

BOOK REVIEWS

Rhetorical Analysis: An Introduction to Biblical Rhetoric. By Roland Meynet. JSOT-Sup 256. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998, 386 pp., \$85.00.

In 1753 both J. Astruc and R. Lowth published works of Biblical criticism. Astruc is remembered as the father of historical criticism, and Lowth's famous study of Biblical parallelism is considered a cornerstone of poetic analysis. Because source-critical methods held sway for two centuries after Astruc, Meynet sets out to show that those who extended Lowth's work became the forerunners of contemporary rhetorical criticism. He reproduces large portions of books he believes have been overlooked, works by J. Jebb, T. Boys, and N. Lund. This historical review takes up nearly half of the book; it shows how each labored to discern larger patterns of organization, particularly the concentric or chiasmic pattern.

Meynet then states his intention to present a clear exposition of the different levels of organization in texts. His presuppositions are that Biblical texts are composed and *well* composed, that there is a specifically Biblical rhetoric that differs from Greco-Roman rhetoric, and that the critic should trust the composition to possess its own inner logic. Thus rhetorical criticism is also a critique of approaches that assume interpreters should look for signs of assembly, concentrating on the seams instead of the intentional design of the whole.

The book can be helpful to the teacher of Biblical interpretation in its focus on a few basic principles. First, the interpreter should look for "figures of composition which all obey the great law of symmetry" (p. 199). Two forms of symmetry are parallelism (elements recur in the same order) and concentricism (elements recur in reversed order). Second, the interpreter should look for relations of identity *and* difference between the elements. If the primary relation between elements (e.g. lines of a parallel verse) is identity, one should look for difference; if the primary relation is difference, then one should look for what identifies them.

Meynet's observations on the differences between Biblical and classical rhetoric are especially useful. First, Biblical rhetoric is concrete. Greek rhetoric states and illustrates, whereas the Bible most often describes reality, leaving the reader to draw conclusions. "The Hebrew shows, the Greek demonstrates" (p. 173). Second, Biblical rhetoric uses parataxis, not syllogisms and enthymemes; words such as "whereas," "therefore," and "consequently" are not used. Instead, Biblical rhetoric relies on juxtaposition, such as the comparison of Jairus's daughter and the woman with a hemorrhage. Finally, Biblical rhetoric is more innovative than linear, and this is the reason the interpreter should look for parallel and concentric constructions.

To illustrate how one learns to trust the inner logic of Biblical texts, Meynet offers two chapters, one serving as a catalog of those relationships of identity and opposition, the other naming the structures of composition. Segments make up pieces, pieces make up parts, parts make up books, and the meaning at each level is discerned in the relationships between those elements. Meynet shows how those relationships display parallelism or concentricism, with examples from Psalms, Luke, and an extended treatment of Amos. The diagrams he constructs are deceptive; they appear to state the obvious, but it is only because the diagrams make it so. Many

readers will nod in agreement at his claim that these structures are not discerned quickly!

Meynet concludes that rhetorical criticism is not one method among many, but rather an important step in all Biblical exegesis. He lists a number of "fruits" (pp. 317–350). For example, the recognition of the internal coherence of a passage can aid in delimitation of literary units and their interpretation. Rhetorical criticism can also be an aid in translation questions, and it makes a case for translating repeated Greek or Hebrew words with the same word in the target language.

One can hardly find fault with Meynet's proposals when one thinks of the scholarship that has been produced by the students of James Muilenburg in this country. It is curious, however, that so little attention is given to that school and that Meynet takes pains to distance himself by associating it with the use of Greco-Roman rhetoric in NT studies. Similarly, the larger field of rhetorical criticism in communication studies is acknowledged mostly in footnotes and the bibliography. Therefore, because this book does not intend to describe all of rhetorical criticism, we might ask whether its approach can claim to be equally descriptive of all Biblical texts, given the variety of forms, genres, and historical contexts represented.

My own answer is that we ought at least to look for the kinds of relationships and structures that Meynet has found across a wide range of Scriptural texts and be glad for those he helps us find. As a teaching textbook, both the history and description of the method are quite detailed and need some guidelines for selected reading, but I do think it should be assigned. Its greatest strength is its insistence that we begin with principles derived from study of the text as practiced by Lowth, Lund, and many others.

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From The Mind of God to the Mind of Man. Edited by James B. Williams. Greenville: Ambassador-Emerald, 1999, 243 pp., \$14.95 paper.

The purpose of this book is to give a general overview of how we got the Bible. It is also clear that the authors seek to show that King James Version Only (KJVO) positions are not correct and that the historic understanding of Bible translations is the only accurate view. This historic position rightly holds that every accurate translation of the Bible is indeed the Word of God.

The sections and their authors are as follows. James B. Williams, introduction, "The Issue We Face" (pp. 1–11); Randolph Shaylor, "Our Final Authority" (pp. 13–29); Paul W. Downey, "Canonization and Apocrypha" (pp. 31–64); Mark Minnick, "Let's Meet the Manuscripts" (pp. 65–98); John E. Ashbrook, "The History of the Textus Receptus" (pp. 99–108); John K. Hutcheson, Sr., "English Translations Before the King James Version" (pp. 109–127); John C. Mincy, "The Making of the King James Version" (pp. 129–145); Mark R. Simmons, "The Changing King James Version" (pp. 147–167); William H. Smallman, "Printed Greek Texts" (pp. 169–184); J. Drew Conley, "English Versions Since 1880" (pp. 185–209). A conclusion, "The Response to These Facts" (pp. 211–218), is by Keith E. Gephart.

Eight of the nine chapters were written by the members of a group called "The Committee on the Bible's Texts and Translation." One contributor is a former missionary and the rest are or were pastors. Their research was examined by several others in academic fields. Overall, the book is well done, accurate, and enjoyable to read. The

subject matter of the book is controversial, but the authors keep a Christian attitude, which is commendable.

Several features make this a good book. It is well written and the printing is easy on the eyes. A 12-page glossary is helpful for those with little knowledge about manuscripts and translations of the Bible. All the basic areas are covered: inspiration, preservation, copying, texts, printed editions, the English Bible, and contemporary controversies. Most chapters have a short but useful bibliography at the end. The introduction says, "Many who are strong advocates of the KJV Only position believe that they are heroically defending the faith, when, in reality, they are defending false assumptions" (p. 4). This seems to be the problem that caused the authors to produce the book. This Bible-translation controversy is presented as the fourth major Protestant controversy since the Reformation (the others being liberalism, New-evangelicalism, and the Charismatic movement).

The KJVO people specifically mentioned include Benjamin Wilkinson, J. J. Ray, David Otis Fuller, Peter Ruckman, D. A. Waite, E. L. Bynum, Jack Chick, Walter Beebe, and Gail Riplinger. These are "unqualified proponents of the KJV Only view" (p. 4). While this is true, the writings of these people are not adequately refuted in the book. Very little is actually said about any of their publications.

After the introduction ("The Issue We Face," by James B. Williams) Randolph Shaylor, in "Our Final Authority," argues that the original languages texts, not any translations, are the authority we must all recognize. Inspiration and inerrancy of the original writings are strongly held. The next section, "Canonization and Apocrypha" (Paul W. Downey), is a good general survey, but is perhaps too long, considering the purpose and size of the book. Also, some of the best works on the canon are not mentioned, such as Beckwith's *The OT Canon in the NT Church* (Eerdmans, 1985).

The next section, "Let's Meet the Manuscripts" (Mark Minnick), has more details, but several mistakes are also found. Nonetheless, this section is a good introduction to textual studies. Many important details are necessarily omitted, but the basics are present.

In "The Making of the KJV" (John C. Mincy), the beginner will learn enough to realize the KJV is a wonderful monument to God's grace, yet it has shortcomings, many of which are explored in "The Changing King James Version" (Mark R. Simons). There is limited information, but enough is given to dispel any perfection theories of KJVOs. Most of the important works are noted in "Printed Greek Texts" (William H. Smallman).

The conclusion, "The Response to These Facts" (Keith E. Gephart), contains a challenge for all to admit to facts and follow truth. A plea is made to work for our Lord in unity rather than disunity.

There are some shortcomings that need to be noted. One general weakness is that there are no chapter titles with page numbers. This makes referring to the sections difficult. There also are several typographical errors, inaccurate details, misleading statements, or other weak points in the book. Some that I found are noted here.

Page four says "many" of the KJV translators were "baby baptizing" Anglicans. Williams should say all, not many, were Anglicans. Page six says the KJV was revised in 1612, 1613, 1616, 1629, 1638, 1659, and 1769, but the important 1762 revision of Thomas Paris is not mentioned.

Page 44 says "the earliest English Bibles, being based on the Latin Vulgate of Jerome, had included the Apocrypha with disclaimers." However only one, the Wycliffe Bible of the 1380s, actually fits this description.

Erasmus's manuscripts are listed as "four or five" (p. 74) and "no more than five" (p. 103), but these are now recognized as seven. On p. 82, the author says the Gospels

section of “Codex Alexandrinus” is “the oldest existing Majority Text manuscript.” However, manuscripts W, C, and Q are also dated to the fifth century by textual scholars. On p. 93, Charles Spurgeon’s quotation “translations are not inspired” should be “translators are not inspired.” Pages 102–103 state that Tyndale went to Cambridge University “about 1510” because Erasmus “taught there from 1509–14.” However, it is almost certain that Tyndale arrived at Cambridge in 1515, after Erasmus had gone. Also, p. 103 says Erasmus’s Greek NT had 672 pages. However, this was only for volume two (Romans-Revelation and notes) and there were page number errors so it had approximately 632 pages. Volume one had 333 pages so the whole NT had close to 1,000 pages.

Page 113 says of Tyndale’s work, “the NT appeared in 1525 and parts of the OT followed in 1534,” but the NT was not likely printed until 1526 and parts of the OT were printed in 1530. Page 114 says “the 35 years after Tyndale’s death [1536] saw a number of new English translations and revisions. At least seven Protestant versions were published and one Catholic version.” However, it was 46 years before the first Catholic effort, the 1582 Rheims-Douay NT. It may be that 85 years (from Tyndale to the KJV in 1611) was meant. Page 138 says the KJV was printed “in America not until 1752.” To my knowledge this never happened until 1782, the NT having been printed in 1777.

On pages 170 and 230, the publishers of the *Textus Receptus* are called “Elzevir brothers.” This should be “the Elzevirs” (Abraham was Bonaventure’s nephew, not brother). A note on this page says that uncials other than Aleph were designed with letters of “the alphabet.” It would be better as “the Latin and Greek alphabets.” Page 179 says P45, P46, P47, P66, P72, and P75 are “all very significant witnesses of the Alexandrian Text type.” This is misleading because most of these are very mixed textually. P75 is practically the definition of the Alexandrian Text-type, but the others are not so clear. Page 203 says the KJV and NKJV rely “on the traditional Greek text.” This is true, but somewhat misleading. These two are based on the *Textus Receptus* (TR). The traditional text (as used by Burgon) refers to the majority text or Byzantine text, not just the TR. There are considerable differences.

The above shortcomings detract from the quality of this book, but it is still a valuable source of information for general readers. I do recommend it as a corrective to some of the misinformation being circulated today. Perhaps a future edition will address the problems that have been noted and deal more specifically with the errors of the KJVO movement.

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Language and Imagery of the Old Testament. By J. C. L. Gibson. Peabody: Hendrickson, 1998, ix + 166 pp., n.p.

Written by a former OT professor at the University of Edinburgh, *Language and Imagery of the Old Testament* does not aspire to be an encyclopedic coverage of the topic announced in the book’s title. Instead, it is a fireside chat with an OT scholar on selected topics dealing with the language and imagery of the OT. The modesty of the enterprise is winsome and extends even to the author’s decision to include no footnotes or endnotes whatsoever! The approach is literary, belonging to what literary critics would label as formalist and rhetorical criticism, with the focus solidly on the Biblical text itself. An incipient thesis is that the preference of theologians for abstraction is out of step with the language preferences of OT writers.

The supreme achievement of the book is its opening chapter entitled "The Energies of the Hebrew Language." This chapter is a primer on such characteristics of OT style as the lack of abstract terms and the heavy incidence of coordination by means of the conjunction *and*. Also highlighted are the prominence of direct speech, cosmological descriptions, formality of address, and etymologies. The chapter concludes with a discussion of three specific tropes: hyperbole, personification, and irony.

Things begin to unravel after this promising start. From the beginning, the author sprinkles in comments to the effect that the OT is suspect in its accuracy and acceptability for modern readers. We read, for example, about "theologically questionable" elements in the OT (p. 7), about pictures of God "which we find off-putting and not at all helpful" (p. 11), and language that "is often distressing to modern susceptibilities" (p. 12). At first these asides seem little more than signals of the writer's bias, but when the discussion turns to such topics as the anthropomorphic portrayal of God and allegedly mythic elements in the OT, the liberal bias becomes a major part of the author's argument. The book is a product of the confident liberalism of mid-century: scornful of literalistic readings of the OT, condescending to the allegedly primitive ignorance of OT authors, unquestioning of the superiority of modern knowledge and viewpoints. My own conclusion is that the problem areas of OT language and imagery that Gibson places on the agenda deserve to be wrestled with by OT scholars who begin with evangelical presuppositions and who do not take the easy way out by simply discrediting whatever a modern reader might find unsettling.

Even though many of the chapter subheads hold promise as basic introductions to OT genres ("The Rhetoric of Judgment," "The Rhetoric of Comfort," "The Rhetoric of Praise"), the actual discussion turns out to be mainly a topical anatomy based on the content of passages, with the result that the book is more interested in the content than the forms of the OT. This is true also of concluding chapters on "Images of God" and "Images of Humanity." The format is mainly that of the catalog of images and motifs, filled out with illustrating quotations and virtually unaccompanied by interpretive commentary. For a Bible reader who has never thought in terms of the labels that Gibson provides for the OT, I can imagine that this book might be a doorway into an exciting new world of illumination of the OT text. For someone familiar with the categories, the book offers little interpretive insight, insight from which even the newly initiated would have benefited.

The author and publisher deserve credit for attempting a short and readable introduction to the literary dimension of OT language and imagery. Except for an excellent opening chapter, the project is laden with the limitations I have noted, resulting in a book whose potential is greater than its achievement. A brief treatment of Biblical imagery cannot hope to compete in scope with encyclopedic surveys of the same subject. Its claim to importance will necessarily rest on superiority of interpretive angle on traits of Biblical imagery. *Language and Imagery of the Old Testament* does not attain to that status, staying too thoroughly on the descriptive plane of merely cataloging instances of various motifs.

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Out of Order: Homosexuality in the Bible and the Ancient Near East. By Donald J. Wold. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998, 238 pp., \$19.99.

The purpose of *Out of Order* is to provide the reader with a careful exegetical study of the relevant Biblical and extra-Biblical passages that address in some way issues

related to homosexuality. This work is very focused, and from the very beginning Wold states that other concerns—such as the history of Christian views on the topic, medical debates and challenges (AIDS, the hypothalamus gland), and the public responsibility of the Christian Church—lie outside the purview of this book (p. 9).

The title communicates very well the general thesis of the author. Wold argues that homosexual conduct violates the original divine order of creation for men and women (Genesis 1–2). He endeavors to demonstrate that the rejection of same-sex relationships is constant in both testaments, as is the severity of punishment that is decreed for those who pursue such activity. The Bible, he says, regards homosexuality as a deliberate act against God's standards and knows nothing of it as simply an inescapable sexual orientation. At the same time, he stresses that the Bible also speaks of the grace of God for those in the throes of this sin: forgiveness was to be found on the Day of Atonement in ancient Israel (Lev 16:29–34) and today is grounded in the cross of Christ (1 Cor 6:11).

Out of Order is divided into three parts. Part 1 (chaps. 2–3) examines the ancient Near Eastern material; Part 2 (chaps. 4–10) turns to the OT narratives and laws; Part 3 (chaps. 11–13) presents the views found within the NT. Throughout, Wold interacts with those holding the contrary opinion that the Bible does not in fact condemn loving homosexual relationships. His primary interlocutor is John Boswell, whose *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality* (University of Chicago Press, 1980) has been a foundational piece for all of this persuasion.

