

Book Reviews

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

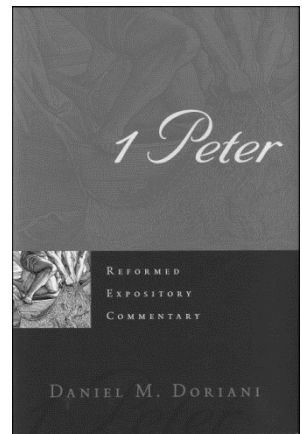
Biblical Theology

1 Peter. Daniel M. Doriani. *Reformed Expository Commentary*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2014, 264 pp., hardcover. ISBN 978-1-5963-8469-9

I was pleased not only to discover a commentary on 1 Peter by a Bible interpreter of the caliber of Dan Doriani but also to be introduced to the Reformed Expository Commentary series, which I now consider to be among my list of “must have” commentaries.

The first contributions to the Reformed Expository Commentary series came out in 2005, and now at the end of 2015, there are fourteen New Testament and seven Old Testament commentaries. The series editors are Richard D. Phillips and Philip Graham Ryken, with Ian M. Duguid as editor for the Old Testament and Daniel M. Doriani for the New. These commentaries are not intended to be exegetical but expository, providing “integrated expositions of whole passages of Scripture” (p. xi). Reading the series introduction (pp. xi-xiii) inspires great confidence that each will be a commentary of excellent quality in terms of scholarship, doctrinal soundness, usefulness to pastors and other preachers and teachers, and of enduring relevance to all Christians seeking truly instructive devotional studies of God’s word.

Indeed, Dan Doriani’s commentary on 1 Peter is no exception. One is immediately struck by the refreshingly crisp chapter titles, which serve as



headings for each coherent passage. Even within chapters, the headings and sub-headings make it easy for the reader to navigate the ideas and themes of each passage. Since the commentary is geared towards a preaching series, introductory matters are dealt with as the need arises in the exposition of the text. Each chapter begins with an attention-grabbing discussion that quickly demonstrates the relevance of the passage. For example, the fundamental question of the source of a person's identity is powerfully used to introduce, and indeed conclude, the exposition of 1 Peter 2:4-10 (pp. 64-65, 73-75).

The author then explains how the passage fits within the literary context in relation to the preceding passage, the development of themes introduced in the opening verses (1 Pet 1:1-12), and what follows later in the letter. The author consistently uses well-chosen cross-references, mainly to the New Testament (see Index of Scripture, p. 241-254), to place the passages in their canonical contexts or to expound a biblical understanding of a theological concept such as holiness (p. 41) or regeneration (p. 56). When necessary, the cultural and socio-historical context of Peter and his addressees is also considered. For example, the slavery that is the background of 1 Peter 2:18-25 is distinguished from both ordinary laborers or employees and slaves of more recent times (pp. 92-94).

After considering the contexts, the author systematically explains the teaching of each passage according to the logic of its argument. When necessary, Greek grammar is discussed as simply as possible; for example, the present passive imperative in 1 Peter 1:14 (p. 40), the indicative-imperative pattern (p. 51-52), the perfect participle in 1 Peter 1:22 (p. 56), and the middle voice reflexive in 1 Peter 2:18 (p. 97). Similarly, some Greek words are explained in order to clarify their precise meaning; for example, "rid yourselves" in 1 Peter 2:1 (p. 59).

Theologically, the author is astute and careful to balance one biblical truth with another equally biblical truth. For example, the fact that Christians are to imitate Jesus in His response to suffering does not negate the fact that Jesus' suffering is unique as an atoning and substitutionary sacrifice (p. 102-103). In this case, he also does not balk at defending a biblical doctrine that is being criticized in some contemporary "Christian" circles (p. 104). Likewise, though he is sensitive to the stigma often attached to the word "submit" (p. 86), the author reveals his firm stance on Scripture when he says of the command that wives be subject to their husbands (1 Pet 3:1),

It *is* controversial, yet we will not read Peter accurately if we let contemporary gender debates become our lens for interpretation. It is better to acknowledge our preferences and let Scripture test them (1 Thess. 5:21), since God's Word is infallible and we are not. (p. 112)

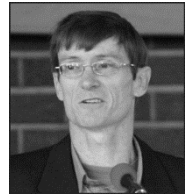
Along with clear explanation, the pages of this commentary are full of colourful historical, every day, and imaginary illustrations that actually *illustrate* the point of the text or show up its relevance for real situations that

Christians will encounter in today's world. For example: hope motivates a student (p. 39); an ingrained pattern enslaves a tennis player (p. 49); the gospel is not the first step surpassed, but "the hub of the wheel" (p. 55); Bertrand Russell's dark despair stands in stark contrast to the fact that the Christian has no need to despair because "the word of the Lord stands forever" (p. 58); "everyone has walked through a door and felt, like a punch to the belly, 'These are not my people, and I don't belong here'" (p. 76); we complain the moment the temperature in a building escapes "our notion of the comfort range" (p. 81); and casting all our anxieties on God is like throwing "a bag of gym clothes into a car" or hoisting "a saddle onto a horse" (pp.229-230).

Finally, each chapter includes application that is well informed of current social, political, cultural, and moral issues that the text of 1 Peter challenges Christians to address intentionally in their individual lives, in the local church community, and in society. The author speaks with the experience of a pastor (p. 102) and a father (p. 51). For example, he shows how we are to evaluate our own culture as "strangers in this fallen world" (p. 48); how we are to stay in line with the gospel (pp. 55-56); and how we are to resist the devil (pp. 231-232).

All in all, this is a commentary that is solid, but not heavy. It is refreshing for the scholar, encouraging for the pastor, and helpful to the Christian reader.

