

BOOK REVIEWS

Ancient Israel: What Do We Know and How Do We Know It? By Lester L. Grabbe. London: T & T Clark, 2007, 306 pp., \$29.95.

It is really the subtitle rather than the title that best introduces this book by Lester Grabbe, Professor of Hebrew Bible and Early Judaism, University of Hull, UK. *Ancient Israel* is not a history of ancient Israel but a *prolegomenon* that proposes and discusses the underlying principles that allow such a history to be written. As such, the conversation that takes place between its covers is not designed for the average person on the street but for scholars who have more than a passing interest in the principles that underlie the reconstruction of ancient history.

The clear and systematic organization of the book is readily apparent from the table of contents. Here we can see that this work not only flows logically from chapter to chapter, but also is thoughtfully organized within each chapter, where multiple subtitles help maintain the reader's orientation. Chapter 1 commences the discussion of method, laying bare the author's approach to the history of ancient Israel. Six fundamental principles are presented and discussed prior to their application in the subsequent chapters: (1) all potential sources (including archaeological data, primary written sources, and secondary written sources) should be considered; (2) preference should be to primary sources; (3) the physical geography and larger historical context (*longue durée*) must be recognized and given an essential role in interpretation; (4) every episode or event detailed in the written sources has to be judged on its own merit; (5) all reconstructions are provisional, awaiting the arrival of new data; and (6) all historical reconstructions must be argued and supported, not simply exported from one's favorite source.

In the next four chapters, Grabbe illustrates how these principles might function in addressing the history of ancient Israel, starting with the Middle Bronze Age and concluding with the time of the Babylonian exile. Each of these chapters that addresses a particular period of OT history consists of three major sections. The first surveys the ancient sources (primary and secondary) relevant to the period in view. This includes resources that originated in Israel itself and those associated with the peoples and nations that impacted Israel's ancient past. The second offers a critical evaluation of each source, acknowledging its potential contribution and identifying its limitations. The third summarizes the main issues associated with writing Israel's history from that period before summarizing what Grabbe feels can confidently be said about it. The final chapter returns to the larger premises of the title and reinforces the six principles noted above.

The book contains much that the evangelical reader will appreciate. First, the organizational precision that marks every chapter of this book makes it easy to access those pages that might be of interest to the reader, and the clarity of the presentation within each chapter allows the reader full and easy access to the thinking that fill its pages. Second, I particularly appreciated the role that Grabbe assigns to *longue durée*. Events simply do not occur in a vacuum, and careful consideration of physical geography and the larger historical ought to play a key role in the process. Third, evangelical readers who are looking for a resource that assembles literary and archaeological data relevant to a particular period of Israel's history will find the pages of this book rewarding. I appreciated the way Grabbe gathered relevant resources, organized them by

historical period, and summarized them within just a few paragraphs. (These thumbnail sketches of the resources are complemented by a closing bibliography that itself consumes about twenty percent of the book's pages.)

Nevertheless, evangelical readers will recognize from the start that Grabbe's pre-suppositions about the Bible differ markedly from their own. He does include the Bible among the sources every historian ought to consult in writing a history of ancient Israel. However, because Grabbe perceives the Bible as written long after the events it reports and as written with a decided theological bias, he does not regard it as a primary but rather as a secondary source, a source whose reliability often is called into question. For example, regarding the Exodus he states, "There is no way to salvage the biblical text as a description of the historical event" (p. 88). Grabbe carries the same uncertainties into the period of the united monarchy: "Unfortunately, just as the exodus and conquest are contradicted by the primary sources, the biblical picture of the united monarchy has some problems associated with it" (p. 221). Moreover, Grabbe seems little interested in engaging evangelical scholars who differ with him in their view of the Bible, labeling them as neo-fundamentalists who cloak their defense of the Bible with the rhetoric of scholarship (p. 22). Grabbe clearly has in mind evangelical scholars such as Iain Provan, V. Philips Long, and Tremper Longman III. It is their work *A Biblical History of Israel* that addresses *prolegomena* principles and illustrates how one with a high respect for the historicity of the Bible might go about reconstructing the history of ancient Israel. I am happy to have Grabbe's *Ancient Israel* on my bookshelf. But pride of place in this category still belongs to *A Biblical History of Israel*, a title more congenial with my foundation.

John A. Beck
Germantown, WI

The Quest for the Historical Israel: Debating Archaeology and the History of Early Israel. By Israel Finkelstein and Amihai Mazar. Edited by Brian B. Schmidt. Archaeology and Biblical Studies 17. Atlanta: SBL, 2007, x + 220 pp., \$24.95 paper.

This book originates from invited lectures delivered in October 2005 at the Sixth Biennial Colloquium of the International Institute for Secular Humanistic Judaism in Detroit, Michigan. Despite the title, the book is not really a debate *per se*, but is more like a "four views" book, but without the two "extreme" views or the responses. According to the writers, the two views presented are "centrist," falling in between the conservative extreme of Kitchen and the revisionist extreme of Thompson and Lemche. The two authors are leading Israeli archaeologists, and their well-articulated views are widely influential and must be rightly understood by evangelical teachers of the OT today.

The book is divided into six parts, with the first and last serving to introduce and conclude the discussion, and the middle four surveying Israel's history from the Patriarchs to the divided monarchy. Each part begins with a "summary assessment" by the editor, Brian B. Schmidt, followed by essays from Israel Finkelstein and Amihai Mazar, respectively. The "summary assessments" are quite good in capturing the main points of each author, though Schmidt provides little in the way of evaluation.

Of the four periods treated, the two authors share the most in common at the ends of the historical timeline—the time of the patriarchs and the divided monarchy. Greater disagreement exists over the nature of Israel's origins and settlement, and the debate is most pointed concerning the tenth century BC, the time of Israel's united monarchy. For the most part, the disagreement merely concerns how large the "kernel of truth" behind the biblical account is.

According to Finkelstein, anachronisms in the patriarchal stories betray a seventh century BC date of composition. He notes as well what “we should have heard about” it if the stories actually took place in the second millennium (p. 45). He argues the patriarchal stories were written in the time of Josiah to demonstrate Judah’s superiority over the northern tribes. Mazar finds some support for historical memory in the early biblical accounts in analogous Egyptian records from the same time period.

Finkelstein consistently identifies the motives of the seventh century BC biblical writers, but he fails to note glaring problems with his proposals. For instance, he describes the stories of Jacob and Esau as giving divine legitimacy to the political relationship of Judah and Edom, without explaining what motivated the writers to invent the flaws of Jacob or how the reconciliation of the two brothers should be understood. Many biblical stories simply cannot be explained as originating from a “powerful expression of seventh-century Judahite dreams” (p. 50). At times Finkelstein makes far-reaching conclusions on literary matters, though the archaeological support is lacking.

Concerning the origins of Israel, Finkelstein rejects the three major models of the twentieth century, instead arguing that the twelfth-century BC settlement of nomadic peoples in the highlands was simply another recurrence in an age-old cycle of sedentarization and nomadization. What was unique was not the settlement of Canaanites in the twelfth century BC but the formation of a state in the ninth century BC. Mazar, on the other hand, steals a page from each of the leading theories, concluding the early Israelites were comprised of migrants from Transjordan, settling pastoralists, and dispossessed Canaanite peasants. Both writers address the issue of plastered cisterns, pillared houses, collared-rim storage jars, and pig bones as reflective of ethnic Israelite inhabitations, sharpening and correcting views from previous decades. Finkelstein finds evidence of Israelite identity only in pig consumption statistics, whereas Mazar argues the entire material culture assemblage can be used to distinguish Israelites from their neighbors. Neither scholar adequately addresses the contradiction of the Merneptah Stele with their interpretation of the archaeological record. Specifically, the archaeological data they interpret as Israelite settlement begins in the twelfth century BC, though Merneptah’s “Israel” was well-established by the end of the thirteenth century BC. One might think Finkelstein’s view would run aground on his own excavations at Shiloh, where he uncovered an occupational history that matches the biblical record. But this only proves, he says, that “some memories” were preserved. He fails to ask what type of archaeological discovery one should expect if the narrative of 1 Samuel 1–4 were in fact entirely historical.

The tenth century BC—the purported time of the United Monarchy—is an area of great disagreement between the two authors, and this chapter alone provides a useful and brief primer to the debate of the last decade. Finkelstein’s “Low Chronology” removes any significant architecture from the tenth century, and he argues the united monarchy should be located in the ninth century and based in the northern kingdom. The fiction of the Solomonic kingdom (and of Hazor, Megiddo, and Gezer) was created to provide a theological justification for Josiah’s intention to rule over both the North and the South. Mazar, however, disputes Finkelstein’s reading of Carbon-14 dates, suggesting instead that they support a uniform material culture from 980 BC to 840/830 BC, part of what Mazar calls the “Modified Conventional Chronology.” The most important extra-biblical text from this time is the campaign list of Pharaoh Shishak, which Mazar presents as evidence for a significant political power in Israel in the tenth century BC. Finkelstein argues that Shishak’s inscription should be understood as an attempt by Egypt to eliminate the nascent kingdom of Saul.

This book can be commended as a concise summary of the current views of two mainstream scholars, but it is not recommended for those unfamiliar with the inadequacies of the archaeological discipline, the nature of negative evidence, or the subjectivity involved in “excavating texts.” Finkelstein emphasizes throughout the neutrality

of archaeology over against the tendentious biblical writings. Archaeology, he believes, is the essential tool for excavating the Scriptures, for peeling back the layers that accumulated over the centuries of oral transmission. Mazar's approach is less negative, preferring the analogy of a telescope, in which the biblical record becomes more blurry the further one goes back in time. The book ends with a nine page list of "Further Reading," helpfully divided into categories roughly parallel to the book sections.

Todd Bolen

The Master's College, Israel Bible Extension, Judean Hills, Israel

Ezra and Nehemiah. By Matthew Levering. Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2007, 236 pp., \$29.99.

Matthew Levering's preface expresses gratitude to and admiration for colleagues at Notre Dame University, Brazos Press, and his own Ave Maria University, whose work is renewing the Christian Church. To them he dedicates a study that looks back to renewal and reform by Ezra and Nehemiah, and aims at improved understanding of the "glory" God promised to post-exilic Israel in Luke 2:31–32 (p. 15). His effort is a venture onto uncertain ground—potential quicksand. The Brazos Theological Commentary series is a "tentative" and "exploratory" work as regards hermeneutical theory and scriptural explanation, "deliberately ecumenical," involving "no particular method of doctrinal interpretation"; it will not settle "in advance" the question of "how doctrine helps the Christian reader assemble the mosaic of Scripture" (p. 13). Commentators are chosen, not for historical or philological expertise, but for habits of mind, for theological training in the Nicene tradition (p. 12), a tradition with which a world of contrasting and competing Christian confessions and practices of the last seventeen hundred years may comfortably identify. Levering's *Ezra and Nehemiah*, while attempting to preserve the books' narrative movement, "makes no claim to be a historical or literary study" (p. 21). Before him, the series' first published work—*Acts*, by Jaroslav Pelikan—produced results "unclear" for John Behr (*Pro Ecclesia* XVI, pp. 14–17; quote from p. 16), and, for Brian E. Daley, "something of a disappointment" (*ibid.* pp. 18–25; quote from p. 20).

Levering dedicates two sections each to *Ezra* and *Nehemiah*. In both cases Part 1 is focused on "Holy Land" and Part 2 on "Holy People." Acknowledging the historicity of most of the books' events, he nonetheless explains that beyond the standard approach to history as "the study of the linear progression of time," there lies a "deeper dimension" of the discipline that is a natural feature of "theological commentary, namely, a divine omniscience where the past may intentionally draw on the future in ways deemed anachronistic from the strictly human perspective (p. 22). Also of special importance to him is a correct understanding of the twin institutions of law and kingship. Regarding law, he rightly laments that modern supersessionist theory undoes the NT's own theology of law, negating, rather than fulfilling earlier revelation (pp. 119–21). With regard to kingship, he engages in a somewhat demanding effort, mostly supported by the lying slander of Sanballat and company, to prove that Ezra-Nehemiah requires a king. Whether or not he is correct, his best argument references the prophetic witness of Haggai and Zechariah, whose clearest reference to royalty (Zech 6:11, 13) is directed to high priest Joshua (pp. 121–23).

Exposing Levering's "anachronistic" vision are multiple, oddly drawn connections—between a hostile Pharaoh, a sympathetic Cyrus, and Paul's commission to the Gentiles—as proof of a progressive continuum toward Israel's ideal (p. 44); between Ezra's Israel striving to build and Paul's outburst (Romans 7) against "the body of . . . death" as statement of ultimate victory in Christ (p. 35); between Israel stripped of

dignity by foreign nations and the degradation and abusive treatment meted out to the Messiah during his passion (pp. 113–14).

As Daley points out, a theological commentary should either expose and present the theological message of a particular text, or set forth an author's reflections on salvation history as observed in the text (*Pro Ecclesia* 16, pp. 24, 25). Levering has evidently determined to do the latter. The work seems more his reflections than a faithful exposé of the books' message. His effort, in the end, should prove of limited value to students of OT historical books. He neither astonishes with Pelikan's encyclopedic knowledge nor ever succeeds in arresting the reader with more than dubious allegorical statements (e.g. Ezra's three day break after arrival in Jerusalem, Ezra 8:32 [p. 95] linked to the resurrection; "lamentation and bitter weeping" for sin, Ezra 10:1 [p. 81] linked to Rachel weeping for dead children in Jer 31:15), and bald NT citations whose relevance is left to readers' imagination (e.g. pp. 45, 61, 71, 91, 94). Further queries might be raised over his position on Israelite fear (Ezra 3:3) as primarily fear of moral lapse (p. 55), or the total absence of any discussion of the radical difference between Ezra's and Nehemiah's return (unarmed versus armed).

Along with expressed allegiance to the Nicene tradition, Brazos editors also protest that as theologians they "have forgotten the skills of interpretation" (p. 14). Perhaps as the series goes forward we shall yet witness how they might felicitously advance their ecumenical cause in what Levering himself calls "the difficult context of the contemporary academy" (p. 15). For one thing, the dichotomy between biblical exegete and Christian theologian as a characteristic of biblical scholarship continues, no doubt, to disappoint us all. So too, does the mostly idiosyncratic result of series volumes to this point, including Levering's *Ezra and Nehemiah*.

Lael O. Caesar
Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI

Psalms. By James H. Waltner. The Believers Church Bible Commentary. Scottsdale, PA: Herald, 2006, 838 pp., \$34.99 paper.

With Waltner's contribution, Herald Press has published its twentieth volume in twenty years in their Believers Church Bible Commentary series. They are not only to be congratulated for this milestone but also for the original conception of developing commentaries that are written with the church in mind. As Cotton Mather once said, "Ignorance is the mother not of devotion, but of heresy!" A biblically informed laity is foundational for a spiritually healthy laity. Thus a commentary on the much beloved book of Psalms with the person in the pew in view will certainly prove a marketable item. What might give the church member even more encouragement to try this commentary is the credibility of the author himself. Waltner certainly appears to have the credentials for the task, having served as a pastor for almost forty years among many Mennonite churches in North America and having earned a D.Min. in OT Studies and Preaching from Claremont School of Theology. One gets the sense that the commentary is the result of a lifelong intellectual and spiritual interaction with the Psalter.

A cursory browse indicates the layout of the commentary is quite user-friendly. It is well structured and typed in large bold letters that facilitates easy reading. From an aesthetic perspective alone, this volume should boost the confidence of even the most novice of students to engage a study of the Psalms.

Waltner begins with a brief introduction to the Psalter, directing the reader on how to read the psalms, including: a few hermeneutical points; an outline of major theological themes in the Psalter; a section on how the NT uses the Psalms; and finally some

suggestions on how to use his commentary. Waltner then proceeds to give a commentary on each of the psalms. This is a mammoth task that requires wisdom and discipline, both to know what to say and what not to say, while still maintaining the material under one cover and keeping it just under a thousand pages. Thus each psalm is treated relatively briefly. Each analysis begins with a “preview” that provides Waltner’s succinct summary of the psalm. A short “outline” follows that will no doubt be of homiletical help to preachers and teachers. Then comes the commentary *per se* where Waltner offers his brief “explanatory notes” on the psalm itself. Lastly, because of the nature of the commentary series, the final section is about application of the psalm and is appropriately entitled “The Text in the Biblical Context and Life of the Church.” Waltner here attempts to set each psalm into a larger biblical and historical context as well as give some of his pastoral wisdom on how to use the psalm for today.

Perhaps what comes after the commentary proper will be the selling point for the usefulness of the volume. At the end is a forty-page section entitled “Essays” that seeks to develop further some of the key topics that are normally found in the psalms. I will list just a few: “Anointed, Anointed One”; “Hebrew Poetry, Imprecation, Names of God, “Superscriptions”; “Torah”; and “Zion.” There are twenty-eight in all, written in a much smaller font than the commentary proper. They vary in length, depending upon topic, but clarity and brevity seems to be Waltner’s aim. An added plus is at the close of the commentary where Waltner gives his annotated thoughts on the “Selected Sources” he had consulted throughout the writing of this project.

Potentially, the real strengths of this work are the strengths of the author. He is a pastor and thus seems to write quite naturally when giving spiritual insight into each of the psalms and seeking how to use the psalms for contemporary life. Though there were times when I could “amen” to some of his points, there were many other times when I could not. I say “potentially” because I feel those who are really going to value Waltner’s insights are those from his own theological tradition. Waltner is an Anabaptist minister writing for an Anabaptist publisher, so he is not to be faulted for this. It is just that at times the Anabaptistic “values” (e.g. environmentalism, anti-militarism, and anti-capitalism) seem to be forced upon the reader as the only application for the psalms, and those of us who are not Anabaptist are left a little short-changed.

My real struggle, however, with the commentary is the so-called scholarship. Herald Press asserts that “critical issues are not avoided,” and Waltner certainly does not shirk away from this desideratum. But because of the short space he is allotted for each psalm, all Waltner typically has space for is give a few textual and interpretive comments that are then thrown together in the “Explanatory Notes” section with little or no interaction or conviction. Thus the “issues” are given without giving the reader any direction of what Waltner believes is the solution. One is left with little more than “data dumping” with little incentive to dig deeper. To be fair, this is not Waltner’s *forte*; the pathos comes alive when we read his application.

Perhaps the biggest frustration with the commentary is Waltner’s obsession with interpreting the psalms through a form-critical grid. There is not only a brief mention of its usefulness in the introduction, but the longest essay is on that very topic (“Psalm Genres”). Two other related appendices also appear: “The Psalms Arranged by Literary Genre” and “Index of Psalms According to Genre.” It seems Waltner is fairly narrow on how he interprets the psalms. No doubt form criticism has been the warp and woof of Psalms studies over the last century but I join others in calling for its abandonment (M. G. Klingbeil, “Off the Beaten Track: An Evangelical Reading of the Psalms without Gunkel,” *BBR* 16 [2006] 25–39; M. Rösler, “Inscriptional Evidence and the Question of Genre,” in *The Changing Face of Form Criticism for the Twenty-First Century* [Eerdmans, 2003] 107–21). While the form critical movement began by comparing the Psalms with

other like types in the surrounding ancient Near East, our knowledge of the ancient Near East and the methodology by which we do comparisons have now both matured to the point that it is necessary to go back and re-evaluate some of the timely held views of certain psalm types/genres. An essential element of comparative studies is to make sure there is something to compare and that the comparison is valid. Thus, instead of using the old form-critical method of comparing the Psalms with Babylonian hymns or some other ancient Near Eastern liturgical/cultic text, perhaps a better way of interpreting the psalms is reading them first for what they were—"prayers" deposited into the temple. This approach has been put forward recently by R. Tomes (*I Have Written to the King, My Lord: Secular Analogies for the Psalms* [Sheffield: Phoenix, 2005]), but he was only building on the work of W. W. Hallo ("Letters, Prayers and Letter-Prayers," in *Proceedings of the Seventh World Congress of Jewish Studies: Studies in Bible and the Ancient Near East* [Jerusalem, 1981] 17–27) and J. Tigay ("On Some Aspects of Prayer in the Bible," *AJS Review* 1 [1976] 363–79). It seems that many, including Waltner, have found it difficult to unshackle themselves from form criticism and have not investigated some of these newer and more mature ways of interpreting the psalms.

I had real hopes for this commentary. As both a pastor and a Bible College lecturer, I desire to have in my hands and in my students' hands a textbook that has both theological acumen and pastoral sensitivity. Unfortunately, Waltner did not fulfill my wishes. My regret is not only on the grounds of differences in theological traditions, but also on Waltner's unguarded overuse of critical scholarship. Two commentaries I still find the best at combining the theological-pastoral dimensions and that I continually consult and recommend are an older volume, W. S. Plumer, *Psalms: A Critical and Expository Commentary with Doctrinal and Practical Remarks* (orig. ed. 1867; repr. Banner of Truth, 1975), and a newer one, J. F. Brug, *A Commentary on the Psalms* (2 vols.; North-western, 2005). Perhaps there are other evangelical pastor-scholars as up to the task.

R. Todd Stanton
Adelaide College of Ministries, Adelaide, Australia

Proverbs: A Mentor Commentary. By John A. Kitchen. Inverness, Scotland: Mentor, 2006, 789 pp., n.p.

In recent years several commentaries have appeared on the book of Proverbs: van Leeuwen (1997), Murphy (1998), Clifford (1999), Fox (2000), Waltke (2004–2005), and Longman (2006), to name a few. Each of these authors approaches Proverbs from an academic standpoint, and this is appropriate, since all are biblical scholars. To help provide a balance, John A. Kitchen has written a commentary that examines the text from a pastoral point of view and emphasizes practical application. Kitchen holds the position of senior pastor at the Stow Alliance Fellowship in Stow, OH.

The format of the book consists of 32 chapters; the first is an introduction, which briefly addresses matters such as the context of Proverbs within the ancient world and in the biblical canon, authorship and date, interpretation, theology, and structure of the book. The following 31 chapters, each one tied to a chapter in Proverbs, contain the author's comments on every individual verse, with the NASB acting as the anchor version. Following the commentary are two appendices. The first is a discussion of wisdom and folly, while the second is a helpful thematic index of the book of Proverbs tied to the NASB. There are also indices on subjects and Scripture cited, along with a brief bibliography.

When reading the introduction from one of the commentaries listed above, the reader is exposed to information that helps interpret, learn to appreciate, or understand better the wisdom movement of the ANE, and by extension, the book of Proverbs. Literary forms are discussed and shown to be familiar genres throughout that geographical region. In Kitchen's introduction there is no significant comparison of proverbs from neighboring cultures to give the reader a sense of what wisdom materials from other countries were like or to show the wisdom movement was truly an international phenomenon. The only example of foreign wisdom brought into the discussion is the *Instruction of Amen-em-ope* (referred to as the Wisdom of Amenemope), but so little information is given that it is impossible to get a feel for what Egyptian wisdom was like. The same can be said for Mesopotamian wisdom. The author could have mentioned and given examples from the proverb collections discovered at Ebla (Tel-Mardikh), or the Sumerian proverbs found in Nippur, Susa, and Ur.

Kitchen also accepts without question, and with limited discussion, the Solomonic authorship for all the proverbs found in Prov 1:1–22:16 and 25:1–29:27. The arguments of those who hold a different position are never mentioned.

