way to persuade and that Christian persuasion is more art than science; "It has more to do with theology than technology" (pg. 33). At first glance, the statement may appear contradictory given his focus on persuasive method, but Guinness goes on to explain that while there is a methodology to persuasion, done properly, this will be lost in the message it conveys and the Master it serves.

Guinness succinctly summarizes this key point: "Whatever little of apologetics is method must come from our experience of God and his love, his truth and his beauty, which are the heart of faith" (pg. 45). This distinction is a healthy antidote to many who have fallen into the trap of focusing solely on the methods and technical aspects of persuasion and less on the message being defended and presented. Put another way, apologetics and evangelism cannot be in isolation from one another. In Guinness' own words, "The work of apologetics is only finished when the door to the gospel has been opened and the good news of the gospel can be proclaimed" (pg. 111).

Guinness, in his typical fashion[1], presents a challenging argument for our Christian call to evangelize and persuade people of the power of the gospel, while providing much needed critical commentary on the social and cultural contexts that the gospel is being presented within.

Reviewed by Ian A. Whytock.

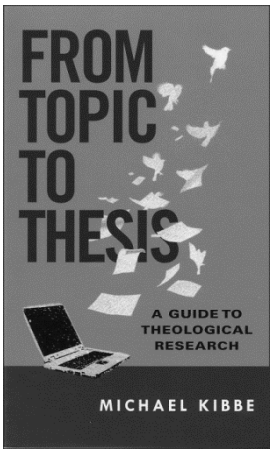
***From Topic to Thesis: A Guide to Theological Research*. Michael Kibbe. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2016, 152 pp., paper. ISBN 978-0-8308-5131-7**

Librarians and professors alike owe a debt of gratitude to Michael Kibbe for his latest book. *From Topic to Thesis* is, according to the subtitle, a guide to theological research. Kibbe, assistant professor of Bible at Moody Bible Institute Spokane in Spokane, Washington has taken the time to summarise the research and writing process for students in a very practical and detailed fashion.

The author's introductory chapter explains to the reader the concept of "topic to the thesis", the student's place in the ongoing dialogue of theologi-

[1] See also my review of Guinness' book, *Renaissance: The Power of the Gospel However Dark the Times*, in *Haddington House Journal* 17 (2015): 95-96.

cal research, the similarities and differences between theological research and research in other disciplines, and the key terms that will be used throughout the book to lay out the best method for conducting such research. Kibbe explains as he concludes his introduction, "You will get the most out of this book if you work your way through it as you are doing your project. Read a step then do it" (p. 44).



What steps does the author propose? He divides these into five broad categories and each receives one chapter in the book. Chapter one deals with finding direction. Here he offers four main points for the student to consider, and he teaches students how to approach primary and tertiary sources as they work toward narrowing down their topic.

The second chapter deals with gathering sources. For those who have read and used the classic work *How to Read a Book* by Mortimer Adler and Charles Van Doren, this chapter reads very much like their discussion on inspectional reading. In my experience as a librarian, this stage of research is often very challenging, as students find it hard to "sift through" sources and can be overwhelmed by the options. Kibbe offers some very helpful guidelines in the form of four keys to gathering sources. He further makes his point through an excursus on common mistakes when gathering sources. No doubt those of us who have spent time in research will identify mistakes we have made in the past that have been costly in terms of both time and outcomes.

Chapter three outlines five keys to understanding issues. Throughout the book, Kibbe emphasises that the student must be seeking to dialogue on a subject and that entering dialogue means first understanding what has and is being discussed on the topic at hand. As with chapter two, the author not only offers the positive keys but then provides a second excurses on the common mistakes in the research process at this point. For example, he is blunt, almost to the point of humorous, when he says one of the mistakes is too much quoting, "If you can't say it in your own words, study it until you can" (p. 74).

Chapter four logically follows on with the theme of dialogue by outlining how students can now enter into the dialogue they should have uncovered by following the steps outlined in the previous chapter. The three keys to entering discussion are useful, but even more useful are the questions to ask of both secondary and primary sources. Kibbe's parting comments to this chapter demonstrate his understanding of the student experience, "When the paper is specifically required to correspond to the course objectives… it never hurts to make clear to your professor that your paper does this!" (p. 85).