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

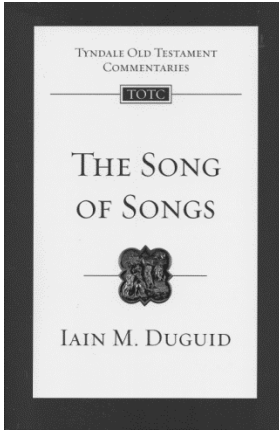


***The Song of Songs: An Introduction and Commentary.* Iain M. Duguid. Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries, vol. 19, gen. ed. David G. Firth. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2015, 160 pp., paper. ISBN 978-0-8308-4286-5**

Since their release in the 1960s, the Tyndale Commentary Series has been praised for its accessibility and concise treatment of the Scriptures. Iain Duguid's commentary on the Song of Songs is the most recent release in this series, which continues to reflect these marks. The book is also part of a wider project of new volumes to replace the original commentaries.

The book is laid out into four parts: introduction, analysis, translation, and commentary. In the introduction, Duguid addresses the questions of authorship, date, method of interpretation, theological themes, and unity. He argues that Solomonic authorship is unnecessary and even unlikely (p. 24). He leaves the question of authorship and date open, although he suggests that it was most likely written after the exile (p. 23).

The Song of Songs has been variously interpreted since its reception into the canon of Scripture. Duguid spends time discussing the natural, allegorical, and typological approaches to the interpretation of the book. Duguid points out that the key question to ask is not whether it is appropriate to have



a book about sex and marriage in the Bible or whether such imagery with propriety be used about God. Rather, the question is whether the central relationship is intended to be a typological picture of Christ and His church (Ps. 45; Heb. 1:8-9) or whether the song should be interpreted against the backdrop of wisdom literature (Prov. 5:18-20) (p. 34). In the end, Duguid argues, “the Song of Songs is best understood as a wisdom piece about two idealized people, a man and a woman, whose exclusive and committed love is deep but, like all loves in this fallen world, far from perfect” (p. 36).

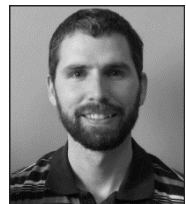
This is not to suggest that the book does not speak about God. It does point us to Christ and the gospel, but it does so in ways different from typology (p. 35). Through this idealized picture of human love, it reveals how far short we fall of this perfection as humans and lovers. But our broken human relationships also tell us something our broken relationship with God. There is a connection between human love and divine love (p. 49). Since the poem is about desire, Duguid writes, “The Song challenges all of us as failed lovers and points us to the perfect Lover, who has loved us and given himself for us” (p. 51). Duguid believes that this approach frees the interpreter from trying to find spiritual significance in every poetic detail of the text and yet provides much for reflection as the reader consider the metaphor of the church as the bride of Christ in Scripture (p. 49).

The reader will appreciate the new format that shapes the commentary section of the book. Each passage unit is divided into three segments (Context, Comment, Meaning). The final section seeks to explain the message of the passage and to highlight its key theological themes, which made for a more enjoyable read.

As a commentary, this would be a helpful book for pastors. Not only is it accessible, the sections summarizing the meaning of the passage will prove to be fruitful for personal application and sermon preparation.

Iain Duguid is Professor of Biblical and Religious Studies at Grove City College. He also serves as pastor of Christ ARP.

Peter Aiken serves as pastor in the Free Church of Scotland in Charlottetown, PEI. He is married to Michelle and they have four children.



***Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi.* Andrew E. Hill. Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries, gen. ed. David G. Firth. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2012, 368 pp. ISBN 978-0-8308-4282-7**

Each carpenter has his or her tried and tested tools present at every project. Since their original publication in the 1960s, the Tyndale Old Testament Commentary (TOTC) series has been a tried and tested tool for Bible students. Hence, students will gladly receive the new, revised TOTC series, which have finally all been released.

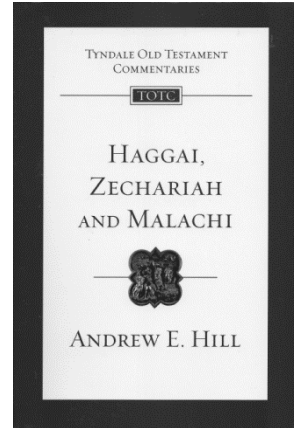
Joyce G. Baldwin wrote the original commentary on Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi in this series, which was published in 1981. The new commentary on these Minor Prophets is by Andrew E. Hill of Wheaton College. I am not familiar with Baldwin's work, but from reviews I have read, Hill's work is more scholarly, which accounts for its increased length. However, let no Bible student think Hill's work is not accessible. Despite its scholarship it is very helpful to preachers and teachers.

In reading this work I found it extremely helpful in four ways, and somewhat weak in two ways. I begin with the book's helpfulness.

First, this commentary will help Bible students in their exegesis of the text. Hill interacts with the Hebrew text in a precise, yet accessible way. He particularly shows how other translations interpret Hebrew verb tenses and other matters of syntax. Something else I found extremely helpful was his "special attention to intertextual relationships [between the three prophets] ... since each of the prophets often appeal [sic] to the messages of their earlier counterparts" (p. 14). Hill does an excellent job showing that Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi "have some inherent relationship by way of theme(s) and message" (p. 14). Hill's intertextual lists for each prophecy are also helpful. The detailed chiasmic structure of Zechariah is excellent, and Hill's pointers on the literary style of these books will help the exegete. Last of all, his verse-by-verse, section-by-section commentary gets to the point of what the text is saying.

Secondly, this commentary will help Bible students grasp the general history behind these books. As in the older editions of the TOTC, the new releases are clear and concise in dealing with the historical background. This is true of Hill's work too; only his commentary has the added feature of extra historical material in the "General Introduction". Here I was fascinated with his discussion of the Minor Prophets as understood in Jewish tradition.