In the commentary, each proverb is dealt with individually, making it difficult to see literary relationships when the text is composed of larger literary units such as those in chapters 1–9 and 30–31. Even passages that obviously fit together as sentences that spread over more than one verse (e.g. 23:1–2) are given separate treatment. It is difficult to see literary linkage and flow when the poetic sections are chopped up this way. Most of the individual proverbs are classified according to their type of parallelism, but other literary features are usually not mentioned. The text from the NASB appears as prose rather than poetry, which fails to visually display the proverb as the small poem that it is.

The author tends to cite the same sources repeatedly and rarely interacts with the most recent and scholarly works on Proverbs. For example, in the bibliography David A. Hubbard's articles on "Proverb" and "Proverbs, Book of," from the *New Bible Dictionary* (1962) are listed, but Hubbard's more recent, detailed, and scholarly equivalent articles in *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* (1986) are never mentioned. Instead, Kitchen prefers to use the older *ISBE* articles by John F. Genung (1939).

Using the first ten chapters of the book as a fair indicator of the rest, an analysis of the works cited is telling. Because Hebrew word meanings are often discussed, the most prominent source in use is the *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (1980) with 127 citations. The *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis* (1997) has 49 citations, while *BDB* has eight. Notably missing here is any use of the *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* (1974–2006). This author certainly favors certain commentaries over others, with the most frequent appearances belonging to Whybray (1994), with 51 citations, followed by Ross (1991) with 47, Delitzsch (1872) with 33, Kidner (1964) with 31, and Buzzell (1988) with 17. The commentaries listed in the first paragraph of this review are referred to infrequently, and some are not engaged in the discussion at all. Even more rarely cited are pertinent journal articles. It is not that any of the authors Kitchen cites prominently are poor scholars, but his research base appears rather limited.

This book's accomplishment lies in the areas of pastoral concerns and a devotional approach rather than in academics. That being acknowledged, more engagement with the best in scholarly sources would have enhanced the book's quality.

The author makes many good observations on practical application and provides great spiritual insight. Quite frequently, a NT parallel or affirmation is brought into the discussion. By far the strongest aspect of the book is the author's skill in personal application, which brings Israel's wisdom into focus and applies it in a modern setting for contemporary Christians.

This book's most likely area of impact will be in the pastoral/devotional realm. The devotional approach will make it a welcome addition to church libraries, and to the personal libraries of those who are seeking practical application for individual proverbs in settings such as sermons, Bible studies, or personal edification.

Daniel P. Bricker
Azusa Pacific University, Azusa, CA

Jonah. By R. Reed Lessing. Concordia Commentary. St. Louis: Concordia, 2007, xlii + 451 pp., \$42.99.

How does one evaluate the merit of a commentary, especially one on a text that has received as much written attention as the book of Jonah? Lessing's commentary is not a groundbreaking work, but it neither intends nor pretends to be so. Instead, it aims to offer a theological exposition of Jonah that can be of help to pastors and teachers who affirm a high view of Scripture and wish to more fully grasp Jonah's contribution to a biblical theology and the gospel of Christ. With this in mind, the following review will primarily evaluate Lessing's work based on the Concordia Commentary Series' stated intent and offer a few brief comments on its place within Jonah scholarship at large.

R. Reed Lessing argues the book of Jonah is meant to be read as a "narrative history" or factual narrative that uses irony and satire to chasten Jonah's audience into repentance over their national particularism. The didactic aim of the book of Jonah is to bring its audience to repentance and ultimately "strengthen the missionary outreach of God's people" (p. 26). The chief vehicles of satire and irony are the prophet Jonah—who according to Lessing resembles the Pharisees of the Gospels—and the author's use of intertextuality, principally the relationship of the book of Jonah to Genesis 6–10. For Lessing, Jonah's reuse of Genesis 6–10 is paramount for understanding Jonah's "missional theology." In essence, according to Lessing, the book of Jonah makes a case for properly grounding Yahweh's governing activities over humanity within the universal Noahic covenant over against the more nationalistic Mosaic covenant.

Although Lessing's insistence upon the primacy of Jonah's relationship to Genesis 6–10 would have to be considered a minority position, his work as a whole falls squarely within the mainstream of Jonah studies, both presently and historically. Jonah is the prophetic anti-hero who comes off as disobedient, "peevish," and in need of divine discipline, yet he is also a type of Christ through his time spent in the belly of a great fish. Thus, within the field of Jonah studies Lessing's work has nothing new to say. In fact, the author largely ignores recent Jonah scholarship that raises questions about the behavior of Yahweh and sympathizes with the plight of Jonah. But therein resides this commentary's greatest strength—it stays true to its stated purpose and intended audience.

Lessing's *Jonah* is first and foremost a Lutheran commentary, as evidenced by his repeated readings through the lens of law and grace and his insistence upon a missional theology at the heart of Jonah. Furthermore, his high view of Scripture is readily apparent from the outset, where he spends an inordinate amount of time defending the factual character of the book of Jonah and making his case for textual unity. Not one of his arguments is unique to Lessing and they will not silence those who hold alternative positions, but they are plausible, at the least, and will satisfy like-minded readers. Pastors, teachers, and students in evangelical schools and churches will find the commentary's structure both familiar (textual notes followed by commentary) and user-friendly. Lessing's

textual notes are surprisingly detailed and so will prove valuable to both beginning (and experienced) Hebrew exegesis students and instructors alike.

Pastors and teachers will find most of the excursuses (Yahweh, the Creator God; Mission in the Old Testament; The Sign of Jonah; Trinitarian Basis of Old Testament Solidarity; Sheol; Death and Resurrection Motifs in Luther's Baptismal Theology; When Yahweh Changes a Prior Verdict) to be on topics of interest and, at the least, a starting point for further reflection and discussion. Particularly noteworthy are his excurses on "Mission in the Old Testament" and "Sheol." And though Lessing's excursus on divine repentance is far from the best work on the subject, he deserves credit for addressing its theological implications in a commentary, and likewise for offering a distinctively Lutheran perspective on the subject. The only excursus that appears to be forced and entirely unconvincing is "The Trinitarian Basis of Old Testament Solidarity." This subject matter neither lies within the purview of Jonah nor is it convincingly argued. Finally, the volume of NT references in this commentary (along with the often forced theologically-themed icons in the margins) testifies to the fact that Lessing rarely fails to read the book of Jonah from a distinctively Christian perspective.

Ultimately, Lessing's work demonstrates how one *can* read Jonah as an "evangelistic and missionary document of the first order" (p. 48), but it does not convincingly argue that one *should* read Jonah that way. However, this is hardly a stinging criticism of Lessing's treatise. No work among the centuries of Jonah scholarship has reduced the voices of all other readings to a muted whisper. Lessing's work is a faithful addition to the Concordia Commentary Series, and those who have appreciated previous volumes in this series will welcome this new addition with open arms.

C. Jeremy Cheek
Wheaton College, Wheaton, IL

Judaism and the Gentiles: Jewish Patterns of Universalism (to 135 CE). By Terence L. Donaldson. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2007, xvi + 563 pp., \$59.95.

Terence Donaldson, Professor of New Testament Studies at Wycliffe College in Toronto, seeks to demonstrate that "Judaism was in its own ways just as 'universalistic' as was Christianity—indeed, in some ways even more so" (p. 1), and he writes this work "to identify and document these various Jewish patterns of universalism" (p. 4). In the brief introductory chapter (pp. 1–13), Donaldson points out that both the "biblical narrative" on which Jewish identity is based as well as Israel's actual experience and the attitudes and actions of Gentiles caused Jews to reflect on the religious status and "ultimate fate" of the Gentiles. He defines "universalism" in the context of the modern religious dialogue as "approaches that ascribe legitimacy to the religious 'other' without requiring conversion," while a particularist religion stipulates conversion as "the only option" (p. 4). The first reason why Donaldson uses the term "universalism" is the fact that it has been used in the past to compare Judaism unfavorably with Christianity (a position which he seeks to challenge); the second reason is that three of the four major "patterns" which he identifies accord Gentiles a positive place "in the divine scheme of things without having to convert to Judaism" (p. 4); and the possibility of adopting a new religious identity was an innovative step towards universalism.

After explaining the term "Gentiles," Donaldson proceeds to raise five questions, promising answers in later discussions in the book (pp. 6–9): Was Judaism a missionary religion? Was the apologetic literature of early Judaism addressed to Gentile readers? Did Gentile sympathizers with Judaism who had some form of recognition by the Jewish community exist? What is the connection between the textual documents

and social reality? Was Judaism a unity or did it consist of distinct social-religious entities?

Donaldson aims at providing a comprehensive collection of texts that demonstrate that the Jewish outlook was "universalist" (part 1). The four main "patterns of universalism" to which each text is assigned (and summarized in part 2) are: (1) a spectrum of sympathizers; (2) converts; (3) ethical monotheism; and (4) participation in eschatological redemption. The texts that Donaldson discusses date from the beginning of the Hellenistic period to the second Jewish revolt (AD 135).

In part 1 "Texts and Commentary" (pp. 15–466) Donaldson works with 222 texts (labeled as paragraphs), divided into the conventional categories of: (1) Scripture (Daniel, Septuagint, and apocrypha); (2) pseudepigrapha; (3) Qumran; (4) Philo; (5) Josephus; (6) Greco-Roman literature; (7) early Christian literature; and (8) inscriptions. For each text (except the NT texts), Donaldson gives a translation, followed by references to "text" (i.e. primary text, which is not quoted except in the case of some of the epigraphical texts); translation (the translation printed, without reference to other translations); date; provenance; original language; bibliography (more representative than complete); and category (one of the four "patterns of universalism"), followed by a commentary. The commentary provides brief introductions into the larger works or corpora to which the texts belong, traces the context in which they appear, evaluates previous interpretations, and carefully explicates the relevance for the topic of Jewish universalism.

Part 2 "Patterns of Universalism" (pp. 467–513) summarizes the evidence in four chapters on sympathization, conversion, ethical monotheism, and participation in eschatological salvation, followed by a conclusion. As regards Gentile sympathizers toward Judaism, Donaldson argues that the available evidence suggests that Gentiles who engaged in monotheistic worship, who recognized the divine origin of Israel's law, and who adopted a Jewish way of life (in what areas remains undetermined) fulfilled "everything that God expected of them as Gentiles" (p. 481). As regards the full conversion of Gentiles to Judaism, Donaldson concludes, among other observations, that there is little evidence of an active mission of Jews to create an interest in Israel's God among Gentiles; Jewish initiative in Gentile conversions was "a response to a prior interest in Judaism on the part of the Gentiles" (p. 492). The third pattern relates to Jews who regarded it as possible for Gentiles to have adequate knowledge of the one true God without any knowledge of Judaism. Donaldson acknowledges that such a Gentile ethical monotheism might be a conceptual device that reassures Jews about the rationality of their beliefs or that it might be a hypothetical concept (p. 496). He asserts, however, particularly with regard to Philo, that some Jews believed that there are noble Gentiles whose ethical monotheism involves a piety and practice that is legitimate and acceptable to God (pp. 497–98). As regards eschatological salvation in the future, Donaldson acknowledges texts that speak of the judgment of the nations. He recognizes that no passage asserts explicitly or categorically that Gentiles are fully incorporated into the people of God (p. 504), but he then argues that there was a widespread expectation that Gentiles would be included in the final consummation as "an essential part of Israel's expectations and self-understanding" (p. 505).

Since Donaldson is already convinced that Judaism was "universalistic," he naturally finds that for which he is looking. This explains the contradiction between the assertion that the religious status and ultimate fate of the Gentiles was not a "defining issue" for Jews "in the sense that it raised fundamental and divisive questions about Jewish identity and self-understanding" and the assertion that the question to what extent Jews could adopt Gentile customs indeed "was such a defining issue" (p. 3). If Jews were worried that accommodation to Gentile customs could jeopardize their identity as the community of God's people, it seems obvious that such concerns imply judgments concerning the religious status of the Gentiles. If the latter were not a "defining issue," then accommodation would not be a defining issue either. If the "positive share in the

religious dimensions of Jewish existence” of Gentiles *qua* Gentiles (i.e. without or with only limited accommodation to Jewish beliefs and customs) had not been a defining issue (p. 3), Jewish self-understanding would have been so broad as to make questions of Jewish accommodation a matter of practicality rather than of defining identity. It is difficult to see how Donaldson can, on the one hand, assert that there is a wealth of material regarding the religious status and ultimate fate of the Gentiles, demonstrating “widespread interest and concern,” while, on the other hand, maintain that this “was not a defining issue” (p. 3).

It is not unfair to conclude that Donaldson has indeed prejudged “the matter” of the relationship between Gentiles and Israel’s God (mentioned as a caveat, p. 476). Since he only discusses texts that evidence a positive relationship, omitting the evidence for a “negative” relationship, the outcome of the discussion has been predetermined. He acknowledges that the OT contains “contrasting material, in which the emphasis is placed on the wickedness of the Gentiles, the need for Israel to remain separate from the nations around them, and the certainty of divine punishment” (p. 479). However, the question is not whether there is “raw material for the idea that Gentiles might be able to recognize the God of Israel as their God as well and to worship this God in appropriate ways as Gentiles” (p. 479), raw material that modern interpreters synthesize into a “defense” of Judaism against the charge of being particularistic. The question is whether “the whole woven pattern” excludes Gentiles from salvation unless they join Israel through conversion, circumcision, and obedience to the Mosaic Law or whether Gentiles can worship Israel’s God “as Gentiles” (i.e. without accepting the stipulations of Israel’s God regarding the access to and the maintenance of holiness and purity). As Donaldson does “not sketch the whole woven pattern” (p. 479), he has raw material, but no case. Unfortunately, he has overlooked the important study of M. A. Elliott, *The Survivors of Israel: A Reconsideration of the Theology of Pre-Christian Judaism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), who demonstrates that the predominant view in Jewish texts held that only a faithful remnant would survive to see the blessings of the restoration. The soteriological dualism of Second Temple Judaism sees the world, including specifically Israel, divided into righteous and unrighteous, expecting judgment for Israel as well as for the nations, trusting in Israel’s God for the vindication of the faithful who acknowledge and obey God’s will.

There is much to commend in *Judaism and the Gentiles*. The collection and discussion of texts that reveal positive attitudes of Jews concerning Gentiles will certainly prove to be indispensable for future discussions. The evaluation of the sources is always judicious. The conclusions are generally circumspect. The desire to demonstrate that most Jews liked Gentiles, and some liked them very much even if they remained Gentiles, is understandable. However, the idea of noble Gentiles who are saved by Israel’s God without acknowledgment of Yahweh’s revelation in Israel assumes a god of the philosophers rather than the God of Abraham, of Moses, and of the prophets.

Eckhard J. Schnabel

Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, IL

The Ancient Synagogue from Its Origins to 200 C.E.: A Sourcebook. By Anders Runesson, Donald D. Binder, and Birger Olsson, *Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity* 72. Leiden: Brill, 2008, xi + 328 pp., \$199.00.

This book is the product of a multidisciplinary research project on ancient synagogues at Lund University in Sweden conducted between 1997 and 2001. Though that project resulted in a number of publications, the present work is intended to provide—

as its subtitle indicates—a “sourcebook.” The goal of this work is to “provide scholars and students easy access to the diverse source materials relating to synagogues from the third century BC to AD 200, facilitating direct interaction with the primary materials both in their original language and in translation. This, we believe, will benefit synagogue research specifically, and studies on ancient Judaism and Christianity more generally” (p. 19).

The work is broken down into six sections. First is a concise but informative introduction, which discusses in five parts the method and state of synagogue research (pp. 1–19). The first part of the introduction is “The Synagogue in Ancient Writings and Modern Studies” (pp. 1–4). Here the authors lament the ambiguous use of “the synagogue” in modern biblical scholarship. In antiquity, a Christianized Rome replaced a Greco-Roman respect for Jewish institutional traditions. “Anti-synagogue” legislation ensued through the sixth century AD and beyond. There are several misnomers that have persisted; first is that “synagogue,” since the first century, has always referred to an institution separate from the “church.” Second is that the two are, in some sense, “binary opposites in constant conflict” (p. 3). Both fly in the face of historical evidence. Primary sources also reveal that synagogue leadership was diverse and should not be relegated to Pharisees that were later replaced by the rabbis. Some were priests, challenging a common assumption that temple and synagogue were sharply distinct. Scholarship is greatly improving, with renewed energy and attention to debunk worn out speculations and provide some innovative research.

The second part of the introduction, “The Current State of Research” (pp. 5–6), charts the dramatic increase in the field over the last twenty years. Differing views on Christian origins and new methods of archaeology have spawned increased research efforts. Such research has become increasingly and necessarily an international, interdisciplinary endeavor. The third part is a summary of “Topics in Synagogue Research” (pp. 7–13). These include spatial aspects, such as archaeological remains, architecture, Jewish art, and iconography as they relate to synagogues. Methods and dating center the debate; and comparisons between synagogues and Greco-Roman temples, the Jerusalem temple, Christian house churches, and Greco-Roman voluntary associations (*collegia*) are prevalent. Also included are liturgical considerations. What took place in them? Public reading of Torah is well attested, but was prayer included in early synagogue worship? What is known about fasts, festivals, and rituals? Does Qumran illuminate this discussion? Also, questions of Jewish magic and mysticism arise. Non-liturgical uses of synagogues—council halls, law courts, schools, treasuries, and public archives—are addressed. Finally, this section touches on institutional aspects of the ancient synagogue, referring to characteristics of leadership and operations. Were they controlled by Pharisees or others? Were there hierarchies? What was the role of priests, women, benefactors, and Gentiles?

The volume contains a brief discussion of the origin and nature of ancient synagogues. Nearly all regions in the Mediterranean world have been proposed as the place of origin, ranging in time from the Patriarchs to the Late Roman period. Why did synagogues appear? What was going on in society, politics, economics, and religious life that caused them to be initiated? While this book does not provide answers, ample references in footnotes direct readers to works to consult for further study by leading scholars on foundational issues, such as the function of the synagogue in antiquity.

The fourth part of the introduction is called “Tools for Synagogue Studies” (pp. 13–15). Here there are lists of important books and articles pertaining to archaeological, inscriptional, papyri, legal, and literary sources. The intent of the present book, then, is to “fill [a] void by gathering all types of sources into one single volume, presenting them, as far as possible, according to geographical location” (p. 15). Finally, the fifth part sets out “The Organization and Aim of the Present Collection of Synagogue Sources” (pp. 15–19).

The second major section, “The Land of Israel” (pp. 20–117), highlights “Identified Locations” (pp. 20–78) and “General References and Unidentified Locations” (pp. 79–117). The authors list names of cities, literary sources, approximate dates for literary sources, original language, and English translation of the literary sources, with the authors’ comments. This is followed by archaeological descriptions, with complete bibliography of the most important secondary scholarship on the issue. Most well known in Christian circles is the synagogue at Capernaum. Sources quoted include Mark 1:21–29; Luke 4:31–38; 7:1–5; and John 6:59. With the brief archaeological description—about a page—is a floor plan and a graphic reconstruction of the interior.

The third section, “The Diaspora” (pp. 118–254), likewise has “Identified Locations” (pp. 118–247) and “General References and Unidentified Locations” (pp. 249–54). The Diaspora section is set up similarly. For example, for the synagogue at Delos, the text of Josephus and eight inscriptions (with translation, comments, and bibliography) are followed by an archaeological discussion, also with bibliography, floor plan, and a photo (black and white) of the so-called “Moses’ seat” discovered there (p. 133).

The fourth section is “General References” (pp. 255–73) from literary sources (2 Corinthians, Philo, Acts, Artemidorus, Cleomedes, Tacitus, and Justin Martyr). The fifth section is “Jewish Temples Outside Jerusalem” (pp. 274–94), including Babylonia, Egypt, Idumea, Syria, and the Transjordan. The last section of the work includes an extended bibliography (pp. 295–312), list of illustration credits (pp. 313–14), abbreviations (pp. 315–16), *sigla* (pp. 317–18), ancient text, subjects, names, and terms indices (pp. 319–28), and a fold-out map of “Synagogue Sites Referenced in the Catalogue” (following p. 328).

This is an ideal resource. It is comprehensive, well written, concise, thoroughly referenced to both primary literature and the most important secondary literature, and easily used without burdening readers with less important secondary discussions. The book is an essential tool for anyone doing work that intersects with the ancient synagogue.

Daniel M. Gurtner
Bethel Seminary, St Paul, MN

The Gospel of Matthew. By R. T. France. NICNT. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007, lxiv + 1169 pp., \$65.00.

Serious students of the Gospel of Matthew will enthusiastically welcome this volume, the product of decades of research and writing by a premier Matthean scholar. R. T. France is Hon. Research Fellow in the Department of Theology and Religious Studies at the University of Wales in Bangor. He has published many previous studies of Matthew and related topics, including *Jesus and the Old Testament* (London: Tyndale, 1971), a shorter commentary on Matthew in the Tyndale New Testament Commentary series (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985), and an introductory work, *Matthew, Evangelist and Teacher* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1989). *The Gospel of Matthew* will now take its place among the best scholarly commentaries on the first Gospel.

In surveying the contents of the volume, one notes immediately that the various subsidiary sections are relatively compact, leaving a very high proportion of the book for its primary task, exegesis. France’s bibliography of sources cited in his commentary is roughly twenty-five pages long. His treatment of introductory matters is rather short (22 pp.). Anticipating reviewers’ concerns about this, France directs readers to his 1989

work and affirms that his own views of Matthew and major issues in the study of Matthew have changed little since then. His decision is in keeping with his view that an exegetical commentary such as the present volume should proceed from the text outward rather than proceed to the text for confirmation of a separately formulated position (p. 1). The book's end matter (indices of modern authors, subjects, and ancient sources) covers approximately fifty pages, leaving roughly 1100 pages devoted to the task of exegesis. France's preface indicates that one of his major exegetical concerns is to locate each part of Matthew within the overall narrative flow, so that one does not miss the woods by looking at the trees (p. xviii). He discusses each pericope as a whole before addressing individual verses or groups of verses within the pericope. He has crafted his own translation of Matthew, one featuring contemporary idiom and clarity rather than literary elegance, as the basis of the comments. His practice was to write a draft on each pericope before consulting other works, including his own 1985 work. Thus one should not view the present work as in any way a revision of the previous one.

France's introduction covers structure, the Galilee-Judea geographical scheme, the discourses, the "fulfillment formula quotations," and the provenance of the book. France considers other proposals concerning structure and opts for a geographical format in which Matthew adopts and enhances Mark's structure. As a result, Matthew presents Jesus as a successful northern prophet who is rejected and killed by the religious establishment in the southern capital and who after the resurrection goes home to Galilee to commission his followers for renewed mission. France's outline is as follows:

- I. Introducing the Messiah (1:1–4:11)
- II. Galilee: The Messiah Revealed in Word and Deed (4:12–16:20)
- III. From Galilee to Jerusalem: The Messiah and His Followers Prepare for the Confrontation (16:21–20:34)
- IV. Jerusalem: The Messiah in Confrontation with the Religious Authorities (21:1–25:46)
- V. Jerusalem: The Messiah Rejected, Killed, and Vindicated (26:1–28:15)
- VI. Galilee: The Messianic Mission is Launched (28:16–20)

Although Matthew's geographical orientation should not be ignored, one wonders whether it justifies taking the last five verses of the Gospel as a main section of the book, structurally equivalent to sections covering several chapters. One also wonders whether France's view of Matthew's structure does justice to the prominence of Jesus' discourses in Matthew and to the transitional formula which leads from each discourse to the ensuing narratives.