The final chapter, in keeping with the title of the book, deals with establishing a position, a thesis. Kibbe notes that this is critical to presenting your

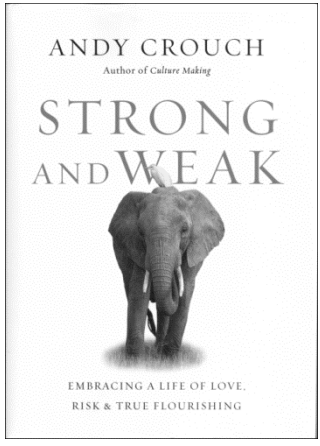
research, "Your thesis is the heart and soul of your paper" (p. 87). His three keys to establishing position warn the student against writing without taking a position, writing too soon, and forgetting that you are entering an existing conversation – humility in writing is essential.

Each chapter includes actual examples that will be helpful to those who have never approached theological research before. At the back of the book there are six appendices: "Ten things you should never do in a Theological Research paper"; "Theological research and writing tools"; "Scholarly resources for Theological Research"; "Navigating the ATLA Religion Database"; "Zotero Bibliography Software"; and "A suggested Timeline for Theological Research papers". A brief subject index at the back of the book is very useful for quickly honing in on a specific aspect of the research process.

At 152 pages, this small book is packed full of practical help for those involved in theological research. Whether used by individuals or as the primary text for a theological research course, it will be a valuable resource to many and is written in a manner that makes it accessible within any cultural context.

Reviewed by Nancy Whytock

***Strong and Weak: Embracing a Life of Love, Risk & True Flourishing*. Andy Crouch. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2016, 192 pp., paper. ISBN 978-0-8308-4443-2**



On the heels of Crouch's recent publication, *Playing God*[1], comes another title in the same vein, *Strong and Weak*. As we have seen with Andy Crouch's insightful work ever since his influential book *Culture Making*[2], the author makes it his purpose to explore what human flourishing looks like for individuals and communities who call upon the name of Christ.

In *Strong and Weak*, Crouch turns his attention to the delicate balance that a Christian must strike between an exercise of authority and an authentic display of vulnerability. He comes to refer to this balance as "up and to the right" (p. 8), a reference to the diagram that he presents at

[1] Reviewed by Andrew Whytock, in the *Haddington House Journal* 17 (2015): 120-122.
[2] Reviewed by Christina Lehmann, in the *Haddington House Journal* 12 (2010): 82-84.

the start of the book. The first half of the book examines what flourishing does not look like by showing how abuses of authority or vulnerability can lead to suffering, withdrawing, and exploitation. In the second half of the book, the author turns directly towards his subject and demonstrates through personal stories, biblical references, and historic examples what it truly means to be both strong and weak.

Crouch argues that every one of us has been given authority from God. While some Christians struggle with the call to humility when using their authority, we all have a responsibility to serve with the gifts that we have been given. On the other hand, it is entirely possible for individuals, organizations, and communities to abuse their authority by refusing to pair it with the kind of vulnerability that invites others in and remains open to the necessity of help from others. In the Gospels we see that Christ Himself presented us with a picture of someone who was perfect in authority and vulnerability. He commanded the waves and made the blind see, but He also fell to His knees in prayer and submission to His Heavenly Father.

Strong and Weak is an excellent companion to *Playing God* because it continues the discussion of power as a means to glorify God. While this book may be more accessible to the average reader than *Playing God*, it is no less important to Christians who feel that God is indeed calling them to use their authority to bless others. Crouch sums the issue up himself in the opening chapter of the book, "There really is no other goal higher for us than to become people who are so full of authority and vulnerability that we perfectly reflect what human beings were meant to be and disclose the reality of the Creator in the midst of creation." (p. 25-26).