This book exhibits several strengths. First, in his analysis of important terminology and in the study of key passages in the OT (Gen 9:18–27, 19:1–11; Judg 19:22–30; Ezek 16:48–49; Lev 18:22, 20:13) and NT (Rom 1:24–27; 1 Cor 6:9–11; 1 Tim 1:8–11), the author utilizes the original languages. Such attention to textual details is crucial for those seeking to acquire a more precise grasp of the canon's perspective on same-sex relationships. It is educational as well to be provided with the challenging interpretations of those like Boswell in order to see where the points of difference truly lie. That the final goal of the book is not to leave homosexuals censured before God but rather to present forgiveness as his divine solution is also a constructive contribution to the often vitriolic context of contemporary discussions. Lastly, the bibliography (pp. 219–228) and indexes (pp. 229–238) make this book a useful tool for the reader.

At the same time, however, the presentation could have been stronger. For example, Wold believes that the concern for order is a fundamental tenet in the ancient Near East, yet he admits that the rejection of homosexuality elsewhere was not as strident as in the OT. One is left wondering then about the existence of a widespread conviction of a connection between this order and heterosexuality, which is the book's prime thesis; the link is most clearly established, of course, in the Biblical data.

At other points the discussion seems a bit stretched. For instance, because the prohibition against Molech appears in a section dealing with sexual matters (Leviticus 18), Wold postulates that this worship by definition entailed a sexual component (p. 119); such an interpretive move is tenuous and not very convincing (especially in light of the degree of scholarly disagreement today over the nature of the Molech cult). In some instances the author appeals to arguments from silence. Two examples will suffice: the statement of Jesus concerning sexual impurity (Mark 7:21–23) "may have alluded to homosexuality" (p. 167); Paul's treatment of the incest case in 1 Corinthians 5 makes it "not difficult to predict how Paul might have handled homosexual conduct" (p. 201). In other cases, other textual approaches would have given the Biblical passages yet even more force. A literary appreciation of the Sodom narratives themselves and of the broader concerns in Genesis for a seed would underscore its sexual dimensions, but Wold's explanation is circumscribed by a lexical investigation into the meaning of the verb *yada*^c (pp. 77–89).

These criticisms aside, *Out of Order* can prove to be a welcome addition to serious evangelical sources for a Biblical case against homosexual relationships.

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Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God in Ancient Israel. By Othmar Keel and Christoph Uehlinger. Translated by Thomas H. Trapp. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1998, 466 pp., \$45.00.

Othmar Keel of the University of Fribourg, Switzerland has been involved in studying the contribution of glyptic art to the religious history of the southern Levant for 20 years. His contributions are many and are probably most well known through the influence of his 1978 book, *The Symbolism of the Biblical World: Ancient Near Eastern Iconography and the Book of Psalms* (recently republished by Eisenbrauns). This current book is a translation of the German *Göttinnen, Götter und Gottessymbole*.

Keel and Uehlinger set about the task of reconstructing the religious history of Canaan and Israel using contemporary sources, as many are trying to do these days. What differentiates their approach from others is that instead of focusing on archaeological finds concerning which sites were occupied during what periods, and literary texts and inscriptions that are spotty in the information they provide, they focus on the extensive iconographic sources to identify trends that betray religious beliefs. They observe that prior studies consistently neglected the seal amulets, which can generally be dated with confidence and provide a broad data base (some 8,500 stamp seals in the collection of the University of Fribourg).

The particular questions they seek to resolve are whether preexilic Israel was polytheistic, and whether Yahweh had a partner. Along the way they explore the significance of male and female deities, the motifs and symbols connected to deities, and religious development through the various periods of Israelite history, stretching from Middle Bronze IIB (beginning about 1800 BC) until the end of Iron III in the mid-5th century. After a brief introduction to the use of symbols and the methodology used for interpreting iconography, they begin a six-chapter, period-by-period march through time.

Anyone familiar with Keel's other works will not be surprised to find the book copiously illustrated (about 500 hand-drawn sketches), with each illustration evaluated for the clues it has to offer. The book is enviably well organized with clear and convenient summaries at the end of each section and chapter, as well as at the end of the book. These conveniences not only allow the reader to trace the argument carefully, but also make it easy to go back and retrieve the information for lectures or research purposes. The 33-page bibliography is predictably thorough up to 1991, with only a couple of entries from 1992 and 1993. The English edition does not supply an updated bibliography, though the preface to the English edition lists a few important works that have appeared in the interim.

Keel and Uehlinger's findings can be summarized as follows. In Middle Bronze IIB (1800–1550) there is obvious Egyptian influence, and goddesses are featured prominently. The weather god and fertility symbols are also widely observed. Sacred trees and stones and erotic imagery lead the authors to suggest that the elements usually connected with Canaanite religion all come together here. During Late Bronze (1550–1250/1150) the goddess figure is less frequently an erotic fertility figure, but is represented stylistically by the sacred tree flanked by caprids or clothed with celestial or warfare symbols. Egyptian influence continues. Iron I (1250/1150–1000) turns its

attention to warrior gods. A dominant motif is portraying prominent deities standing on the backs of animals or holding up animals in both hands. Bulls and lions represent the deity. Goddesses appear only rarely and in symbolic form (tree or nursing animal). In Iron IIA (1000–925) anthropomorphic deities are rare, as are goddess figures. Motifs that in prior periods represented the goddess are now identified by Keel and Uehlinger as representing the kingdom. The sacred tree is now flanked by humans rather than animals. Iron IIB (925–720/700) iconography contains guardian lions, but no ark (in the south) or bull-calf (in the north). The tree is now flanked by guardian creatures of griffin or cherub characteristics. The inscriptions from Kuntillet ʿAjrud and Khirbet el-Qom are seen by the authors as portraying Yahweh alone as “the ultimate source of blessing and protection. If there is additional mention of ‘his *asherah*,’ this is probably not a reference to a personal deity, conceived anthropomorphically, but is rather a cultic symbol in the form of a stylized tree, an entity that serves him as an agent of blessing” (p. 401).

As the study proceeds, Keel and Uehlinger develop from their source the thesis that there was a dominant Yahwistic religion in Israel during the eighth century and that Yahweh had no consort (p. 207). Anthropomorphic male deities make a resurgence in the north. Keel and Uehlinger identify a solar motif as a new dominating element in this period in both the north and the south. The solar symbol is often accompanied by uraei. The authors identify this solar symbolism with Yahweh worship. This trend continues in Iron IIC (720/700–587) with an expansion into astral symbolism of various sorts, and decreasing Egyptian influence as Aramaic and Assyrian symbolism takes its place. The solar disk moves more to the background as the crescent moon, the Pleiades, and Venus become more prominent. Deities are more frequently portrayed in symbolic rather than anthropomorphic form. In the iconography from Judah in the last part of the 7th century, the time of Josiah’s reform, the authors observe that pictures virtually disappear from the seals, which now feature just names. Finally, Iron III (587–450) shows a broad series of influences including the Persian royal hero, Egyptian Bes and Isis, Greek Heracles and Zeus, and Phoenician Baalshamem.

Evangelicals will find much in Keel and Uehlinger’s findings to be pleased about, not the least the wake-up call they issue concerning those who are victimizing Israelite religion by means of feminist agendas. Additionally the authors make favorable statements such as “We do not believe that there was an actual Yahweh iconography in Israel and Judah” (p. 407), or more moderate observations such as, “The external evidence confirms neither the view that there was a fully developed Mosaic monotheism nor the popular view that late and even very late dates for the literature are justified” (p. 407).

But the authors also have an indirect challenge to offer to evangelical scholarship. In their conclusions, after addressing the ways in which scholars have often over-focused on text to the neglect of iconography, they offer their opinion that “[t]his approach to the biblical texts is based on a one-sided view of the Bible as the *Word* of God. It is theologically problematic and historically inappropriate, because it does not investigate the life behind the word. It understands the text in an abstract sense, not as a partial expression of a far more complex system of a whole culture” (p. 395). From a theological standpoint we might be willing to accept that evaluation as a reflection of our determined convictions. But at the same time we might take the criticism to heart as exegetes and begin to seek out a more culturally informed basis for probing the depths of the text.

At the beginning of their conclusions section, the authors state, “People who have never concerned themselves with the unique possibilities of word and pictures usually think that pictures are vague and ambiguous, whereas words are precise and clear”

(p. 393). The authors identify this judgment as rash, and, based on the extensive findings and persuasive arguments of this book, I would have to conclude that they have proven their point. This book is a gold mine of information.

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We Have Heard with Our Ears, O God: Sources of the Communal Laments in the Psalms. By Walter C. Bouzard, Jr. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997, 229 pp., \$34.95.

In this dissertation Bouzard has set out to determine if and how the Mesopotamian *balag/eršemma* compositions might have influenced the *Klagelieder des Volkes* (communal laments) in the Biblical psalms. In order to achieve this goal Bouzard has sought to articulate a satisfactory comparative methodology, to identify and describe typological features of the Akkadian *balag/eršemma* laments and their "Israelite counterparts," and to establish points of correspondence between the two sets from which conclusions concerning influence may be drawn.

In his search for method Bouzard has provided a critical survey of pertinent scholarship. In this overview he has carefully outlined the pitfalls of the polar extremes found in "parallelomania" and the insistence on Israel's unique literary genius. In the end Bouzard has opted for a model, building upon W. C. Gwaltney's comparative work between the laments of Mesopotamia and the book of Lamentations, that focuses on opportunities for cultural contact—especially with regards to temporality—and similarities in content, form, and genre.

Confident in Gwaltney's demonstration of a temporal and geographical link between the *balag/eršemma* laments and Israelite culture, Bouzard has noted correspondences and contrasts between these Mesopotamian texts and a set of seven "core" communal laments from the Psalter. The numerous correspondences noted include points of structure and content, poetic devices and the general absence of penitential motifs. Most significant to this study is the work done on the contrastive elements. It is here that the battle of dependency is fought, because many scholars reject the idea of literary dependence on the basis of the absence of significant motifs and understand the correspondences to be the result of generic relatedness at best.

Bouzard discusses three major contrasts at length: the absence of the heart-pacification unit and the weeping-goddess motif from the *Klagelieder des Volkes* as well as the inclusion of the taunting enemies motif. The author has addressed these contrasts by concluding that Israelite authors adopted and transformed (creatively adapted) the literary traditions of the *balag/eršemma* texts to fit their own theology. While this argument is fairly convincing for the first of these contrasts, i.e. the heart-pacification unit is replaced by the concept of Yahweh turning the face, it falters when applied to the two remaining topics. In fact, regarding the absence of the weeping goddess motif Bouzard has concluded that it "may simply not have seemed as crucial to the Hebrew poets" (p. 169).

The analysis is completed by means of addressing additional corroborating evidences. The major focus of this section is to suggest an early date for Psalms 74 and 79 (two of the seven core communal laments) based upon antiquated grammatical forms in the former and a quotation from Psalm 79 found in Jeremiah 10. Further support for Israel's early contact with Mesopotamian laments and consequently the early dating of these particular psalms is evidenced by the presence of motifs common to the *balag/eršemma* texts found in Jeremiah 25 and the book of Joel. These evidences,

along with the absence of penitential elements and the preservation of the communal laments, seem to have convinced the author that the seven communal laments are to be dated early and understood as having had a ritual usage comparable to that of the *balag/eršemma* texts. The latter came to be used in a regular fashion to appease the gods for unknown offenses.

Certainly the correspondences found between the *balag/eršemma* laments and the communal laments of the Psalter encourage further study. However, as Bouzard himself states, “the evidence remains circumstantial, and at present the question of Israel’s specific borrowing cannot be demonstrated with absolute certainty” (p. 201). Yet he concludes his work by suggesting “it is unreasonable to suppose that Israel could have composed communal laments that correspond in so many ways with the *balag/eršemma* texts apart from . . . influence by them” (p. 211).

In conclusion, while Bouzard has presented some reasonable evidences to suggest a dependency between the *balag/eršemma* laments and the communal laments of the Psalter, his concluding statements (quoted above) highlight the inherent weaknesses of his methodology. Although there are significant correspondences between the two sets of literature, the conclusion reached concerning dependency are far from concrete and at times even unconvincing.

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Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah. By Kenneth L. Barker and Waylon Bailey. NAC 20. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1999, 528 pp., \$29.99.

Some years ago, I remember reading a comment by a well-known scholar who was reviewing a volume in a commentary series. The commentary series was both denominational and confessional, and the reviewer sadly noted that it had fallen between two stools. In his mind, it possessed neither the robust, energetic textual exposition expected of evangelical scholarship, nor the stimulating interaction with critical scholarship demanded of a more technical series. Happily, the same cannot be said of this volume in the NAC.

On the title page, the NAC claims to provide an exegetical and theological exposition of Holy Scripture. This statement acknowledges not only the theological unity of each book but places it in the context of the whole Bible and in the setting of the church. The goal is to build up the body of Christ. The series is unapologetically confessional, but clearly strives to be conversant with current textual and critical issues in the wider scholarly community. Introductory issues come first and then a structurally based verse-by-verse interpretation of each book follows from the NIV, although the authors are free to differ with the NIV when they desire. The volume transliterates the Hebrew in the body of the text, but uses the Hebrew characters in the extended footnote discussions. Although the Hebrew student will find the transliterations fascinating for revealing qualities resident in the text, such as assonance and paranomasia, most lay readers will miss the points being made, despite the transliterations.

Kenneth Barker of NIV translation fame writes on the book of Micah. In his introduction, he deals with the historical background, authorship and unity, date, literary analysis, purpose, themes, message, and theological teachings. Then follows a verse-by-verse interpretation based on the book’s structural outline. Barker accepts Micah’s authorship for both the commonly accepted chaps. 1–3 and the often-disputed chaps. 4–7, but he allows that Micah, his disciple or a later editor may have arranged Micah’s oracles, somewhere between 700 and 608 BC. Following Willis, Childs, and

others, Barker embraces a three-part cycle of alternating judgment and salvation sections (p. 33) for the underlying structure of the book. The principle of progressive fulfillment is seen as the key to interpreting Micah's prophecies, and Barker opts for a dispensational understanding of Israel and the nations. For example, the prophecy in Mic 4:1–5 of the exaltation of the Lord's temple *har* progresses from fulfillment in Christ's first coming to his literal reign in a millennial kingdom (pp. 86–87).

Micah 6:1–8 provides a good paradigm for how each section is exegeted. Barker accepts the form-critical consensus that the section is a divine covenant lawsuit (*rib*), with witnesses called (vv. 1–2), the prosecution's case presented (vv. 3–5), the defendant's response (vv. 6–7), and Yahweh's rebuttal (v. 8) defining his desire to see his people keep the covenant—by doing covenant-justice, mercy, and walking humbly with God, not just by participating in sacrifice. The section moves to the present day with brief application for today's believers, to wit, that worship must be coupled with faithful living and God's past faithfulness demands present loyalty.

Waylon Bailey authors the treatments of Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah. Like Barker on Micah on introductory issues, he follows the same basic NAC pattern for each book. Not a "hymn of hate," Nahum was originally a work of literature (a *sēper*), circulated to encourage a young Josiah and to comfort Judah (p. 139) with the message that God is a warrior who judges evil (p. 152). The strength of Assyria and the weakness of Israel date the book before 627 BC. After a fine exploration of structural questions, Bailey opts for an outline agreeing with the chapter divisions in the English text (chap. 1 uses hymnic and oracular language for God's character, chap. 2 uses oracular and battle language to announce the Lord's judgment on Nineveh, chap. 3 uses the language of lament to pronounce death on Assyria [p. 151]). On the partial acrostic of Nahum, Bailey explores a number of options, concluding that it was originally that way and remaining agnostic as to why. His summary application of the book cautions that God has the only right to vengeance and that the believer may have to experience evil and wait patiently for the Lord to exercise his right, trusting in his justice.