France takes the discourses of Matthew as anthologies of Jesus' sayings, originally uttered at various times and places, organized by the evangelist around a central theme. Some evangelicals will be uncomfortable with France's view that the narrative setting and structure of Jesus' discourses are not historical. France regards the view that Matthew composed the discourses from authentic dominical traditions as preferable to the view that Mark and Luke deliberately dismembered existing sermons (p. 8), but this oversimplifies a very complex matter. This whole issue is based on the larger matter of the genre of the Gospels as theologically and pastorally motivated history, a topic France does not directly address in his commentary.

France believes that the apostle Matthew is as likely a candidate as any for the authorship of the book and that the book was written in Syria or Palestine during a time of developing tension between non-Christian Jewish authorities and Christian Jews, plausibly during the AD 60s while the temple was still standing. Matthew's distinctive formula quotations show the evangelist's typological hermeneutic. They are the

product of editorial activity, not a previously collected group of traditional “testimonies.” In France’s view, these quotations come from the author’s (ostensibly the apostle Matthew’s) reflection on the Bible in light of his understanding of Jesus’ words and deeds. France maintains some distance between his own approach to source-critical issues and that of those who work somewhat simplistically with a discrete Q document and community (pp. 20–22). He supports Markan priority but not the doctrinaire two-source theory of Matthew redacting Mark with the sayings source Q. France’s work is arguably more influenced by narrative criticism than by source and redaction criticism, and this distinguishes his commentary from several other recent notable commentaries on Matthew.

Hopefully, the tenor of the commentary can be portrayed by a sampling of France’s approach to selected issues. The affirmation in Matt 2:23 that Jesus will be called a “Nazarene” is a notorious *crux*. France spends the better part of five pages (pp. 91–95) explaining the details of the text and weighing the various views. He concludes that the most promising solution to the problem is that Matthew has in mind the prophetic expectation (e.g. Zechariah 9–14; Isa 49:7; 52:13–53:12; cf. Psalm 22; 69; John 7:27) that the Messiah would be a rejected nobody from nowhere (cf. John 1:46). Others before France have weighed this evidence and come to similar conclusions, but France’s discussion is unique and refreshing in that he admits the surprising obscurity of the allusion and acknowledges the possibility that the real answer to the question is not now available to scholars. It is a mark of mature scholarship to acknowledge the tentativeness of one’s conclusions rather than to inflate the evidence for them with one’s rhetoric.

Readers of this review may be curious as to France’s conclusions on other Matthean *crucis*. Only a few can be noted. Matthew 5–7 is understood as a “discourse on discipleship,” a “guide to life” for those committed to the kingdom, and a uniquely authoritative “messianic manifesto” (pp. 153–56). Peter is the rock on which Jesus will build his church (16:18), although this text says nothing about Peter’s successors (pp. 621–23). The unusual future perfect passive periphrastic verbal constructions in 16:19 and 18:18 are not viewed as equivalent to typical future passives but as indicating the priority of heaven’s decisions in “binding” and “loosing.” The implication is that this text does not promise divine endorsement but divine guidance for Peter’s decisions. The “nation” to which the kingdom of God will be given (21:43) is neither a new leadership group (Jesus’ disciples in the place of the current Jewish hierarchy) nor the Gentiles, but a new group composed of Jews and Gentiles alike that fulfills the intended role of Israel as God’s vineyard (pp. 816–17). In light of its pervasive biblical imagery, Matt 24:29–31 does not describe the *parousia* and the end of the world but the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of Israel’s temple (pp. 919–29). Many readers of this commentary will appreciate France’s stress on the hermeneutics of apocalyptic and on the importance of the AD 70 destruction of Jerusalem, while at the same time disagreeing with his preterist view that Matt 24:29–31 has only the events of AD 70 in its purview.

Those who read this commentary will appreciate France’s clear presentation of evidence, his careful yet concise weighing of various views, and his frequently convincing conclusions. To say that his research has been extensive and his conclusions judicious would be an understatement. A helpful and refreshing distinctive of this commentary is its undistracted focus on France’s exegesis. Although France summarizes the views of others, he does so succinctly. He does not provide elaborate citations of additional sources or an extensive bibliography. The clarity of his exegesis is not compromised by a plethora of asides, lists, parenthetical citations, and footnotes. France has made this a commentary on Matthew, not a commentary on commentaries on Matthew (p. xix).

His work should be warmly appreciated, and his example of focusing on textual exegesis rather than on peripheral matters should be followed by all those who do scholarly biblical exegesis for the benefit of Christ's church.

David L. Turner
Grand Rapids Theological Seminary, Grand Rapids, MI

The Sinner in Luke. By Dwayne H. Adams. Evangelical Theological Society Monograph Series. Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2008, xxvi + 204 pp., \$25.00 paper.

The Pharisees question the disciples' eating with the tax collectors and sinners (*hamartōlos*). Jesus overhears and responds that "he did not come to call the righteous, but sinners" (Matt 9:11–13//Mark 2:16–17//Luke 5:30–32). Who are the "sinners," especially in the phrase, "the tax-collectors and sinners"? Through the centuries and currently, scholarship has given a variety of answers. Are the "sinners" those Jews who sin heinously, or those Jews in frowned-upon professions, or those Jews (*am ha-'arets*) who do not follow the extra-biblical ceremonial rules of the Pharisees, or all Gentiles, or simply the opposite of the "righteous," or any human under God's wrath for violating his law? Adams's monograph delves into the technicalities of the identity of the "sinner" but also ties his view of this identity to the broader purpose of Jesus' mission. Adams does this by concentrating on Luke. Why Luke? It has ten pericopes that include "sinner," whereas Matthew and Mark have three, and John has one.

The primary methodology that Adams self-consciously uses for evaluating Luke is narrative criticism. That is, the center of his exegesis is to determine what Luke intended his reading audience to understand by the term "sinner." However, as opposed to the tendency of many in narrative criticism to simply bracket out or discount historical factors and questions, Adams judiciously includes them.

Adams gives a brief survey of scholarship with its various interpretations of "sinner." Naturally, a large part of the scholarly discussion revolves around the historical use of the term "sinner" in the Second Temple period, especially by Pharisees. Adams includes a 48-page survey of Hellenistic sources, the OT apocrypha, the OT pseudepigrapha, and the Mishnah, and a substantial section on OT usage. (At this point, he does not include the NT.) He concludes that "sinner" has a wide semantic range and includes many of the definitions listed above. However, he does discount one standard option. Historically, the Pharisees did *not* consider the *'am ha-'arets* (common Jewish people) as "sinners." Here Adams sides with E. P. Sanders against Jeremias.

Given the semantic range of "sinner," Adams next turns to Luke with a narrative-critical methodology. In two large chapters that constitute over half the book, he gives an overview of Jesus' mission as Luke presents it and exegetes all ten of the "sinner" pericopes. He believes that "sinner" is best understood in Luke when it is realized that Jesus' mission, as emphasized from Isaiah, is to save sinners. The "sinner" pericopes reinforce Jesus' broader mission.

Adams defines Luke's "sinner" as "a person who is guilty of violating the will of God as revealed in the law and thus under the danger of God's wrath" (p. 195). His exegesis notes that it is not only the Pharisees that use the term "sinner." Peter refers to himself in this way (Luke 5:8); Jesus (e.g. Luke 6:32; 15:7) and the "crowd" (Luke 19:7) use it; and the angels at the open tomb refer to those who crucified Jesus as "sinners."

Luke 13:1–5 is important for Adams's definition of "sinner." ("Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans, because they suffered this

way? No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish" [Luke 13:2–3].) Here Jesus universally designates all as "sinners" before they have repented. This dovetails well with the emphasis in various Psalms that contrasts two categories, the "sinner" and the "righteous" (e.g. Psalm 1). The "sinner" is under God's wrath and has not repented. The righteous one has repented and is living under God's covenant law (although not perfectly).

As to the argument that "sinners" in the expression "tax collectors and sinners" must refer to frowned-upon professions, Adams rebuts that, yes, in these contexts "sinners" does refer to those involved in various professions. However, it is not the professions *per se* that were the problem, but rather the issue is the tendency toward heinous moral sin rampant in these professions (of course, prostitution is an intrinsically immoral profession; cf. Matt 21:32 and Luke 7:37). Hence, his above definition still holds. Those committing heinous moral acts in a profession are under God's wrath.

Adams connects the "sinner" pericopes to Jesus' broader mission to save both Jewish and Gentile "sinners" with several overlapping arguments. Based on the many connections in Luke to Isaiah, Adams sees Luke's use of Isa 40:5 ("All flesh shall see the salvation of God") in Luke 3:6 (cf. Acts 28:28, Luke 2:30) as a key text. "Sinners" are included within the "all flesh." All agree that Luke 4:18–19 is a main programmatic text in the narrative of Luke. Jesus claims from Isa 61:1 that he will proclaim "release (*aphesis*) to the captives." Adams connects this "release" with the many "release" or forgiveness (*aphesis/aphiēmi*) of "sins" texts in Luke-Acts. It is then an easy jump from "sins" (*hamartia*) to "sinner" (*hamartōlos*). Most acknowledge that the final statement in the Zacchaeus pericope is a key text for Luke's narrative. ("For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost" [Luke 19:10].) Adams connects the "sinner" concept to the "lost" by means of the three "lost" parables of Luke 15. He notes the use of "sinner" and the verb "to sin" (*hamartanō*) in Luke 15.

Adams has two tentative conclusions that are worth mentioning. (1) Even though "sinner" is not used in Acts, Luke wants the reader to use the concept. Several in Acts are to be considered "sinners" and under the wrath of God, but also some sinners repent (e.g. Paul!). In addition, since Jesus came for "sinners," this partially explains the Acts emphasis on the Gentile mission. (2) At the historical level, the Pharisaic opposition to Jesus' association with "sinners" was "rooted in the biblical requirements to avoid such types" (p. 186).

I agree with Adams's central thesis that "sinner" is used for one under the wrath of God and that this dovetails with Jesus' larger mission. However, allow me to raise a few quibbles: (1) Adams seems too intent on having an overarching definition of "sinner" that fits every pericope. It seems that Peter's reference to himself as a "sinner" (Luke 5:8) does not fit well. Also, could not the Pharisees' use of "sinner" both at the historical and Lucan narrative levels have been different than Jesus' use? (2) Adams should at least note that three of the uses of the adjective *hamartōlos* are attributive ("sinful man": Luke 5:8; 19:7; 24:7), while the remainder are substantival. He should consider whether this distinction might slightly modify his thesis for the attributive pericopes. (3) I appreciate Adams's investigation at the historical level as to why the Pharisees would not associate with sinners. His tentative conclusion that they were following biblical ideas of separation may partially answer this question. However, I believe that the Pharisees' self-righteousness also was involved (cf. Luke 18:9–14).

This monograph represents solid scholarship. It has a central focus but includes many pertinent and interesting peripheral items. The book is not overly saturated with footnotes; and for my taste, it has the right level of detail appropriate to this type of study. Evangelical Theological Society members should be proud that the society sponsored it. For anyone doing a study of the Lucan "sinner" pericopes, Adams's monograph

and David A. Neale's *None but the Sinners* (Sheffield: JSOT, 1991) are the books to consult.

Robert J. Cara
Reformed Theological Seminary, Charlotte, NC

Peter in the Gospel of John: The Making of an Authentic Disciple. By Bradford B. Blaine, Jr. Academia Biblica 27. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2007, xii + 224 pp., \$29.95 paper.

As its title indicates, Bradford Blaine's monograph examines the characterization of Peter in the Gospel of John. Blaine is particularly concerned to challenge the common view that the Fourth Gospel presents Peter as a negative figure. He argues throughout his study that Peter is in fact depicted very positively, appearing together with the beloved disciple as a paradigm of discipleship and a co-founder of the Johannine community.

In an introductory chapter, Blaine briefly describes his approach and surveys the main lines of scholarship relating to his topic. With respect to the latter, he identifies three dominant ideas: (1) that Peter is portrayed negatively; (2) that he is presented as subordinate to the beloved disciple; and (3) that he functions as a representative figure symbolizing the apostolic church or some other group that stands opposed to the Johannine community. Noting that much of the investigation of Peter's characterization has been derivative of work done on the beloved disciple, Blaine divides scholars into two groups, the majority who view Peter as subordinate to the beloved disciple and a minority who regard him as equal. Even within the latter group, however, many would see Peter and the beloved disciple as somewhat competing figures, especially in John 1–20, and see the beloved disciple as more significant for the Johannine church. As for his methodology, Blaine describes it as narrative-critical, though not in the sense of eschewing all interest in the Gospel's sources and historical setting. He assumes that John 21 is the work of a later redactor, for instance, and he thinks the evangelist knew several of the Synoptic pericopae involving Peter, including the specifically Matthean version of Peter's call, naming, and confession.

Through most of the rest of the book Blaine analyzes John's Peter material, taking this up passage by passage in the order in which it appears in the Gospel. He breaks this pattern only in chapter 6, where he examines the relation of John 21 to the rest of the Gospel. His conclusions about a few of these passages will give an indication of the overall direction of his study. One of the texts examined in his second chapter is the important confession episode of 6:66–71. This passage is frequently held as evidence of Peter's low Christology. Blaine argues that such a conclusion fails to consider the narrative context in which Peter makes his confession. To call Jesus "the Holy One of God" is entirely fitting in the aftermath of the Bread of Life discourse, because it highlights Jesus as the one set apart to bear the revelation contained within the discourse. Blaine also stresses the crucial timing of Peter's confession: it comes as an important pledge of loyalty at a moment when many of Jesus' followers were deserting him. Chapter 3 includes discussion of 13:21–26, the first of five Johannine passages in which Peter and the beloved disciple appear together. In this episode Peter goes through the beloved disciple, who is reclining next to Jesus, to learn the identity of Jesus' betrayer. In contrast to the many interpreters who see Peter pictured as subordinate to the beloved disciple here, Blaine argues that they are instead portrayed as partners working together. Peter

takes the initiative in raising the question, and his gesture to the beloved disciple should be understood more as a signal of command than a request (taking *πυθέσθαι* as an infinitival imperative). Peter thus demonstrates action and authority. The beloved disciple, from his position close to Jesus, also plays a necessary role, however; only as a team do they achieve a positive result. Blaine sees a similar pattern of complementary qualities running through the remaining episodes in which Peter and the beloved disciple appear together. As a team Peter and the beloved disciple represent the ideal Johannine disciple.

Chapters 7 and 8 deal with John 21. Blaine regards this chapter as the work of a redactor stemming from a time of community crisis following the death of the beloved disciple, but he rejects the common opinion that this supplement promotes a new image of Peter, rehabilitating him after the more negative portrait found in the rest of the Gospel. Once again Peter and the beloved disciple are viewed as complementary figures, both with respect to their paradigmatic functions (Peter representing zeal and active following, the beloved disciple faith and confession) and their ecclesial roles (Peter as missionary, pastor, and martyr, the beloved disciple as witness). Blaine also sees Peter taking on another narrative role in this chapter, however, that of representing the Johannine community in the midst of its crisis. As evidence that it is the Johannine community rather than the apostolic church that Peter represents, Blaine cites his appearance as part of a group of seven disciples rather than twelve. In their fruitless effort to fish, these seven picture the community in crisis, and then later in the chapter Peter takes on this surrogate role in an individual way when he voices the community's question about the death of the beloved disciple and receives the Lord's command to keep following.

This study makes a helpful contribution by challenging the widespread view that John presents a basically negative view of Peter and that he symbolizes a particular party or stream within the early Christian movement that stood opposed to the Johannine church. Blaine is able to bring strong exegetical arguments against both of these positions at many points.

Along with its positive contributions, this study also raises a few questions that I think merit further exploration. One concerns the function of negative aspects of Peter's portrayal. Blaine does recognize that these are present in John to some extent but perhaps underplays their significance, trying to align most of the Peter material with his narrative roles as a model of ideal discipleship and an inspirational community founder. Blaine is concerned (rightly in my opinion) to reject the view that the Gospel takes a hostile stance toward Peter. Yet does this also require de-emphasizing negative elements in Peter's depiction, as if their presence would necessarily point to an anti-Peter agenda? Might they not play an important role even within a work that is completely friendly to Peter? One such role could be to provide a backdrop against which Christological truth stands out more clearly (Peter's actions in the footwashing episode and the sword attack scene?); another might be to give believers a needed warning through a negative example (the denials).

A second question concerns methodological guidelines for interpreting narrative material, particularly with regard to perceiving allegorical elements. Though Blaine rejects the view that Peter represents the apostolic church or some other group contemporary to the evangelist, he does nonetheless see Peter as a representative figure. Together with the beloved disciple he symbolizes ideal discipleship. This means that narrative details are sometimes interpreted in an allegorical way. For instance, pulling the net to shore symbolizes drawing people to Jesus, and in John 21 Peter even represents a later church group, the Johannine community. This means that some physical details are seen to function in a wholly realistic manner (e.g. Peter's seating position at the last meal), while others are understood to carry symbolic meaning. Peter can rep-

resent himself, an ideal, or a historical group, and sometimes more than one of these at the same time. This kind of exegetical practice is quite common, but it would be good to see further explanation and defense of the rules involved.

Overall this is a useful study with implications for Johannine scholarship that extend beyond the specific question of the Gospel's portrayal of Peter.

Timothy Wiarda
Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary, Mill Valley, CA

Acts. By Darrell L. Bock. BECNT. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007, xxi + 848 pp., \$49.99.

The relative paucity of quality commentaries on Acts makes Darrell Bock's volume a welcome addition to the Baker Exegetical Commentary series. Like the other volumes in this series, this one charts a middle course between overly technical commentaries on the Greek text and some all-too-brief expository ones, making it a helpful resource for pastor and scholar alike.

One benefit of this volume is that the same author wrote the two-volume work on Luke's Gospel in the same series (BECNT; 1994, 1996). For those who rightly affirm the theological and narrative unity of Luke-Acts, the ability to follow one author's assessment of Luke's themes consistently from the birth narrative to Paul's imprisonment in Rome in a three-volume set is a great asset. This phenomenon was almost unique until Fitzmyer's 1998 volume on Acts (Anchor Bible) supplemented his two volumes on Luke and Luke Timothy Johnson co-authored (with Daniel J. Harrington) the volumes on Luke and Acts (2006) in the *Sacra Pagina* series. Bock's work now joins these as an excellent comprehensive analysis of the Lukan corpus.

Bock's introduction covers basic issues of genre, author, sources, purpose, date, destination, audience, canonicity, manuscript tradition, chronology, theology, and social context. He distinguishes Acts from the Hellenistic genre "acts," which typically recount the deeds of a single individual, and links it more closely to the Hellenistic histories. Noting that it is not the human characters of Acts but God's activity that stands at the center, he defines the book as "a sociological, historical, and theological work explaining the roots of this new community, as a sequel to Luke's story of Jesus portrayed in his Gospel" (pp. 2–3). Luke is a historian in the ancient mold, "whose historiography is rooted more in Jewish models than in Greco-Roman ones" (p. 3). Although Acts is a story of origins of the Christian faith, it is a highly selective one, emphasizing themes the author wants his readers to appreciate.

Bock rejects the claim that the "we" sections are literary creations, since they appear quite haphazardly instead of at important theological junctures. He follows Fitzmyer in denying any evidence for a travel narrative or sea voyage using such a convention. While acknowledging the plausibility that Luke is using someone else's first-person material (so S. E. Porter), considering Luke's almost seamless integration of sources elsewhere, Bock argues that it seems more likely the author was present with Paul on these occasions. Bock affirms Lukan authorship, based both on these "we" sections as well as on the early and unanimous external evidence. The claims about differences in theology with Paul are overblown and can be explained by differences in theological emphases and purposes in writing.

Although Luke almost certainly had sources from the Jerusalem community and from Hellenistic Jewish communities for the material in Acts 1–12 and from Paul in Acts 13–28, the specific nature of these sources is nearly impossible to identify. The

speeches in Acts are likely summaries of what was actually said on such occasions—after the model of Thucydides, who claimed to place “in the speakers’ mouths sentiments proper to the occasion and to give the general import of what was actually said” (pp. 21–22). As far as the purpose of Acts is concerned, Bock affirms the view of Luke Timothy Johnson (and the general consensus of contemporary scholarship) that “the message and preaching are an extension of God’s promises to Israel and that the new community is now the place where these promises are realized.” “At the core of the activity and preaching stands the work of God through the now exalted Jesus, who in turn distributes the Spirit as a sign that the new era and salvation have come to both Jews and Gentiles” (p. 24).

Bock is ambivalent on the date of Acts. Presenting arguments for a date in the early AD 60s (esp. lack of resolution to Paul’s imprisonment) and post-AD 70 (Luke’s use of Mark in the Gospel; allusions to Jerusalem’s destruction in the Gospel), he slightly favors a date in the late AD 60s, perhaps shortly before the destruction of Jerusalem. The provenance and destination of the book are even more uncertain, and Bock declines to offer an opinion.

Bock covers the theology of Acts in a brief ten pages, referring the reader to his more comprehensive analysis of the theology of Luke-Acts in his BECNT Luke commentary and elsewhere. The theology of Acts—epitomized in the speeches of Acts—centers on the plan and work of the mighty God, who is the central character of the book. God acts as Savior to reconcile humanity to himself through Jesus Christ. The inclusion of the Gentiles was always part of God’s purpose and plan. For Luke, Jesus is the vindicated and exalted Savior, Christ and Lord, who mediates the long-promised Spirit from the right hand of God. Acts 2:36 does not represent an adoptionistic Christology, as some have supposed, since Jesus is Lord of all, who will judge the living and the dead, serving as mediator at God’s side. Any subordinationism is strictly functional, not ontological. The Holy Spirit is the key to the renewal and mission of God’s people, empowering and guiding the church and ensuring an intimate connection between the disciple and Jesus. Much of Acts concerns the progress of the inclusion of the Gentiles in the church and the nature of the new community that emerges from this. Some have argued that Luke favors law observance, but in fact the situation is more complex and nuanced. Peter’s vision in Acts 10 concerning dietary laws and the Jerusalem Council’s decision against the circumcision of Gentiles show that “Luke does include a critique of the law or a call for its renovation in Acts” (p. 39). Bock generally rejects the “early Catholicism” approach espoused by Käsemann and others. While the church is certainly becoming a more settled community, there is little emphasis on apostolic succession, sacramentalism, or the replacement of eschatology with salvation history. Bock summarizes the theology of Acts: “Above all, Acts is about the expansion and triumph of the gospel as it penetrates the world from Jerusalem to Rome by means of God’s guidance and despite intense opposition” (p. 40).