Thirdly, this commentary will help Bible students theologically. In his "General Introduction", Hill describes the six theological subjects the student



will encounter throughout the commentary. One, God's person is revealed. Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi repeatedly use the divine name, the LORD Almighty, which emphasizes His sovereignty specifically over nations, creation, His people, and faithfulness to His Word. Two, Second Temple is a central focus of these three books. Since the backdrop of these prophecies is the return of the Jewish exiles, the prophets' concern is that the people return to worshipping God. Hence, Haggai seeks to stir the people to rebuild the walls, Zechariah calls the people to repent in their hearts, and Malachi tells the people to renew their faith. Three, the eschatological truth of the Day of the Lord fastens these books together. As Hill employs the analogy of faith, he shows that the Day of the Lord and the New Covenant age are unified. In the Day of Messiah, the Davidic kingship will be restored (Haggai), God the Holy Spirit will be poured out (Zechariah), and a day of purification (Malachi). Four, a clear theology of the Holy Spirit is found here. This stands to reason since the Day of the Lord is also the age of the Holy Spirit. Five, a detailed theology of repentance is present here. Six, a theology of justice and mercy is found in these books too.

Fourthly, this commentary will help Bible students ecclesiastically. That is, it will help teachers and preachers in the church. I think it helps teachers and preachers in two ways. One, the good outlines and the clear, to-the-point exegesis facilitate the pastor or teacher in their work. Two, Hill seeks to apply the text to the Christian life. He does this in the commentary though the "Message" portions in the introductions to the books, and he ends his major expository segments with a paragraph entitled "Meaning", in which he gives practical theological application to human life. Some are longer and more specific than others, yet each of these "Meaning" sections can give application ideas to the church teacher or preacher.

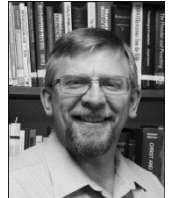
Though Hill's commentary is a worthy tool in Bible study, it does have two weaknesses. First, its Christology should be stronger. Hill views Haggai 2:6-9 as non-messianic. On this section, Hengstenberg's *Christology of the Old Testament* and J. Alec Moyter's commentary on Haggai are better. Hill in his "Meaning" section does intimate that the glory of God's Temple is fully realized in Messiah Jesus, but his analogy of faith is not robust here. Furthermore, on Haggai 2:23 Hill is quick to point out that there are no Christological implications. Hill's Christological interpretation fares better in his exegesis of Zechariah and Malachi. He recognizes that both these books are filled with messianic prophecies and typology, and there are times, especially in Zachariah 12 and Malachi 3, where Hill explains the messianic interpretation. Nevertheless, generally his Christological interpretation is weak.

Secondly, as a result of the weak Christology, Hill's work is not as theologically robust as it should be. He writes in his preface that, "We read the Bible as theology (the *revelation* of God and his redemptive plan for humanity), history (the *record* of God's dealings with humanity, and especially Israel) and literature (the *story* of God and human experience)" (p. 12). Hill excels in showing the history and story of the era in redemptive history, but he

is not as vibrant in explaining the record of God's salvation in Christ. Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi are part of God's revelation of His redemptive-historical purposes which culminate in Christ. Hill does not bring this out in a vivid way.

Notwithstanding these weaknesses, I recommend this commentary to pastors and teachers. It is an excellent companion to E.W. Hengstenberg and J. Alec Moyter's commentaries mentioned above.

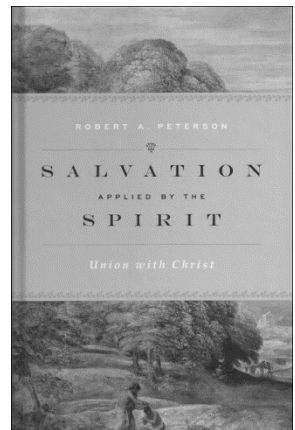
Reviewed by Henry Bartsch, minister of Trinity Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church in Chatham Ontario. He graduated from Haddington House School of Theology in 2003.



***Salvation Applied by the Spirit: Union with Christ.* Robert A. Peterson. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015, 462 pp., hc. ISBN 978-1-4335-3257-3**

Robert A. Peterson (Ph.D. Drew University) is professor of systematic theology at Covenant Theological Seminary in St. Louis, Missouri. He is the author and editor of numerous books and articles, including *The Glory of God* and *The Deity of Christ*.

Peterson's book came into my hands as I was searching for a recent work regarding "Union with Christ". My search is over as the author has not only done his Bible study, but he has referenced numerous sources in his eleven page bibliography set out at the end of this excellent book. This is a very important doctrine which is seldom mentioned from the pulpits of the church today. Not only is the bibliography adequate, so are the general and Scripture indices. The three take up thirty-three pages at the back of this readable Christ-centred book by Mr. Peterson.



This volume is the second in what will be a three-part series. The first volume, already published, is *Salvation Accomplished by the Son: The Work of Christ*. The projected third volume, *Salvation Planned by the Father: Election in Christ*, has not yet been published.

This book's focus is on the narrower sense of union with Christ encompassing the application of redemption. There is a broad sense encompassing election, Christ's saving work, and final salvation, and the work of the Holy Spirit, a much neglected topic of study by Christians.

The book has two main parts: Union with Christ in Scripture and Union with Christ in Theology. The author divides part one into five sections. (A) Chapters 1-3 outline the foundations for union with Christ in the Old Testa-

ment, Synoptic Gospels, and the book of Acts. (B) Chapter 4 considers union with Christ in the Gospel of John. (C) Chapters 5-14 consider union with Christ in the Pauline Epistles. (D) Chapters 15 and 16 are given to summarizing findings from the ten chapters dealing with Paul's letters. And (E) chapters 17-20 consider union with Christ in Hebrews, 1-2 Peter, 1 John, and Revelation.

It is only after we are urged to study union with Christ in Scripture that we are led to part two, Union with Christ in Theology.