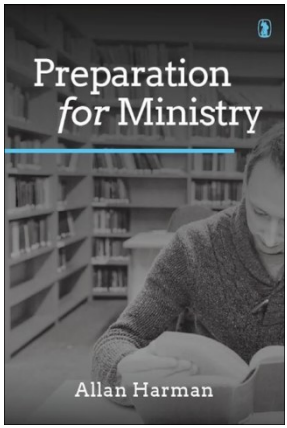
Reviewed by Andrew M. Whytock. Andrew lives in Charlottetown, PE and runs his own professional writing services company. He studied creative writing at Cornerstone University, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

***Preparation for Ministry*. Allan Harman. Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 2015, 117 pp., paper. ISBN 978-1-84871-623-0**

Many of us may well recall being given Edmund Clowney's book *Called to the Ministry* (originally published in 1964) when we were wrestling with that very subject. It has served a couple of generations now and will remain helpful. Now here is a new work written by a committed churchman, pastor, and professor involved in training pastors for the ministry, Allan Harman of Melbourne, Australia, which will be useful for many today. *Preparation for Ministry* covers more topics than Clowney's work and also adds some classic materials to round out the volume. This is a small book – Harman's actual written material constitutes about half the book (fifty-seven pages) and to-

gether with the reprint appendices (about fifty pages) the work is less than 120 pages.

Harman addresses the issue first of coming to faith. He then proceeds to a discussion of "the call". Not that long ago I had a conversation with some ministers who stated that there was no such thing as a call today. I am afraid I strongly disagreed with them and am glad to see that Harman affirms the call.



Next he addresses the matter of what is best for pre-theological studies and concentrates here more on personal development and not advice on educational studies. He has a short chapter on choosing a theological college or seminary and has produced here a very helpful chapter, one of the best sections in this little volume. This chapter concerning choosing where to study could be well used by pastors offering counsel to those in this thinking and investigative phase.

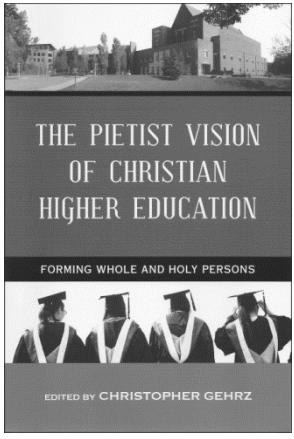
Harman then gives a chapter of advice on the actual "doing" of the theological studies. The book also includes chapters about the period after seminary training and offers advice on the early years in ministry and as well as on "staying fresh". All of it appears to come from wisdom gleaned over a lifetime and is very sound and practical.

The appendices include a suggested preparatory reading list, a short guide to sermon preparation and two reprints, one from Spurgeon's *Lectures to My Students* – the chapter on "The Minister's Self-Watch" – and the other, Warfield's "The Religious Life of Theological Students". These are worthy additions and certainly enlarge this little volume into a good one-book resource. One comment here – the Spurgeon material would have benefited with some editorial updating. It may not be digested easily by readers who are not native English speakers – now a very large segment of those who read and study in English.

Preparation for Ministry is a great tool for pastors to use in ministry. Any pastor could find it helpful to have a few copies of this in his library to give away to those asking about a call into the ministry. It is inexpensive as a slim paperback and facilitates a whole range of discussions and conversations to provoke a deeper understanding of the calling to ministry, the preparation for the ministry, and the early years of the ministry. Warmly recommended.

Reviewed by Jack C. Whytock

***The Pietist Vision of Christian Higher Education: Forming Whole and Holy Persons*. Ed. Christopher Gehrz. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2015, 239 pp., paper. ISBN 978-0-8308-4071-7**



Perhaps it is small, but there does seem to be somewhat of a trend in recent years to go back and take another look at the Pietist movement both historically and in terms of continuing ethos. Modest, yet it does appear to be there. I think of recent reviews which have been published in the *Haddington House Journal* related to aspects of the Pietist tradition and this alone starts to alert one that this tradition is being given another look.[1]

I first came across the editor of this volume some time back when researching about theological education and pedagogical methods. He has a fascinating blog, *The Pietist Schoolman* (pietistschoolman.com), hence my interest was awakened even more when I saw this book edited by him.