Each passage covered in the commentary proper is divided into two parts, the first dealing with a summary of structure, themes, theology, genre, sources, etc., and the second with exegesis and exposition. All Greek is followed by transliteration; footnotes deal with subsidiary issues; and “Additional Notes” at the end of each passage discuss textual variants. Bibliography and indices of subjects, authors, and Scripture and other ancient literature conclude the work.

Bock’s interpretation is consistently clear, balanced, and well informed on contemporary scholarship. This commentary will no doubt become a standard on Acts, especially for evangelicals. It is less technical than Barrett (ICC), and more detailed than Bruce (NICNT), Longenecker (EBC), Marshall (TNTC), Polhill (NAC), and Johnson and Harrington (SacPag), comparable in quality and detail to Fitzmyer (AB) and Witherington. The only section I found myself wanting more was in the introductory theology

of Acts. This would not be a problem for those who own Bock's earlier commentary on Luke, but as a stand-alone volume this one could use a greater analysis of the purpose, themes, and theology of Luke-Acts. Another potential weakness is the lack of creative interpretation. Bock surveys issues and authors well, but I did not experience many "aha!" moments that engaged my imagination or challenged my previous views. Yet what the commentary might lack in verve, it more than makes up for in quality, even-handed exegesis. For student and pastor alike, this would be a good "first buy," when looking for a commentary on Acts.

Mark L. Strauss
Bethel Seminary San Diego, San Diego, CA

Discerning the Spirits: Theological and Ethical Hermeneutics in Paul. By André Munzinger. SNTSMS 140. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007, xv + 239 pp., \$95.00.

The discipline of biblical epistemology has been enhanced by several major studies in recent years. In addition to Munzinger's work, Lee S. Bond's dissertation "Renewing the Mind: The Role of Cognition Language in Pauline Theology and Ethics" (Aberdeen, 2005) and Stephen E. Witmer's dissertation "Taught by God: Divine Instruction in Early Christianity" (Cambridge, 2007) provide much food for thought.

Munzinger's revised and updated dissertation for Brunel University and the London School of Theology in 2004 provides a disciplined study probing the nature of discernment in Pauline thought. Munzinger is a model of organization reflecting the processes and style of a dissertation. Part 1 introduces the need for the study, provides a modest literature review, and proposes how the issue is advanced by the project. Part 2 addresses "What Requires Discernment? The Objects of Evaluation" (chaps. 2–4), and part 3 seeks to answer "How Can and Should True Discernment Take Place?" (chaps. 5–6). Part 4 wraps up Munzinger's findings and answers the "so what?" question. He claims (pp. 17–18) his work is "novel" by (1) providing a semantic domain study of discernment rather than limiting the study to a few key words; (2) showing the "interdependence of ethical and spiritual discernment"; (3) arguing that Paul formulates truth (discernment) by using the Christ event to retheologize (renewed mind) our personal and community identity; and (4) observing certain Hellenistic (perceptual set ethical transformation) and Jewish ("new heart") themes in Paul's thinking. He eventually concludes "that discernment is *existential theologizing* in which the 'renewed mind' (or 'mind of Christ' or 'mindset of the Spirit') takes on a constitutive role in constructing and verifying meaning" (p. 191). One macro contribution from Munzinger is that he provides a way of thinking that avoids the extremes of a static application of biblical material written for a different time and space and of a non-critical mystical process of discernment. Discernment, especially for the many issues not addressed directly in Scripture, is for Munzinger an objective task of interpreting our world from the basis of a conversion "world-switch" that provides (via process) a "renewed" mind that the Spirit utilizes in individuals and communities to achieve God's will in the world.

Munzinger is particularly interested in investigating how mind and Spirit integrate for the work of discernment. What does the gift in 1 Cor 12:10, "discerning of spirits," mean? What is the role of the Holy Spirit in the discernment process? How does the objective adjudication of ethical issues relate to discernment? What is the NT's vocabulary of discernment and how are these terms to be interpreted within their contexts? How did Paul view mind and Spirit working together (e.g. 1 Cor 2:6–16)? Is Christian

epistemology pneumatic or ethical in nature? How did Paul's Jewish and Hellenistic worldview affect his epistemology? How does the "renewal" of Rom 12:1–2 relate to discernment? How does God make known his will in a post-Scripture setting? These three Pauline texts mentioned above regularly recur in Munzinger's analysis and particularly drive his research. He claims that his research shows "the *interdependence* of spiritual, theological and ethical levels of Pauline thought" (p. 16) in a "natural" holistic process of worldview shift that results in a retheologizing of ourselves and our world.

Munzinger criticizes Therrien's work on discernment as limited by a too narrow linguistic field. He agrees, however, that Paul's use of $\delta\omicron\kappa\upsilon\acute{\alpha}\zeta\omega$, especially in Romans 12, is a mandate for Christians "to answer questions not addressed by Paul" (pp. 22, 41). This is set in contrast with Schnabel's work on wisdom and claiming that the will of God has been sufficiently revealed in previous Scripture and created order. Munzinger asserts that "it is left up to the believer to know when the apostolic maxims conclude an argument and when they are the beginning of reflection" (p. 28). While calling the church to discern truth/ethics beyond the text, Munzinger avoids defaulting to a mystical process to achieve discernment and argues that Paul's renewed mind expectation is the "locus of normativity" (p. 35). The boundaries of this renewed mind process are not always made clear. Boundaries, however, are implied by Paul's connection with Judaism (previous Scripture) and Hellenism, especially stoicism and its emphasis on worldview self-understanding. God's will is worked out within a biblical worldview trajectory. A further check to adjudicating "truth" is the "pragmatic consensus-building activity in the body of Christ" (quoting Becker, p. 39). The call of Rom 12:2 is real and ongoing (p. 43).

The next key text for Munzinger's model is the gift of "discerning of spirits" in 1 Cor 12:10. The author disagrees with Dautzenberg's limitation of this gift to discerning prophetic utterances and with Grudem's third-wave interpretation of this gift. Munzinger argues that Paul's vocabulary of discernment requires both an interpretive and an evaluative aspect. Paul does call the Corinthians to discern prophetic utterances. Yet, Paul wants more. This more relates to discerning "spirits." Discerning of spirits is not some activity of identifying demons or demonic activity, but rather a term to capture a larger worldview concept. He proposes that "discerning the spirits means understanding the macro-microcosmic link of reality *and* evaluating that link" (p. 65). This means that the renewed mind is able to make judgments about our world in its unique relationship to the "spiritual world" on the basis of a sound worldview (derived from a Jewish worldview) and the objective ethical results that such discernment produces (pp. 65–70). Munzinger's analysis manages to work this gift into his model. He does so by taking it to the worldview level. However, does this fit the gift list in which it occurs? Dautzenberg has correctly noted that the list in 1 Cor 12:8–10 seems to contain a series of doublets with "miraculous signs" as the middle hinge. This links discerning of spirits to prophecy and maintains a sound OT tradition about the speech of prophets. Since lists are not self-interpreting, we need to take what little hints exist in order to perceive the author's intention. Munzinger does not digress in his treatment to evaluate the possible continuity with the OT prophetic model and what that would mean for his treatment. It seems he could still maintain his point about Paul's worldview discernment expectation without massaging this text as he does.

A more controversial text for various treatments of discernment is 1 Cor 2:6–16. Munzinger visits this text at numerous points (chap. 4; pp. 147–54, 166–72) as the key to the Spirit's role in discernment. He promotes a "pneumatic epistemology" while rejecting "immediate intuition" as the expression of it. Rather, the junction of our rational responsibility within a biblical worldview (= mind) and the Spirit's role merges in a way to provide "authentic perception" (p. 160) in our truth and ethical judgments. The "Spirit's role is seen as reinforcing, building and expanding consciousness" (p. 159).

Munzinger's construct of the role of the Spirit is appealing but lacking in exactly "how" it happens. This is a challenge that all interpreters face. Paul uses metaphors (e.g. much of the language of 1 Corinthians 2; "led by the Spirit") to affirm the role of the Spirit but never provides a concrete explanation. At the end of the day, Munzinger seems to capture this antinomy in his mind-Spirit junction paradigm. He argues that the Spirit enables a "new grasp on reality," not by means of some "extra-cognitive epistemology" but rather by enabling our cognitive "world switch" that results in discerning God's way.

Although at times Munzinger's unpacking of assertions is more suggestive than final, his work stimulates fruitful paths for understanding how Paul expected the believing community to do the work of discernment beyond the obvious, direct teaching of Scripture. His developing paradigm may assist the current evangelical debate about when and how to "go beyond the Bible" in making truth and ethical judgments.

Gary T. Meadors

Grand Rapids Theological Seminary, Grand Rapids, MI

Saint Paul as Spiritual Director: An Analysis of the Concept of the Imitation of Paul with Implications and Applications to the Practice of Spiritual Direction. By Victor Copan. Paternoster Biblical Monographs. Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2007, xxvi + 296 pp., £19.99 paper.

This book is an analysis of the "concept of the imitation of Paul as reflected in the uncontested Pauline epistles in order to determine its relevance to the practice of spiritual direction" (p. 1). It is an updated 2001 doctoral dissertation originally submitted to the University of Vienna, supervised by Dr. Suzanne Heine.

Chapters 1 and 2 introduce the topic and survey the field and terminology related to spiritual direction. Copan argues that effectiveness in spiritual direction is not primarily the product of technique but of the character and lifestyle of the one providing the direction. Therefore, it is interesting that his survey of the literature reveals little discussion regarding the one providing direction—technique is at the forefront of the literature—thus revealing a weakness in his opinion. It is this "total shape" of the director's life—ethos in classical rhetorical understanding—that Copan focuses on in this study and its impact on the effectiveness of imitation. His primary thesis is that "it was the ethos of the Apostle Paul that made such a strong and life-changing impact on his followers" (p. 2) and that this provides a model for the practice of spiritual direction today.

After reviewing the related terminology, he concludes that there is a "high degree of elasticity" regarding spiritual direction, which presents a challenge in coming to a common understanding of the core meaning. After posing a series of "generative" questions, Copan presents a working definition—"spiritual direction is the (variegated) means by which one person intentionally influences another person or persons in the development of his life as a Christian with the goal of developing his relationship to God and His purposes for that person in the world" (p. 39).

Chapter 3 places the concept of imitation within the context of the Greco-Roman world. As noted by Copan, imitation was common in the ancient world in both the Greek and Jewish literature. This is easily established within the Greek literature in that the practice of imitation was widespread through modeling one's life after living persons, persons of antiquity, groups, spiritual beings, non-human objects, and specific characteristics and virtues. While there is very little "terminological parallel" in the LXX or

Jewish intertestamental literature demonstrating the concept of imitation in Judaism, Copan argues for verbal linkage through Philo's and Josephus's use of μιμητής and conceptual linkage through Paul's frequent analogical use of the OT and its personalities. This leads Copan to conclude that there are multiple sources for the concept of imitation, "primarily influenced by the Greek educational/moral tradition and shaped by the Judaic understanding of parenting and teaching" (p. 44). The primary relational settings where imitation occurred were the parent-child, teacher-student, and leader-group relationships. As Paul positions himself as parent, teacher, and leader, it would have been perceived as normal that he would function as a model to be imitated. Due to the high priority of community, the concepts of shame and honor, which were "vital realities in the daily lives of Greek and Jewish people" (p. 70), created an environment in which imitation was both pervasive and powerful in the Greco-Jewish world.

Chapters 4, 5, and 6 analyze Paul's imitation language in the Thessalonian, Corinthian, and Philippian correspondence, respectively. Copan's goal is twofold: (1) to determine how imitation is configured, including the scope, in these contexts; and (2) to discern what the texts reveal explicitly or implicitly about Paul, the person, and his relationship with the recipients. Copan's "working assumption" is that "the texts reveal something of Paul behind the texts—his character, values, intentions, modes of interaction, etc." (p. 72)—which further address relevance for the practice of spiritual direction.

In the Thessalonian correspondence (chap. 4) the reference to imitation appears at the beginning of the letter in the "thanksgiving" section (1 Thess 1:5–7). Both the language and concept of imitation are significant in this letter and reveal a strong emphasis on Paul's life as exemplary and the importance of the Thessalonian believers looking closely and imitating his life. Copan argues that imitation here refers to an integrative understanding of the lifestyle and the message, rather than the message alone.

In an excursus (pp. 88–102), Copan addresses the question of Paul's lack of direct references to Christ throughout the Pauline corpus and how this impacts imitation studies. Following Michael Thompson (*Clothed with Christ: The Example and Teaching of Jesus in Romans 12.1–15.13* [JSNTSup 59; Sheffield: JSOT, 1991]), he notes the consistent tendency of early Christian authors to shy away from direct quotations of Jesus. Following Kenneth Bailey ("Informal Controlled Oral Tradition and the Synoptic Gospels," *Them* 20/2 [1995] 4–11) and James Dunn (multiple sources), and others, Copan argues for a tightly controlled oral tradition that would have restricted Paul from reciting the oral tradition as he was not a true ὑπρέτης τοῦ λόγου. Paul's consistency and the common pattern of the early Christian writers reveal that this was not considered unusual. This is significant for imitation studies in that it allows Paul's commendation of the Thessalonians' imitation "of the Lord" (1 Thess 1:6) to be understood as a contextual referent for the life and ministry of Christ (historical Jesus) and not just the Christ of faith.

With regard to the Corinthian correspondence (chap. 5) Copan notes that the appeal to imitation occurs within the well-known Corinthian context of factionalism within the church, abuses of authority and praxis, dissension, and so on. Against Linda Belleville ("Imitate Me, Just as I Imitate Christ: Discipleship in the Corinthian Correspondence," in *Patterns of Discipleship in the New Testament* [ed. Richard N. Longenecker; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996] 120–42), he argues that Paul's imitation appeal (1 Cor 4:16) concludes the previous chapters. Rather than referring to "a common core of ethical teachings and norms of Christian practice," Paul is appealing to his own life as exemplary in all that he had already said and done (pp. 110–11). Using parent-child imagery and the Hebrew understanding of *halakah*, Paul is exhorting the Corinthians to address the core issue of pride and live an examined life in Christ as he has done (p. 120). In a similar way, the second reference to imitation (1 Cor 11:1) concludes 1 Cor 8:1–10:33.

Using his own strategic choice to be “weak” to win others to Christ and to live in Christ, Paul bases his imitation appeal on his own life and example.

In the Philippian correspondence (chap. 6) the language and concept of imitation is pervasive. Following Casey Wayne Davis (*Oral Biblical Criticism: The Influence of the Principles on the Literary Structure of Paul’s Epistle to the Philippians* [JSNTSup 172; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999]), Copan argues that the “oral dimension” needs to be considered in understanding the epistle’s structure (p. 146). In this context, the call to imitation (Phil 3:17) is unique in that it is the only occurrence of $\sigma\upsilon\mu\mu\eta\tau\alpha\iota$. Copan argues for “intentional paralleling and concentric patterning” in the structure. Thus, it is in the second half, where multiple examples that appeal to imitation are presented (Phil 4:9). As Paul regularly uses his own life as an example, and the example of others, Copan argues that imitation in this context is clearly based on the integration of life example and teaching, and it has the added dimension of joint imitation by the Philippians.

In chapter 7, Copan vigorously challenges Elizabeth Castelli (*Imitating Paul: A Discourse of Power* [Literary Currents in Biblical Interpretation; Louisville: Westminster, 1991]). Castelli applies Michael Foucault’s understanding of the nature of power relations to Paul’s use of imitation (p. 182). She argues that Paul does not have a legitimate claim to a privileged position, thus necessitating an illegitimate claim to a unique position with Christ. This, combined with a unique reading of the OT, results in Paul rhetorically manipulating the recipients of his letters into accepting his authority. For Castelli, imitation thus becomes a matter of abuse of power. Copan’s challenges fall within the categories of (1) misunderstanding and misuse of authorial intent; (2) the danger of starting a study with a Foucauldian ideology; (3) a misunderstanding of Paul, Christianity, and the issue of specialness, power, and authority; (4) a misunderstanding of the nature of imitation; and (5) a failure to analyze adequately Paul’s authoritarian approach. His rigorous and thoughtful challenge is in keeping with other opposing reviews of Castelli’s work but represents a more in-depth analysis.

In the final two chapters, Copan provides a summary along with an explanation of pertinent issues and implications resulting from the project. Three important issues are highlighted. The first issue involves the role that personality plays in imitation. He insightfully notes that nowhere does Paul link imitation of “himself to his person *qua* personality” but rather focuses on “fundamental virtues that flow out of Paul’s understanding of Christ and the gospel” (p. 230). Second, is it legitimate to apply Paul’s call to imitation to ourselves since he was in a unique role as an apostle? Again, Copan astutely notes that “the ground of Paul’s call to imitation had to do with Paul understanding himself as an authentic and reliable follower of Christ” and not his apostleship (p. 231). Third, is imitation a “psychologically problematic technique to effect foundational transformation of a person” (p. 232)? He concludes that Paul does not explore the human psyche; rather, he explores theology and the corresponding performance, which should serve as a model for spiritual direction.

There are several areas where the study could be strengthened. First, the work is replete with errors that could have been corrected in the editing process (spelling, grammar, incomplete abbreviations, missing bibliographic entries, numeric sequencing, etc.). Second, while Copan briefly mentions “evangelicals” and the concept of discipleship at the beginning of the project, it would be helpful to see how the principles developed in this project compare with the current trends in discipleship and mentoring. Third, the test of orality is helpful but applied only to the Philippian correspondence. One wonders if there is a similar impact with the Thessalonian and Corinthian correspondence. Applying it to these other letters would provide validation for its use with Philippians. Finally, it is surprising that in a work on spiritual direction the role of community is minimized and the significance of the individual is intrinsic to the study and

given a focused nuance throughout. It seems that the heart of imitation, *especially within the uncontested Paulines*, is communal in nature and the study would be strengthened by evaluating this aspect.

Notwithstanding these issues, the study is significant for its singular focus on imitation and spiritual direction, thoughtful exegesis of related passages, and contribution to imitation as understood by Paul. This study is certainly important for scholars, pastors, and students who are working in this area and who desire a different and more scholarly approach.

James M. Howard
Colorado Christian University, Lakewood, CO

Our Mother Saint Paul. By Beverly Roberts Gaventa. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2007, xi +218 pp., \$24.95 paper.

Traditional works about Paul and women follow a predictable pattern of exegeting and applying texts such as 1 Cor 11:2–16, Gal 3:26–28, and 1 Tim 2:11–15. As imperative as these works are, Beverly Roberts Gaventa, the Helen H. P. Manson Professor of New Testament Interpretation and Exegesis at Princeton Theological Seminary, seeks to retrieve oft-neglected Pauline texts that employ maternal imagery and thus to broaden the discussion about Paul and women. Gaventa's book *Our Mother Saint Paul* reclaims four additional Pauline texts and locates them in a broader examination of Pauline theology. The book itself incorporates nine articles published previously but now revised and collected for a greater effect.

Gaventa's argument unfolds in two parts with part 1 exploring texts throughout the Pauline corpus that include maternal imagery. Rather than understanding these statements as disparate images, Gaventa believes that four common features unify the passages. First, unlike direct metaphors employed elsewhere (for instance, Paul as a spiritual father) the metaphors in these passages are complex. Paul as a spiritual *mother* is "a metaphor squared" (p. 5). Second, the use of maternal imagery intentionally conveys a picture that is distinct from the one painted by paternal imagery; they are not interchangeable. Whereas Paul's fatherhood emphasizes his contributions to the initial faith formation of an individual or community, Paul as mother highlights his ongoing relationship. Third, Paul uses the maternal metaphor to illustrate some aspect of his apostolic vocation, and finally, many of Paul's maternal images appear in apocalyptic contexts.

Proceeding with the idea of Pauline maternal imagery as an identifiable thread, four chapters present exegetical work on 1 Thess 2:7, Gal 4:19, 1 Cor 3:1–2, and Rom 8:18–23, the passages Gaventa has selected as the most illustrative texts containing maternal imagery. Unconvinced of the existence of a *topos* that employs a nurse metaphor to speak of the ideal philosopher's gentleness, Gaventa sees potential backgrounds to 1 Thess 2:7 in Num 11:12 and 1QH 15:20–22 and an allusion in it to a familiar, beloved kinship relationship. Further, she suggests that Paul's presentation of himself and his coworkers as both infants and nurses through an intentionally mixed metaphor is his attempt to explain two aspects of the apostolic role—innocence and caring responsibility—in a jarring way that challenges his audience to consider their own relationships in familial terms.

The exegesis of Gal 4:19 finds no mere emotional outburst in Paul's words but reads them as reflective of Paul's highly theological understanding of his apostolic work within an apocalyptic framework that anticipates the redemption of the entirety of creation.

Supporting this conclusion is a word study of *ōdinein* and its related forms, which in general usage emphasize the anguish of childbirth rather than the simple fact of birth and in their prophetic occurrences establish a connection between an apocalyptic expectation and such labored anguish. Although one would expect Paul's metaphorical delivery to result in the birth of the Galatians, the image shifts in 4:19b, and it is the birth of Christ in the Galatians that emerges. Rather than indicating a flaw in Paul's metaphor, this phrase portrays Paul's understanding of a divine overtaking of the Galatians by Christ that has implications for the corporate life of believers but also for the entire cosmos.

Among ancient literature that uses food imagery including a contrast between milk and solid food, Gaventa finds that Paul is unique in speaking of himself in the first person as the nursing mother who provides the milk. She believes that this metaphor, selected to characterize Paul's relationship with the Corinthians in 1 Cor 3:1–2, is consistent with the family metaphor throughout the Corinthian correspondence and serves to build up the believing community in unity. The comparison, furthermore, launches a string of metaphors that Paul employs to speak of the apostolic task, but this specific metaphor of a lactating mother opens Paul to scorn and places him at the margins of society as one who is less than a "real male." With this picture, Paul relativizes the role of the apostle, a mere servant of God, in relationship to the Corinthians who are God's field, temple, and so on.

Romans 8:18–23, the final passage under consideration, uses birth imagery to speak of an act performed by the entirety of creation, although Gaventa believes that this birthing never comes to completion as the text turns to speak of waiting for adoption and redemption. This unexpected (il)logical conclusion is the clue that reveals Paul's apocalyptic expectation that God will deliver all of creation, including humanity, from opposing powers to which God has previously subjected creation. Therefore, for Gaventa, this passage highlights creation's yearning for freedom but its inability to achieve this liberation apart from God's apocalyptic act.

Gaventa's remaining chapters turn to Pauline theology in general and argue for its thoroughly apocalyptic character, providing case studies from Galatians and Romans. The textual work on Galatians and Romans critiques the conclusions of the majority of scholarly work on those letters in several ways. For instance, Galatians 1–2 are read not as apologetic but as Paul's paradigm for how a singular devotion to the gospel reverses all previous ways of thinking, and throughout Romans sin is understood not metaphorically but literally as an actual power to whom God hands creation for enslavement but whose demise is ensured by the cross of Christ. From her conclusions regarding Galatians and Romans, Gaventa desires to push scholarship on Pauline theology further towards a framework that recognizes Paul's concern for the deliverance of not only individuals but also for the community of faith *and* the remainder of creation by an active and unrestricted God.