Part 2, Union with Christ in Theology, consists of eight chapters:

A : Chapter 21 – The Biblical story (union and eternity past, union and creation, union and the fall, union and the Incarnation, union and Christ's work, union and the New Creation)

B: Chapter 22 – The personality and deity of The Holy Spirit

C: Chapter 23 – The work of the Holy Spirit

D: Chapter 24 – The most important work of the Holy Spirit

E: Chapter 25 – The Christ to Whom we are united.

F: Chapter 26 – Union with Christ in the Church.

G: Chapter 27 – Union with Christ in the Sacraments.

H: Chapter 28 – Union with Christ in the Christian Life.

The author does not define union with Christ until the final chapter and very wisely so. Union with Christ is a mystery in the New Testament sense of what has been hidden with God in His eternal purposes but now finally has been revealed in Christ, particularly in His death and resurrection, and is appropriated by faith. Certainly in its full dimensions this mystery is beyond the believers complete comprehension (Eph. 3:18-19; Col. 1:26-27). Nevertheless, we know or can know much about this union because Scripture says so much about it.

Union with Christ is the central truth of the whole doctrine of salvation. That is why the author rightly devotes a complete chapter to the most important work of the Holy Spirit in the realm of salvation, union with Christ, for people who lack the Spirit do not belong to Christ.

It is very fitting that the final chapter in the book is entitled "Union with Christ in the Christian Life". This chapter focuses on aspects of the meaning of union with Christ: identity in Christ, belonging to Christ, and suffering and glory.

In summary, this is an excellent book on a most important subject. It should be and could be read by every Christian and by anyone seeking to be saved from a world that is without God and without hope outside of union with Christ as applied by the Holy Spirit.

Reviewed by Loyde Bruce, a ministering elder in the Eastern Charge, Free Church of Scotland, Prince Edward Island and married to Gloria.

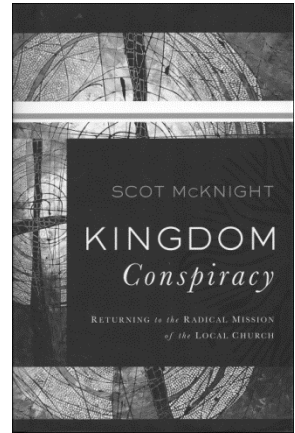


***Kingdom Conspiracy: Returning to the Radical Mission of the Local Church.* Scot McKnight. Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2014, 289 pp., hc. ISBN 978-1-58743-360-3**

The language of this book very much reflects the culture and discussions of North America. This is not an opening criticism but a contextual comment. When the first two chapters are entitled, “Skinny Jeans Kingdom” and “Pleated Pants Kingdom”, one does need to know something about the North American context. (By the way, “Pants” here is trousers.) These two chapters develop a caricature which one will see followed throughout the book. Basically, “skinny jeans” folks see the kingdom of God as social justice whereas “pleated pants” Christians see it as personal redemption. McKnight correctly sees that there is something just not right about these two viewpoints. His goal is to return to Scripture and see just what does the Bible mean by the kingdom of God or heaven?

Thus the chapters which follow develop key aspects of the biblical theology of the kingdom of God. McKnight is not afraid to challenge stereotypes that we have all likely heard and been taught to a point where they have almost reached an orthodox creed of sorts about the kingdom of heaven. He is friendly towards George Ladd and yet also disagrees with him. Likewise, he will not endorse all that D. A. Carson may assert about the terminology of Son of God and Son of Man (pp.128-130). Many of us have imbibed the basics of the kingdom of God/heaven found in summary form by George Ladd in his article in *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*.¹ McKnight does not disagree with everything here but does clearly assert that “the kingdom is the church and the church is the kingdom” (p. 206) in contradistinction with many who assert that the kingdom is not the church. This really is the heart of what McKnight develops in this book and is very concisely stated up front in the book’s subtitle, “Returning to the Radical Mission of the Local Church”. Also the title of chapter 6 makes this abundantly clear, “No Kingdom outside the Church”.

The author’s final chapter, number 12, presents his “Kingdom Theses” (pp. 205-208). It is tempting to go right to these and read them to know what he is arguing. The problem is that these are concise theses, and one really needs to read the previous chapters to really see the depth of reflection upon



¹ George E. Ladd, “Kingdom of Christ, God, Heaven”, in ed. Walter Elwell, *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1984), 607-611.

each thesis. The theses are however most helpful, and I trust that this section alone will make the book very valuable as a resources for all future discussion about the kingdom. The author has fifteen theses about the kingdom. I personally found myself persuaded by the majority of these. There were one or two that I was not convinced by. These concern his Constantinian formulation. I personally think there is much more complexity about this than is being offered here.

There was one quotation which I really appreciated and want to include here: “Anyone who calls what they are doing ‘kingdom work’ but does not present Jesus Christ to others or summon others to surrender themselves to King Jesus as Lord and Savior is simply not doing kingdom mission or kingdom work. They are probably doing good work and doing social justice, but until Jesus is known, it is not kingdom mission” (p. 142). I have witnessed in the developing world much “kingdom mission” but cannot find the summons to Christ being included. McKnight asserts something very important here to be heeded.

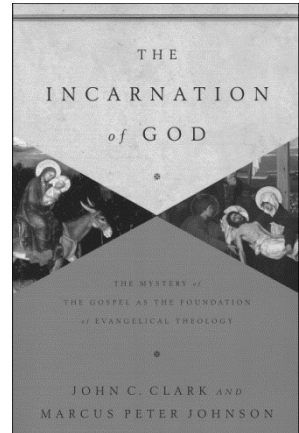
The author is one of North America’s most prolific writers in New Testament studies. This book is written with wonderful imagination and creativity and contemporary relevance. Though it will sit more with the North American context, it should also receive a global read as the subject is relevant for all Christians and will help all of us to think more clearly about the kingdom even if in the end we may disagree with some of the theses.