Habakkuk's ministry revolved around the fall of Nineveh and the rise of Babylon in the last quarter of the seventh century BC. Bailey is unsure whether Habakkuk was a member of a pro-Babylonian party or a cult prophet. He rejects form-critical markers as the decisive key leading to the book's two-part outline and sees a tripartite division based on literary markers in the book's present form instead. Jehoiakim's time (609–598 BC) is Bailey's best proposal for the date of the book. The book is a unity, as shown by the brilliant use of a variety of literary devices in the work that point to an original written work. Bailey's masterful discussion of the literary features of the book is quite thorough and includes helpful tables on the "Structure of the Twelve," "Selected Redaction Theories," "Rhetorical Features," and "Habakkuk as a Lament." In sum, Habakkuk is a book for people of faith, living in the interim, when the revealed promises of God have not yet been fulfilled, and asking why. In his exegesis of Hab 2:4, Bailey zeroes in on God's cryptic answer to the prophet's question of why God punished his own people with a pagan nation more wicked than they: "God promised to spare a remnant based solely on their faithfulness to God" (p. 278). In the interim, when understanding of God's ways is lacking, the righteous remnant must live by faith. In spite of God's judgment through the cruel Babylonians, the righteous will live by faithfulness or steadfastness or loyalty to God in that interim, regardless of the circumstances. In this key verse, I found myself wishing for more from Bailey, perhaps even an excursus, but to no avail.

Zephaniah may have descended from King Hezekiah (1:1 and the unusual fourth generation), and delivered his message in the bleak days before Josiah's reform (prior to 626 BC). Bailey accepts a traditional tripartite outline for the book (1:1–2:3; 2:4–15; 3:1–20). There follows a fine discussion of the current state of scholarship on

Zephaniah, namely its role in the unified meaning of the Book of the Twelve, which Bailey rightly believes must be preceded by work on the literary structure and meaning of each book in the Twelve.

A perusal of the selected bibliography and person index reveals that a broad range of critical scholarship was consulted and cited, although earlier works such as Calvin's were not listed. The person index reveals Bailey's fondness for the question of the meaning of the Book of the Twelve, but the same interest cannot be found in Barker's superb analysis of Micah. The commentary's authors have provided us a fine, well-balanced volume that will serve the scholar, pastor, and serious student exegete or lay teacher. This volume should occupy a useful place in the exegesis of these not-so-"minor" prophets for all who seek to understand their profound message for our day.

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Encountering the New Testament: A Historical and Theological Survey. By Walter A. Elwell and Robert W. Yarbrough. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998, 448 pp., \$44.99; *Readings From the First-Century World: Primary Sources for New Testament Study.* Edited by Walter A. Elwell and Robert W. Yarbrough. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998, 223 pp., n.p.

A new generation of Biblical-studies textbooks is beginning to appear. On the leading edge of these "new-millennium" books are the volumes in the Encountering Biblical Studies series, under the indefatigable editorial oversight of Walter A. Elwell. Not only are these volumes "reader-friendly" with first-rate graphics, pictures, typesetting, and arrangement, several also feature CD-ROMs. The latter addition signals a new day in publishing. It is hard to imagine any successful survey text hereafter without something comparable, and almost certainly, something better. The age of computer technology, for better and for worse, has changed the way the Bible is being studied.

Elwell and Yarbrough bring together commendable experience and expertise. *Encountering the New Testament* is organized into four main parts: "Jesus and the Gospels," "Acts and the Earliest Church," "Paul and his Epistles," and "General Epistles and Apocalypse." These four main parts are divided into 24 chapters, each of which is introduced by an outline and concluded by review questions, study questions, and basic bibliography for further reading. Each chapter also features attractive sidebars, boxes, and graphics conveying special information, key terms, leading themes, charts, illustrations, maps, diagrams, pictures, and more. One can only use superlatives to describe the packaging and layout of the text.

A helpful preface by the publisher, a word to the professor, and a word to the prospective student state forthrightly what this textbook is and is not. At the end of the book is a nearly 12-page glossary with definitions that are generally fuller than one finds in introductory texts. Besides the answers to the review questions, the appendix contains nearly 11 pages of notes from the 24 chapters. This is followed by subject, Scripture, and name indexes, the latter including both ancient and modern writers and figures who are mentioned in the textbook. In addition, an Instructor's Resource Manual, containing suggestions for use, objective test questions, lecture outlines, among other helpful items, may also be purchased to supplement the main textbook. One can think of little that could have enhanced its usefulness. In short, this survey of the NT establishes a new benchmark.

The viewpoint, of course, is staunchly evangelical. The introductory chapter establishes this stance by discussing the issues of revelation, inspiration, canonicity, and

significance. As the subtitle implies, the authors are interested not only in the historical background of the NT, but also in its theological significance for today. Especially helpful for beginning students are the summaries of Jesus' thought (chap. 9), what the earliest Christians believed (chap. 13), Paul's teaching (chap. 17), and the epilogue. The latter offers some guidance in bringing the NT to bear on the great questions of our new millennium (chap. 24).

The authors seek a positive presentation of NT teaching. The tone of the book is for the most part irenic. Not unexpectedly, the section on Jesus and the Gospels has a polemical flavor, since this issue is the touchstone of orthodox, Christian faith. Yarbrough's expertise in Gospel studies is especially evident here. Chapters 10–12 are devoted to a description and critique of modern methodologies in Gospel research. I applaud the straightforward acknowledgment by the authors of the necessity for a critical approach to the NT (pp. 155–156). At the same time, they remind us of the limitations of critical approaches, especially when divorced from faith commitments and openness to the transcendence of God.

The discussion of the philosophical roots and hermeneutical presuppositions that underlie modern Gospel criticism will benefit not only beginning students, but seasoned teachers as well. A huge amount of information has been digested and condensed in two succinct chapters—the sure sign of an experienced guide! Of course, the much-ballyhooed searches for the “historical Jesus” and the extreme claims of the Jesus Seminar elicit some well-deserved criticism (chap. 12).

Here is one minor point argued in the book that I find questionable. In chap. 2, dealing with the background of the NT, the authors survey Jewish literature outside the canon. With regard to the Pseudepigrapha they state: “Yet the pseudepigraphal books were never considered Scripture by anyone, Jew or Christian” (p. 63). This is hardly the case. *Jubilees* and *1 Enoch* seem to have possessed that status at Qumran (ca. 16 copies of *Jubilees* and ca. 11 of *1 Enoch* were discovered there). At face value, Jude views *1 Enoch* and *The Assumption (or Testament) of Moses* as authoritative, if not Scriptural. 2 Peter may well do the same with regard to *1 Enoch*. In any case, the Abyssinian Church still views *Jubilees* as Scripture.

The authors categorize the Gospels as “expanded biographical sermons” (p. 72), having a primarily evangelistic purpose. The essence of the Gospels consists of the proclamation about Jesus and his saving activity. This explains why there are omissions of items normally in biographies. The authors find the most compelling reason for the writing of the Gospels in the need, at the end of the first century, to instruct new converts. These new believers, increasingly removed from the original events, lacked an understanding of how the saving events of Jesus' life culminated a long history of God's saving activity recorded in the OT.

One wonders why the authors should then later say of the purpose of Matthew's Gospel: “Fundamentally, Matthew wrote his Gospel to preserve what he knew about Jesus' life and words. *That was his basic purpose, as it was the underlying purpose of each of the Gospel writers*” (p. 80, emphasis mine). This seems to be a retreat from their earlier position (p. 72), and an unnecessary reaction against historical critics who question the authenticity of much of the gospel material. Is it really the case that the basic purpose of the evangelists was to document the historical life of Jesus, lest it be lost to future generations? After all, they knew much more about Jesus' life than they mention in their Gospels (cf. John 20:30; 21:25).

The authors choose to treat the four Gospels in canonical order (in fact, all the NT documents are treated in canonical rather than chronological order) before the issue of the relationships between them is taken up in chaps. 10–12. Some teachers will prefer a chronological approach based upon a particular theory of Gospel relationships (i.e. the priority of Mark and the two-source hypothesis), but this would be an

easy adaptation. The authors' own stance is unclear. They argue that the synoptic question has come to an impasse. The manner in which the chapter is written implies that they might even hold to the precritical view of Augustine (p. 170).

The position of the authors on the Pauline letters and general epistles generally follows well-trodden paths taken by conservative NT scholars. They place Galatians early (ca. AD 48), adopting, without strong convictions, the South Galatian theory. They mention the critical debate over the unity of 2 Corinthians, but conclude, "there are no compelling reasons to deny it as a unit" (p. 296). A curious sentence occurs shortly thereafter in which they state: "It cannot be said that the Epistle [2 Corinthians] is at the center of current discussion" (p. 296). What this "current discussion" might be is not clear. In fact, a considerable amount of secondary literature has been generated on various issues related to 2 Corinthians.

The prison epistles are all located during a period of house arrest in Rome in the early 60s and are accepted as genuine. Clinton Arnold's work on Ephesians has been instrumental in their understanding of what is going on in Ephesians. In their discussion of critical issues in Ephesians, they fire off a passing shot on the issue of male-female roles in marriage ("But if Paul is not to be trusted on some of the topics about which he teaches, who is?" [p. 312]). One would hoped for a little more elaboration on this hotly contested issue. If there were inadequate space for an adequate discussion, it would probably have been better not to raise it at all! The authors decline to identify definitively the Colossian error, simply pointing out some of the features that Paul criticizes.

The Pastorals are all accepted as genuine, "we simply do not know for sure" who wrote Hebrews (p. 348); 2 Peter was written by the apostle Peter; Jude was written by Jesus' brother; and Revelation was, along with the Gospel of John and the three Johannine letters, written by John the apostle.

I like the fresh, lively style of writing that characterizes most of this book. The introductions to the various documents draw the reader into the issues and discussion. I think the difficulty level for both the English employed and the content is just about right for undergraduates. That is a big plus in the marketing of a textbook.

The CD-ROM that accompanies the text is generally well done and complements the text. The interactive features of the CD will be a hit with students—even teachers will enjoy using this in class as a preview for upcoming exams. The drag and drop buttons with appropriate feedback (e.g. "you're good!") are just plain fun!

The media features of the CD are generally adequate. In this regard, the slide shows are the strong point. With but few exceptions (e.g. the colored fish at Eilat), the slides are relevant and nicely illustrate the NT world. They are accompanied by brief descriptions, upon which the teacher can elaborate. The video clips, accompanied by music, are a mixed bag. The problem is that these are huge files. The result is that they are quite brief. My estimate is that most last about 15–20 seconds. The one on Jezreel (at least on my CD) lasted but five seconds. This dimension of the CD-ROM technology is bound to improve. As technology enables ever-larger amounts of information to be compressed in ever-smaller spaces, we will undoubtedly witness great strides here. The video clips are helpful; it's just that students already have access to better visual tools for the Holy Land.

The portion in which the two authors discuss various applications of the NT to modern life is a good idea and contains some very good material. My caveat is that "talking heads" are probably not going to appeal that much to the new student generation (unless, of course, the "talking heads" have the status of pop icons!). I think it is helpful for students to be able to "meet" the authors and listen to a personal word from them, but the discussion of various issues should probably be narrated by them and illustrated by video clips, pictures, charts, graphics, and so forth. In this re-

gard, the comparable CD-ROM *New Testament Foundations* (Discovery House/Sky Media, 1996), narrated by Phil Yancey, does a better job.

This is a good textbook. It remains to be seen, however, how much longevity it will have. Almost certainly it will not have the shelf life of Merrill C. Tenney's *New Testament Survey* (1st ed., 1953) or Robert Gundry's *A Survey of the New Testament* (1st ed., 1970). The reason is simply this: the technology-driven age in which we live generates "upgrades" with increasing rapidity!

Readings From the First-Century World is a reader of primary source material accompanying the textbook, illustrating the background of the NT. This feature too is a good idea and helpful. The readings are arranged into three major sections: "The Gospel and Jesus," "Acts and Paul," and "General Epistles and Revelation." The first section brings together such aspects as the geography and history of Palestine and the various groups and religious ideas of the Jewish people during this era. The second and third sections simply follow the canonical order and illustrate various features of the text by the selected readings.

In their introduction the authors anticipate some criticism from potential users concerning their particular selections. The most significant inclusions in the reader are quotations from the OT. It is hard to quarrel with their rationale: "the time is past when it could be assumed that college students studying religion or Bible formally for the first time would already have a command of at least the basics of Old Testament content as it relates to and undergirds the New Testament" (p. 11). This feature is definitely a strong point of the reader. On the other hand, I think the authors underestimate the importance of apocryphal, pseudepigraphical, and sectarian writings for gaining an understanding of the NT (see their comment on p. 11).

They admit that limitations of space and money make for hard decisions ("both the breadth and scope of coverage will frustrate the specialist" [p. 12]). All in all, I would give them generally high marks for the selections they have made. Teachers of NT survey can always add relevant citations, especially from the Greco-Roman world, which the authors admit is not as well represented in their reader.

The overall combination of textbook with CD-ROM, resource manual, and reader presents an attractive, engaging, and competent introduction for undergraduates. As I said at the outset, it is a new benchmark.

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Palestine in the Time of Jesus: Social Structures and Social Conflicts. By K. C. Hanson and Douglas E. Oakman. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1998, 255 pp., \$21.00.

Hanson and Oakman write so readers will "learn to take seriously the distance between ourselves and the ancients," so we can read the Gospels in the right context, so we may "learn to work and think cross-culturally," and so we can recognize the complexity of the hermeneutical task (pp. 161–163). They invite the reader to ponder what is culture-bound, what requires translation, and what is clear enough transculturally without such translation. These are questions to which our grappling with Biblical texts inevitably drives us sooner or later. This work does not seek to answer all such questions, but it does sharpen them and provides information useful for our reflection.

Each chapter opens with questions about Jesus and the Gospels and then reviews the data from the ancient Mediterranean world. Chapter one introduces social-science models and social structures in ancient Palestine, chap. two kinship (including marriage, gender roles, dowry, and divorce), chap. three politics and patronage (the application of patron-client models to Galilee is somewhat controversial but has

value), chap. four political economy (including the preparation and sale of fish, the use of caravans, trade, taxation, and debts), and chap. five political religion.

Any work about antiquity employing modern social-science models may risk the danger of extrapolating from generalizations conceived in very different cultural contexts. The best way to guard against this danger is to work from as much concrete data as possible from the ancient society in question. The positive value of such extrapolations, however, is that even when we must make educated guesses in the absence of solid data, an educated guess is better than an uneducated one. Extrapolations based on analogous cultures are far more likely to prove correct than uninformed readings simply from our own often quite distant cultural assumptions.

Much more than some earlier social-science works dealing with ancient societies, Hanson and Oakman ground their conclusions in concrete data. They are careful to define the nature of their analogies clearly, e.g. advanced agrarian societies and slave economies. They properly reject comparisons of Jesus with Cynic philosophers (an urban model, *pace* Mack and Crossan). They recognize that Jesus, though ministering in a largely "peasant society," was himself an artisan rather than a peasant. They also define their social-science models more carefully than do many writers today, and, in keeping with current social-science approaches, appear to apply the models heuristically—that is, finding the models that fit their data rather than conforming the data to the models. Sometimes they could have found closer models—e.g. synagogue prayer for authorities tells us more specifically about 1 Tim 2:1–4 than the more general questions they ask—but their purpose here is not so much to explore all points of specific background as to invite fresh, relevant ways of thinking about the texts.

They ask useful comparative questions, helping readers most familiar with our culture to understand the integration of religion with other social structures in antiquity such as group identity, kinship and gender patterns, the nature of the economy, life expectancy, and parental role in spouse choice. While using modern studies of analogous cultures, they derive their ancient material from sources like the OT, Apocrypha, Josephus, and the Mishnah rather than much later sources (they also cite archaeological data and Roman sources where relevant).