Parts 1 and 2 combined reflect Gaventa's contention that Paul's theology is not confined to propositional statements found in limited sections of his letters. Rather, Paul's theologizing pervades the whole of each letter and is not absent from his metaphorical language. Therefore, Paul's feminine metaphors (part 1) are an intrinsic part of his apocalyptic theological understanding of God's redemption of a cosmos enslaved to sin (part 2) with effects for the life of the believing community. Gaventa argues that one implication that this reading of Paul has for the lives of women today is that there remains no room for conventional dualistic categories (hierarchical vs. egalitarian) of thinking about leadership.

Although meeting the rigors of serious scholarship, Gaventa's work avoids highly technical language in order to be accessible to the less trained reader, and it presents effective contemporary illustrations to reinforce key points. Overall, Gaventa conveys

a deep awareness of the history of traditions that may have contributed to Paul's imagery, the ways in which Paul's usage upholds or violates his own socio-cultural context, recent studies in gender construction in the Greco-Roman world, and significant scholarship in metaphor theory. Many of Gaventa's specific conclusions require a greater level of conjecture than I find to be appropriate; however, I commend her desire to include more Scripture in the discussion about Paul and women and her ability to see a more holistic Paul who refuses to separate theological reflection from practice.

Karelynn Gerber Ayayo

Palm Beach Atlantic University, West Palm Beach, FL

Ephesians and Colossians. By Charles H. Talbert. Paideia Commentaries on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007, xix + 296 pp., \$24.99 paper.

Just a few years ago, it was possible to speak of a very bleak scenario with regard to scholarship on Ephesians and Colossians. Because many scholars typically regard these letters as coming from the pen of someone other than Paul, they have not received the same attention in the form of commentaries and scholarly monographs as Paul's so-called "chief letters." This situation has been remedied somewhat over the last few years with the release of a smattering of excellent commentaries—to focus on just one form of scholarship. This encouraging trend continues with the arrival of Talbert's commentary on Ephesians and Colossians.

This commentary is one of the early volumes in the new Paideia series by Baker Academic, which reflects various recent trends in the guild of biblical studies. The name of the series reflects its instructional intention, which is aimed at guiding graduate students and seminarians in a basic engagement with the text itself. The approach also seeks to treat NT texts with greater literary sensitivity as to the manner in which they are shaped. Rather than imposing unnatural categories upon the text, the series seeks to grasp the educational categories and ideas of the ancient writer. There is also a greater sensitivity to the pedagogical aim of the original writers, who were not aiming merely to inform but to "form the theological convictions and moral habits of their readers" (p. ix). While recent discussions about theological approaches to Scripture in the wider guild of biblical studies have drawn some measure of interest among evangelicals, the approach to Scripture represented by this series, and executed in this instance by Talbert, ought to be quite attractive to such readers as well.

With regard to format, Talbert has a 25-page introduction, followed by the commentary on Ephesians and then Colossians. For each section of text, he begins with introductory matters, follows with a lengthier section called "Tracing the Train of Thought," and draws to a close with a discussion of theological issues. These final sections of theological discussion are, as can be expected, at times brief and at other times lengthy. In each case there are no wasted words; each discussion is fitted to the need of the moment. The benefit of this format is the model for students of moving from the shape of the text and the flow of argument to theological reflection. Talbert does not necessarily draw extensive theological conclusions from each section, but he does indeed provide a model for thinking theologically along the contours of the text. There is also, included throughout, a healthy number of charts and boxes in which other issues are covered. One does not often find such matters included in a commentary, but, as one has come to expect from Baker Academic, the layout is visually attractive and Talbert is consistent in keeping the information contained therein succinct and relevant.

Talbert largely follows the scholarly consensus regarding the authorship of Colossians and Ephesians, holding that they are Deutero-Pauline, being written sometime

between the AD 50s and 100. Many will not find his discussion of authorship entirely satisfying. Talbert lays out the main lines of argument that lead to this familiar conclusion but entertains few counterarguments that envision greater continuity between the Paul of the “chief letters” and the Paul of Ephesians and Colossians. One would have hoped for perhaps some more extended comment on the consideration that different occasions draw forth different styles of composition and modes of address. Might this supply a rationale for any discontinuities? Talbert also discusses several major features of the “world” of Ephesians and Colossians. He notes rightly that the hostile powers are critical for understanding these letters, along with grasping the nature of households in the Greco-Roman culture of the first century.

One of the striking features of Talbert’s commentary is that he does indeed allow the categories and thought forms of these letters to determine how he envisions the drama inherent within them. This is especially the case when it comes to the prominent place that hostile cosmic powers play in Ephesians and Colossians. Talbert has a sizable discussion of these figures in the introduction to the commentary, and he treats them in a satisfying manner in his comments on various passages. They appear throughout Ephesians, of course, but he treats them at length in the comments on Eph 1:15–23. Against a Jewish background, though also in conversation with Greco-Roman cosmologies, Talbert views these figures as having much to do with the disunity within the cosmos and the corruption of God’s good creation. These are the forces that God has defeated at the cross of Christ and with which the church battles in the present evil age. According to Talbert these figures are again in view in the difficult passage of Col 2:6–23. In verse 8, the author makes reference to the *stoicheia tou kosmou*. Talbert’s discussion of the meaning of this disputed phrase is as good as can be found anywhere (pp. 211–12), avoiding unnecessary ancillary issues. He rightly sees a reference here to the astral beings who are hostile to human life, especially in light of the fact that the author of Colossians makes explicit reference to these beings in Col 2:14.

Regarding the relationship of the five participles to the finite verb in Eph 5:18–21, Talbert views the participles as the results of being filled by the Spirit (pp. 129–30). He dismisses the view that the participles are the means by which a community of God’s people fulfills the command to “be filled by the Spirit,” another Pauline expression for the church’s role as the dwelling place of God in Christ. Talbert does not address the major difficulty with the view that takes the participles as expressing result, which is somehow to answer the question of *how* to be filled by the Spirit. If the participles are not the means of fulfilling the command, then there is nothing in the context of Ephesians that informs this cryptic imperative.

Talbert does not take the expression in Col 1:24 (“I am completing what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ”) as a reference to the messianic woes, a common interpretation, and he also rightly dismisses any notion that the author of this letter envisions some deficiency in the atoning death of Christ (pp. 201–2). He opts for a view that sees a necessity of apostolic suffering, making reference to similar language in Phil 3:10 and 2 Cor 4:10–11 (p. 202).

All in all, Talbert’s commentary is impressive for combining succinct expression of thought, thorough examination and treatment of most major interpretive issues, subtle grasp of the flow of argument, and brilliant articulation of the theological impulses in Ephesians and Colossians. Talbert’s work succeeds wonderfully in fulfilling the vision for the Paideia commentaries—the seasoned work of a scholar-teacher made accessible for theological students—and if subsequent volumes match the standard set here, this series will indeed be one to watch in coming days.

Timothy G. Gombis
Cedarville University, Cedarville, OH

Paul, the Pastoral Epistles, and the Early Church. By James W. Aageson. Library of Pauline Studies. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2008, xv + 235 pp., \$24.99 paper.

From Elaine Pagel's *Gnostic Gospels* to Dan Brown's *DaVinci Code* (and the many "discoveries" and associated "documentaries" stirred up in their wakes), the present moment has spawned a near-renaissance of interest in the early development of Christianity. Fueled by the explosive combination of sensational, paradigm-overturning claims and a deconstructively-disposed milieu in the West, more and more conversations are taking a serious interest in what used to be the domain of only a select few of the "faithful." James Aageson's monograph is a welcome entry into this fray. His relatively modest aims, irenic tone, and reserved conclusions are a breath of fresh air and hold out the promise of separating at least some of the chaff from the wheat. Using the Pastoral Epistles as his point of entry, he hopes to shed some light on this broad and complex discussion. In particular, he focuses narrowly on the patterns of theology and thought in the Pastoral Epistles to gain insight into how Paul and his writings came to shape early church tradition as it developed along the trajectory set by the Pastoral Epistles. In the end, he wants to place the images of Paul and the theological patterns found in Pastoral Epistles "in their rightful place in the developing Pauline tradition and in the emergence of the Christian church" (p. 56).

He begins by establishing the "basic contours of the discrete theological patterns in the three Pastoral letters" (p. 55). He approaches each document on its own terms rather than reading them as a literary corpus in some sense. As the "contours" emerge, 2 Timothy stands out from the large degree of homogeneity in outlook found between 1 Timothy and Titus. These analyses form the basis of the subsequent comparison of each to the other and to their "most immediate Pauline counterparts" (1 Timothy to 1 Corinthians; 2 Timothy to Philippians; and Titus to Galatians; p. 71). He next broadens his base for comparison by examining the image of Paul portrayed in the Pastorals. This "Paul" is an authoritative figure who conveys by life and word a fixed body of teaching meant to function as authoritative, if not yet fully as Scripture, in shaping the life of the household of God. This portrait is then compared to that found in Acts and the Deutero-Paulines in order to find its place among the other NT appropriations of Paul's image. Finally, these refined conceptions of the theological patterns in the Pastorals along with their conception of Paul are brought up against the "patterns found in important figures from the second and third centuries of the early church" (p. 157).

What emerges is a pseudonymous perspective on these letters, though their pseudonymity is most likely not monolithic. They all assume the same theological world of thought where "doctrinal correctness" as essential to faith is assumed by all (p. 70), one compatible with the church of the late first century (e.g. 1 Peter). At the same time, 1 Timothy and Titus are more similar in their emphases and outlook on the nature of the church's engagement with the world. Their conservative ethic advocates conformity to Greco-Roman societal structures in building up the household of God. Moreover, they share no substantive contacts with the theological worlds of their "most immediate Pauline counterparts." In contrast, 2 Timothy's non-conformist emphasis on suffering strongly suggests a separate author. It closely matches Philippians in regard to the paradigmatic function of Paul's example and the counter-cultural emphasis on suffering, while still sharing enough of a theological affinity with 1 Timothy and Titus to rule out Pauline authorship. Consequently, though these pseudonymous letters represent perspectives that are not necessarily incompatible within one group or with regard to one author, they are incompatible enough to see probable grounds for different authors and different developing strands in the Pauline tradition.

Widening the circle of comparison, Aageson goes on to argue that not only do 1 Timothy and Titus differ from 2 Timothy to a lesser (though significant) degree, they all differ even more significantly from the undisputed letters of Paul, Acts, and the

Deutero-Paulines in their images of Paul, his authority, and his theology. Key examples include the following: Philippians allies with 2 Timothy in its call to suffer as Paul suffered, but it shares no concern for the type of doctrinal correctness evident in the Pastorals generally (p. 78); Galatians has “real but very limited” points of contact with 1 Timothy and Titus in its Christology and treatment of the law (p. 82); and 1 Corinthians and 1 Timothy possess distinct structural and functional conceptions of the church; use distinct language but share the same soteriological intent; may both deal with an over-spiritualized eschatology though in very different ways; and differ in the latter’s lack of concern for doctrinal orthodoxy and conformity to divine order. Finally, Aageson demonstrates points of convergence and divergence between the “theological patterns” found in the Pastorals and those evident in the important figures of the second and third century church. Here, in terms of a concern for good order in the church, a notion of a fixed orthodoxy, and their view of Paul’s writing as Scripture (or nearly so) that needs to be authoritatively passed on, he finds the nearest theological heirs to be Ignatius, Polycarp, Tertullian, and Irenaeus.

In a review of this size, it is impossible to address the many interpretive insights and issues raised in this study. One will certainly find plenty with which to agree or disagree given the numerous interpretive assumptions and stances demanded by a study of this breadth. Aageson is to be commended for addressing the interface between the apostolic and post-apostolic eras, given the current cultural milieu and the ongoing importance of these issues for our understanding of Paul and the nature of the NT canon. Any serious student of the Pastoral Epistles will want to give the book a close read. Nevertheless, in my opinion, the promise of this study is largely unrealized. With a study such as this, the value of the overall endeavor is tied most closely to the initial stages of the argument. Establishing the baseline for comparison through studying the theological patterns of the Pastoral Epistles is the first and most crucial step. The validity of all future comparison, backwards or forwards, rests on whether or not you have, so to speak, “got it right.”

However, though the views of Aageson are certainly representative of a significant strand of modern scholarship, they are presented as established fact with little or no interaction with literature running contrary to his view of the Pastorals. His initial development of the theological contours of these letters—which sets the trajectory of the whole study to a significant degree and largely determines the value of its contribution—lacks the kind of close, detailed interaction with the scholarly literature and argumentation that would seem appropriate given the crucial role these initial stages play. Interaction with important and apropos works by I. H. Marshall, P. Towner, A. Lau, R. Kidd, H. von Lips, R. Van Neste, S. Westerholm, and R. Mounce, to mention a few of the most prominent omissions, is surprisingly absent. Important, trajectory-setting texts are explained as if there are no interpretive issues to be dealt with (e.g. 1 Tim 2:2). Discussions of the theology of the letters reflect a puzzling marginalization of key texts (e.g. 1 Tim 1:17 and 6:15–16 play no real role in the conception of God in this letter). Critical assumptions about the nature of the argumentation in these letters (e.g. p. 31: “the discourse is linked together by a complex interweaving of terms and ideas that provides a kind of rhetorical coherence for a text that otherwise often appears quite random”) go untested.

In the end, if you grant the author’s starting points, there is much to be gained for our understanding of the Pastoral Epistles and their place in the development of early Christian tradition. However, if you see significantly different theological patterns in the Pastorals and, thus, very different starting points, as I do, the realization of the essential goal of the study remains in question.

Greg Couser
Cedarville University, Cedarville, OH

Not By Paul Alone: The Formation of the Catholic Epistle Collection and the Christian Canon. By David R. Nienhuis. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2007, xviii + 264 pp., \$39.95.

Is it possible to have a genuine, saving faith without the concomitant proof of a transformed life? St. Augustine's response that the "letters of Peter, John, James and Jude are deliberately aimed against [such an argument] and firmly uphold the doctrine that faith does not avail without good works" (quoted in Nienhuis, p. 2) serves as the starting point for Nienhuis's revised doctoral thesis *Not By Paul Alone*. Augustine's understanding of how the writings of the "pillar" apostles serve to correct a misreading of Paul sets the trajectory for Nienhuis's investigation. The book constitutes an interesting turn within the recent wave of texts that self-consciously seek to read James "on its own terms." Whereas many of these recent works (e.g. Luke Timothy Johnson, *Brother of Jesus, Friend of God* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004]; Luke L. Cheung, *Genre, Composition and Hermeneutics of the Epistle of James* [Carlisle, UK: Paternoster, 2003]) strive to hear James' voice without the dissonance of Paul, the knock-on effect is that James is read independently from the other Catholic Epistles as well.

Nienhuis challenges the notion that James must be interpreted without reference to other Catholic Epistles or the Pauline corpus. Rather he sets out this strikingly original thesis: "It is my contention that the final form of the Catholic Epistles collection was the result of intentional design on the part of the canonizing community in the hopes that it might perform a particular canonical function" (p. 5). Specifically, he argues that James was written in the mid- or late second-century with the purpose of bringing together the Catholic Epistles collection—marshalling the writings of the "pillar" apostles, James, Peter, and John—in order that it might serve as a canonical antidote for a second-century misreading of Paul. Following the canon criticism of Rob Wall (*The New Testament as Canon* [Sheffield: JSOT, 1992]) and the interesting observations regarding the origin of the NT canon argued by David Trobisch (*The First Edition of the New Testament* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000]), Nienhuis takes up the example of 2 Peter as evidence not merely of a pseudepigraph included in the NT, but a "canonically motivated pseudepigraph," which, he continues, "is a document that was created by a particular trident of authoritative tradition to enable the process of canon formation according to the particular theological needs of his ecclesial readership" (p. 18). This, then, becomes corroborating evidence for the argument that the historical origin of James points to the intentional shaping of a literary collection—the Catholic Epistles collection.

Chapter 1 ("A Canonical History of the New Testament Catholic Epistle Collection" 29–97) contains one of the most thorough accounts of the canonical formation of the Catholic Epistles in English, and here Nienhuis has put us in his debt. Tracing the development of the Catholic Epistles through patristic sources and manuscript evidence, he draws two important conclusions. First, the collection of the Catholic Epistles was the last section of the NT canon to find its final form. Second, though within the Eastern tradition the canonical order of the NT gave prime place to the Catholic Epistles after Acts (e.g. Gospels-Acts-Catholic Epistles-Paul-Apocalypse), the final (largely Western) sequence of Gospels-Acts-Paul-Catholic Epistles-Apocalypse was adopted in the end. From this Nienhuis argues that "Augustine's comments . . . may therefore provide an accurate depiction of the logic behind the ultimate ordering (that the Catholic Epistles were added to Paul as a means of correction)" (p. 87). These observations regarding the historical formation of the Catholic Epistles hint at the collection's canonical function, and Nienhuis takes them as evidence that the Catholic Epistles came into circulation at a time when the church was in need of a "robust apostolic witness in support of a right reading of Paul" (p. 163).

Leading on from his analysis of the canonization of the Catholic Epistles collection, Nienhuis reflects on the evidence (or rather lack thereof) regarding the composition date for James (chap. 2: "Early James Traditions and the Canonical Letter of James," pp. 99–161). Against the recent resurgence in favor of understanding James the Lord's brother as the author of James, Nienhuis offers a robust argument that James is a pseudepigraph of the second century AD. Asserting that none of the contemporary arguments for authenticity offer a convincing explanation for the lack of attestation before Origen (something exhaustively demonstrated in the previous chapter), he argues "the burden of proof lies with those who want to secure an early date against this formidable difficulty" (p. 101). Though Nienhuis continues to press this point for several pages, offering clear and accomplished argumentation, it nonetheless seems a argument merely from silence. The lack of early attestation does not prove a late composition date for James beyond doubt. However, for Nienhuis, the silence is deafening. Based upon a second-century *Jakobusbild* (picture of James) pieced together from first- and second-century James traditions, Nienhuis argues that a mid-second century author wrote James. From his analysis of these traditions and the content of the letter he argues that "the second-century author of James desired the content of the letter to comport closely with the historicized James of his day [e.g. the *Jakobusbild* of the mid-second century]" (pp. 157–58). Thus the letter is best understood as not written to Jewish Christians of the first-century but "to a second-century Christian readership in order to promote the essentially Jewish underpinnings of Christian faith and practice. . . . James was written to present the church with a more fully Catholic Jewish-Christianity" (p. 159). Perhaps an argument from silence coupled with such a complicated historical reconstruction does account for the late canonization of James; however, one could argue from internal evidence that the letter more likely was composed during the first century.

In the third and final substantive chapter ("Reading James as a Canon-conscious Pseudepigraph," pp. 163–231), Nienhuis tests his hypothesis that James is a second-century text composed with the express purpose of both introducing the Catholic Epistles as a coherent collection and acting as a canonical correction of misreadings of the Pauline corpus. Here textual parallels between James and the Catholic Epistles are explored to see whether or not James intentionally linked his (second-century) letter with other, currently accepted texts from the Catholic Epistles. The literary and conceptual connections are impressive, and here Nienhuis displays a *tour de force* in reading the Catholic Epistles as a coherent collection. Along with the connections within the Catholic Epistles, he offers a fresh reading of the various literary parallels between James and the Pauline texts. Here not only does he offer fresh insights regarding parallels between James and Romans, Nienhuis presents some intriguing connections between James and both of Paul's letters to the Corinthians. This literary analysis of the Catholic Epistles stands as one of the clear strengths of the book and will prove useful both to those interested in James and to those who are interested in the thematic coherence of the Catholic Epistles collection. However, as Nienhuis himself concedes, "the literary evidence alone is slippery and thus cannot be presented as the sole *substantial* basis for my argument" (p. 168). Essentially, his argument stands or falls on his understood implications of late attestation and his argument against James's authenticity—in short, his historical reconstruction. It is no surprise, then, that Nienhuis can find literary and thematic parallels that support his reconstruction—the problem is that such parallels can be read in very different ways and thus, as he acknowledges, only constitute the *plausibility* of, not *evidence* for, his claims.

Though there is much to disagree with in Nienhuis's work, there also is much to benefit from. The overall implication that reading James "on his own terms" can lead to an overly reductionistic, even anti-canonical, understanding of James is a helpful corrective. Also, both the thoughtful account of the canonical formation of the Catholic

Epistles and his insightful reading of the literary parallels among the Catholic Epistles and between the Catholic Epistles and Paul make *Not By Paul Alone* a fine addition to the growing body of texts focusing on the long neglected letter of James.

Darian Lockett

Talbot School of Theology, Biola University, La Mirada, CA

1 Peter. By Joel B. Green. The Two Horizons New Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007, xiv + 331 pp., \$20.00 paper.

It seems that we cannot get enough of them. Publishers offer up multiple commentary series, populated with tomes both old and new, even occasionally revised. At times these volumes push forward our understanding of the books of Scripture in significant ways, while others offer little more than a reworking of previous reflection. The strength of the Two Horizons New Testament Commentary (THNTC) is the editors' commitment to take the interpretation of biblical books in the renewed direction of "theological exegesis and theological reflection" (p. i). Like the Brazos Theological Commentary on the Bible (BTCB), the THNTC emerges from the growing interest in theological interpretation, which seeks to address the question of the relationship between biblical studies and theology and how theological perspectives inform our reading of the biblical text. Theological interpretation attempts to bridge the (ugly ditch" between exegesis and theology ("Introduction," in *Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible* [ed. Kevin J. Vanhoozer; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005] 20) in its quest to hear the voice of God anew in the church. As the editors Joel Green and Max Turner state, the Two Horizons series "seeks to reintegrate biblical exegesis with contemporary theology in the service of the church" (*Between Two Horizons: Spanning New Testament Studies and Systematic Theology* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000] 2). In *Between Two Horizons*, Green critiques our singular concern with historical methodology and boldly claims that "the meaning of Scripture cannot be relegated or reduced to its historical moment" (p. 30). "Meaning," he states, "belongs rather to the intercultural interplay of discourse within communities of interpretation for whom these biblical texts are invited to speak as Scripture" (p. 43).

Yet despite the rather lengthy prolegomena to the series presented in *Between Two Horizons*, Green and Turner do not constrain the authors of the commentaries (which now include works by S. Fowl [*Philippians*], M. M. Thompson [*Colossians and Philemon*], and R. A. Reese [*2 Peter and Jude*]), with a particular methodology. They simply ask for a theological approach to a paragraph-by-paragraph engagement with the biblical text. "How commentators engage in the work of theological reflection will differ from book to book," they note, "depending on particular theological tradition and how they perceive the work of biblical theology and theological hermeneutics" (*1 Peter*, p. i). In a similar way, the BTCB series preface states, "No reading strategies are proscribed, no interpretive methods foresworn. The central premise in this commentary series is that doctrine provides structure and cogency to scriptural interpretation" (R. R. Reno, "Series Preface," in *Acts* [Jaroslav Pelikan; BTCB; Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2005] 16). So the adventure of the theological interpretation begins.