Reviewed by Jack C. Whytock

Systematic Theology

***The Incarnation of God: The Mystery of the Gospel as the Foundation of Evangelical Theology.* John C. Clark and Marcus Peter Johnson. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015, 238 pp., paper. ISBN 978-1-4335-4187-2**

The incarnation of Christ is one of the doctrines that most Christians confess, but it is also one of the least understood and appreciated today. That is the premise of the book, *The Incarnation of God*. The authors seek to be careful to guard the mystery while providing a full-throated treatise on what the Bible teaches and the church has confessed on this doctrine. Clark and Johnson, professors at Moody Bible Institute, are not seeking to be novel but to explore the historical, orthodox understanding of the incarnation. Although the incarnation may be fundamental to our faith, this does not diminish all mystery and majesty surrounding this truth. As Clark and Johnson say on p. 12, “The incarnation of God lies at the heart of all reality.”



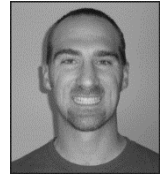
This book opens by acknowledging that it cannot be comprehensive. Still, consisting of 238 pages, it is no lightweight pamphlet. The pages are divided into eight chapters but the main structure is as follows “1. The nature and function of doctrine; 2. Trinitarian and Christological developments regarding the incarnation in the early centuries of the church; and 3. Several core convictions that characterize the authors’ approach to the supreme mystery of the gospel (p. 20)”. The scope of this book is vast, as the authors connect the incarnation to man in his sin, how the incarnation enables us to know God, how the incarnation speaks to the church’s relationship to God, and how the incarnation is the framework for our marriages. This scope was very helpful in my view.

When reading this book, I was struck by the need for a book like this. The doctrine of the incarnation has, in my opinion, been ignored by many in the church and scoffed at in the world. Clark and Johnson bring the reader back to a place of wonder and joy in this sacred event. Of particular help, chapter

I defends the centrality of the incarnation as it directly affects the Christian's life, practice, and faith. Also, chapter 8 on marriage is worth the price of this book. One critique I have is the frequent use of packed words. At certain points, Clark and Johnson come off sounding unnecessarily academic. For example, the authors state on p. 74, "Yet whenever discussions of God's attributes are beholden to incipient naturalism, to rationalistic tendencies that suggest epistemic Pelagianism, God is invariably domesticated and distorted, reduced, in effect, to little more than a representation of some self-styled ideal." This and other sentences are loaded and cumbersome in my view. Since these authors tend to use catch phrases and academic labels, I believe that this treatise is not as approachable as it could be. It is definitely not a weekend read nor should it be seen as an introduction to the subject matter.

In conclusion, although Clark and Johnson could have been more approachable in their word choice, with a little effort this book will pay dividends. I appreciate how Christo-centric each chapter is, and this book did cause me to marvel at Christ's humiliation and His glorious presence with us. It was helpful but also profound. I recommend this book to anyone who is serious about studying the incarnation and its implications.

Reviewed by Nick Alons, originally from Iowa and a graduate of Dort College and Mid-America Seminary, presently pastor of a United Reformed Church in Illinois.



Historical Theology

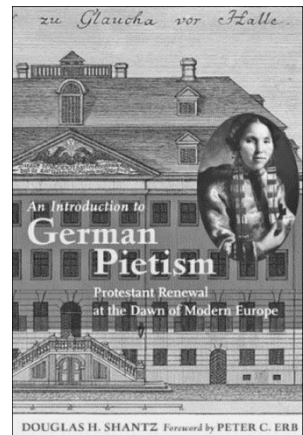
***An Introduction to German Pietism: Protestant Renewal at the Dawn of Modern Europe.* Douglas H. Shantz. Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press, 2013, 452 pp., paper. ISBN 978-1-4214-0831-6**

In this fine work, the University of Calgary professor of Christian Thought, Douglas Shantz, provides readers with the distillation of decades of investigation and reflection on a theme clearly of personal importance to him. Though it is entitled “An Introduction”, this terminology is capable of misleading the reader. It is not an “introduction” in the sense that this is the first work a reader, curious to understand Pietism, need take up. A “doorway” or “first encounter” it is not.

What Shantz has provided in ten well-documented chapters is a thorough introduction to the *state of studies in Pietism* – that post-Reformation movement in European Protestantism which sought sometimes to renew and rejuvenate the territorial churches (both Reformed and Lutheran), and sometimes to provide an alternate Christianity outside their jurisdiction.

An English-speaking reader might think that he or she is already reasonably informed about Pietist Christianity because of a familiarity with already-existing standard treatments of the subject by Ernest Stoeffler (1965, 1971, 1973), Dale Brown (1978), Peter Erb (1978, 1996), or Carter Lindberg (2005). Shantz, who takes as his task the gathering and interpreting of a vastly larger (and European) body of Pietist research, aims initially to help us to see these English-language interpreters as part of a larger effort to rehabilitate the Pietist movement for modern Christians. Like the writers whose research he collates, Shantz truly laments that this once-vital stream of Christianity, which emphasized the religion of the heart, has largely evaporated from both western Europe and the new world.

The truth is, there was never just one strain of Pietism. Shantz docu-



ments that the origins of the movement lay in diverse places: post-Reformation Holland, German cities of the Rhine region (such as Frankfort), and centers in Saxony such as Halle and Leipzig. We have heard most about the “churchly” Pietists, such as Spener (1635-1705) and Francke (1663-1727); yet at least as influential were the “radical” Pietists such Tersteegen (1697-1769) who would not align themselves with the territorial churches of the Reformation. The “churchly” Pietism may have worked within the institutional church, yet its relationship – rooted in pragmatism – could be rocky. Radical Pietists, not willing to make their peace with institutional Protestantism, were by and large harassed in Germanic territories and were more likely to emigrate abroad. As Shantz helpfully explains, by 1700 Holland and Britain were miles ahead of the German territories in offering religious toleration to minorities. In the process, the Germanic territories impoverished themselves.