Those unfamiliar with social-science models could learn from this book even if they skipped the introduction to social systems (chap. one) and used only the index. Nevertheless, comments on passages make more sense in the context of the larger treatments that Hanson and Oakman provide, so the reader will profit most by reading the work more thoroughly, especially the introduction. The authors also provide suggested reading at the conclusion of each chapter for those who wish to pursue such questions further.

The work includes less specific cultural information on the NT setting than, say, Everett Ferguson or James Jeffers, but should prove useful for probing ways to apply social-science models to NT (especially Gospels) study. As such, it would be useful not only as one of several texts for a backgrounds course but also as one of several texts for a hermeneutics course.

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The Parables: Jewish Tradition and Christian Interpretation. By Brad H. Young. Peabody: Hendrickson, 1998, xv + 332 pp., \$24.95.

Whereas a century ago the focus of much NT research was on the Greek roots of the Biblical authors, today there is a strong tendency to see Jesus and the evangelists

in terms of inter-testamental and Second-Temple Judaism. Jesus and Paul, it is stressed, were both Jews.

Young counters the widespread conclusion that many parts of the parables, and the interpretations given in the Gospels in particular, are later additions and do not come from Jesus. His methodology is to compare the parables of Jesus, including themes and individual expressions, to Jewish parables that reflect a similar theme and wording. The book is full of Jewish parables and stories that have some similarity to Jesus' major parables (usually most tangential, it must be admitted). In the book's fifteen chapters Young groups Jesus' parables by theme and quotes rabbinic *haggadah* that contain a similar element.

His sparring partner is most often Joachim Jeremias, probably the foremost interpreter of Jesus' parables in the 20th century. Even though Jeremias emphasized the Jewish background of Jesus' parables, Young can say, "Jeremias has misunderstood the world of ancient Jewish thought" (p. 69), insisting that he erred primarily by claiming that Jesus broke away from traditional Judaism by teaching grace instead of reward.

Young divides his 15 chapters into six parts. The first part discusses the historical development and theological significance of parables in Judaism and Christianity. The other five parts break Jesus' parables down by themes: Part 1, "Jewish Prayer and the Parables of Jesus," Part 2, the parables of the contemptible friend and the corrupt judge, Part 3, "Parables of Grace in the Gospels and Their Theological Foundations in ancient Judaism" (the parables of the fair employer and the talents), Part 4, "Teaching in Parables: The Theology of Reconciliation between God and Humanity in Both Judaism and Christianity" (the Samaritan, the merciful lord and his unforgiving servant, the father of two lost sons, the two debtors), Part 5, "The Disciple's Call: A Life of Learning and Doing" (the great banquet, the lost sheep and coin, the hidden treasure and the pearl of great price, the tower builder and the king going to war, the unjust steward), and Part 6, "Torah Learning and God's Reign" (four types of hearers [sower], the rich fool, the ten maidens, the good and bad fish, and the wheat and the tares).

The strength of this book is its quotation and analysis of many little-known Jewish parables, most from a later period than the time of Jesus, admittedly, but nevertheless having roots that go back perhaps to Second-Temple Judaism. Young challenges earlier interpretations, because Christian scholars did not know the Jewish roots of and background to the teachings of Jesus. As a result, they "frequently miss the deeper level of meaning" (p. 101) of the parables. In fact, a negative view of Jews and Judaism, he insists, has always proved detrimental to a correct understanding of this important literary form. "Jesus and his teachings must be placed in the midst of his own people rather than in conflict with them" (p. 123). Just as Deissmann a century ago mined the Greek papyri for parallels to NT Greek words and customs, so Young has mined the Jewish materials, and the rabbinics in particular.

Young is also critical of Karl Barth's tendency to read Jesus' parables "through the eyes of the church's beliefs about Jesus rather than first-century Jewish beliefs about God" (p. 132). Young tends to see Jesus in disjunction with the early church and shows no awareness of N. T. Wright's brilliant defense of the idea that those numerous NT scholars who make a disjunction between Second-Temple Judaism and Jesus or between Jesus and the early church are mistaken. Wright is not mentioned at all in the index of names and subjects, in fact. Young also shows no awareness of Craig Blomberg's seminal work on the parables, though he quotes himself and his mentor, David Flusser, in support of Blomberg's argument that a parable may have multiple points of comparison.

Young did his doctoral work at Hebrew University in Jerusalem under David Flusser and frequently quotes him with complete approval. Flusser in the foreword to the book commends Young's "great new book" because he shows that "Jesus is both a foundation of the Christian faith and at the same time an integral part of Second Temple period Judaism" (p. ix). Where the two authors differ from Jeremias is in seeing Jewish thought not only as a background for Jesus but rather the original context and natural framework of his message.

The book has at least two weaknesses. One is its pedestrian style, which makes the book hard to read. The second is the tendency to diminish the differences to the place where it is hard to credit the Gospels with historical accuracy when they portray some Jews in a negative light. In fact, for Young, "the Romans crucified Jesus" (p. 174). It is hard to see why the Jewish leaders would have been opposed to the Jesus Young presents.

But Young has done an outstanding job of showing Jesus' Jewish heritage.

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A History of the Synoptic Problem: The Canon, the Text, the Composition, and the Interpretation of the Gospels. By David Laird Dungan. Anchor Bible Reference Library. New York: Doubleday, 1999, xii + 526 pp., \$39.95.

Dungan has written an idiosyncratic volume, especially for a reference library, ostensibly on the history of the synoptic problem but ranging far from that subject as narrowly conceived. As the subtitle suggests, he is also supposed to be discussing the canon, text, composition, and interpretation of the synoptic gospels—a daunting task for any one volume! These subjects, however, are only discussed tangentially. Instead, as Dungan states in his conclusion, "It has been the foremost goal of this history to present, in some respects for the first time, a complete (if not comprehensive) history of the debate on this issue from its inception, not just from the eighteenth century. Moreover, this history has examined the Synoptic Problem within a rigorous and consistent methodological perspective, so as to clarify the subtle nuances of its different forms" (p. 394). What Dungan is saying, in sum, is that he has written a carefully researched, detailed study of a few key theological thinkers and their views of the Bible and religion, from the perspective of someone who has long held that the two-gospel hypothesis (the neo-Griesbachian or Owen-Griesbach hypothesis) is the correct view of the synoptic problem and that the dominant two-source hypothesis can only be explained in terms of the post-Kantian antisupernaturalism of the last two centuries. He admits, "My treatment is undoubtedly uneven and tendentious in many places" (p. 347).

The three divisions of the book reflect this idiosyncratic methodology and, I would suggest, its limitations. Part One, "The First to the Fifth Century: Conflict and Consolidation," consists of ten chapters, most of which are devoted to in-depth analysis of the primary sources to survey the thought of individuals. Papias of Hierapolis, Justin Martyr, Marcion, Celsus, Origen, Porphyry, Eusebius of Caesarea, and Augustine each receive a thoroughly researched chapter. The author's wide-ranging approach leads him at times to stray rather far from his ostensible focus. For example, his analysis of Marcion includes a discussion of the roots of anti-Jewish polemic, he has a thorough discussion of Celsus's general criticism of the Christian religion, and he gives a detailed treatment of Eusebius's views of apostolic succession!

Of particular interest is Dungan's discussion of Augustine's view of Biblical inspiration. Dungan notes that Augustine held firmly to a Scripture without error, though the Biblical authors have freedom to change events in terms of order, to be flexible about chronological order, etc., the very issues that evangelicals try to keep together and critics see as making inerrancy impossible. It becomes quite clear that inerrancy goes back to Augustine at least, not just to "the Old Princeton" or François Turretin, as some very influential religionists maintain today. Inerrancy has always involved a nuanced view of the phenomena of Scripture. The evangelical reader will conclude from Dungan's discussion that inerrancy is the historic position of the Christian church and should not be abandoned, as some evangelicals seem to be willing to do despite its great antiquity, but reaffirmed and explained for today's reader as Augustine did for his day.

Equally idiosyncratic in a "history" of the synoptic problem is the omission of any discussion of anyone from Augustine to Spinoza, though it reveals Dungan's philosophical interests. There are very brief glances at the Reformers (inferior to Origen and Augustine because they narrow the focus) and Erasmus, but the focus of Part Two, "The Creation of the Modern Historical-Critical Method," is on such Enlightenment figures as Spinoza, Locke, John Toland, and the "third form" of the synoptic problem, better known as the two-source theory (Mark is the first Gospel and Luke and Matthew both combine the sayings of Jesus, or Q, with Mark to produce their Gospels). Unique, I believe, is his discussion of the impact of economic, political, and technological developments on Biblical science.

The key chapter in this section is probably chap. 11, "The Rise of the Modern Period and Its Consequences, 1500–1950," in which Dungan argues that modern historical criticism seeks to destroy dogma. Relying heavily on Louis Dupré's seminal *Passage to Modernity*, Dungan distinguishes, as evangelicals must, between what is valid in liberalism and what is the result of the influence of theological and philosophical naturalism. He appears to put the two-source hypothesis in the latter category, whereas most evangelicals and the vast majority of Biblical scholars would put it in the former. Dungan does us the service, however, of forcing us to look at the question anew.

The longest chapter (63 pages), on Spinoza and Biblical criticism, does what post-modernists have done for modernism and Phillip Johnson for Darwinism. All three movements are not "scientific" or "objective" but are deeply influenced by what Albert Schweitzer called "the struggle against the tyranny of dogma" (p. 199). The chapter on Locke tries to tie his views of "literalism" to modern "fundamentalism," though here he, once again idiosyncratically, does not cite a single "fundamentalist" source!

Not only is the book idiosyncratic and unfocused, but Dungan also too often indulges in *ad hominem* arguments. He gratuitously tries to tie the Enlightenment and atheism to the two-source hypothesis without ever looking at a synopsis. He argues that the two-source hypothesis triumphed in part because it helped Bismarck unite German Protestants against papal infallibility, which was based in part on Matthean priority. He even suggests that German anti-Semitism led to a preference for Mark over Matthew. Belief in Markan priority is even tied to the rise and atrocities of Hitler. Part Three discusses current trends in fifty pages.

In brief, Dungan has written an important book. It is not, however, a history of the synoptic problem, but an all-out attack on the historical-critical method. The evangelical reader will conclude that he is throwing out the baby with the bath water.

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Entering the Kingdom of Heaven: A Study on the Structure of Matthew's View of Salvation. By Petri Luomanen. WUNT II/101. Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1998, 343 pp., n.p.

What is the "kingdom of heaven"? This question has plagued scholars for the past two hundred years and has received a variety of answers from such notables as Schweitzer, Dodd, and Ladd. The present work, however, deals with what may be a more fundamental issue: "How is it that one (according to Matthew) gets into—and stays in—the kingdom of heaven?" That is the question that this revised version of the author's doctoral dissertation seeks to answer. The central point of contention is stated by Luomanen (p. 3): "Is God's grace the starting point which is followed by requirements directed to those who are already believers? Or should the priority be given to the final judgement, when grace would have only a subsidiary role?"

The work begins, after an introduction to the question, with a survey of previous research. This section is well done and would be a good place to start for anyone working on this area in Matthean studies. He divides the previous research into two areas: scholars who see "Good News and Good Works" as the basis for salvation (with sub-categories of grace and works, grace alone, etc.), and scholars who see the covenant as the basis of salvation. While one might quibble here or there with some nuance in the description of a particular scholar, overall this is a very helpful section.

Next, Luomanen sets forth his methodological considerations. He rightly points out that the "danger of getting involved with circular arguments is biggest when it comes to the task of forming an overall view of a religious movement or community" (p. 32). He goes on to assert that the "aspects of soteriology that are valued in our religious environment also tend to be found as the key concepts of Matthew's theology" (p. 33). In an attempt to avoid this problem, Luomanen sets forth his method clearly, arguing that to accurately understand Matthew's view of entering the kingdom, one must examine three different types of texts: texts describing the final judgment, texts describing the relationship between Jesus and his disciples, and texts describing how one stays in the Christian community (primarily from Matthew 18). Luomanen includes a very strong section on distinguishing true redaction from possible or probable redaction. Here he is at his best and his careful work on the text of Matthew shows.

The majority of the work is given over to analyzing texts for the purpose of finding Matthew's view of achieving and/or maintaining salvation. He divides the texts into the three categories set forth in the methodological section. Given the space constraints of this review I will comment only briefly on one area, Luomanen's third category (an analysis of Matthew 18; pp. 231–257).

He begins by asserting that the "life setting for the rules concerning the expulsion from the congregation is not to be found in the history of Jesus" (p. 231). While some, perhaps even the majority, may see this to be the case, it is certainly not as axiomatic as Luomanen would make it. There are indications that Jesus did have a community around him, and while it was not as structured as the community was in later years, there still may have been need for rules of expulsion. There are such rules in the Qumran materials. While it legitimately could be argued that the Qumran group was more close-knit, and more rule-oriented, there is no inherent reason to deny the basic historicity of this discourse, particularly given Luomanen's belief that this section is not a creation of Matthew (p. 243).

In this section, Luomanen argues that Matthew's group certainly was striving "towards a pure community" (p. 259). Here Luomanen contends most forcefully against the mixed nature of Matthew's "church." These members, he argues, are "seeking to expel members whose behavior is not in accordance with its norms" (p. 260). They are not waiting for the last judgment to get rid of the unfaithful ones.

In the conclusion, Luomanen argues that the "indicative forms the basis of Matthew's understanding of salvation. The starting point is God's election, which calls

for human response" (p. 285). Luomanen goes on to argue in favor of a "covenantal nomist" view of salvation on the part of Matthew. He compares many of the basic assumptions of covenantal nomism (as set forth by Sanders) with Matthew's thinking and finds many similarities. Luomanen does, however, find some significant differences as well (p. 282). In the end, though, he finds that Matthew "has more in common with covenantal nomism than with many other Christian writers" (p. 283).

While I would disagree with Luomanen on many issues—e.g. whether or not one "maintains" one's salvation through obedience (p. 285), or whether or not covenantal nomism is an accurate description of Matthew's understanding of the kingdom, I certainly found the work helpful in setting forth some very important issues as to Matthew's view of salvation and in forcing me to think through my own view of the Gospel. This book is highly recommended to anyone who is working on the nature of salvation in the Gospel of Matthew.

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John the Baptist in Life and Death: Audience-Oriented Criticism of Matthew's Narrative. By Gary Yamasaki. JSNTSup 167. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998, 176 pp., \$57.50.

This dissertation, written under Jack Kingsbury at Union Theological Seminary in Virginia, endeavors to refine the literary-critical approach pioneered, among others, by Kingsbury himself and to apply the results to the characterization of John the Baptist in Matthew's Gospel. After briefly surveying previous work done on the figure of John in the first Gospel, Yamasaki turns to the issue of methodology. Based on an appeal to the oral mentality of the ancient world, he objects to any narrative interpretation of the Gospel that presupposes the opportunity of the audience to reread or compare portions of the text. While the literary construct of an ideal narratee may necessitate a second or third reading to select the relevant from the accidental potentialities of the text, Yamasaki nonetheless insists that narrative interpretation be built upon a dynamic, sequential encounter, for which he borrows Menakhem Perry's term, "a reconstructed first reading." Few will want to disagree with the importance of sequentiality in narrative interpretation, yet Yamasaki's discussion leaves a crucial issue unaddressed. Given the fact that the modern interpreter is not privy to all the extratextual information possessed by the original, intended audience of the document, is it appropriate to demand that we declare to be off-limits all data—redaction-critical or narrative-critical—that does not correspond to the procedure by which the ancient listener might have encountered the text? Easy answers might not be attainable, but the question cannot be ignored without serious discomfort.