Joel Green's *1 Peter* volume in the THNTC divides into two major sections, the first being the commentary (pp. 13–186), which is followed by a series of engagements with *1 Peter* subsumed under the heading "Theological Horizons" (pp. 187–288). The commentary is prefaced with a general orientation to the letter and a brief section on introductory issues (pp. 1–11). The final pages of the volume provide the reader with

a substantial bibliography along with the usual indices. The introduction to 1 Peter is fairly brief, offering about the same level of orientation one would glean from a good NT introduction. Here Green shows his support for the traditional view regarding Petrine authorship, although he does not rule out the possibility that a "Petrine circle" may be responsible for the letter. He argues that the first readers were, on the main, Gentiles whose status as "strangers" in society is linked with their election. He is not concerned whether or not the readers were literally resident aliens (cf. Elliott). The metaphor of being "strangers" is "interwoven with motifs associated with election, such as call and vocation, covenant, and journey" (p. 17). From the outset, we hear Green's theological concerns taking center-stage without entirely dismissing historical questions.

The commentary on the letter, which occupies sixty percent of the book, at first appears to be standard fare, save for the paragraph-by-paragraph analysis of the text. However, Green focuses upon the main theological themes that dominate each part. He is well aware of the exegetical issues along the way, although dialogue with the commentaries on the letter is kept to a minimum. Theological topics are sometimes identified via Peter's repetition of common concepts, such as God's faithfulness and actions (pp. 22–25), "new birth" (pp. 25–33), or the readers' existence as exiles along with the attendant emphasis upon "familial language and terms of endearment" (p. 34) and the maintenance of a distinct identity (p. 34). The discussion of 1:22–2:3 focuses the interpretive beam on "Conversion" and "The Efficacy of the Word" (pp. 49–54).

Yet Green does more than string together common themes as he identifies the larger theological story within the letter. First Peter, he shows, moves from "Primordial Time" before the foundation of the world (1:20), deals with his readers "Time of Ignorance/Emptiness" (1:14), tells the drama of the "Revelation of Jesus at the End of the Ages" (1:20), proclaims "Liberation" (1:18–19), orients his readers to their "Time of Alien Life" (1:17), and turns them forward to the "Revelation of Jesus Christ" (1:13; pp. 36–47). In his discussion of the theological horizon of 1 Peter, he again picks up this "narrative" reading of Peter's theology (pp. 197–202). Such linkage between the theological work in the commentary and the subsequent discussion in the "Theological Horizons" is one of the strong suits of this study.

In the midst of this attempt to read the dominant theological themes of the letter, Green pays attention to the author and readers' place in history. The proclamation of Christ as "Lord" is framed against the backdrop of imperial claims (pp. 23–24), and he discusses Peter's injunctions to wives and husbands in light of the emerging "new woman" movement in Roman society (p. 92). The commentary consistently shows Green's concern for contextual and sociological issues, although at times we are left wanting for more. These summary discussions, however, are enough to assure those who are nervous that this iteration of the theological interpretation program might drift from its historical moorings.

For all the virtues in Green's opening theological commentary on 1 Peter, I am left with some questions. First, can we best isolate the theology of the letter by looking at common themes in a particular section and throughout the book or should we also attend to the way the author develops his theses? The letter is an argument, however difficult it may be to outline. Peter builds a case, and its many details drive forward his theological point. Green's approach misses some essential theological texture. For example, this thematic approach misses Peter's movement from the indicative to the imperative in the call to holiness (1:16: "act as God acts") and in the way sanctification both results in and becomes a call to love (1:22: "act what you are"). Texts such as 2:1–3 enter into relation to the themes they share with other texts in the letter, but the passage's movement of thought is not discussed. Green puts the larger narrative features of Peter's theology on display while sometimes glossing the details of the theological argument.

Second, in the discussion of Peter's theological concerns in the commentary, why is there little interaction with the theological interpretations of this book repositied in the church? Green evokes Bede frequently, but other voices remain silent. Clement of Alexandria, John Chrysostom, Jerome, and Oecumenius all wrote on 1 Peter before Bede. Luther and Calvin penned commentaries on the letter as did Wesley. While we hear from Clive Lewis in the commentary on 3:18–22 (p. 130), Karl Barth only appears in a section on method (pp. 243, 245) and not in the reflection on the "descent into hell" (see D. Lauber, *Barth on the Descent into Hell: God, Atonement and the Christian Life* [Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004]). The great interpretive traditions surrounding 1 Peter are not entirely absent, but they are decidedly muted as compared to Pelikan's work on *Acts*. If the program of theological interpretation is about reading not *only for* but *with* the church, why are principal discussion partners absent?

The second major section of the book, the "Theological Horizons," breaks into three sections. The first of these gathers up all the threads into a "Theology of 1 Peter" (pp. 188–228). These helpful pages highlight Peter's principle theological loci: alien existence in the world, the narrative of new birth, God, Christ, and Holy Spirit, the community, and suffering. Green prefaces the section with a brief discussion of the biblical and theological program of the THNTC, an orientation that might have been better placed at the beginning of the volume and read alongside the series preface. The theology is similar to that found in the commentaries by Kelly, Achtemeier, and Jobes, or in the somewhat more extensive work by Andrew Chester and Ralph P. Martin (*The Theology of the Letters of James, Peter, and Jude* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994] 87–133). Green next connects the theology of 1 Peter with the rest of the NT (pp. 228–39). Those who remember when Selwyn was still king of the hill will find Green's discussion to be familiar as it ties together 1 Peter with early Christian teaching. He also notes that 2 Pet 3:1 "invites theological reflection in relation to 1 Peter" (p. 235). Green accepts the invitation, and so, while acknowledging the differences between the books and 2 Peter's use of Jude, offers a helpful and unique summary of the common purposes of 1 and 2 Peter.

These two sections within the "Theological Horizons" are what we expect from a biblical theology. Not until the final section, "Engaging Theology with 1 Peter" (pp. 239–88), does the discussion widen to include "selected theological concerns of contemporary importance" (p. 190). Green once again moves into a discourse on the nature of theological hermeneutics and regards 1 Peter as a model of how the church may undertake this project (pp. 244–58). The particular cases in point are Peter's use of the OT (pp. 246–54) and the relationship between Scripture and Creed (pp. 255–58). The final sections on "Anthropology and Salvation" and "Peter, Politics and Society" (pp. 258–88) hold much promise for a wider theological engagement, but Green does not fully deliver. The section is more at home with discussions surrounding the ancient horizon of meaning. The road runs out as the section does not present the reader with a deep encounter with Systematics, nor with a thorough treatment of all the themes Green previously highlighted. There is unfinished business at the very place we hope for a robust and broad dialogue between Peter and the church through the ages and today, both within the North Atlantic region and wider global contexts. We are also left with little to help us understand how theology can and does inform our interpretation.

The project of theological interpretation and its commentaries that attempt fresh readings are welcome, even as they seek to clarify methodology and perspective. We need further orientation to the history and prospects for the enterprise (see, for example, D. J. Treier, *Theological Interpretation of Scripture: Re-Introducing a Christian Practice* [Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2008]) as well as models to follow, so that the church may hear afresh the message of God and know God through Scripture. Green's commentary on 1 Peter keeps the biblical text central, while pointing to the wider discus-

sions raised by Peter's theology herein. Peter is the "Rock," and, as such, his theology is foundational for the development of the whole of Christian theology.

Gene L. Green
Wheaton College, Wheaton, IL

And I Turned to See the Voice: The Rhetoric of Vision in the New Testament. By Edith M. Humphrey. Studies in Theological Interpretation. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007, 238 pp., \$22.99 paper.

This book offers ground-breaking insights into key NT passages: Matt 17:1–8; Mark 9:2–8; Luke 1:5–2:40; 9:28–36; 10:17–24; Acts 7:54–60; 9:1–25; 10:1–11:18; 22:1–22; 26:1–24; 2 Cor 12:1–10; and Rev 1:12–3:22; 4:1–5:14; 11:15–12:17. All the passages include reports of visions—from the angel appearing to John the Baptist's father Zechariah to revelatory scenes in the Apocalypse. When the visions are submitted to careful analysis and comparison, especially pertaining to rhetorical function, the meaning and power of the texts come into sharper focus.

Edith Humphrey is Professor of New Testament Studies at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary. The present book is based partly on sections from previous essays and books (e.g. *Ecstasy and Intimacy: When the Holy Spirit Meets the Human Spirit* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006] and a chapter in *Vision and Persuasion: Rhetorical Dimensions of Apocalyptic Discourse* [St. Louis: Chalice, 1999]). However, these earlier studies have been rewritten, incorporated with fresh material, and placed in a new context so as to demonstrate the rhetorical impact and theological implications of vision-reports in the NT. Humphrey writes in a style that is delightful to read; for example, "vision-reports are allusive, with the symbolism going off in various directions, ringing different bells all at once" (p. 22).

Humphrey's commitment to a hermeneutics of receptivity rather than suspicion is welcome: "It is clear that such an approach will be more congenial to those readers who, like me, have discovered that knowledge is not merely perspectival, nor found wholly in a system of thought, but is found in a Person" (p. 13). She takes seriously the life-giving power and theological purposes of Scripture, focused on the intended transformation of hearers.

Humphrey considers the vision-report to be a genre of its own with several identifying marks: an account of someone having seen the extraordinary; one or more verbal conventions signaling a vision; a literary context in which the vision takes on meaning; and a generally symbolic or allusive impact that cannot be conveyed through words (thus, the need for vision). Vision-reports are not independent units of text that can be decoded into propositional meaning. Rather, they function within a narrative or discourse, and the function—more than simply surprising the reader with the extraordinary—is part and parcel of the author's flow of thought. In this regard Humphrey deftly employs rhetorical analysis, which she introduces for readers unfamiliar with the discipline. Her goal is to understand the persuasive power of the units of text and the effect on listeners. Simply put, she explores how *word* and *image* work together.

Some visions fit very tightly into an author's argument and make specific impressions on a reader; others are more suggestive and use imagery to stir a reader's imagination. Based on their functions, Humphrey categorizes visions as follows: "some visions bring speech to an apt and powerful conclusion; others direct the polemic of a narrative through recapitulation or strategic placement; still others, embryonic in form, subtly shape the message of the passage in which they are embedded; and extensive visions allow the

readers' imaginations freer reign even while they are guided by propositions included with the vision sequence" (p. 28). Humphrey follows this fourfold functional arrangement of vision-reports in the fourteen passages she treats.

Chapter 1 examines cases where a vision clinches the argument of a passage. For example, Paul's report of a man caught up to the third heaven (2 Cor 12:1–10) reveals the rhetorical skill of an apostle who employs irony to lead to the desired conclusion. Unexpectedly, Paul reports no details of the vision: "Those conversant with the formal features of the apocalypse anticipate an interpretation of the vision and perhaps even some *paraenesis* ('exhortatory instruction'). The surprising interpretation given through Paul's inverse 'angel' is that insight into God's mysteries should not elate the one illumined; rather, weakness is the true source of strength" (p. 46).

Chapter 2 takes up Luke's two repeated accounts of visionary experiences and how they direct the argument of the narrative, viz. Peter's sheet and Paul's conversion (Acts 10:1–11:18; 9:1–25; 22:1–22; 26:1–24). In this case, "the visions do not present a *fait accompli* but are artfully presented and combined to lead hearers within the story, and the readers of the story, to certain conclusions" (p. 81). Humphrey warns that a vision-report such as these "has the potential to take on a life of its own and threatens to break loose from its narrative context even while it is gently but significantly guided through repetition" (p. 59). Humphrey's interest in transformation is evident in a concluding comment: "The repeated narratives of Saul's revelations coax the reader to wonder about how the divine light is continuing to make an impact on his or her world and to consider, with Paul, the best way to convince would-be followers of the Way to heed that light" (p. 197).

Chapter 3 focuses on visionary material in the Gospels: the visions embedded in the infancy narratives; the vision Jesus saw of Satan falling from heaven; and the vision of the transfigured Jesus in each of the Synoptics. Humphrey finds that the vision-reports are strategically selected and placed "in order to give the narrative a suggestive but coherent direction" (p. 104). The function of the visions is to highlight the main character of the narrative, and secondarily, to direct attention to "historical, ecclesial, missional, and pneumatological" matters (p. 104).

In chapter 4 Humphrey turns to visions that are the most predominant in a text, yet are the most polyvalent. The visions of the Apocalypse are "almost entirely of allusive visionary language and seemingly far removed from the rational, discursive mode of Paul, more perplexing than the implicit rhetoric of Luke's repeated narratives, and less univocal than the transfiguration episodes" (p. 152). Yet if one reads closely, the visions are punctuated by occasional declarations or propositions that guide listeners to the author's desired effect. Humphrey's commentary on Rev 11:15–12:17, employing structural analysis, form-critical application of hymns, and rhetorical criticism, is masterful. "John's visionary logic is convoluted yet powerful: Rejoice because of your seeming failure; rejoice because of death, for death implies life. The Lamb is a Lion, the fugitive is a queen, and the dragon is already judged as he rampages" (p. 170).

In the conclusion Humphrey admires the "studied wit and artless beauty, the richness of texture and jostle of life evidenced in these vision reports" (p. 204). However, she anticipates that some who read her book may be taken aback by the allusiveness of visions—a bit of playfulness—when a heavier authorial hand would be expected. Conversely, others may be put off by such things as the harsh judgment of the Apocalypse. In response Humphrey appeals "to a larger, demanding meta-narrative, whose Author cannot be controlled" (p. 206).

Though some parts of Humphrey's book seem to have been written with non-professionals in mind, other portions employ a considerable amount of technical terminology (e.g. *topos*, *chreia*, *demonstratio*, *ethos*, *apokalypsis*, *telos*, *merkabah*), though in most cases the first time a term appears it is defined (often in a footnote). The book

is most appropriate for graduate students, well-read pastors, and especially anyone writing commentary.

In general, while there are occasional points where readers may disagree with Humphrey—and she clearly admits places where debates exist among scholars (and she does not necessarily follow the consensus)—on the whole there are no significant flaws in her method or in her conclusions. It is a book that needed to be written. It offers original interpretive insights. In the spirit of the series, *Studies in Theological Interpretation*, the book seeks to discover the governing intent of the passages under consideration—in the full light of God and his program, with a balance of faith and reason, and with reference to the best of current NT scholarship. That adds up to a significant book.

D. Brent Sandy
Grace College, Winona Lake, IN

In the Name of Jesus: Exorcism among Early Christians. By Graham H. Twelftree. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007, 351 pp., \$26.99 paper.

Graham Twelftree, an expert on the subject of Jesus as an exorcist and miracle worker, presents us here with a meticulously detailed exegetical study on exorcism in the early church. The aim of his book is twofold. First, it examines the place of exorcism among early Christians. Second, it explores the importance of exorcism and how it was practiced. The book contains thirteen chapters and concludes with a select bibliography and helpful indexes on ancient writings, authors, and subjects.

Part 1 (chaps. 1–2) sets the stage for the book. In chapter 1, Twelftree outlines the problem, highlighting that while some scholars contend that exorcism played a significant role in early Christianity, others disagree. Besides, the NT itself seems to present divergent, if not contradictory, views on the place of exorcism in Jesus' ministry—while the Synoptics give a prominent place to exorcism, John is completely silent on the matter, and Paul appears to say nothing about it either. Twelftree investigates the writings of both the NT and the second century, using the latter writings as a lens to help us see aspects of the former that might otherwise escape us. Chapter 2 describes how Jesus' followers perceived him as an exorcist and sets out the options and models of exorcism that were available to the early Christians. Twelftree shows that exorcism was prevalent in antiquity, ranging from exorcists of ancient magic (where what was said and done was important) to charismatic magicians (whose presence combined with what was said and done was critical) to charismatic exorcists (whose success was solely dependent on their identity). Twelftree argues that, while Jesus is best described as a charismatic magician, his followers fit better into the category of magicians since their method of exorcism (“in the name of Jesus”) shows that they were dependent on an outside power-authority rather than on their own identity.

Part 2 (chaps. 3–9) scrutinizes the NT documents in chronological order. Although Paul makes no clear reference to Jesus being an exorcist or to himself performing exorcisms, Twelftree argues that there is some evidence that, modeled on Jesus' ministry, Paul also had a miracle-working ministry that probably included exorcism (chap. 3). Regarding Q, the material common to Matthew and Luke that is absent from Mark, Twelftree discovers that for the Jesus of Q exorcism has a relatively low priority. Exorcisms are only mentioned late in Q and are visible expressions of the coming of the kingdom of God (chap. 4). For Mark, exorcism is empowered by the Spirit and is the most important aspect of Christian ministry, wherein the demonic and exorcism are

interpreted in spiritual rather than socio-political categories. Thus, Jesus and his followers are engaged in a battle with Satan (rather than the Romans), and exorcism is liberation from demonic oppression. For Mark, an exorcism performed “in the name of Jesus” by a follower of Jesus was an exorcism done by Jesus himself (chap. 5).

Luke, Twelftree observes, broadens the scope of the demonic so that all sickness is given a demonic dimension and healing stories are exorcisms. For Luke, exorcism among early Christians is the ongoing activity of Jesus himself, bringing eschatological salvation. However, unlike Mark, exorcism is not the most important aspect of Christian ministry but part of a wider mandate involving word and deed (chap. 6). Matthew gives low priority to exorcism since it is the proclaimed word that is given importance in the ministry of early Christians. Nevertheless, Matthew perceived exorcism as part of the evangelistic activity of the early Christians, signifying both the first stage of the defeat of Satan and the eschatological realization of God’s powerful presence (chap. 7). Regarding 1 Peter, Hebrews, and James, Twelftree discovers only hints of exorcism (chap. 8). John is surprisingly silent on the subject, and Twelftree suggests that in John’s Gospel the entire ministry of Jesus is characterized as a battle with Satan, whereby the demonic is overcome by truth rather than by the power encounter of an exorcism (chap. 9).

Part 3 (chaps. 10–12) examines the literature of the second century. Looking at some “orthodox” literature of the early second century (e.g. *1 Clement*, *Shepherd of Hermas*, *Didache*, *Letter of Barnabas*), Twelftree discovers that these writings do not show an interest in exorcism (chap. 10). While some literature of the latter half of the second century resembles John’s Gospel in showing no interest in exorcism (the *Letter to Diognetus*, the writings of Athenagoras and Clement of Alexandria), other writings (e.g. the longer ending of Mark, the writings of Justin Martyr, Tatian, and Irenaeus, and the *Apostolic Tradition*) demonstrate a renewed interest in exorcism (chap. 11). Twelftree gets mixed results from his examination of critics of Christianity (chap. 12): from no obvious interest in exorcism (Galen), to Christian exorcism being indistinguishable from other kinds of exorcisms (Celsus), to a probable involvement in exorcism (Lucian of Samosata).

Chapter 13 contains Twelftree’s conclusions. First, exorcism varied in importance among early Christians—ranging from a high interest in Mark to no interest in John, with Luke, Matthew, Q, and Paul in between. Regarding the function and practice of exorcism, Paul does not provide much information, while the Synoptics encourage their readers to be dependent on Jesus in their exorcisms rather than copying him. With various nuances, the Synoptics understand exorcisms as tangible expressions of the coming of the kingdom or powerful presence of God. From his examination of second-century literature, Twelftree draws some important conclusions: (1) the early second century shows no interests in exorcism; (2) some writings, in keeping with John’s Gospel, indicate that the demonic is defeated by the truth; (3) in the middle of the second century there is a renewed interest in exorcism. Twelftree’s explanation for this change is that the acceptance of the longer ending of Mark in Rome marks the renaissance of interest in exorcism in that city (and beyond). In sum, exorcism was neither widespread in early Christianity nor the primary evangelistic method; there were other ways to confront the demonic, and hence some churches may not have thought it necessary to have a ministry of exorcism.

The major strength of the book is the inclusion of literature from the second century, whereby Twelftree is able to demonstrate that the function of Jesus in early Christianity was much more varied than we might conclude from the NT. I was also impressed at the breadth, depth, and rigor of Twelftree’s research. Nevertheless, there are a few weaknesses. First, I would have expected more interaction with the monographs of Eric Sorensen (*Possession and Exorcism in the New Testament and Early Christianity* [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002]) and Clinton Wahlen (*Jesus and the Impurity of Spirits in the Synoptic Gospels* [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004]) and perhaps some reference to

Robert P. Menzies, *Empowered for Witness: The Spirit in Luke-Acts* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994).

Second, while his chapters on the Gospels and Acts are solid, in his treatment of Paul, Twelftree sometimes seems to move too quickly from possibilities to certainties. Besides, his chapter on Q may need more justification in the light of the growing minority view that dispenses with Q. Third, Twelftree's assertion that the Johannine Jesus does not rely on any source of power-authority for his miracles is perhaps overstated. I think a case can be made that the Spirit did not only empower Jesus for his teaching (John 1:32; 3:34) but also for his miracles, because he received the Spirit of wisdom *and power* (John 1:32 alludes to Isa 11:2). Besides, Jesus only did what he saw the Father doing (John 5:19–20), which would naturally include the performance of miracles, and, if this "seeing" possibly occurred by means of the Spirit, the Spirit could also have been the means by which Jesus did miracles.

Despite these comments, Twelftree's case for the place and practice of exorcism among early Christians is convincing overall and a must-read for anyone interested in the subject. This book is not for the faint-hearted since the argument is often elaborate and technical, sometimes to the point of tedium, but it is undoubtedly the best academic work on the subject. I highly recommend the book to those who wish to delve deeper into the issue of exorcism to understand its nature and place in the church—then and now.

Cornelis Bennema

South Asia Institute of Advanced Christian Studies, Bangalore, India

Protestant Theology at the Crossroads: How to Face the Crucial Tasks for Theology in the Twenty-First Century. By Gerhard Sauter. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007, xxiv + 180 pp., \$24.00 paper.

Gerhard Sauter, a self-professed German confessional "mongrel," is professor of systematic and ecumenical theology at the University of Bonn, where he occupies the chair once held by Karl Barth. Placing his own background and ecumenical interests on display, *Protestant Theology at the Crossroads* presents a sagely series of reflections on what the author sees as the crucial issues facing theology today. Unlike his earlier *Gateways to Dogmatics* (Eerdmans, 2003), this present volume, largely composed of his 2000 Warfield Lectures at Princeton Seminary, is loosely organized and less tightly argued. Nevertheless, the book is held together by two themes also important in the author's previous works, namely, the centrality of hope and the necessity of dogmatics for navigating the troubled waters of contemporary culture, church life, and Christian theology.

The first chapter takes up the question of "what dare we hope?" at the beginning of the third millennium. Sauter begins by contrasting true Christian hope with false "hopes" such as the bizarre apocalyptic expectations of fanatics and the overly realistic hopes of German Protestant churches at the turn of the millennium. The latter tended to produce responses of repulsion and apathy respectively, while the former may prove an indispensable source for responsible Christian living. He further laments the hope-shrinking influences of Protestant liberalism, Bultmannian existentialism, and modern science, and calls Christians to a life-energizing and invigorating hope, as propounded in the theology of Jürgen Moltmann, for example. Most noteworthy is the author's reflections on the meaning of the biblical idea of promise and fulfillment. Fulfillment in the OT, he writes, "does not mean the execution of something predicted by God, something finished at a certain time in such a way that people can assert: 'It is done, from now on we ourselves can build on this ground.'" In contrast, he notes: "[F]ulfillment

characterizes the very special way and manner God acts to pursue his will. Therefore, fulfillment often shatters expectations based on God's promises; it reshapes them and leads to a renewed hope" (p. 12). Fulfillment is surprising but sure, and this characterizes our hope.