Obviously, the title of the book indicates that this work is going to explore Pietist thought as it applies to Christian higher education. But what is not quite so obvious is that the book is really a case study chiefly of this vision through the portal of Bethel University in St. Paul, Minnesota, an institution with roots in Swedish Pietist Baptist history (maybe the publisher could have made this more explicit). I found it was actually only once I got into the book that I discovered this. The book comes out of papers developed in part from a June, 2013 workshop facilitated by Christopher Gehrz, "The Pietist Idea of the Christian College" where fourteen current and former Bethel faculty and staff participated. *The Pietist Vision of Christian Higher Education* then grew to seventeen contributors.

The introductory essay by the editor asks a worthy question: "Does Pietism Provide a 'Usable Past' for Christian Colleges and Universities?" As would be expected in such a collection, the answer is "yes". Gehrz sets forth his working definition of a Pietist as both movement and ethos at the outset:

> Pietists at all times and in all places seek a more authentic Christianity: not inherited or assumed, coerced or affected, but lived out through transformative experiences of conversion and regeneration. Suspicious of 'dead orthodoxy,' Pietists subordinate doctrine to

[1] See the reviews by Ken Stewart of *An Introduction to German Pietism* by Douglas Shantz, in *Haddington House Journal*, 18 (2016), 39-41 and also *The Pietist Impulse in Christianity*, eds. Christian T. Collins Winn, Christopher Gehrz, G. William Carlson, and Eric Holst, in *Haddington House Journal*, 15 (2013),94-96.

> Scripture – with an irenic, or peaceable, spirit prevailing in matters where the Bible leaves open a range of interpretations…Clergy and laity alike form a common priesthood actively engaged in worship, education, evangelism and social action, in the firm hope that God intends 'better times' for the church and the world. (p. 20-21)

With basically only a passing comment towards other Pietist strains such as some within the Reformed, the chapter, as so with the whole book, focuses chiefly upon Pietism in the Scandinavian ethnic grouping. Spener and Francke surface many times in the book but as interpreted through Swedish leaders to America and their offspring. Unfortunately often this is a neglected area when American church history is taught, so in that sense alone the book is educational and informative.

Following Gehrz's opening essay are five essays forming part one, whereby the Pietist historical distinctives are revealed as the backdrop that helped to shape Christian higher education today. Pedagogically there is material here for those not acquainted or consciously Pietists, but perhaps seeing themselves as "evangelicals" only. Reading these chapters as any Christian higher educationalist should be helpful. Be prepared for some controversial opinions as Roger Olson is a wonderful writer but he can generate controversy.

Part two has three chapters dealing with a stereotype of Pietism as "world-denying". The chapters debunk this as much as any stereotype can be, as there are always plenty of exceptions which have formed the backdrop for such popular stereotypes.

Part three only has two chapters. These chapters focus on the natural and health sciences as related to Pietist values and approaches.

The theme of part four is how to attempt to put such a Piestist vision for higher education into practice, hence the title here, "Problems and Proposals". Here there is an excellent chapter by Kent Gerber offering many valuable historical lessons and contemporary applications on curating, yes, curating – very well done. But the chapter by Samuel Zalanga, "Neoliberal Challenges to the Pietist Vision of Christian Higher Education" was too broad-stroke. There are many more complexities which needed to be considered, and the problems needed to be more carefully nuanced. There is very little in the way of proposal in that chapter.

As Gehrz introduced the volume, so he also writes the conclusion. He takes us back to his opening theme, "the usable past". He has an interesting discussion on innovation challenges in higher education such as technology and distance education and the usable past both positively and negatively. There are some excellent pedagogical quotations that an educator will want to keep at hand to use in training events from Gehrz's conclusion.