Having unfolded his proposed methodological refinement of the literary-critical model, Yamasaki examines the characterization of John the Baptist in the Matthean Gospel. In Matt 3:1–17, John is introduced by the evangelist as the forerunner of Jesus. Many of the details contained in this introduction, Yamasaki insists, do not contribute to the immediate context but serve as a repository for subsequent retrojections. Already here, for example, John is portrayed as employing a designation for Jesus ("the one coming after me") different from that approved by the narrator in 1:1. This, coupled with John's objection to the baptism of Jesus, indicates to Yamasaki that the Baptist misunderstands the timing of Jesus' role as the eschatological judge. This misunderstanding is further perpetuated in the question of John's disciples regarding fasting (9:14–17) and finally culminates in John's own query

whether Jesus is “the coming one” in 11:3. Other retrospections, such as the later identification of John as Elijah first introduced in the description of John’s clothing in 3:4, or verbal similarities between Jesus’ subsequent speech and the earlier articulations of John (e.g. 3:2 and 4:17; 3:7 and 12:34; 3:10 and 7:19), all seem to draw the narratee’s mind toward the pronouncement of Jesus as Son of God that brings John’s forerunner role to a climax in 3:17. In a similar way, the account of John’s execution (14:3–12a) includes a number of motifs that are later used as part of Jesus’ experience. Thus, John serves not only to introduce Jesus to the narratee but also as Jesus’ forerunner to death. Hence, Yamasaki concludes, John’s primary role is on the discourse level, influencing the way in which the narratee experiences the narrative rather than functioning as a mechanism to move the plot forward.

Two significant methodological questions arise from Yamasaki’s work. The first has to do with the matter of characterization in the Gospel narratives. When does the narrator evidence a genuine interest in the thoughts of the characters in the story? For example, is Yamasaki correct in suggesting that John is presented by the narrator as misunderstanding the timing of Jesus’ mission? Or do the question of 3:14 and 11:3 merely function as a literary device to elicit Jesus’ respective answers? But more importantly, what about the implied narratee? What does he or she know, and when do they know it? Would the ideal implied narratee really have been surprised by John’s title “the Baptist” in 3:1 (cf. Josephus, *Ant.* 18.116), while not batting an eye at the offhand manner in which John’s imprisonment is introduced in 4:12? And, how do we decide whether John’s use of the language of “the coming one” would really have been perceived as oddly deficient while at the same time the narratee is astute enough to recognize Jesus’ water baptism as an “anointing” for his messianic mission? Yamasaki wastes no words on these troubling questions. His implied narratee is at times strangely ignorant of the context of second-temple Judaism and the Christian story and at other times intuitively grasps such fine distinctions as that between an eschatological judge and the facilitator for the kingdom acts of God. But as long as the issue of our historical distance from the text remains unaddressed, suspicions will linger that the ideal implied narratee is only a proxy for the modern interpreter.

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Your Father the Devil: A New Approach to John and “the Jews.” By Stephen Motyer. Carlisle: Paternoster, 1997, x + 260 pp., \$34.95 paper.

This work is a revision of the author’s dissertation submitted to the University of London. Motyer contends that a “second new look” (p. xi) is needed at the fourth Gospel, one that seriously challenges the current consensus on two crucial issues: (1) the fourth Gospel’s putative anti-Judaism and (2) the purpose (i.e. function) that the Gospel played among late-first-century Jews. Motyer asserts that prior to his work there have been no truly successful attempts to integrate the (new) literary-critical approaches with the more traditional historical-critical ones and that his study does in fact provide a successful synthesis. Motyer admits that he will argue for “the unpopular view that the Gospel would have functioned evangelistically—that is, that it would have been heard by many Jews as an appeal, directed at them, to believe in Jesus as Messiah” (p. 6).

His study provides several significant contributions to Johannine scholarship, not the least of which is an excellent summary of the spectrum of approaches that have

been employed in the study of the fourth Gospel. A second contribution is the very penetrating critique he makes of J. L. Martyn's now famous and widely accepted "two-level drama" paradigm for interpreting the fourth Gospel. His ultimate concern is an informed understanding of "the Jews" in the fourth Gospel and how the argument of the Gospel would have functioned in reference to them.

Most critical assessments of Martyn's two-level drama hypothesis concern themselves with the historical plausibility of the *birkhat ha-minim*, which, as Motyer recounts, for numerous reasons can no longer be sustained. Motyer shows that the problems with Martyn's program run much deeper, however. He challenges Martyn's hypothesis on four additional counts: (1) the lack of form-critical support for his allegorization; (2) his uncontrolled use of inference; (3) his highly selective use of both the fourth Gospel and background texts; and (4) his lack of interaction with the issue of *function*.

Motyer's study utilizes a three-phased approach drawing upon the theory of sociologists Berger and Luckmann. He first attempts to discern indications within the text of the social setting, identifying seven "points of sensitivity" (borrowing Dunn's expression), foremost of all being the temple (chap. 2). He then moves outside the text informed by the first phase to determine the broad background. Employing Martyn's approach, but rejecting his "expulsion from the synagogue" conclusion, Motyer argues that the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem and its resultant trauma on the Jewish people is a more satisfactory point of contact with the fourth Gospel. Finally, Motyer returns to the text of the fourth Gospel "to re-read it against the background now more fully delineated" (p. 33).

Motyer concedes that the fourth Gospel may be called "anti-Jewish," but he insists that this must be severely qualified. Above all, the Gospel's motivation for this is "not at all hostile" (p. 211). Motyer develops three strands of argument to support his thesis. First, polemical language was "normal" and acceptable. More importantly, the polemic must be seen against the backdrop of the Hosea prophetic polemic tradition in which the prophet, while excoriating Israel, is solely interested in her good. Second, the polemic is more a "debate within the family" (p. 212): John is simply one Jewish voice among many as they sought to make sense of the trauma being experienced in the aftermath of the temple destruction. Third, the fourth Gospel contains an agenda committed to the rebuilding of Israel. Unique among the many voices, the fourth Gospel is asserting that restoration has already occurred (in its realized eschatology): freedom from sin and death that the Torah lifestyle could never effect has in fact been brought about in the person of Jesus, the Christ.

In my opinion, Motyer has put forth an eminently more plausible explanation for both the fourth Gospel's historical milieu and its engagement with "the Jews." There are probably a few areas that will likely need refinement. One point of disagreement I have with Motyer is with his critique of Culpepper's presentation of characters. Motyer asserts that "simply illustrating alternative responses will not necessarily move [the readers] to follow the *right* example" (p. 109). However true this might be, proponents of the New Rhetoric do show that illustrations (more precisely, "models" and "anti-models") can serve as a method of persuasion (an avenue I intend to pursue further).

Because of its fresh ideas and its willingness to dissent from the current consensus surrounding crucial interpretive issues when necessary, this volume has provided a valuable contribution for an understanding of the fourth Gospel.

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Paul, Judaism, and Judgment According to Deeds. By Kent L. Yinger. SNTSMS 105. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999, xiv + 318 pp., n.p.

The Pauline teaching that believers will be judged according to works has naturally provoked significant discussion in the history of scholarship. Kent Yinger, in a dissertation written under Andrew Lincoln, takes a fresh look at the matter. Yinger organizes the study in four major sections. He commences with a survey of scholarship, introducing readers to the history of modern interpretation on the question. Then the motif of judgment according to deeds is examined in Jewish literature, which includes the OT Scriptures, the OT Pseudepigrapha, and the Qumran literature. The next major section investigates the Pauline literature, and texts from Romans, 1–2 Corinthians, and Colossians are studied to determine the Pauline teaching. Yinger wraps up his work with conclusions, which are followed by three appendixes.

Yinger demonstrates that the motif of judgment according to deeds was widespread in Jewish literature, not only in the OT but also in the Pseudepigrapha and Qumran literature. The Pauline appropriation of the theme, therefore, cannot be limited to a single text but demonstrates instead Paul's familiarity with the Biblical tradition as a whole. The author also shows that judgment according to deeds is employed in various contexts, whether to praise God, comfort the righteous, or warn those who were sinning. He adopts the covenantal nomism view of Sanders, arguing that good works were not an earning of salvation but a response to God's grace. He also qualifies Sanders by saying that obedience does not *maintain* covenant status but *evidences* or *manifests* one's relationship with God. Nonetheless, Sanders is fundamentally correct in saying one "gets in" by God's grace and "stays in" by obeying covenantal stipulations. God's judgment of people according to their deeds is sensible, according to Yinger, when we realize that it is a holistic judgment. God does not demand perfection, but good works reveal the integrity, consistency, and authenticity of persons. One does not, therefore, become righteous at the judgment, but one's righteousness is vindicated and confirmed at the judgment.

Paul, in Yinger's view, stands in continuity with Jewish antecedents. Judgment according to works was a fundamental element of his gospel and cannot be dismissed as hypothetical. No element of legalism exists in the Pauline gospel, for people enter a relationship with God by grace and confirm their relationship with him by works. Paul, therefore, adopts the covenantal nomism of his Jewish ancestors and contemporaries. He differs, of course, in trumpeting the Christ event rather than the Torah as the means by which one enters God's people. Yinger also thinks Paul emphasizes the role of the Spirit more than Judaism, although we should not draw the conclusion that legalism was taught in Judaism. Nor does Yinger think that Paul's view of good works should be described only in terms of evidence of salvation, for it is also clear that good works are a *condition* for receiving eternal life (Gal 6:8–9).

Apparently, says Yinger, Paul himself felt no tension between judgment according to works and justification by faith, for he taught the two side by side and often. Paul simply expected that those who had received God's grace would live righteously. Yinger acknowledges an existential tension, even if a theological tension is absent, conceding that some of those who believe in Christ may apostatize.

Yinger's work is helpful in many respects, showing that the theme of judgment according to deeds permeates the OT, second-temple Jewish literature, and Paul. Judgment according to works is not hypothetical, as Yinger rightly acknowledges. It is a constituent part of the Pauline gospel.

Despite insightful exegesis in a number of texts, Yinger's work fails in a number of respects. The relationship between faith and works in Paul receives astoundingly little emphasis. Yinger notes Paul's emphasis on the Spirit, but the role of faith is

almost completely ignored. Nor does he explain the tension between justification by faith and judgment according to works simply by saying that Paul saw no tension and presented both themes without apology. People may present two themes together and without apology and still be contradicting themselves. We need some explanation as to *how* the themes do not contradict.

Yinger's anthropology is also defective, causing one to wonder what need there was for the cross at all. He rejects the notion that God demands perfect obedience, offering a quite unconvincing interpretation of Gal 3:10–13, and argues that Paul follows the pattern of covenantal nomism seen in Judaism. If perfect obedience is unnecessary, why is the cross necessary? In Yinger's view God simply looks for a holistic obedience that manifests moral transformation. Yinger also accepts Sanders's view of covenantal nomism, the social view of "works of law," and rejects any legalism in Judaism. All of this amounts to a rather positive view of human beings and fails to see the radical nature of human evil. Yinger rightly sees that good deeds are necessary for salvation, but he fails to perceive any newness in Paul's gospel, nor does he explain the role of the cross or faith adequately.

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Romans. By Jack Cottrell. College Press NIV Commentary. 2 vols. Joplin: College Press, 1996, 1998, vol. 1: 525 pp., \$28.99; vol. 2: 499 pp., \$28.99.

This two-volume commentary belongs to the College Press NIV Commentary series. College Press is the publishing house for the Independent Christian churches and the Non-instrumental Churches of Christ. Though some eight or more volumes have been released in this series, it does not seem to have as yet circulated widely. Jack Cottrell is Professor of Theology at Cincinnati Christian Seminary. He has published a number of works with such varied titles as *God the Creator*, *God the Redeemer*, *God the Ruler*, *Baptism*, and *Feminism in the Bible*, all published by College Press.

Cottrell's *Romans* commentary is formidable. Volume 1 contains a 10-page bibliography, a 34-page introduction, a 4-page outline of Romans 1–8, and nearly 500 pages of commentary on Romans 1–8. Volume 2 contains an additional 7-page bibliography, a 4-page outline of Romans 9–16, and 475 pages of commentary on Romans 9–16. Neither volume contains any indexes.

The commentary has many strong points. For one, it is very thorough. Cottrell gives a full exposition of the text. He usually covers all major viewpoints on any issue of interpretation, listing representative scholars for each view and never failing to defend his own. Other commentators are generally cited in parentheses beside their viewpoints. For each major block of Scripture, the commentary begins with a helpful general introduction that sets forth the main issues. It then proceeds to a verse-by-verse exposition. Although this creates some redundancy, it also provides great clarity. Clarity is a strong point of Cottrell, who writes on a level that an educated layperson should be able to understand.

Since Cottrell is a theologian and not a *Neutestamentler*, his emphasis is more on the theology of Romans than the historical context of the epistle. He is aligned more with those who see Romans as Paul's presentation of his personal theology than with those who see the epistle as a primarily "situational" letter. He chooses not to deal with such questions as whether Romans 16 might be a fragment of a letter to Ephesus, and he does not treat the major text-critical problem of the Roman doxologies.

His slighting the historical setting of the epistle sometimes leads to questionable conclusions, such as his argument that law in Romans usually means law in general and not specifically the Mosaic law.

Cottrell's basic orientation is Arminian. Given this, much of his argument is predictable. He prefers to speak of "original grace" rather than "original sin." He prefers to speak of foreknowledge rather than of predestination. He interprets the predestinarian language of Romans 9 as referring to corporate Israel's election for service rather than applying to salvation. On the other hand, he sees chap. 10 as referring to the salvation of individuals, based on their response to Christ. He likewise rejects the idea of "once-saved-always-saved" (to use his designation), preferring to see God as never overriding the free will of man, even in grace.

One is not surprised at Cottrell's view of baptism, given his Campbellite affiliation. He argues that salvation cannot be *sola fidei*, as important as faith may be. Also necessary for salvation is the physical act of water baptism.

Some of Cottrell's ideas were unfamiliar to me. For example, his view of "original grace" maintains that all people are justified by Christ's atoning work (Rom 5:18). He sees everyone as being born into this state and remaining in it until they reach an age of accountability, when they willfully sin. Before that point children remain saved, living in a state of grace. Another distinctive view is his dualistic interpretation of Rom 7:14–25, the dualistic language of which he takes quite literally. He sees the passage as autobiographical. It describes a Christian like Paul, who has been fully redeemed in his inner, spiritual being. His physical flesh has not yet been redeemed, however. It remains sinful and in conflict with his spirit. This view seems close to gnostic dualism, but there is a difference: unlike the gnostics, Cottrell does not see the spirit as separating from the body at death. Rather, he sees the sinful body as being fully redeemed at the end time.

College Press has done an excellent job with these volumes. The format is easy to follow. Margins are generous, and the print is sufficiently large for those of us with aging eyes. Overall, both volumes are clean and relatively error-free.

The publisher's preface indicates that this commentary series was designed for multipurpose usage, including Sunday School teachers and those who would use it for daily devotions. Frankly, these two volumes seem a bit too lengthy and heavy for most who would fall into these categories. They are more suited to the student or pastor who wants to study the theology of Romans in some depth. Cottrell is an independent thinker, and his distinctive approach to many issues should both interest and challenge the student of Romans.

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Hebrews: A Bible Commentary in the Wesleyan Tradition. By Gareth L. Cockerill. Indianapolis: Wesleyan, 1999, 316 pp., n.p.

Cockerill has provided a well-thought-through commentary on the book of Hebrews. In the introduction, he takes a sharp stand against the current thinking of the day by declaring Hebrews a book that emphasizes holiness and that "we can no longer do our own thing" (p. 11). In that sense, he points out the practicality of the book that has a vital message for today's "pluralistic age who believe in the relativity of truth and morality" (p. 11).

In this introduction, Cockerill also takes up the usual concerns with the book, such as its characteristics, its authorship (which he feels is unknowable after examining the usual possibilities), and the recipients (who he affirms are a congregation in Rome that had numerous Jewish believers in it, but were more associated with speaking Greek rather than the Hebrew of Judea). In treating the OT in Hebrews, he points out that the book is almost totally Biblical exposition, using five major pictures to present its concerns: Mount Sinai (1:1–2:4), pilgrimage journey on the way to the promised land, the heavenly homeland (2:5–4:13; 10:32–12:13), High Priest (4:14–10:31), and the Sinai picture again (12:14–29). The writer has numerous diagrams to help the reader to see the cinematographic flow of thought of these pictures and their relation to one another (p. 24).