Chapter two builds on this theme, asking whether there is a shared hope that could function as the basis for unity between Jews and Christians. Sauter examines various Jewish conceptions of the Christian hope (e.g. that Christ's death is the sum total of our hope or that our hope has no public dimension) and concludes that a misconstrual of the already-not yet dimension of Christian hope has led to still ongoing misunderstandings. Furthermore, the far too common view that sees future redemption as the completion of an historical process toward human betterment does not capture the "holistic" nature of hope or redemption. In the end, the hope shared by Jews and Christians is that of the end of the world, the hope "that is aware of God's acting here and now, opening us up for the expectation of new heavens and a new earth, where God's righteousness dwells" (p. 32).

In the next chapter Sauter highlights the need for theology to inform proper Bible reading. The author's position is reminiscent of Calvin who, in his preface to the reader, explains that a purpose of the *Institutes* is the instruction of candidates in theology "for the reading of the divine Word, in order that they may be able both to have easy access to it and to advance in it without stumbling." Sauter's basic position here is little different than that of the growing number of advocates for the theological interpretation of Scripture. For example, one finds in Sauter's account the "Yale school" emphasis on identity-shaping narratives and something similar to Kevin Vanhoozer's stress on biblical genres and the variety of skills involved in reading them aright. In addition, Sauter particularly underscores three theological motifs through which one can profitably engage in the art of Bible reading: letter and spirit, law and gospel, and promise and fulfillment. Herein one gets a sense of the author's Lutheran and Reformed influences.

The question of chapter four is: Why Christian dogmatics? The answer: "Without dogmatics the church runs the risk of losing itself in ideological confrontations or in the plurality of religious opinions" (p. 73). Dogmatics, according to Sauter, is indispensable for the church to play its role correctly, that is, according to its "script." In a brief manner, the author here connects doctrine and praxis, a definite need in theology today (see Vanhoozer's *The Drama of Doctrine* for his directive theory of doctrine that links church performance to the "dramaturgical" guidance of doctrine). Theology (as church dogmatics) is the memory of the church (so Bonhoeffer). Therefore, for the church to perform its public task well, there must be the clear self-understanding that comes through dogmatics. Chapter four may be viewed as the basis for the remaining chapters.

The fifth chapter looks at the doctrine of justification and its ecumenical potential. After debunking caricatures of the historical differences between Catholics and Protestants and their respective doctrines of the justification, Sauter highlights the recent breakthroughs in dialogue between the Lutheran World Federation and the Roman Catholic Church, as exemplified in their *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification*. This document underscores a shared understanding of justification as "a dynamic and decisive action of the triune God, the judge and savior," in which he "liberates the sinner from the power of the hostility against God's creative will, and at the same time unites the justified person with Christ" (pp. 92-93). According to Sauter, this understanding of justification is fruitful for future ecumenical dialogue for at least two reasons. First, because justification is an action of the sovereign God, there is no room for one Christian community to boast over another. Second, and more important, because justification is also liberation from hostility against God's will, Christian "performance" may become the truer test of ecclesial verity.

In chapter six, the author takes issue with two main features of various modern conceptions of contextual theology. First, he opposes the view that the reader's context is decisive for the interpretation of any text. According to some theorists, it is not what the text says that counts, but rather what it can mean under certain circumstances. Second, he rejects the reduction of theology's context to the urgent political, social, and economic needs of the day. Instead, Sauter proposes that theology must be situation-related but not situation-dominated, not deriving its form and content from its current socio-political situation. Dogmatics, however, protects theology from slipping into captivity to context by defining the task and character of the church.

The next three chapters elaborate on the theme of the church's role in society, offering poignant examples of public theology gone awry. In chapter seven, he makes several theological observations related to the events before and after the fall of the Berlin Wall. For example, he recalls the major reluctance of many people to speak of God's action in history. Because God was "silent" during the perplexing tragedies of Auschwitz and Stalingrad, how can one state with any certainty that he was involved in the surprising events of 1989? Sauter argues for a cautious appeal to God's providence, but warns against any naïve identification of European politics or history with God's revelation and will (echoes of Barth's protest against the German theologians of his day). Chapter eight presents a not-too-novel analysis of the religious dimension of American self-understanding. The author analyzes the American tendency to view itself as a "city on a hill," a beacon of light to the dark world, a nation with a unique destiny that enjoys the special providence of God. His critique centers on the inappropriate responses of Americans after disastrous events like September 11, 2001. "Where was God?" according to Sauter, is the wrong question. In chapter nine, he examines three inadequate models of public theology—those of David Tracy, Ronald Thiemann, and Owen Thomas. He finds in all three approaches the propensity for taking their primary cues from the culture rather than from Christian dogmatics. Only when the church knows what it is and what it has to say can it engage the public sphere faithfully.

In the final chapter, Sauter tackles the current state of Reformed theology and church life. Through interaction with Michael Welker and David Willis's *Toward the Future of Reformed Theology*, he makes seven key observations, sometimes offering criticisms, sometimes posing important queries. He questions, for example, whether the administration of the Reformed churches has fallen prey to following "political modes of thought and decision making" (p. 174). He further challenges the "difficult and troublesome" relationship between eschatology and history in Reformed thought. Sauter claims that over time thinkers began to develop a theology of the kingdom of God according to the course of world history, a tendency similar to that of American dispensationalism (p. 179). As a positive, he commends the all-encompassing Reformed (especially Calvin's) doctrine of the Holy Spirit and encourages renewed attention to the doctrine, as this may lead to greater insights into what it means for Christ to be present in the Lord's Supper (p. 178). In the end, he is hopeful about the Reformed tradition.

Among the positive features of the book are the following. First, the ringing chorus throughout the book that church dogmatics is essential to every theological task is something that needs to be heard. In his *Gateways to Dogmatics* Sauter asserts that dogmatics is "a movement of thought" that carries within it "the astonishing power of renewal" (p. xix). Indeed, if the church has the self-understanding afforded it by a robust dogmatic theology, it could then determine what its proper public tasks are and how to go about achieving them. Barth put it powerfully: "I believe that it is expected of the Church and its theology . . . that it should keep precisely to the rhythm of its own relevant concerns, and thus consider well what are the *real* needs of the day by which its own programme should be directed." The man on the street, whose needs so powerfully direct the course of much contemporary theology, will really take notice of the church

“when we do not worry about what he expects of us but do what we are charged to do” (*Church Dogmatics* 1.1, xvi). This emphasis in Sauter’s work is commendable.

Second, his caution that we do not identify the course of world history with the will and revelation of God is much needed. His European and American examples demonstrate that this temptation may take different forms in different contexts, but it is no less ever-present. Sauter reminds us that God’s “fulfillments” are often surprising and that his relationship to nations is very complex.

Finally, and related to the last point, given the paucity of theologies of hope, identifying hope as a central theological concern is a breath of fresh air, particularly amidst the seemingly hopeless and slowly deadening atmosphere of today’s church and world. Although he touches on it in only a few pages, Sauter’s reminder of the centrality of hope to the Christian life and, therefore, Christian theology is important. (For more on his theology of hope, see his earlier volume entitled *What Dare We Hope? Reconsidering Eschatology* [Trinity, 1999]).

Among the few questions raised during my reading are the following. First, though his overall selection of crucial tasks facing theology are well chosen, one stands out as a bit idiosyncratic, namely, Jewish-Christian dialogue. Is such *theological* discourse a central concern for Protestant theology as it faces the twenty-first century? No doubt, fostering relationships with our Jewish neighbors is important, but it is difficult to see it as a *crucial* task facing theology. Furthermore, in the author’s introduction, he writes: “To be accountable for hope requires engagement in dialogue with Jewish readers concerning their Scripture and their reasoning with Scripture” (p. xvi). But why is this the case? If Christians never engage in conversation with Jewish thinkers, would their theology of hope necessarily be malnourished? It appears from Sauter’s conclusions in chapter two that the result of such dialogue is the acknowledgement that what is common between Christian and Jewish hope lacks much content and commonality (i.e. that both look for a new heavens and earth).

Second, the numerous references to events in Hungary and Poland, coupled with the peculiar selection and arrangement of essays, makes the book feel piecemeal and anecdotal. Thought does not necessarily build on thought, as one paper may repeat the ideas of the last (or make no mention of them at all). The side-by-side placement of three or four chapters on public theology, for instance, struck me as odd. These are preceded by two chapters on hope, two on dogmatics, and one on justification and Catholic-Lutheran relations. The final chapter on the current state of Reformed theology just hangs there, having no thread linking it to the previous essays.

That being said, given that the book is a collection of essays and talks written and delivered on different occasions, one cannot make too much of structure and flow. Taken for what it is, *Protestant Theology at the Crossroads* provides thoughtful exposure to issues facing contemporary theology from one European perspective. It may be a helpful primer to North American students of theology who are unfamiliar with these current issues or with the vantage point from which they are presented.

Uche Anizor
Wheaton College, Wheaton, IL

The Genius of Luther’s Theology: A Wittenberg Way of Thinking for the Contemporary Church. By Robert Kolb and Charles P. Arand. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008, 240 pp., \$21.99 paper.

The title of this book is doubly audacious: first, in claiming something ingenious about Luther’s theology (a claim at which many today, especially in Pauline studies,

would scoff), and, second, in claiming to have unlocked it. As I turned the final page, however, I was convinced that such audacity was vindicated and even called for. In this marvelously accessible volume exegeting the irascible German's theological core, a pair of Lutheran theologians explore two fundamental presuppositions to Luther's theology, building bridges along the way into the twenty-first century church. Professors Kolb and Arand both teach systematic theology at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, Missouri.

Before moving to content, a word is needed on what makes this book distinctive. First, Kolb and Arand write neither as academicians to the academy nor as church leaders to the church, but as academicians to the church. Though experts in theology themselves, they have not targeted doctorally-endowed minds but everyday believers. Such a marriage of church and academy—the latter explicitly serving the former—is frequently extolled today but rarely executed. Yet not only in *how* and *to whom* but in *why* they have written, second, the authors have resisted the urge to remain in the rarified air of theological scholarship. Time and again Kolb and Arand connect their analysis with the current needs of today's church. Lay church members will not only understand this book but will be expertly guided in transposing Luther's key insights into their own lives and local churches. Third, this book is not an attempt at comprehensive theological analysis of Luther and his disciples. Rather than obligating themselves to treat Luther systematically, the authors pinpoint and explore two foundational presuppositions with which Luther went about his ministry. This book is unique, then, in audience, purpose, and scope.

The two presuppositions form the two halves of *The Genius of Luther's Theology*. Part One explores Luther's anthropology, employing the hermeneutical matrix of his "two kinds of righteousness." By delineating this righteousness as "active" and "passive," the authors do not refer to Christ's own active (law-fulfilling) and passive (penalty-bearing) righteousness as traditionally conceived within Reformed theology, but rather to the objective righteousness unilaterally given to the believer (received passively) and the subjective righteousness in which one then (actively) responds in faith-filled obedience. As both dimensions of righteousness work in tandem, humanity once again becomes, meaningfully though not perfectly, what it was meant to be. After defining what it means to be human, chapter one delineates these two spheres of existence and insists that, though inseparable, the two aspects of righteousness must be kept distinct, alleging that the "crux of the Lutheran reformation" hinged on this distinction (p. 30).

Chapter two lays out Luther's understanding of the gospel itself. Illuminating the Reformer's understanding of God's grace against the backdrop of medieval teaching on the final judgment, Kolb and Arand recount Luther's conversion, ignited by his famous breakthrough reading of God's righteousness in Rom 1:17. Following discussions of the atonement, the instrumentality of the Word in receiving God's saving righteousness and the falsity (despite being *simul justus et peccator*) of calling justification a "legal fiction" is one of the most moving sections of the book. The authors explain the "joyous exchange," illustrated so often by Luther in marital terms, in which Christ and all his riches become mine as I and all my poverty become his. This leads to a consideration of the nature of faith, which ignores one's own moral résumé and looks instead to God's promise in Christ.

Transitioning from vertical (passive) to horizontal (active) righteousness, chapter three explores what it means to live truly as a human. Four elements of Luther's thought contribute here. First, Luther repeatedly emphasizes the need to recognize the goodness of God's creation and the value of simple, everyday care for our neighbors in material ways. Second, interpersonal righteousness manifests itself comprehensively, in the four basic "spheres of life": the family (which received particular attention from Luther); economics; the government; and religious life. The bottom line is that in all of these, "Luther's positive view of creation led him to heap praises on ordinary activities carried out within creaturely walks of life" (p. 63). Third is Luther's view of law, both

natural law and the Ten Commandments. A helpful discussion explores the fundamental nature of the first commandment. Due to the idolatrous displacement of God inherent in all sin, transgression of commandments two through ten necessarily includes breach of the first. Fourth, wisdom is required for healthy living. Such wisdom includes love, common sense, and virtue.

Chapter four explores more fully a theme that briefly surfaced in chapter two: human identity. In ways reminiscent of Cornelius Plantinga's eye-opening *Not the Way It's Supposed to Be*, Kolb and Arand show how Luther exposes the ugliness of self-glorification and the psychological disintegration that invariably follows self-reliance. Echoing Luther's conviction that "[n]othing could be more counterintuitive for human beings after the fall into sin than to ignore the law with its demand that we take action" (p. 78), Kolb and Arand see legalistic self-help as the central postlapsarian symptom of our diseased hearts. It is "the tragedy of human destiny" (p. 80). Reflection on various "theologies of self-glorification" leads to discussions of medieval reward-seeking, monasticism, contemporary "self-esteem," neo-Gnosticism, materialism, neopaganism, and Bonhoeffer's notion of "cheap grace." What is the solution to these diverse forms of moral self-assertion? It is regeneration and a life of ongoing repentance.

Faith is the subject of chapter five. Demonstrating that Luther kept human obedience completely out of one's acceptance before God without ever sliding into antinomianism, the authors explain how true faith necessarily changes the impulses at the core of one's will. How *are* we, then, to view works? Kolb and Arand probe how those who have been freely put right with God are liberated to live *in* the world (contra Gnosticism or monasticism) without being *of* it (contra materialism or worldliness). Rejecting a sacred/secular distinction, God's children gratefully embrace the mundane in everyday existence with joy and energy. Moreover, faith lets God be God even as we work as hard as possible, submitting in childlike trust to his fatherly governance. Luther's understanding of sanctification rounds out this chapter, returning to the rubric of two kinds of righteousness to articulate both positional and progressive dimensions to sanctification.

Part Two turns from Luther's anthropology to his critical understanding of the Word of God—that is, from "what it means to be human" to "the way God works in the world" (p. 10). For Luther, "the Word of God" denotes not only the Bible but, more broadly, God's revealed message of a gracious salvation—a message captured most objectively, of course, in the Scriptures. After placing Luther historically in fourteenth-century Ockhamism, chapter six surveys several functions of the Word. First, God's Word creates. What God says, *is*. His Word also recreates, second, as sinners are brought into reconciliation with God (2 Cor 4:6). Third, by the Word, God continues to this very day to initiate and sustain conversation with his human creatures. Fourth, the Word educes faith in his people, drawing them out of their various idolatries into trusting reliance upon him. Fifth, his Word reveals all we know of God while, due to his infinitude, keeping much of him hidden. A critical point here is Luther's paradoxical "theology of the cross:" the way in which humans know God is, oddly, through a cross. Sixth, God's Word contains law and gospel, demand and grace, standard and provision. Though his Word prescribes ideal human existence, the law cannot generate that life among fallen people. Consequently, the Word also extends the gospel, "God's gift of new life in Christ" (p. 153), including justification, forgiveness, and a new identity.

Chapter seven engages the two primary embodiments of God's Word: Jesus Christ (the Word in a human body) and the Bible (the Word in a human book). Discussion of the former includes reflection on the hypostatic union, the atonement, and the "joyous exchange." The written Word is explained by reference to Scripture's sufficiency, vibrancy, and authority, as well as the asymmetrical relationship between confessional statements and Scripture.

In chapter eight Kolb and Arand return to the theme of the goodness of the created order to examine Luther's understanding of the means of grace. "God blesses his

people," reads a crisp summary of the chapter, "with the gift of restored life as children of God through his re-creative Word, as it comes in its several forms, oral, written, sacramental, in the means of grace" (p. 179). These three components provide the substance of the chapter: the oral Word, focusing particularly on preaching, confession/absolution, and small groups; the written and heard Word, zeroing in on prayer, meditation, and *Anfechtung* (trials); and the sacramental Word, including baptism and the Lord's Supper.

Chapter nine helpfully articulates how Luther envisioned God's people communicating the Word to one another. Extended reflections on the need for purity of teaching and Luther's metaphor of doctrine as a body start the chapter, before the author moves into warmly edifying exegesis of Luther's view of prayer as the natural human reaction of God's children to his Word, as well as the reality of persecution. A brief concluding chapter underscores the immediate relevance of Luther's theology as everyday Christians strive to understand both what it means to be human and how God has chosen to communicate with such humans.

A few weaknesses could be mentioned. First, at numerous points an explication of a strand of Luther's thought could have been more powerfully underscored by recourse to extra-Lutheran support. Throughout the book the authors repeatedly call in Paul Althaus, Oswald Bayer, and Gerhard Forde to solidify their points. One wishes that what is manifestly an in-house Lutheran discussion had been broadened out to include non-Lutherans who would still have agreed on the essentials. A tangible example is the way the already/not yet of Christian experience is explained (pp. 127–28). Despite drawing on World War II for an analogy, the authors ignore Ridderbos's helpful and widely-employed use of this war to make the same point (that though new creatures in Christ lose battles here and there, the war has been won). Another example is an infelicitous endorsement of "baptismal regeneration," which may needlessly distance some Protestant readers (p. 209). A second weakness is occasional redundancy, presumably due to dual authorship. Two different discussions of the "joyous exchange," for example, cite the very same extended quote of Luther's (pp. 39–40 and pp. 165–66).

The strengths of the book, however, more than make up for any weaknesses. The first two strengths have already been mentioned above as distinctives. First, discoveries unearthed in the mines of academia have been made accessible to all. While Kolb and Arand have reflected long and hard on both primary and secondary sources, their goal is not academic impressiveness. This is confirmed in the second strength: relevance to the contemporary church, a goal indicated by the book's subtitle. Time and again the authors bridge their analysis of Luther's core theological convictions into today's church. At times, perhaps, their analysis of currents within evangelicalism could have been more penetrating and extensive, yet interaction with the various voices calling for different kinds of evangelical reform would quickly have ballooned the volume into a much larger, and in some ways a different, project. They have stuck to their purpose—elucidating Luther's doctrinal center—bringing their findings to bear on numerous live issues in the church, including the gospel itself, God's character, money, divine law, living in but not of the world, preaching, the sacraments, prayer, and persecution.

Third, a helpful emphasis throughout was Luther's persistent preaching of the goodness of creation. This emphasis on creation provides a refreshing corrective to an unfair stereotype of Lutheranism as concerned only with justification by faith in the life of an individual sinner. The emphasis on how the gospel energizes praxis in *this* world also helps expose the historical nearsightedness of some today claiming to have uncovered the "secret" or "lost" message of Jesus. Luther's soteriology ignited, rather than sidelined, his understanding of kingdom living in the here and now. Fourth, *The Genius of Luther's Theology* holds tremendous cash value for church leaders. This would be a marvelous book for a pastor to work through with his staff, or, in a theologically conscientious church, for use in the context of small group study. For seminary and Bible

college professors, at the same time, this book could join hands with either a more comprehensive study of Luther's theology (P. Althaus's meaty 1966 study remains a standard) or a biography (e.g. R. Bainton's *Here I Stand*) in a course on Luther or Reformation theology.

All the foregoing strengths make this book worthwhile, but a fifth and final strength contains, to my mind, the key to its significance and timeliness. If hundreds of pastors all over the English-speaking world were to read and digest the message of *The Genius of Luther's Theology*, Christianity could, under God, experience another Great Awakening. With all due gratitude to Professors Kolb and Arand, this is not due to any cleverness of their own. Rather, they have simply latched onto the gospel itself, in all its counter-intuitive, doctrinally-contoured, conscience-cleansing, wrath-remembering, love-generating dimensions. In today's fragmented, atheological evangelical mishmash, nothing could be more important. As pastors and writers have scrambled to delineate the boundaries of evangelicalism, the center—the gospel—has gone neglected. Indeed, confusion over the gospel is rampant today both in our pews and in our seminary classrooms. For some, the gospel is the announcement of Jesus' lordship; for others, the arrival of the kingdom of God and its ramifications for this life; for still others, a story (not propositions) in which we are invited to participate. Yet as important as Christ's dominion, the coming of the kingdom, and the ongoing biblical narrative are, none of them is the gospel. Looking at and reflecting on a single core reality from various angles, Kolb and Arand, through the penetrating mind and prickly temper of Martin Luther, have reminded us that the gospel is simply the counter-intuitive announcement that one is put irreversibly right with and perfectly approved before God by looking, in trusting faith, to Christ, against all fallen human instinct to earn one's salvation. Luther came to see that the only thing that qualified him for divine approval was a frank recognition that he did not qualify. Self-despair was the way out of despair. Approaching God not only having emptied his hands of rebellious wickedness but also scrupulously meticulous obedience, Luther clung only to Christ, God's promise in flesh and blood. Impatient with the domestications of Luther, human sin, and divine holiness so pervasive in various branches of evangelicalism today, Kolb and Arand have, like the Reformer, brought us back to the heart of biblical theology—free grace, received open- and empty-handed, by virtue of the ultimate sacrifice. This, indeed, is the genius of Luther's theology.

Dane Ortlund
Wheaton College, Wheaton, IL

The Great Commission: Evangelicals and the History of World Missions. By Martin I. Klauber and Scott Manetsch, eds. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2008, xii + 228 pp., \$14.99 paper.

The Great Commission is the fruit of a conference on the history of evangelical missions held at Trinity International University in April 2006 in honor of long-time Trinity church history professor John Woodbridge. Twelve scholars from diverse denominational and ethnic backgrounds contributed to the volume, which includes: an introduction (Douglas Sweeney), three articles on early Protestant missions (Glenn Sunshine, Jon Hinkson, Timothy George), three articles on modern Anglo-American missions (Bradley Gundlach, Thomas Nettles, Fred Beuttler), three articles on majority world missions (Daniel Salinas, Richard Cook, Tite Tiénou), and a final article on the biblical and theological imperative for the ongoing work of global missions (D. A. Carson).

The appendix by Alice Ott provides a nice annotated and descriptive bibliography of Woodbridge's published works.

As a volume treating the period of missions history since the Reformation, *The Great Commission* generally resembles Stephen Neill's *History of Christian Missions*; however, Neill's work surveys missions history from the early church through the twentieth century. As Neill completed his study in 1964 and thus does not treat the significant growth of global Christianity in the past forty plus years, and because Neill does not have a high appreciation for evangelical missions, *The Great Commission* is a much-needed contribution. Similarly, the volume also compliments J. Herbert Kane's short work *Concise History of the Christian World Mission* (1982). In fact, Tiéno, in his article, detects and challenges Kane's subtle western hegemony in narrating missions history. *The Great Commission* is also comparable to Ruth Tucker's *From Jerusalem to Irian Jaya*, though Tucker's biographical approach is distinct from the critical essays in this volume. By treating evangelical missions history since the Reformation, *The Great Commission* also overlaps with Timothy Yates's *Christian Mission in the Twentieth Century*. Finally, the chapters on majority world missions relate very much to the recent works of Phillip Jenkins (*The Next Christendom; The New Faces of Christianity*), Lamin Sanneh (*Whose Religion is Christianity?; The Changing Face of Christianity*) and Samuel Escobar (*The New Global Mission; Changing Tides*). In short, this collection of essays focused on the history evangelical missions is a necessary contribution to the noted scholarship on missions history.