Particular strengths of the *Introduction to Pietism* are a seventh chapter given over to gender; this explores the greater relative freedom afforded for the ministry of women in the two streams (churchly and radical). It was an outworking of the conviction that the indwelling Spirit empowered without respect to gender. The eighth chapter, “Pietism and the Bible”, strikes many sparks, showing that Pietism surpassed territorial Protestantism in its desire to distribute Scriptures widely and cheaply in contemporary translations. When Europe’s first Bible Societies were created in the 18th century, they were entirely Pietist undertakings. Pietistic scholars such as Johan Albrecht Bengel (1687-1752) were at the forefront of the study of the Greek text of the New Testament. The ninth chapter, “Pietism, World Christianity and Mission”, offers the best overview this reviewer has seen of two spheres of 18th century Pietist missionary labor: that of the Danish-Halle Lutheran mission to south India and that of the Moravians to Greenland and Labrador. All this labor unfolded decades in advance of William Carey’s departure for India in 1793.

With contributions so notable as these, the reader naturally wants to inquire why Pietist influence across the Christian world has so diminished since the early 19th century. To this question, Shantz offers only partial answers. He maintains that Pietism contributed to the Enlightenment growth of individualism and the right of private judgment in a way that advanced modernity; he allows that Pietism – especially in its radical manifestations – was made vulnerable by its repeated dependence on charismatic leadership – which often led to disappointments and disillusionment.

Two themes bearing on this demise of influence which this reader would have liked to see explored further are the intertwined questions of what educational institutions were erected – beyond Halle in Saxony – to sustain this movement, and of what was done within Pietism to safeguard fundamental biblical convictions. Radical Pietism was just distrustful enough of reason that it may have disparaged the creation of the colleges and seminaries necessary to ensure its growth and survival. Again, there is the question about

whether adequate measures were taken to ensure the doctrinal integrity of the Pietist movement over time. Pietism championed the new birth, the indwelling of the Spirit, and the right of the believer to study the Word for himself. But this approach to a Christianity which was primarily experiential did not sustain itself well over time. Halle itself ceased to stand for Christian orthodoxy over a century ago. In the modern era, so many expressions of Pietism have, in a kind of exhaustion, been absorbed into moribund mainstream denominations from which – in their heyday – they would have stood apart. Those which remain suffer from anemia.

Shantz' *Introduction to Pietism* offers the curious reader more than he or she will initially want or need. But this is a resource book which ought to be in libraries of many institutions of Christian higher learning. Like no other book known to this reviewer, it opens up the field of Pietist studies and points one forward in valuable lines of inquiry.

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

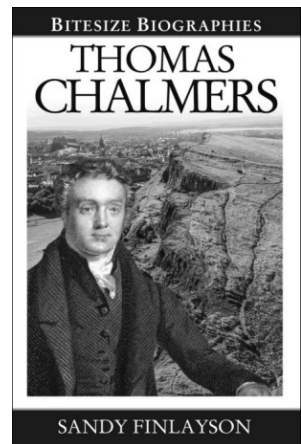


Thomas Chalmers. Sandy Finlayson. Bitesize Biographies. Holywell, UK: Evangelical Press, 2015, 152 pp., paper. ISBN 978-1783970728

Professor Finlayson of Westminster Theological Seminary, Philadelphia, has demonstrated with this book that a bite size biography can provide a rich banquet of highly digestible food for the soul. In a brief 152 pages he has summarized and highlighted all that is essential to know in the life of Thomas Chalmers, a man who had a profound and godly influence not only in his native Scotland but in North America as well.

The significant thing about the book is that Finlayson is not afraid to bring out both the strengths and weaknesses of his subject, to make judgments, to identify with Chalmers but at the same to acknowledge his weaknesses and failures.

This was in sharp contrast to previous biographers such as Chalmers' own son-in-law William Hanna and most recently Stuart Brown's definitive *Thomas Chalmers and the Godly Commonwealth*. Hanna was deferential, Brown detached and academic. Somewhere in between was Hugh Watt's centenary of the Disruption biography. One might well ask, how much more can be said about Chalmers? The answer simply is that Finlayson makes him approachable and provides a teachable moment for the non-academic layper-



son. To use an overworked term, Sandy Finlayson makes Thomas Chalmers relevant for the 21st century.

For Chalmers has a story that needs to be carefully examined by the contemporary church. Division and separation seem to be the order of the day among churches that have a Reformed legacy. The Disruption of the Church of Scotland in 1843 not only was an ecclesiastical catastrophe, it also impacted the country of Scotland and indeed the entire Christian world. The 19th century Free Church of Scotland left, along with its founder, a remarkable and influential legacy of piety, scholarship, and passion for world mission that has seen no equal before or since. The event of 18 May 1843 was truly seismic.

Finlayson tells a highly personalized story of Chalmers' struggles, weaknesses, and spiritual vision. He is not afraid to describe Chalmers as headstrong, impulsive, and unable to listen to people who took a different view. But despite his fallibility, there was also strength: only a man with Chalmers' courage, conviction, and commitment could have accomplished as much as he did. In analyzing Chalmers' greatness, Finlayson strips away much of the mythology with which those of us with a Scottish background were nurtured from our earliest years, and we see the man anew.

At the heart of Chalmers' theology, as we are shown, was his ecclesiology. Chalmers (unlike many in our day) was deeply committed to the local church and saw it as the well-spring of a vibrant Christian faith. From the moment he encountered a living Christ in his early ministry in Kilmany to the end of his life with the innovative West Port Free Church, and through his not altogether successful experiments in the Tron and St. John's churches in Glasgow, he saw the local parish as where the real action was. It was that reality that led him to insist on the spiritual independence of the Kirk and its right to choose and call its own ministers.