Any reader can gain valuable information from Cockerill's explanations of the Son's position (his radiance and glory) and work (1:2–4), the urgency of obedience by believers in that "we must pay the most careful attention" (2:1; p. 49), and the warnings, especially 6:4–8 (which, while serious, does not describe some people who have left the fold of faith because of God's commendation of their service; p. 141). He also demonstrates the finality of Christ's sacrifice in Hebrews 9–10, and where believers can have the assurance that they have "been made perfect forever who are" continually "being made holy" (p. 205).

Cockerill's emphasis on the completed work of Jesus is quite strong, but more attention could focus on the status of believers under the Mosaic covenant. He insists that OT people had not experienced the cleansing of the conscience, but actually believers did know this cleansing. Back then, it was the *unbelievers* who had this experience, even though they continually brought their sacrifices. Similarly, while the blood of bulls and goats in themselves never took away sin, it was necessary to believe in the principles attached to the sin offering: substitute, identification, death of the substitute and the exchange of life, which would be the means for salvation for the believer. For those who did not believe, no salvation was possible. So, under the Mosaic covenant, a remnant existed among Israel while the rest remained in unbelief, but under the new covenant everyone as a believer knows salvation. Too often, commentators on Hebrews compare individuals of Mosaic-covenant days to the believers under the new covenant, while it is actually best to compare the two communities in order to have a better grasp of what the writer to the Hebrews had in mind.

Cockerill's contribution on Hebrews can be read with great profit, especially by those with limited skills in the Greek text who nonetheless wish an in-depth commentary.

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Revelation 1–5. Word Biblical Commentary 52A. By David Aune. Dallas: Word, 1997, ccxi + 374 pp., \$29.99; *Revelation 6–16*. WBC 52B. By David E. Aune. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1998, xlv + 529 pp., \$29.99; *Revelation 17–22*. WBC 52C. By David E. Aune. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1998, xlv + 449 pp., \$32.99.

Aune has authored what will likely prove to be the longest commentary on the Apocalypse of this generation (some 1,650 pages total). At just over 1,300 pages, G. K. Beale's impressive new offering in the NIGTC series is a distant second, whose work in more ways than extraordinary length almost seems like that of an R. H. Charles (author of the monumental 1920 ICC commentary) for this generation.

The most apt analogy that I can think of to Aune's achievement is the movie "Titanic," which became one of the great box office blockbusters of all time. Like the ship of the movie title, Aune's commentary is "titanic" in size. Like the ship, it has been launched with much acclaim. Like James Cameron at those Oscar ceremonies, there is so much about Aune's work that is so well done, he could almost think of himself as "king of the world" (at least of contemporary Revelation commentators).

For lack of space, a quick "Top Seven (given its obvious numerological significance in the Apocalypse) List" of the strengths of Aune, Vol. 1, will have to suffice: (1) The general and almost all sectional bibliographies are expansive, bordering on exhaustive. (2) The discussion of genre (pp. lxx–xc) is certainly one of the most thorough in print. (3) The careful treatment of text (pp. cxxiv–clx) is superb. (4) It is matched by a painstakingly full essay on syntax (pp. clx–ccvii). (5) The material on makarisms (i.e. "blessing" statements) on pp. 10–11 is an excellent introduction to a strangely overlooked area. (6) Most of the excursuses (e.g. "The 'Angels' of the Seven Churches," pp. 108–112) provide a wealth of information, though it is often frustratingly difficult to find a conclusion by Aune as to the best of the views presented (shades of Donald Guthrie!). (7) Throughout the commentary portion, evidence of Aune's amazing command of extrabiblical sources (more about that later) is on display.

For all these impressive strengths, however, we must not forget that there is another side to our initial analogy. "Titanic" was a movie set on a great ship, but one that sank nevertheless. All it took was one unfortunately placed iceberg to bring about a tragic ending for almost all aboard, something the Titanic's short-sighted designers and owners didn't even consider, given the unconscionable shortage of lifeboats aboard.

By contrast, however, Aune seems to know exactly where his "iceberg" is . . . but he heads at it full speed ahead anyway. Though fully aware that he is paddling upstream against the current of scholarly consensus that Revelation is a literary unit (p. cvii), a view now shared even by J. M. Ford (to be published in the revision of her Anchor Bible volume, now in progress [p. cxi]), Aune opts for an elaborate source-critical approach to the Apocalypse (pp. cxviii–cxxiv). Based on 12 passages that seem awkwardly placed to him (chaps. 7, 10; 11:1–13; chaps. 12, 13, 14, 17, 18; 19:11–16; 20:1–10; 20:11–15; 21:9–22:5), Aune concludes that Revelation was edited in two or three stages.

Inexplicably for a scholar of his literary sophistication, Aune does not even seriously consider any other explanation that would maintain the unity of the book. One such viable explanation would be a grand chiastic structure for the book that accounts for the seemingly odd order of certain passages through parallelism. Ironically, just such an insightful chiastic study that explains very naturally the location of all the passages that trouble Aune has recently appeared in a high-profile venue (M. V. Lee, "A Call to Martyrdom: Function as Message and Method in Revelation," *NovT* 40 [1998] 164–194). Thus (to revert to prevailing imagery), Aune's formidable literary "ship" is already "taking on water."

Moving ahead to Aune's second volume, we find a useful vantage point from which to observe the transition from the "first generation" to the "second generation" of the Word Biblical Commentary series. Some ten volumes (several of which are the final volume of a multi-volume commentary [which was originally intended to be only one volume]) remain to be published, but there are other notable aspects of such a generational shift.

For example, when the WBC was organized in 1977 (p. x), the original general editors were David Hubbard and Glenn Barker, both now deceased. The general editor's role has now been filled by Bruce Metzger. As of Aune's second volume, James Watts (OT) and Lynn Losie (NT) have been appointed as associate editors, along with John D. W. Watts (OT) and Ralph Martin (NT). Even the series publisher is now different, with Word having been recently purchased by Thomas Nelson.

In addition, the size of the series commentaries keeps expanding. In its planning stages, the WBC was expected to encompass 52 volumes. It is currently at 62, but with the real possibility that one or more uncompleted assignments could still grow into multi-volume projects.

That size-inflation trend, of course, includes Aune's massive effort, which took between 15 and 20 years (i.e. from the initial assignment to release of the final volume) to complete (p. xi). Those nearly two decades in the making explain not only the mind-boggling length of Aune's contribution, but also its encyclopedic command of the ancient Near Eastern literary sources. At this point, however, we might do well to ask, "Is bigger always better?" Or, is it just possible that Aune's bulked-up presentation is "too much of a good thing?"

I do not accuse Aune of what is called "paralleomania," but I do harbor serious doubts about the direct usefulness of a good bit of the extrabiblical material for the exegesis and exposition of the text of the Apocalypse. As I worked my way through all manner of such extrabiblical field trips and circuitous routes, interesting though the literary chase might have been, I had to ask over and over again, "Now, what passage in Revelation is this material supposed to illuminate?" Relatedly, it was not at all infrequent that the length of the discussion of the Biblical text was dwarfed by the wide-ranging discussion of other sources.

I certainly do not think Aune intended to relegate the actual exegetical treatment of Revelation to a sort of "second-class citizen" status. Nevertheless, the true exegetical discussion is often disproportionately small by comparison, so it comes off that way. If the primary purpose of the WBC in general, and Aune's work in particular, was to provide an *unabridged* comparison between the Apocalypse and the spectrum of more or less relevant ancient Near Eastern literature, then Aune's "dump the whole load" approach would be well justified. As it stands, though, what is encountered is not unlike a preacher holding forth in the pulpit for two hours, mainly because he found two hours of related material while researching his message.

By the time readers arrive at Aune's third volume, they also begin to notice the effects of the massive "lag time" involved in producing this megacommentary. The now updated Preface (p. xi) says Aune essentially finished the draft of the commentary in 1994–95. Thus, the three plus years until the 1998 release of Volume 52C was comprised of editing/proofreading and compiling indexes. This has to be considered problematic in regard to bibliography. For example, though the bibliographies throughout are exhaustively complete *until 1993–94*, there are only a few entries from 1995, even less from 1996 and only one from 1997 (in the sectional listing for Rev 22:10–21).

There is another bibliographic inequity that, cumulatively, makes itself known as readers familiarize themselves with Aune's three volumes. His listing of Revelation commentaries (pp. xxviii–xxix) is highly selective (in comparison to his other bibliographies) and, oddly, excludes a number of well-considered evangelical works. Remember, this is in a series which claims that the "broad stance of [its] contributors can rightly be called evangelical" (p. x) and that we live at a time when evangelical scholarship is finally succeeding in getting a wider scholarly hearing. Thus, his virtual ignoring of, e.g. the impressive "paper trail" of significant publications by G. K. Beale, is passing strange.

Relatedly, a professor friend who had read only parts of Aune's first two volumes offered the opinion that Aune doesn't really seem interested in theology. Upon reflection, though, I have concluded that is not precisely true. It would be more accurate to say that, while Aune evidences very little interest in any sort of standard evangelical theology (e.g. only a fraction of a page given over to the "millennium" issue in Revelation 20 [p. 1089]), he is very interested indeed in apocalyptic and rabbinic Jewish theology, as well as other extrabiblical "theologies."

To attempt an even-handed concluding evaluation for all three volumes, I would say that many, if not most, aspects of Aune's work are unquestionably brilliant. Still, it plays out as heavily idiosyncratic and in almost complete disregard (if not disdain) of the emerging consensus areas of recent Revelation scholarship.

For those students, teachers and scholars itching to get their hands on a recent *evangelical* megacommentary on the Apocalypse, this is not it. If, however, they are willing to undertake the kind of "eyes-wide-open," "separating the wheat from the chaff" process necessary for profitable use of liberal critical commentaries, their judicious efforts will be richly repaid.

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The Word as True Myth: Interpreting Modern Theology. By Gary Dorrien. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1997, 287 pp., \$24.95 paper.

Gary Dorrien serves as Associate Professor of Religion, Dean of Stetson Chapel, and Chair of Humanities at Kalamazoo College in Michigan. His other notable books include *Soul in Society: The Making and Renewal of Social Christianity* (1995), *The Remaking of Evangelical Theology* (1998), and *The Barthian Revolt in Modern Theology: Theology without Weapons* (1999).

In *The Word as True Myth*, Dorrien endeavors to interpret the history of modern theology by examining how major theological movements and particular thinkers understood "Christian myth." In doing so, he focuses on liberalism, crisis theology/neo-orthodoxy, and liberationism/postmodernism.

Dorrien's account of liberalism surveys Immanuel Kant, Friedrich Schleiermacher, G. W. F. Hegel, David Friedrich Strauss, Albrecht Ritschl, Adolf von Harnack, Shailer Mathews, D. C. Macintosh, Ernst Troeltsch, and Walter Rauschenbusch. He proposes that despite all their differences the leading liberal theologians assumed that the mythical aspects of Christianity were to be transcended or overcome. In essence, liberalism yearned to adapt Christianity to "an Enlightened myth-negating consciousness" (p. 2).

Whereas liberalism attempted to go beyond the mythical elements of Christianity, dialectical theologians brought the idea of myth to the forefront. From his examination of Karl Barth, Rudolf Bultmann, Emil Brunner, Paul Tillich, Friedrich Gogarten, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, and Reinhold Niebuhr, Dorrien concludes that neo-orthodox theologians produced a wide variety of viewpoints concerning the problem of Christian myth. In particular, Dorrien suggests that Bultmann aimed to reconstruct ("demythologize") the mythical aspects of Christianity into humanity's existential concerns, that Brunner denied the idea of Christian myth altogether, and that Tillich and Niebuhr embraced myth as the essential mode of encounter with a person's ultimate concern.

Endeavoring to demonstrate the transition from neo-orthodoxy to the diverse post-modernist theologies, Dorrien focuses his attention on the theological journey of Langdon Gilkey. He finds in Gilkey a strong attempt to reinterpret classical liberalism and neo-orthodoxy in the postmodern context. Gilkey's theology exemplifies a reworked liberalism that affirms Christian myth as its source.

Contemporary liberationism/postmodernism also struggles over the precise meaning and role of myth, Dorrien submits. Process theology is viewed as an attempt to translate faith into the language of a credible philosophy. Jungian theory, ecofeminism, and post-structural feminism are then perceived as appeals to "the mythic imagination as a distinctively generative and revelatory mode of understanding" (p. 4).

After his survey of the multiple understandings of myth in contemporary theology, Dorrien proceeds to formulate his own views concerning myth. He suggests a positive approach to myth that attempts to combine Barth's dialectics of Word and Spirit with philosophical pluralism (Dorrien expects to explore these ideas more fully in a later book). He asserts that theologians can maintain that the Bible is a true witness of the Word of God although it remains "unhistorical and prehistorical" (p. 233). Scripture uses narrative and is itself narrative. He also argues that Scripture does not teach a particular worldview because "what it says can be said only as narrative" (p. 234). Dorrien concludes, "If Christianity is true, it is true as true myth" (p. 236).

The Word as True Myth clearly demonstrates Dorrien's exceptional scholarly breadth. Shining throughout the book is his ability to interact in detail with the leading modern theologians, especially Strauss, Barth, and Gilkey. His focus on the problem and various nuances of myth contributes somewhat to the study of modern theology.

Nevertheless, significant weaknesses emerge. First, although Dorrien proposes to investigate many modern theologians' understandings of myth, he falls short of explaining them clearly and of comparing them sufficiently. Second, his survey of the role of myth in modern theology sheds little light on contemporary theology. Stanley Grenz and Roger Olson's interpretive motif of God's immanence/transcendence (in their *20th-Century Theology*) as well as Bruce Demarest's examination of significant understandings of general revelation (in his *General Revelation*) provide much more insight into contemporary theology. Third, Dorrien's writing style is unnecessarily wearisome and unsuitable for most classrooms or pastors' offices. Most importantly, evangelicals will consider Dorrien's proposals for a Christian approach to myth unsatisfying. His approach to myth undermines the historical nature of Christianity. In contrast, evangelicals assert that the Christian faith is rooted in historical events (especially Jesus' incarnation, sinlessness, crucifixion, resurrection, and return) that occur in concrete places, within particular eras, and involve specific people.

Those seeking a pluralist's examination of the concept of myth in leading modern theologians might consider tackling *The Word as True Myth*. Most readers would be wiser to invest their time reading elsewhere.

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On Christian Theology. By Rowan Williams. Oxford: Blackwell, 2000, xvii + 289 pp., \$26.95 paper.

This volume is a collection of essays representing twenty years of work by noted Anglican theologian and recently appointed Archbishop of Wales Rowan Williams. Published in the "Challenges in Contemporary Theology" series (Gareth Jones and Lewis Ayres, editors), this book brings together eighteen previously published essays that provide the reader with an overview of Williams's theology in a variety of areas.

Williams's blend of modern and postmodern ideas is evident in the titles of the book's sections. The five general categories are: defining the enterprise, the act of God, the grammar of God, making signs, and living the mystery. In his prologue, Williams admits that British scholars are not known for setting out a clear methodology. Therefore, he sets out his "typology of theological activity" (p. xiii) which is not exactly a statement of his methodology but functions to unite his perspectives. This typology falls into three categories that he titles the celebratory, the communicative, and the critical styles; these function cyclically throughout his writings.

Williams's strength is in his ability to retain the complexity of the theological enterprise. He points out the difficulty of doing theology because "the theologian *is* always beginning in the middle of things" (p. xii, his italics). In particular, Williams is dealing with the idea that theological works are being framed within multifaceted and problematical historical situations. His mastery of Church history makes his arguments all the more powerful. He rightly observes that we do not know everything now nor will we ever do so (at least on this side of eternity).

However, this strength is also Williams's weakness. His desire to allow for complexity at every theological turn leads him to articulate a theology that is ever shifting. He is very uncomfortable with the idea that religious language can claim a "total perspective" (p. 13), by which he appears to be setting himself against theologies that seek to establish a unified Christian worldview. At the same time, Williams has his own total perspective, one that uses much of the language of postmodernism. Yet his perspective is actually the modern project of creating one global community founded not on or by God but on human experience of God.