I must confess that I was drawn to some of the authors more than others. This is unavoidable in such a collection. Overall I was stimulated to think

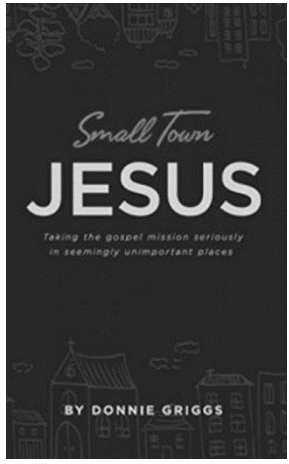
about the educational institution where I am also involved; so in this way, even though very much a case-study, this book can force any Christian educationalist (even if one is not in a liberal arts college) to be challenged as leaders. Also the book is certainly making a contribution to the renewal of interest in Pietism. Although this work is limited in many regards to one particular strain within that movement, it is worthy for all to consider.

There are some notes of criticism. First, unfortunately, the preface appears to stereotype all in the Reformed community, just as perhaps the book also tries to dispel certain stereotypes of Pietism. There was some irony in that. Second, I found a couple of chapters were too overloaded. Third, an interesting comment about the weakness of worldview studies also in light of Pietism was made. That comment needed more unpacking.

The discussion is not over on the Pietist viewpoint and higher education – it needs to continue. Overall, this work is a helpful contribution in keeping the discussion going, or should I say, for starting the discussion. Next please.

Reviewed by Jack C. Whytock

Small Town Jesus: Taking the Gospel Mission Seriously in Seemingly Unimportant Places. Donnie Griggs. No place: EverTruth Publishing, 2016, 168 pp., paper. ISBN 978-0-9914030-5-9



I looked forward to reading this book since I also live and serve in a small town (2800 people) where we are trying with God's help to bring the good news of Jesus to the people of our small town community.

Griggs devotes the first half of the book to showing how small towns still matter and still present a major mission field for bringing the gospel to broken and hurting people. He laments how small towns are too often forgotten in today's missional church landscape where cities seem to be where the action is in terms of planting and building churches. He makes the case that people in small towns need Jesus as much as those living in larger centres and that the church can make just as much of an impact for the gospel in small towns as in urban areas.

As Griggs rightly suggests, small towns are not immune from the brokenness and social issues that are found in larger centres today. People assume that small towns are more churched today than cities, but less and less of the younger generation are found in small town churches today also. Small towns need strong churches and effective leaders just as much as the city.

Griggs builds his case for the importance of small town ministry by pointing to the ministry of Jesus and how Jesus was not only born and raised within a small town but how Jesus did much of his ministry in the villages of Israel along with what He did in the city. While Griggs makes some good points about that, he does get somewhat redundant in this section and sometimes tries too hard to make the point about Jesus doing small town ministry.

In the second half of the book, the author offers some helpful tips on how to do effective ministry in a small town setting. He stresses the importance of getting to know how your small town ticks and how you can only do that by listening and watching how people live their lives. He suggests that understanding the ways that small town people think is crucial in knowing how to point them to Jesus.

In that regard, Griggs stresses that small town pastors shouldn't try to merely copy the methodology of big city pastors and/or churches. The challenge is to understand the needs of your unique community and to address those needs accordingly.

Griggs' use of a "Chapter Pop Quiz" at the end of each chapter in the second half of the book is helpful in raising some good questions about how to evaluate the effectiveness of one's ministry within a small town setting. He does a good job of fleshing out some of the mindsets a pastor will encounter within a small town setting and how a pastor's reputation really matters in a small town. People will soon sense whether a pastor cares enough to "do life with them" in their town. The biggest challenge, says Griggs, is getting people to see that God is big enough to do great things even in a small rural setting.

I did wonder somewhat whether Griggs' town of 9200 is really a small town or not, but the points he makes about small town ministry definitely show that he does understand the intricacies and challenges of serving in a small town setting. The book is very accessible and its shortness and clarity makes it a good read for anyone who is involved in small town ministry in some way.

Reviewed by Henry Steenbergen. Henry is senior pastor of Maitland River Community Church in Wingham, Ontario, has served as an ordained pastor in the Christian Reformed Church for 27 years, is married to Helga, and is a father and grandfather.