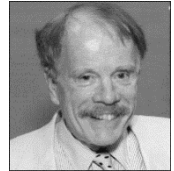
Chalmers, as is pointed out, had a magnetic appeal to his students during his years as Professor of Divinity at the University of Edinburgh. The leaders of the Disruption were mostly young men in their thirties, "hot-headed radicals" as they were called, but they had drunk deeply from the well of Chalmers deep spring of commitment to the life and ministry of the church. The pastoral vision of parson and elders engaged in the lives of their parishioners, focused on relief of the poor, extending compassion and comfort to the needy: this was his burden and it inspired a generation of clergy. The establishment of New College in the autumn of 1843 and his appointment as Principal, was a reminder that a learned clergy was the great commitment of John Knox to the people of Scotland now carried on in the Free Church. Chalmers knew that, as goes the seminaries, so goes the church.

One of the great benefits of this biography is that it focuses on essentials and cuts to the chase the complicated story of ecclesiastical intrigue that sometimes can confuse and complicate Scottish church history. The ten years leading up to the Disruption, with its cut and thrust, its complicated legal finagling, its attack and counterattack, are simplified and clarified in a helpful

manner while at the same time avoiding oversimplification. With a useful chronology at the start, we are able to trace the ebb and flow of the great man's life in a more simplified way. And the italicised quotations, carefully selected to provide immediacy and directness, are useful as they provide first person insight and clarity.

And what would Thomas Chalmers think today of the Church of Scotland in its present travail? This book is a salutary lesson in how complicated even matters of principle can become, and how even for the best of causes and by the most conscientious of people, positions become murky and compromised. That in two generations members of the pre-1900 Free Church of Scotland would become major promoters of Higher Criticism, remains a warning to all of us. Even Chalmers' first biographer, William Hanna, and his wife Anne Chalmers eventually lost the track. Hopefully this biography will help preserve the life and legacy of Thomas Chalmers. It needs to be widely read.

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

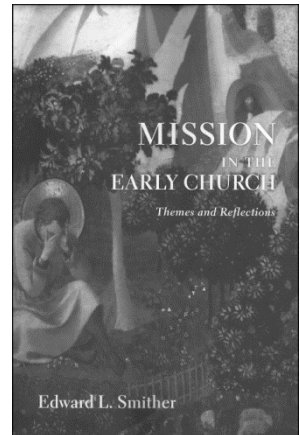


***Mission in the Early Church: Themes and Reflections.* Edward L. Smither. Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2014, 178 pp., paper. ISBN 978-1-61097-521-6**

This is a well written and reflective book by a seasoned teacher of both church history and missions. I have always been pleased with what I have read by Edward Smither and can see this book making its way into both my church history and mission history classes. Smither is associate professor of intercultural studies at Columbia International University in South Carolina and well suited to author this book.

The thesis of this book is to explain, "How did Christian mission happen in the early church from AD 100 to 750"? Some church historians might disagree with the time frame presented by Smither for the early church period, but this does not detract from the book in any way. The author tells us that he aims this book for college bachelor level work through to beginning master level. The eight chapters are well crafted, beginning with a helpful introduction, then the first chapter, "Backgrounds", which allows readers without prior background the opportunity to engage with the subject.

Then the second chapter asks, "Who Were the Missionaries?" This is very



helpful as Smither organises the answer around three groupings: full-time missionaries, who were cross-cultural; bivocational missionaries, namely missionary-bishops, philosophers, and monks who did transcultural missions; and lay and anonymous missionaries. Each answer is well illustrated. The reader will also see the author's style of opening each chapter with a good illustration, often drawing in a more contemporary story to hook the reader. The chapters each have a good summary/conclusion and questions plus text boxes with a good quotation. On occasion the text has good illustrations to again make for a reader-friendly textbook.

Then comes the main portion of the book, Smither's six themes concerning mission in the early church, constituting six chapters: suffering, evangelism, Bible translation, contextualization, Word and deed, and church. One chapter which I found particularly valuable was chapter 5 on Bible translation in the early church (pp. 91-108). For some reason the table of contents calls it "Bible Translation", but on page 91 it is entitled "Scripture" and all the headers likewise read "Scripture". This was somewhat confusing. The chapter does bring a corrective to an often misunderstood and often ignored subject. He develops the translation work of the Scriptures into Syriac, Latin, Coptic, Gothic, Armenian, Georgian, and Ethiopic all "in light of the church's missionary expansion in the first eight centuries" (p. 93). Smither makes some very perceptive concluding statements in this chapter: "...it would be helpful to discuss briefly the legacy of Bible translation in the early Christian period. On a positive note, communities that translated Scripture into the local vernacular managed to avoid extinction, especially following the rise of Islam in the seventh century" (p. 107). He then goes on to summarise what happened through the failure of producing a Punic Bible translation in North Africa and that this church in North Africa was limited to the Latin Scriptures. This church became almost non-existent after the Arab conquest. Here we see how one theme crosses over into another theme, namely contextualisation or in this specific instance the failure to contextualise.

This book will serve as a worthy companion text for early church history and mission history courses. It presents a compelling challenge for scholars "to give more regard to the mission of the church as a framework for historical studies" (p. 166). *Missio Dei* is not just theory in this book but is fully illustrated and thematically portrayed. It shows a good acquaintance with the secondary literature in the field and also sprinkles primary sources on occasion through quotations, making for an engaging and readable book at the level for which it is aimed. Delightful to read sound evangelical scholarship and writing in this field. Well done.