A connected weakness is Williams's understanding of Jesus' death and resurrection. Although he is an excellent historian, Williams follows Bultmann and later theologians who consider the authenticity of Jesus' resurrection to be ahistorical. The resurrection is an internal and spiritual event, of utmost significance to the church, but it was not an historical event. Williams would like to speak for the Anglican Church, particularly in his new position at Archbishop of Wales, but his understanding of the resurrection places him at odds with historic Christianity.

Williams's work represents not the radical edge of theology but a moderate way in which the older modern ideas, both liberal and neo-orthodox, and the new postmodern terminology are being melted into a theology for the new millennium. As a follower of historic Christianity, I found this approach to theology sometimes challenging and often disconcerting, but definitely an interesting read.

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Inspiration and Authority: Nature and Function of Christian Scripture. By Paul J. Achtemeier. Peabody: Hendrickson, 1999, 166 pp., \$9.95 paper.

The issue of the inspiration and authority of Scripture continues to occupy Christians of diverse theological persuasions. Nineteen years after the widely read publication of *The Inspiration of Scripture: Problems and Proposals* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1980), distinguished scholar Paul J. Achtemeier has sent forth his book a second time. It comes with some modest revisions and additions and under a new title. Achtemeier has added a short chapter on the authority of inspired Scripture (pp. 144–156) and slightly enlarged the discussion in the main body of the book to incorporate some pertinent literature and issues that have appeared since 1980. Unfortunately, however, he has drawn heavily on likeminded authors but has not adequately interacted with other scholars who have made significant contributions and proposed alternative solutions that take serious the self-testimony of Scripture. The book now has footnotes rather than endnotes, which makes it very reader-friendly.

Achtemeier has not changed the thrust of his earlier argument. He skillfully proposes a doctrine of Scripture that seeks to maintain a unique status and authority of Scripture for its content and intention while at the same time accommodating and upholding historical-critical scholarship without falling prey to its excesses (p. 146).

Achtemeier perceptively observes that “to lose the authority of the biblical witness is to become captive to the culture and its ruling norms” and points out that “the Christian community that abandons the authority of the biblical witness becomes little more than the mouthpiece of whatever current cultural norms catch its fancy” (p. 148). The key question—how can one maintain the canonical authority of Scripture so that it continues to play a meaningful role in the church while at the same time clinging to the discoveries of modern critical scholarship?—is tackled by Achtemeier in an attempt to transform and shift the process of inspiration from Scripture to the community out of which it grew and for which it was written (pp. 99ff.). For Achtemeier inspiration is located and occurs as much within the community of faith, out of whose experience traditions were formulated and reformulated, as in individual authors or the process of giving final shape to Biblical books (p. 102). The close relationship between community and Scripture indicates that Scripture cannot be understood in isolation from the community of faith (p. 103). This means that “the locus of authority lies beyond the text itself” (p. 147) and that the authority of Scripture is demonstrated not in the literary form in which it has been cast but rather in its power to create, shape, and author reality (p. 151).

Such a position raises several crucial questions. What is the nature and role of Scripture in theology? Is Scripture the sole source of its own exposition, or is the community of faith the authoritative interpreter of Scripture? It comes as no surprise that Achtemeier’s earlier book was very well received among Roman Catholic scholars. Despite his attempt to maintain some form of canonical authority where the incarnation and the witness to other foundational events function as a rule for the faith of the church, Achtemeier frankly admits that “the canon does not give the kind of unanimous witness that would be necessary for it to function exclusively in a positive way, as an indication of content” (p. 154). This has repercussions for the issue of the unity and clarity of Scripture as well as for its real authority. Once the inspiration of Scripture is no longer acknowledged as coming from above and pertaining to some extent to the text of Scripture, the unique authority of Scripture as infallible Word of God and authoritative norm for the church cannot be consistently maintained. To elevate the proclamation of the community of faith and its witness to the living Lord to the level where it becomes “the word of God in all its timely relevance for the historic juncture at which we live” (p. 159) does not adequately account for any distortions and unfaithfulness in the proclamation and witness of the church. Without a divinely inspired Scripture as guiding norm, the proclamation of the church and its teachings becomes a “wax nose” whose actual shape depends on theological creativity.

Unfortunately, Achtemeier has not really advanced the discussion on the question of the inspiration and authority of Scripture in his revised edition. Instead we are left with a Scripture that has been muted to a “functional authority” (p. 146). To transform the lives and experiences of the community, however, Scripture needs to be joyfully acknowledged for what it really is: the living and authoritative Word of God.

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Sexuality and the Christian Body. By Eugene F. Rogers, Jr. Oxford: Blackwell, 1999, 303 pp., \$28.95 paper.

Eugene Rogers makes his thesis clear: he is arguing for homosexual marriage. However, in doing so he finds it necessary to work out a general theology of marriage

and celibacy in order to explore the issues. By working theologically, he hopes to overcome the polarization that has characterized the debate up to now.

The book is divided into three parts. Part one attempts to portray fairly the “liberal” and “conservative” positions and how they hear and respond to one another. Rogers is reasonably fair to both sides and has clearly done his homework. Conservatives, he believes, are most concerned with the issue of holiness, and if, following Orthodox theologian Paul Evdokimov, marriage (and celibacy) is about renunciation and commitment (rather than sex and procreation), then there is no reason why such holiness may not also be expressed in marriage of homosexuals. Liberals, on the other hand, are concerned with identity, particularly our mutual baptismal identity as members of God’s family; sexual activity is secondary. Gal 3:28 creates an analogy that makes it possible to extend Paul’s arguments beyond what he explicitly addresses, and the fact that God acts “contrary to nature” in Romans 11 puts him on the side of the Gentiles who also act “contrary to nature” in Romans 1. Thus, we have the primary baptismal identity even for those acting “contrary to nature.”

This part of the book was intriguing, especially in Rogers’s call for (1) the largely Gentile church to recover a sense of grace (i.e. Gentiles by nature do not belong to God’s people) and (2) a theology of marriage that is broader and deeper than sexual expression and procreation. Furthermore, Rogers does play fair with Paul in that he does not try to cover up his antipathy to homosexuality. Intriguing as his argument is, however, Rogers fails to realize that evangelicals will not be able to move beyond such Pauline passages because theology can never explain away exegesis. Nor are his attempts to give context to Paul convincing, for Rogers’s rabbinic scholarship depends too much on works far later than Paul. There is no reason to believe that Paul attributed unbridled sexuality to either women or slaves, although some later rabbis did. Finally, while “contrary to nature” does appear in both Romans 1 and 11, the contexts give the phrase quite different meanings; thus, Rogers’s argument is weak linguistically. One ends this section intrigued but unconvinced.

In part two (which Rogers believes may be skipped over) he looks at the theologies of Thomas Aquinas and Karl Barth as containing aspects that point beyond that to which either theologian would have given approval; this forms a basis for Rogers’s further argumentation. In Aquinas, it is a particular view of nature and specifically the point at which nature gives (science) room for new readings of Scripture that draws Rogers’s attention. In Barth, it is his view of the Spirit, although Rogers does pay careful attention to what Barth says about gender and Jew and Gentile. As a non-specialist I will leave it to specialists to determine whether Rogers has interpreted these theologians accurately.

Finally, in part three Rogers comes to his core theological argumentation. He begins with the twin concepts of love in the Trinity and of creation reflecting the glory of God. Since marriage at root is a reflection of the internal love of the Trinity, it can display the glory of God whether it be heterosexual or homosexual. Moving a step farther, God’s love for human beings is demonstrably erotic in that God desires us, and this eroticism is imperfectly mirrored in human relationships and in our desire for God. Since God himself is non-gendered, Rogers does not find heterosexual eroticism as the only way to mirror this eroticism. Finally, in a chapter on hospitality, Rogers sees God dealing with sin in that sin is inhospitality to the other. In suffering this inhospitality (crucifixion), Christ offers God’s hospitality (forgiveness) to us (which we mirror in the hospitality we show in adopting children).

The arguments above are of necessity schematized and over-simplified. Certainly Rogers does make one think theologically about marriage and its relationship to Eucharist and Trinitarian life. Furthermore, it is fascinating (and helpful) that he speaks of celibacy in the same breath with marriage, for dealing with celibacy is a weakness in the Protestant tradition. Furthermore, his extensive use of the Church

fathers and the Orthodox tradition adds a breadth to the discussion. Finally, he generally remains within the bounds of Biblical orthodoxy in that he takes such concepts as the incarnation and resurrection seriously. Because of these factors evangelicals must not write him off.

At the same time, I am not convinced that Rogers ultimately succeeds. (I have chosen to focus on the broad strokes of Rogers's argument rather than on his exegesis of specific passages, although I am both fascinated by and critical of that as well.) While one cannot object to grounding marital love in the relationships among the Trinity, the creational form of human existence as male and female has to be dealt with more extensively than Rogers does. Again, God does desire human beings and in this sense his love for us is erotic, for otherwise one could not take Scripture's frequent use of marital analogies seriously (God and Israel; Christ and the church). But having passed over the heterosexual duality of human beings as created, this duality is not taken seriously as the legitimate foundation of marital eroticism. Male and female are not just necessities for procreation, but rather part of a creational polarity. While I am suspicious of attempts to define the nature of maleness and femaleness (as, despite claims to the contrary, more Aristotelian than Biblical), making this mystery of polarity indifferent is also no solution. Finally, while adoption is indeed one image of our incorporation into the family of God, it is only one image. It is not entirely fair to Paul to contrast the Jews as born into the family with the Gentiles as adopted, for Paul uses images within a specific context; both he and others in the NT can speak of *all Christians* as "born" into the family of God and of God's "seed" being in them, richly procreative images. Baptism is not simply an adoption rite (although it can be seen as that), but also a rebirth rite (Titus 3:5).

In summary, Rogers argues not for homosexual sexual expression but for homosexual marriage, with the commitment and renunciation this implies. His argument is provocative, often fascinating, and certainly capable of making one think more deeply about the nature of marriage. I do not think that he has accomplished either his goal of finding a middle ground between evangelicals and liberals (stubborn Biblical texts stand in the way) or that of providing an adequate theological basis for homosexual marriage (there are too many unanswered questions), although he does clear away some issues. Nonetheless, the work is worth reading, for even if Rogers does not persuade, one does come away thinking more deeply theologically about sexuality and marriage. There is also respect for an author whose goal is a covenant reflecting Trinitarian love, even though in the end one still sees that goal to be impossible in homosexual marriage.

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Leisure, the Basis of Culture. By Josef Pieper. Introduction by Roger Scruton. New translation by Gerald Malsbary. South Bend: St. Augustine's, 1998, xvi + 160 pp., \$12.00 paper.

This book was originally published in 1947 in German, containing two essays by Josef Pieper, a German Roman Catholic philosopher. As the preface to the English edition states, the common message of these essays is that culture depends on leisure and, conversely, leisure depends on culture in its ultimate sense of cult or worship.

In his first essay entitled "Leisure, the Basis of Culture," Pieper asks how this dynamic of leisure could be justified, especially shortly after World War II when the rebuilding of life seemed to preclude leisure as a waste of intellectual and physical potential. He notes that the worship of work and the contempt of leisure in its sense of worship was already present in Greek philosophy. This misconception still needs

correction because work is not an end in itself but aims at the happiness of existence in a life of worship.

Accordingly, the author explains that idleness is not a state of inactivity as such but the refusal of the busy person to be himself, the person God wants him to be in order to bless him with divine grace. In contrast, leisure is a condition of life in the presence of God with freedom to work as well as to recreate. In this sense, leisure means the participation of man in the Sabbath rest of God at the completion of creation. Therefore, the author pleads for a balanced interplay between leisure and work in order to be human in its true sense.

However, Pieper asks whether it is possible to preserve leisure within the world of work. In the highly industrialized Western world, the concept of the life of work has an almost demonic power since it keeps man from thinking and exposing himself to the ultimate reality, i.e. God. This deprivation of leisure amounts to a spiritual affliction calling for deliverance because the worker is consumed by the working-process that values him only according to his usefulness in production.

In contrast, the author states succinctly: "Worship is to time as the temple is to space" (p. 52). As there is a separate space, there is also a separate time removed from all practical use, providing opportunity for a worshipful celebration. In this sense, leisure is the center of a complete human existence, providing the participation in the Sabbath rest of God. Thus, within a philosophical framework, Pieper advances a convincing argument for the restoration of leisure to its proper place as the center of worship and of human life and work as a whole.

In his second essay entitled "The Philosophical Act," the author emphasizes that philosophy breaks through the canopy of a closed system of the total world of work. The worship of God as creator, like the experience of the margins of existence (for example, love or death), makes man sense the non-ultimate nature of his work-life as these experiences lead him into the experience and realization of "wonder." However, Pieper emphasizes the danger of pseudo-realizations of the margins of existence such as pseudo-philosophy, pseudo-art or pseudo-religion. In contrast, true philosophy is looking at the world out of reverence toward creation in order to understand and to see God himself. This vision of God is the common element between theology and philosophy; therefore, in its true sense, philosophy has to be Christian philosophy.

Pieper concludes that the mysterious character of reality, its inexhaustibility—as accounted for in a Christian world view—saves philosophy from a pretended clarity and systematic closure that no longer corresponds to reality. Therefore, a cheerful acceptance of the limits of our understanding of reality is essential for a Christian philosopher who seeks not only cognitive knowledge but also relational knowledge, as "one who allows the Christian faith to be real in himself" (p. 134). Regrettably, Pieper does not elaborate further on how this relational knowledge may be fulfilled in man's communion with Christ.

Nevertheless, Pieper has convincingly shown that a Christian philosophy can truly serve theology in asking genuinely relevant questions about ultimate reality to which theology is called to respond. Moreover, philosophy emphasizes the need for dedication and surrender, not manipulation and trivialization of the divine. Only by recovering a true sense of wonder of the divine in creation and in God's present work can a meaningful leisure with a theological quality be regained.

The book is well translated, with only minor misspellings in both the German and the English text, and is rounded off with several newspaper reviews from 1952. It is stimulating reading, urging the reader to balance his life anew by focusing on leisure as fellowship with God. As such, I highly recommend it.

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Three Views on the Millennium and Beyond (Counterpoints Series). Edited by Darrell L. Bock. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999, 329 pp., \$16.99 paper.

Zondervan's Counterpoints series provides a forum for comparing and critiquing different views on important theological issues. This series includes books presenting the major views concerning creation, sanctification, hell, the Law, miraculous gifts, pluralism, the rapture, and the book of Revelation. One view is defended by a proponent and then briefly critiqued by the other writers. *Three Views on the Millennium and Beyond* follows this approach and centers on "whether or not there is a future intermediate earthly kingdom of a literal thousand years over which Christ will rule before the new heavens and new earth are established" (p. 7).

The case for postmillennialism is presented by Kenneth L. Gentry, Jr., Professor of New Testament at Bahnsen Theological Seminary in Placentia, California. Gentry has recently defended the preterist approach to Revelation in the Counterpoints book *Four Views on the Book of Revelation* (1998) and has written numerous related works, including *The Beast of Revelation* (1995), *Before Jerusalem Fell: Dating the Book of Revelation* (1996), and *He Shall Have Dominion: A Postmillennial Eschatology* (1997). As a theonomic postmillennialist, Gentry expects the proclamation of the gospel to convert the vast majority of people in the present age. Increasing gospel success will gradually produce a time in history in which faith, righteousness, peace, and prosperity prevail at the individual, social and national levels. After an extensive period of these conditions, Christ will return visibly, bodily, and gloriously to end history with the general resurrection and the final judgment (pp. 13–14).