Supported by the contributions of various authors writing in their area of specialization, *The Great Commission* as a whole has many strengths, and several will be discussed here. Despite the overlap of material in some places—especially between Hinkson, George, and Nettles—the contributors have either collaborated well or the editors have done a good job in reducing redundant material.

First, the work is characterized by some compelling arguments. For instance, George makes a fine case for Christian literature—including Jonathan Edwards's *The Life of David Brainerd* and William Carey's *Enquiry*—being a catalyst for motivating the church toward a global missions commitment. Carey's status as the "father of modern missions" is moderated somewhat by George's insightful assertion that three other books by Protestants Thomas Coke, David Brown, and Charles Grant appeared in the decade prior to Carey's *Enquiry*. Nettles challenges the prevailing view (cf. Estep, *Whole Gospel, Whole World*, p. 7) that late eighteenth-century British Particular Baptists were anti-missionary. Through a careful re-examination of primary sources, Nettles offers the fresh perspective that the point of contention between Carey and John Ryland, Sr. was actually over the *means* of fulfilling the Great Commission—not whether the Lord's command was still relevant to believers in every generation. Finally, in what is arguably the best article in the volume, Tiéno also challenges the work of missions historians who have failed to acknowledge the role of "native missionaries" in the spread of the gospel in Africa. Tiéno responds with a well-documented, compelling, and beautiful account of the ministries of African indigenous missionaries, especially in West Africa in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

A second strength of *The Great Commission* is that, without sacrificing critical scholarship, a number of the contributors have proven to be excellent storytellers. In this sense, they continue the legacy of professor Woodbridge, a gifted history teacher partly because of his ability to spin effectively the historical narrative. In Hinkson's chapter "Missions among Puritans and Pietists," he recounts colorfully the experiences of John Eliot, David Brainerd, the Mayhews, Ziegenbalg and Plutshau, and the Moravians. Hinkson's narrative is also profitable because it raises a number of missiological issues and strategies that modern missionaries continue to face: spiritual warfare,

the necessity of language study, youth ministry, contextualization and Bible translation, and raising financial support for missions.

While Hinkson's chapter is perhaps more inspiring, Gundlach offers a sobering account of the failure of Indian missions in the hostile North American context. Indeed, reflecting on the negative aspects of missions history is a valuable exercise. Indeed, the contemporary church can learn from such mistakes and avoid them, and also realize that suffering is an expected part of the missionary endeavor.

A third important aspect of the work is that the significant missionary movement from the majority world (outside of North America and Europe) has been recognized. This is especially important for many North American Christians whose profile of a missionary is still limited to the likes of David Livingstone and Jim Elliot. Thus accounts of the missionary efforts of João Jorge de Oliveira and Bokari Saba offer a more balanced picture of nineteenth- and twentieth-century missions and inform readers that thousands of non-western missionaries are presently serving around the globe. The section on majority world missions is even more credible because two of three articles are written by non-North Americans—"The Great Commission in Latin America" is written by Daniel Salinas from Paraguay, and "The Great Commission in Africa" is authored by the recognized West African scholar Tite Tiénou.

Finally, while the authors skillfully interact with the history of evangelical missions since the Reformation, they also highlight the important place of a theology of mission. Sunshine and Hinkson reveal a Lutheran theology that was almost anti-missionary, while George and Nettles ably discuss the shift in mission theology that took place in England around 1792 (which, of course, was key to the birth of the modern missions movement). On the other hand, Beuttler correctly shows that liberal theology dealt a death blow to the missionary zeal of the Student Volunteer Movement. Though often subtle, reflections on theology of mission can be found throughout the work. Then, in the closing chapter, Carson bases his imperative for continuing to obey the Great Commission on a firm biblical and theological basis. Originally given as the conference banquet speech, Carson's contribution is by far the most passionate, and he does not refrain from criticizing those who threaten sound mission theology—especially Brian McLaren. Hence, in faithfully narrating missions history, the contributors to *The Great Commission* also make important assertions about the place of mission theology in mission practice.

Though overall *The Great Commission* is a very helpful resource, I do have some brief critiques. First, Sunshine asserts that the absence of a deliberate missions movement during the period of the magisterial Reformers was because physical access between the European continent and foreign fields was blocked due to the political situation. A creative thesis that Sunshine has endeavored to support, it nonetheless seems overstated. The consensus of scholarship is that the magisterial Reformers' inaction was due mostly to theology. Indeed, Sunshine himself shows that Calvin taught that Matthew's Great Commission text applies only to the apostles. Furthermore, Hinkson argues that the Pietists' commitment to missions was radical because they came from a Lutheran tradition that seemed quite averse to foreign missions.

In the period prior to the Reformation, the Italian Jesuit Matteo Ricci (1552–1610) succeeded in accessing the previously closed Chinese interior. Around 1300, Franciscan monks went East, penetrating the wall of Islam in order to minister to the nomadic Mongols. Hence, there have been and continue to be great physical and political barriers to the spread of the gospel; however, those with faith and Great Commission convictions have always found a way to negotiate these obstacles. We can certainly infer that if Martin Luther had had the same convictions about global missions that he had for *sola fide* and *sola Scriptura* (convictions that led to an audacious stand against Rome), then he would have traversed any barrier to fulfill the Great Commission.

Second, despite a fine and well-argued article, George concludes his piece by summarizing the main points of Van der Berg's 1956 dissertation on missionary motives from 1698–1815. While indeed Van der Berg's work is compelling, and George argues that mission scholarship has proven Van der Berg's theses, George's rhetorical "punch" at the conclusion of an otherwise fine article is diminished through this approach.

Third, though she is mentioned twice in the book (pp. 50, 55), there is no substantive reflection on Dorothy Carey—her apparent lack of missionary call, her reluctance to go, her going insane, and the certain aloofness and neglect on the part of her husband. Though George makes brief mention of her being "the wife of a missionary" as opposed to a "missionary wife," and while Nettles goes into great detail about Carey's theology of mission and work, some attention to Dorothy Carey would have strengthened the book.

Fourth, two articles in particular—by Beuttler and Cook—seem to be too broad in scope. Though Beuttler's twenty-six page chapter is the longest in the book, his attempt to cover the period of 1860 to the present is quite unfeasible. Similarly, Cook's chapter on "The Great Commission in Asia" is too broad simply because of Asia's vastness. Despite his nuance (p. 149) that much of the article will be concerned with East Asia (typically missionary code for that "big country"), Cook nevertheless uses "Asia" to describe India and other Asian countries. This point makes his article a bit hard to follow.

Finally, while Salinas and Tiéno both confront a history of bad historiography regarding national missionaries in the Latin American and African contexts, Salinas's tone sounds quite bitter, especially in comparison with Tiéno's winsome chapter. He complains that accounts of Latin American missionaries have only been preserved orally and, therefore, much historical knowledge has been lost. Is this indeed the case? Would it not be possible to interview evangelical leaders, pastors, and congregations (both in Latin American and abroad) and piece together an accurate oral account from the past century that would encourage the Latin American church in ongoing mission and also educate the North American and European church about the work of these missionaries? Perhaps he intends to stir his audience through provocation. If so, he has succeeded in stirring at least one reader to learn and tell the stories of Latin American missionaries who have gone before us and who faithfully serve today.

In conclusion, *The Great Commission* is an important and needed book that should be read by missiologists, seminary students in missiology and intercultural studies, and practitioners currently on the field. I personally plan to adopt it for a seminary course that I teach on the history of Christian missions.

Edward Smither
Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary, Lynchburg, VA

Opening the Covenant: A Jewish Theology of Christianity. By Michael S. Kogan. New York: Oxford University Press, 2008, xiv + 284 pp., \$29.95.

In an age of dialogue and pluralism, Michael Kogan wants to take things one step forward, as he sees it. With a survey of selected Jewish views of Christianity from medieval times to the present as his background, along with Christian views of Judaism, Kogan proposes that the time has come for each faith to fully recognize the other as a legitimate revelation from God. Specifically, Kogan wishes for Jews to view Christianity as the revelation of the God of Israel to Gentiles, thereby incorporating Christians into Israel itself. Similarly, he wants Christians to affirm the full validity of Judaism as a

revealed faith and particularly to give up theological exclusivism even as Jews must abandon humanistic exclusivism (pp. xii–xiii). It is time for both sides to make a move.

Though at first sight this may sound like an updated version of Franz Rosenzweig (well known as the originator of the dual-covenant theology so prominent in Jewish Christian dialogue of recent years), it goes further than Rosenzweig did. It is a bold project that, once the details are understood, will sit well neither with many Jews for what it grants Christianity nor with Christians who believe in the validity of truth claims.

Let me say that this is a book of tremendous value, in general for giving one Jewish scholar's understanding of Christianity and the dialogue movement, and specifically for clearly summarizing and evaluating a dozen Jewish and Christian theologians who have had something to say on the subject, along with several important official statements from the Jewish-Christian dialogue. The downside for those coming from a conservative or evangelical viewpoint, or for that matter for many coming from a modernist mindset, is that Kogan can only maintain his theological construction at the price of denying that religious truth claims intersect in a meaningful way with historical truth claims, and by simultaneously insisting that even if Christian claims were true, they would have no relevance for Jewish people, because Christian revelation is for Gentiles only. In the last chapter, in fact, Kogan advocates for an expansive pluralism that finds divine revelation in all religions. Kogan does not offer reasons for believing that his construction is true; rather, he presupposes both the election of Israel that requires no further revelation and the validity of a pluralistic approach to religion, then builds his edifice in order to practically further Jewish-Christian relations. It is his pluralism that allows him to attribute value and "truth" to Christianity; it is his commitment to Israel's election-*sans*-Christianity that causes him to rule out anyone holding to exclusive claims from being valid dialogue participants. As I will comment later, Kogan appears to confuse claims to truth with attitude problems, and also claims to any (exclusive) truth as claims to *all* truth.

Michael Kogan is Professor of Religious Studies at Montclair State University, where he also serves as Chairman of the Department of Philosophy and Religion. By way of notice, his mentor, Gabriel Vahanian of Syracuse University, was a pioneer of the "death of God" theology.

Already in the introduction, Kogan avers that "interreligious dialogue requires that those engaged in it give up long-standing convictions of their own exclusive possession of truth" (p. xii). This is not, however, a call merely for Christians to make a move. He also asks, "are Jews ready and willing to affirm that God, the God of Israel and of all humanity, was involved in the life of Jesus, in the founding of the Christian faith, in its growth and spread across much of the world, and in its central place in the hearts of hundreds of millions of their fellow beings?" (p. xiii). Christianity needs to give up its theological exclusivism, while Judaism's move is to abandon what he calls its "humanistic" exclusivism. To his credit, he is even-handed; he wants both sides to abandon their own particular brands of exclusivism.

In Chapter One, "Defining Our Terms," Kogan summarizes his understanding of the teachings of Judaism and Christianity. The summary of the former will be invaluable to Christian readers to hear the self-understanding of his faith from a contemporary Jewish scholar. In the latter case, it is equally valuable to see a précis of Christianity through Jewish eyes. Interestingly, Kogan locates the key theological difference between Jews and Christians not in Christology but in anthropology—the starting point being the disagreement over the nature of sin, which for Christianity is a more "radical" problem requiring a more radical solution. It is also worth noting that Kogan finds more rather than less divergence in theology among the Gospel writers, and outright con-

tradition in Paul—perhaps less a problem for him than for evangelical Christians, given that in Judaism, *midrash* traditionally celebrates diversity of interpretations.

The final section of the first chapter lays the “foundations” for a Jewish theology of Christianity. Of note here is Kogan’s observation that the roles of Israel the people and of Jesus himself run on parallel tracks in Judaism and Christianity and that the NT presents the life of Jesus as the recapitulation of Israel’s experience. That really means they are more than parallel, as Kogan says, but certainly in the NT fully intertwined. This insight offers promise as a heuristic grid through which to view the NT, with the payoff of exegetical insights. It is not a new observation, but it is well worth repeating.

A second emphasis of Kogan’s is that Christianity may indeed be true, a revelation of God for the Gentiles, but not of the same relevance for Jews. He will expand on this later. But Jews need to accept that God may well have acted in Christ to expand the covenant, thereby including Gentiles in Israel. Similarly, an “enlightened” kind of Christianity—that is, a non-“exclusive” kind—will recognize the reality of God’s ongoing covenant with Israel.

Chapter Two, “The Question of the Messiah,” is a survey of royal and priestly messianic ideas in the Hebrew Bible, along with the concepts of the suffering servant and the “son of man.” Kogan follows the trajectory into the apocryphal and pseudepigraphal literature, Qumran, and later rabbinic texts. Of note here is his observation that other Jewish groups besides the early Christians had notions of a dying Messiah; his comparison of Judaism’s “two Messiah” theology with Christianity’s single Messiah in two appearances is quite helpful. Here is one place where Kogan seeks to find common ground—the idea of a suffering, dying Messiah should be a “shared treasure,” one example of his willingness to find more commonality than many would, as long as the playing field is non-exclusivistic.

Throughout the book, and one of the really great benefits of reading it, are Kogan’s summaries of past and contemporary theologians both Jewish and Christian, who have explored the relationship of Judaism to Christianity. The first such summary comprises Chapter Three, “Three Jewish Theologians of Christianity,” which surveys thirteenth-century Menachem Ha Me’iri, eighteenth-century Moses Mendelssohn, and nineteenth-century Elijah Benamozegh. Two of these will doubtlessly be unfamiliar to many readers. It can be startling to learn, for instance, that Ha Me’iri not only did not view Christians as idolaters (as many Orthodox Jews would do even today) but also included both Christians and Muslims as part of Israel. The point of the chapter is that the project of a Jewish theology of Christianity has important and even surprising antecedents.

Chapter Four is the heart of Kogan’s project: “Affirming the Other’s Theology: How Far Can Jews and Christians Go?” Essentially, responds Kogan, they can go farther than anyone has yet gone. He begins by surveying Franz Rosenzweig, the well-known originator of modern dual-covenant theology. Here we discover that not all dual-covenant theologies are created equal. Kogan takes issue with Rosenzweig on two grounds. First, Kogan is troubled by Rosenzweig’s relegating Judaism to a kind of background position, leaving Christianity as the exclusive witness to God in the world. Kogan wants to find much more equality and partnership. Second, he rejects Rosenzweig’s leaving the door open for Jews to be “proselytized” on an individual basis. “Proselytization”—read evangelism—equates to exclusivism and a stance of superiority as well as failure to allow God’s covenant with the Jewish people to stand on its own.

Following Rosenzweig is a summary of Martin Buber’s thought, and essentially Kogan’s point in all these evaluations is to see not only antecedents but where previous thinkers have not in his opinion gone far enough. For instance, as to Buber, Kogan disagrees that religious claims can only be evaluated from within the group which holds

those claims. He also finds Buber did not go far enough in granting a positive role to Christianity, accepting as he did that only by denying Israel's claim to "validity" could the church be itself. Next comes Abraham Joshua Heschel, who unfortunately cannot find anything positive to say regarding Christian claims about Jesus. In contrast, Kogan wishes to affirm Christian doctrines such as the incarnation and resurrection as valid revelation from God for non-Jews. Then we head over to the side of the Christian theologians with surveys of Paul Van Buren, A. Roy Eckhardt, and Clark M. Williamson. For purposes of space I will not comment on these surveys other than to say they afford excellent entrees into the thought of each theologian.

Finally, Kogan offers his own viewpoint, and here he mistakes truth claims for attitudes. "Negative attitudes" are equated with "holding that all who do not [affirm Jesus's person and resurrection] are damned." So others have not gone far enough; now comes Kogan's proposal to go further. He wishes to affirm the incarnation, the atonement, and the resurrection as "religious events" which do not equate to historical events. His philosophy becomes clear: "[W]hile we [i.e. Jews] cannot affirm the truth of these propositions, we need no longer insist on their falsity" (p. 114). "Cannot affirm," because only those who share Christian faith can do so. "Need not deny," because the doctrines are no longer being used by mainstream Christians to undermine Judaism. Kogan hedges on any need to investigate history or make any judgment on whether events such as the incarnation actually happened, because "whatever we make of the Christian claim, it can have no impact on our belief or practice. If it happened, it happened for the sake of the gentile mission of the church" (p. 116). In the end, then, it does not matter if the events are merely "religious" or equate to Francis Schaeffer's "true truth"—it makes no difference for Jews anyway! Though skirting the historical relevance for Jews, Kogan goes beyond many Jewish writers in showing that key Christian doctrines are not as foreign to Jewish thought as many would think. Again, there is much that evangelicals can take away from Kogan without buying into his larger framework.

Chapter Five, entitled "The Forty Years' Peace: Christian Churches Reevaluate Judaism," is a commentary on various mainstream church statements on Jewish-Christian dialogue, showing either where they, too, do not go far enough or where they fall short in maintaining a position of Christian superiority. But Kogan is also prepared to give more from the Jewish side. Already in the previous chapter, he noted: "Several church statements have affirmed that while Christianity needs Judaism for its self-understanding, Judaism can fully define itself without reference to Christianity. Not true!" (p. 118). After all, for Kogan, Christianity is the inbreaking of the God of Israel into the Gentile world.

Chapter Six is specifically concerned with "Engaging Two Contemporary Theologians of the Dialogue." The two are, on the Jewish side, Irving Greenberg, whose key idea that Jesus was a failed rather than false Messiah itself fails to take Christianity seriously enough, and, on the Christian side, John Pawlikowski, who has been much involved in the dialogue movement.

"Into Another Intensity: Christian-Jewish Dialogue Moves Forward" is the title of Chapter Seven, in which Kogan moves toward an expansive pluralism, adopting Paul Knitter's view that other religions are revelations from God in preference to John Hicks's formulation. He suggests reading NT texts such as John 14:6 in "pluralist" ways, and in this chapter also covers the important document *Dabru Emet*, a response on the Jewish side to the newer Christian attitudes towards Judaism.

Chapter Eight explores "Truth and Fact in Religious Narrative." Kogan explicitly rejects the correspondence theory of truth and "religious" facts as indemonstrable. He issues the call for a "'grown-up' existential conception of religions truth based on the lived experience of the believer" (p. 188). In this way, inter-faith dialogue can advance

beyond “mutual respect” to “mutual influence” (p. 183), for every religion now has received a finite part of truth that can be shared with others.

Chapter Nine, “Bringing the Dialogue Home,” includes a fascinating chronicle of some of Kogan’s experiences teaching the NT and Paul in synagogue classes. One group was composed of Jewish physicians who tried to study Paul on their own without much success and brought in Kogan as their teacher. As Kogan reports it, the doctors “were deeply impressed with the brilliance of Paul’s original formulations” (p. 201), though they ultimately took issue with Paul on key points. The time may not be far off when evangelicals can no longer assume that most Jews have no knowledge of the NT, including Paul, but need rather to interact with contemporary Jewish views—and not just fully negative ones, but views that accord respect to and find commonality in the NT, but which nonetheless reject it for various reasons (including misunderstanding its teaching).

Chapter Ten is “Does Politics Trump Theology? The Israeli-Palestinian Dispute Invades the Jewish-Christian Dialogue.” Given the current ferment among mainstream and evangelical Christians over Christian Zionism, divestment from Israel, and similar topics, I can do no better than to quote Kogan’s paragraph (p. 227), a view that resonates with a great many Jews:

Without the rebirth of Israel, Jews would be left with the Holocaust. For Jews everywhere, if Israel loses, Auschwitz wins. We do not make the distinction Christians do, in this case at least, between religion and politics. We tend to see Christian attacks on Israeli policy as assaults on our family. And when many Jews experience such attacks, they are led to reflect that, if it had not been for Christian persecution of Jews in Europe, there might not have been the need to gather the Jews in a tiny country that, while being a beloved ancient homeland, is also located in what is perhaps the most dangerous neighborhood in the world. Given Christian conduct toward Jews for 2,000 years, Jews feel that the descendants of the persecutors should have the grace now to avoid criticizing their longtime victims.

Finally, Chapter Eleven moves “Towards a Pluralist Theology of Judaism.” Says Kogan: “Thus the *underlying assumptions* of the Jewish-Christian dialogue must open the participants to a full multifaith pluralism” (p. 231; emphasis added). Kogan also says something interesting with implications for evangelical theology and praxis: “All Jews are Jews religiously even if they do not practice their religion. They are Jews religiously because they have been chosen and commissioned by Israel’s God to be among God’s witnesses on this earth” (p. 235).

Here is what I believe to be the crux in the development of what is being called “messianic Jewish theology;” that is, an indigenous, evangelical, Jewish Christian theology. There is good reason to believe that the future point of debate dividing Christians from Jews will not be Christology, nor anthropology, but ecclesiology. Some Jewish thinkers have sought to divide Jewish believers in Jesus from one another by expressing a willingness to accept as Jews those who claim to believe in Jesus but deny his divinity. I believe that will be the lesser issue, especially if Jewish theologians like Kogan are willing to explore the Jewish commonality of doctrines such as the incarnation (even if they are motivated to do so as long as their dialogue partners are not exclusivists). Rather, the point of contention will be how Jewish believers in Jesus relate to the Jewish community, to the Gentile world, and to the church. Indeed, messianic Jewish writer Mark Kinzer, in his recent *PostMissionary Messianic Judaism*, proposed a “bilateral ecclesiology” whereby Jews who profess faith in Jesus should find their primary social community in the larger Jewish world, separate from Gentile Christians. It is a solution born more of Karl Barth and postliberal thinking than evangelical theology, but it indicates the nature of the upcoming debates. To reiterate Kogan: “All Jews are Jews

religiously even if they do not practice their religion. They are Jews religiously because they have been chosen and commissioned by Israel's God to be among God's witnesses on this earth." Future evangelical theologies will need to say something on this topic in new ways that address these contemporary trends of thought.

In conclusion, Kogan's starting point is startling: "Only one claim must be surrendered [for there to be successful dialogue]; the single negative claim that there is truth to be found in no faith save our own" (p. 237). That, of course, is a false starting point, for it confuses a claim to *any* truth with a claim to *all* truth. Meanwhile, we must not allow the affirmation of exclusive truth claims to be written off as bad attitudes. Evangelicals and others who believe in respect and dialogue must continue to pursue those goals while affirming the validity of truth claims about Jesus which bind Jew and Gentile alike. At the same time, they will also need to explore what Jewish thinkers are calling the "validity" (an ambiguous term susceptible of several meanings) of Judaism and of the covenant God made with Israel—without neglecting the evangelization of both Israel and the world. In the end, *Opening the Covenant: A Jewish Theology of Christianity* is one of those must-read books for anyone interested in Christianity and the Jewish people.

Richard A. Robinson
Jews for Jesus, San Francisco, CA