Gentry categorizes postmillennialism into three major types: Puritan, generic, and theonomic. The Puritan form of postmillennialism holds that the millennium will exist for a literal thousand years and will begin with the conversion of the Jews. A righteous state governed by God's law will emerge, and then Jesus will return. Generic postmillennialists believe that the millennium "spans all of the new covenant phase of church history, developing incrementally from the time of Christ until his Second Advent" (p. 18). Theonomic postmillennialism (also known as Christian reconstructionism) envisions the gradual return to Biblical norms of civil justice as a consequence of widespread gospel success. Gentry assembles his case for postmillennialism on the theological foundations of God's purpose in creation, sovereignty, and provision. He then charts the redemptive-historical flow of the covenants: creation and Edenic, Abrahamic, and the new covenant established by Christ. He also suggests that postmillennialism emerges from a careful study of passages such as Psalm 2, Isa 2:2–4, Matthew 13, John 12:31–32, Matt 28:18–20, 1 Cor 15:20–28, and Revelation 20.

The case for amillennialism is presented by Robert B. Strimple, Professor of Systematic Theology at Westminster Theological Seminary. Strimple has written *The Modern Search for the Real Jesus: An Introductory Survey of the Historical Roots of Gospels Criticism* (1995). In defending his position that there is no future literal millennium, Strimple first analyzes major OT themes (Israel, the land of Canaan, the city of Jerusalem, the temple, the sacrifices, and the kingdom of David) and how they are interpreted in the NT. He suggests that the OT prophets spoke of the glories of the coming messianic age in terms of their own age, employing terms and ideals with which they and their listeners were familiar as they pointed toward this everlasting kingdom. He then interprets John 5:28–29, 2 Thess 1:5–10, Rom 8:17–23, 2 Pet 3:3–14, 1 Cor 15:20–26, Romans 11, and Rev 20:1–10. Strimple concludes that the return of Christ, the resurrection of believers (and the change of living believers), the resurrection of the unjust, the judgment for all, the end, the new heaven and new earth, and the eternal states of heaven and hell occur together in one cluster of end-time events—like one dramatic grand finale of redemptive history.

Craig Blasing, Professor of Christian Theology at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky, defends premillennialism. Blasing has teamed with Darrell Bock to edit *Dispensationalism, Israel, and the Church* (1992) and write *Progressive Dispensationalism* (1993). Premillennialism holds that Jesus' coming will be prior to his establishment of an earthly thousand-year kingdom. Blasing observes that premillennialists differ concerning the nature of the rapture, specifically whether it is temporally distinct from, or a temporal phase of, the second coming. Pretribulationism holds that the rapture will take place before the tribulation (i.e. a period of apocalyptic woe and distress) prior to Jesus' second coming. Midtribulationism maintains that the rapture will occur during this tribulation. Posttribulationism holds that the rapture and the second coming are indistinguishable temporally and occur together in the one event of Jesus' second coming, which transpires at the end of the tribulation. Blasing then surveys two predominant views concerning eternal life (the spiritual vision model and the new creation model) and additional varieties of premillennialism (classical dispensationalism, progressive dispensationalism, reductionist, holistic, dualist, and historicist). A progressive dispensationalist, Blasing proposes that the millennial kingdom revealed in the book of Revelation, "while new in its specific content, is compatible with earlier revelation concerning the eschatological kingdom and the manner of its coming" (p. 200). Finally, Blasing examines Revelation, interpreting pivotal texts, suggesting a useful outline and concluding that martyrs will be raised to reign with Christ on earth.

In his summary essay, Darrell Bock, Professor of New Testament at Dallas Theological Seminary, provides wise counsel concerning the nature of these millennial disagreements. He observes that an interpreter's conclusion is often determined by which Biblical passages he lets control the discussion, how he understands the NT's use of the OT, how he views typology, his interpretation of the role of Israel in redemptive history, and his beliefs about the nature of Revelation. Most importantly, Bock demonstrates that an interpreter's preunderstandings concerning simplicity in hermeneutics, God's sovereignty, the nature of apocalyptic genre, the Biblical terminology for time, and the nature of eternity drive his millennial view.

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Historical Theology: An Introduction to the History of Christian Thought. By Alister E. McGrath. Malden: Blackwell, 1998, xiv + 388 pp., \$36.95 paperback, \$69.95 hardcover.

The second half of twentieth-century evangelicalism in the United States cannot be imagined without the writings of British scholars of the highest caliber, John R. W. Stott and James I. Packer. Within the last ten years, another important theologian has joined their ranks. This presence was emphasized in a recent Baker publication by Roger Steer entitled *Guarding the Holy Fire—The Evangelicalism of John R. W. Stott, J. I. Packer and Alister McGrath*. While the evangelicals of the second half of the twentieth century have greatly benefited by the works of the first two, as we are beginning the twenty-first century, we are blessed to have the additional excellent works of the third.

Historical Theology is an expansion of the historical section from McGrath's previous book entitled *Christian Theology: An Introduction*, published in 1994. The 137 pages that provide the historical section of that book have been greatly expanded into this new book. The book is divided as follows: Introduction; The Patristic Period, c. 100–451; The Middle Ages and the Renaissance, c. 500–1500; The Reformation and

Post-Reformation Periods, 1500–1750; and The Modern Period, 1750—the Present Day. Each historical section is then subdivided into introductory matters, clarification of terms, key theologians, key theological developments, important movements, key names, words and phrases, and summary questions. At the end of each historical section, there are case studies dealing with the main concepts using excerpts from original works.

The user-friendly approach is one of the many excellent qualities of this book. McGrath has written a book to enable the student to grasp the essentials of historical theology. His style is so clear that in two years of using this textbook (both at the seminary level and layman's level), I did not have any student ask me what he meant. The other excellent aspect is that McGrath has a bountiful supply of enthusiasm for historical theology that he wants to instill in his students.

The book is limited in size and that provides some of its shortcomings. The book could benefit from a short section on the apostolic period. In view of the work of George H. Williams, Timothy George, and others, McGrath's presentation of the Protestant Reformation only from the Lutheran, Zwinglian, and Calvinistic perspectives, mentioning only in passing the Radical Reformation, seems to evidence some of the author's bias. In a time when the Eastern Orthodox Church asserts itself more and more in the English-speaking world and also in international forums, the overall knowledge of the matter seems to be limited to some of the theologians known by the author in England. On the other hand, the theological favorites of the author are easily picked up.

These shortcomings do not detract greatly from this otherwise superb textbook. The mastery of the subject, the clarity of expression and the commitment to portray historical theology as accurately as possible are examples for other historical theologians to imitate. Teachers and students will be inspired by using this book. Therefore, for all the noted qualities and for its usefulness as a textbook and as a reference manual, McGrath's *Historical Theology* is worth the investment.

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Changing the Mind of Missions: Where Have We Gone Wrong? By James F. Engel and William A. Dyrness. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2000, 192 pp., n.p., paper.

The authors have undertaken the gargantuan task of demonstrating where Western (especially North American) evangelical missions went wrong in the twentieth century and the kind of Revolution (their word) that must occur if they are to go right in the twenty-first century—all of this in less than 200 pages.

The first half of the book deals with the present crisis in missions and where missions have gone wrong. According to the authors they have gone wrong at many turns. In fact, their legacy constitutes a millstone as much as a milestone in the overall history of missions. They did not understand the comprehensive nature of biblical mission. They dichotomized between evangelism and social action, and between evangelism and discipleship. They yielded to the spirit of the modern age by reducing mission to a managerial enterprise characterized by marketing, fund-raising, strategic planning, and a preoccupation with numbers. They spawned numerous agencies (many of them *para-church*) that preempted the role of local churches at home and abroad.

In the last half of the book, Engel and Dyrness develop a “new paradigm” for missions in the twenty-first century—“. . . the establishment and extension of God's kingdom and reign on the earth” as announced in “Jesus' own mission statement” in Luke

4:18–19 (pp. 79–80). This “kingdom paradigm” entails a commitment to the creation of “communities of common people doing uncommon deeds” (see p. 89). These communities will be sensitive to the Spirit; share a vision for Christ’s reign; comply with the Beatitudes; identify with the poor and marginalized; and share in witness and social transformation with like communities around the world. They will not be modeled after the institutional model inherited from the Reformation and characterized by such things as sacraments, preaching, organization, authority, discipline, programs, a preoccupation with numbers, and resistance to change. They will be patterned after the model exhibited by later pietism and revivalism—one that encourages personal reflection and allows space for Spirit-directed, selective, and wise use of cultural influences. They will understand that the first work of the church is “to bring wholeness and healing to the brokenhearted and oppressed” (p. 123).

What about mission agencies? They have a future only to the extent that they undergo “top-down, bottom-up” organizational transformation that involves re-thinking goals, outcomes, and donor-relations; responding to the concerns of the churches; and valuing persons more highly than programs.

I have provided the foregoing summary in order to indicate the nature of this particular revolution and to demonstrate the need for a careful scrutiny and evaluation of it.

Engel and Dyrness are to be commended for their fearless critique of Western missions. There is little doubt that our missions often have been domineering and in need of more humility and appreciation for two-thirds world leaders, churches, and missions. There is little question that they have been overly dependent upon carefully concocted statistical analyses and “scientific” strategies while being less dependent upon the Holy Spirit. Few would argue that they have been addicted to numbers and, consequently, have given inordinate attention to such things as fund-raising and counting converts. Almost all would agree that they have not done a good job when it comes to properly relating evangelism and discipleship, mission and social ministries, and even church and mission. Practically all of these criticisms have been leveled at our missions before. Little is new here, but Engel and Dyrness have had the courage to restate them and to spell out some of their implications. One can only wish that mission leaders had submitted their programs and strategies for this kind of constructive criticism before selling them to the Christian public.

But if Engel and Dyrness merit sincere commendation, they also merit serious criticism. Frequently, their treatment lacks comprehensiveness, balance, and objectivity. Some examples are in order.

Following liberals, liberationists, and some evangelical holists, they make Jesus’ messianic mission as stated in Luke 4:18-19 the paradigm or model for ours. In doing so, they fail to deal with the messianic nature of the quotation from Isaiah; with the import of Jesus’ words, “This day this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing” (v. 21); and with the possibility (I would say fact) that only the Messiah *could* fulfill this kind of ministry.

They attempt to show that the various statements of the Great Commission support their case for adopting the “kingdom paradigm” in Luke 4. But in doing so they ignore recent and profound treatments of Great Commission statements such as those of Robert Culver (*A Greater Commission: A Theology for World Missions*, 1984) and Andreas Köstenberger (*The Missions of Jesus and the Disciples According to the Fourth Gospel: With Implications for the Fourth Gospel’s Purpose and the Mission of the Contemporary Church*, 1998).

They make a case for their radical kind of holistic mission on the basis of fidelity to the whole of Scripture and its *missio Dei* as propounded by Karl Barth. But they ignore Barth’s insistence that Scripture be read in the context of the historical church. And they are silent concerning very recent and different readings of a Biblical theol-

ogy of mission such as the one in John Piper's *Let the Nations be Glad! The Supremacy of God in Missions* (1993).

They acknowledge a debt to Roland Allen and his *Missionary Methods: St. Paul's or Ours?* (1927), but they give only token attention to Paul's missionary ministry and the fact that it was that ministry that Allen considered to be the Biblical model for our mission.

They write with glowing terms about Wesley's and Whitefield's "coupling" of social transformation and evangelism as though it was a precursor of their kingdom paradigm, but they disregard Wesley's charge to his preachers: "It is not your business . . . to take care of this or that society; but to save as many souls as you can" (quoted in Robert Coleman, "*Nothing To Do But To Save Souls*," 1990, frontispiece).

They emphasize the church in mission and often draw lessons from the early church. But they do not deal with all of the "marks of the church" or clearly indicate whatever differences there may be between a Biblical church and their Christian "communities."

They assert that, since discipling is a process that will continue until Jesus returns, "The Great Commission can *never be fulfilled*, and we are doing a great disservice when we declare any part of the world to have been *reached*" (p. 67, italics theirs). But, whatever truth there might be in their assertion, it begs important questions and does a great disservice to a host of mission statesmen and practitioners of at least the last 115 years.

After examining what Engel and Dyrness have written, we are forced to ask what it is that *really* drives this view of missions history and theology. What defines mission and fuels this particular "revolution"?

I believe that Engel and Dyrness answer these questions by constantly and consistently pointing to the profound differences between the modern and postmodern eras. They claim that evangelical missions of the twentieth century went wrong because they adopted the thinking, values, and methods characteristic of modernity. But baby boomer Christians (those born between 1946 and 1965) are postmodern and they now control the destiny of North American churches and missions. Only to the extent that we understand and defer to them and their postmodern worldview will our churches and missions have a future (a position long held by Jim Engel).

To illustrate what is involved, the authors describe three individuals as depicted by Bob Fryling: (1) a robed priest in medieval times bound by divine authority, revealed truth, absolute rules, and accepted rituals; (2) a scientist in white coat, confident that modern science and culture will provide truth through reason and rationality; and (3) a bearded, scruffy-looking rock musician seeking to make meaning out of a life that is disillusioning and futile. The priest represents the traditional theocentric worldview of the church up to the Enlightenment as encapsulated in Augustine's "I believe in order that I might know"—the view that all human reasoning is subject to validation by Scripture. The scientist represents modernity, confident in the empirical search for truth inherent in scientific method—truth that is often incompatible with traditional authority. The rock musician is postmodern and suspicious of both the narrowness of tradition and the rationality of science. Despite his disillusionment, the musician has somehow rescued the values of personhood, personal experience, and faith from the ash heap of history.

Utilizing this comparison, Engel and Dyrness introduce their sweeping revolution by saying, ". . . we will attempt . . . to help you sharpen your ability to diagnose the signs of the times and to respond in a creative way as you discern what the Spirit is saying and sense where the Spirit is guiding. So stay with us because, once we break loose from the shackles of the past, we are free once again to do all things through Christ who strengthens us. But be prepared: that scruffy, bearded young man and his tattooed girlfriend in the back row may be among your most valuable assets for missions!" (p. 81).

This accommodation to postmodern “realities” is not entirely new. We have already experienced something of a revolution in our churches as well as in our larger culture. Fifty years ago traditional church music that featured organs and hymns began to be outmoded. *Reform* came with an infusion of more popular church music fashioned in the molds of working-class ballads, African-American blues, and other styles that exuded sympathy for the poor and outrage at injustices. But, for many, reform proved to be an insufficient response to massive cultural change. It was rock ‘n’ roll that portrayed itself as free of hypocrisy, engaged deep emotions, and concerned itself with the anxieties and values of baby boomers. Christian rock with its drums and guitars gradually became more and more accepted. According to informed music historians, what is known today as “praise and worship” began with a revolution in church music—the baptism of rock ‘n’ roll. Of course, this revolution has not been entirely bad. Few revolutions are. But, among other things and in many instances, it allowed music to preempt the place of theology in defining Christian worship and determining how it is to be carried out. Often that worship is “accompanied” by a devaluation of Bible reading, historic creeds, cardinal doctrines, classical hymns, and even biblical preaching.

Despite their claim to being “countercultural” in the sense of being committed to such values as Christian love, selfless service, and a pilgrim lifestyle, Engel and Dyrness embrace the rock ‘n’ roll musician altogether too enthusiastically. It seems to me that their recommended revolution goes way beyond needed reform. To the extent that this is so, the authors make the same mistake they accuse twentieth-century missions and missionaries of making, except that in the one case the accommodation was to modernism, while in the other it represents an accommodation to postmodernism.

Ralph Winter has written, “The future of the world hinges on what we make of this word—mission. Yet at this moment it is almost universally misunderstood—in both liberal and conservative circles” (*Missions Frontiers Bulletin*, March-April 1998, p. 15). My memory is that evangelicals of a previous generation were pretty much united in their understanding of mission. My fear is that, in reading this book, our converted rock ‘n’ roll musician, who has already redefined worship somewhat too narrowly, will now feel justified when redefining mission entirely too broadly. My hope is that all Bible-believing Christians—of whatever generation or cultural inclination—will go back to the Book of Books and be instructed concerning mission by the Spirit who inspired it. The future of the world hinges on it. And the future of our churches and missions hinges on it as well.

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