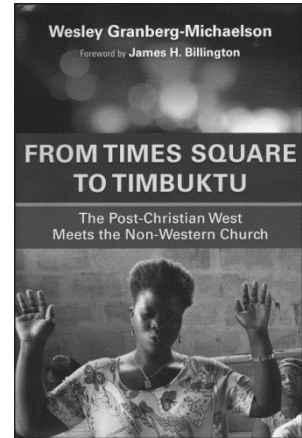
Reviewed by Jack C. Whytock

***From Times Square to Timbuktu: The Post-Christian West Meets the Non-Western Church.* Wesley Granberg-Michaelson. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013, 161 pp., paper. ISBN 978-0-8028-6968-5**

There is a growing body of literature documenting the remarkable growth of Christianity in the majority world over the past century. This literature is welcome, indeed necessary, for us to begin to comprehend the new reality of the global church in the 21st century, where, for example, there are more Protestants in Nigeria than in Luther's homeland and more Christians in Asia than in North America. Wesley Granberg-Michaelson's *From Times Square to Timbuktu: The Post-Christian West meets the Non-Western Church* is in a class of its own in the burgeoning field of scholarship on world Christianity. It is neither a history of world Christianity nor an overview of the global church, although it includes aspects of both. It is rather a proposal for how Christians in the West should respond to the emergence of a truly global faith, which is no longer "ours" to determine or direct. In an age when, statistically speaking, the "normal" Christian is a Catholic farmer in Brazil or a Pentecostal seamstress in Kenya, how will Christians in the minority world, long accustomed to assuming that our western creeds, liturgies, and theological methods are norms for the universal church, respond to this shift?

Lest Christians in the minority world think the southward plunge of Christianity does not really touch our congregations, doctrines, and worship, Granberg-Michaelson devotes attention to the forces of globalization and immigration, both of which are bringing the world church right into our neighborhoods. He cites the Sierra Leonean evangelical Jehu Hanciles to the effect that "every migrant is a missionary" (p. 83): not only are a high percentage of immigrants to North America Christian (despite what much popular opinion holds), these Christians are often zealous about sharing their faith. Today, in profound and irrevocable ways, the world is drawing closer together – will Christians draw closer as well? And how should local churches in North America respond to the outposts of world Christianity sprouting up in our towns and cities?

There are few people better positioned to raise these questions than Granberg-Michaelson, who has made a career of building bridges between denominations and Christian communions. A former general secretary of the Reformed Church in America, he also served many years in the World Coun-



cil of Churches as a self-professed evangelical. In recent years he has become extensively involved in global Christian communities. *From Times Square to Timbuktu* combines statistics with history, theology, spirituality, and congregational studies, all filtered through the author's personal experiences and anecdotes. Granberg-Michaelson's touch is light: the book is written in an easy-going, winsome manner. But he asks questions that hit hard and linger long. Perhaps the heart of his concern is laid bare already in the prologue of *From Times Square to Timbuktu*. He recalls recently travelling by taxi to a church meeting at Riverside Drive in New York City, where many mainline denominations keep (or until recently, kept) their headquarters. The cab driver was originally from Ghana and excitedly told Granberg-Michaelson about his immigrant church "that had a lively, vibrant worship, Bible studies, healing ministry, and outreach" (p. viii). As the driver dropped off the author at his destination, he admitted that he had never heard of any of the denominations located on Riverside Drive. It was as if the Christian hemispheres had nothing to do with each other, even within a North American city.

Encounters like this one have prompted Granberg-Michaelson to reflect on the rapid growth of Christianity in the global south in regard to the unity Christians share through faith in Jesus and the presence of the Spirit in the church. On one hand, the anecdote of the cab driver simply underscores the irrelevancy of much traditional Protestantism for the emerging world church. Granberg-Michaelson notes that the most vital and fast-growing churches in the global south are primarily charismatic and independent, and, as such, rarely intersect mainline denominations in the global north, or even many evangelical or conservative denominations for that matter. (Nor does it help that ecumenical organizations keep their headquarters in the north – and he criticizes the World Communion of Reformed Churches [WCRC] for choosing Hannover instead of Johannesburg or Sao Paulo as its new headquarters.)

Along with the gap between northern and southern hemisphere churches on a whole range of moral issues, theological topics and spiritual priorities, Granberg-Michaelson laments the proliferation of churches in the majority world. Division takes place over contested doctrines and teachings but even more so along tribal and ethnic fault lines, as well as over access to power and influence in emerging Christendom contexts. On this issue, Granberg-Michaelson believes that the embattled denominations of the northern hemisphere have something of value to share with Christians in the global south. For all the shortcomings of the World Council of Churches and similar ecumenical fellowships, whether of conservative or liberal sentiment, Christianity in the minority world has a long history of attempting unified witness to Christ and making common cause for evangelism, justice, peace, and environmental advocacy. "The spiritually fervent churches of the global South need the enrichment of the commitment to tradition and catholicity of Christian faith carried on by churches rooted in the global North", insists Granberg-Michealson.

And those churches need the enrichment of brothers and sisters in the global South who are discovering fresh and vital pathways for participating in God's mission in the world. Building that bridge is the critical global calling today in concretely expressing the unity of the global church. (p. 20-21)

That the "old" and the "new" vitally need each other, is the heartbeat of *From Times Square to Timbuktu*, and at stake is nothing less than the global church's witness to Christ's reconciliation in our broken and troubled world.

While Granberg-Michaelson is sympathetic to the "big tent" ecumenism of the WCC, the WCRC, or the NAE, he is confident that the most important place by far for northern and southern hemisphere Christians to start learning from each other is at the grassroots level. Specifically, local congregations in the West have a providential opportunity to begin the process of listening and learning as North America becomes increasingly diversified through patterns of immigration. Building multi-ethnic and multi-cultural congregations should be a priority for western churches and church leaders, although this is a difficult task requiring intentionality, humility, and deep reliance on the guidance of the Spirit. For there is a considerable imbalance of power between established churches in the West and immigrant Christians that needs to be carefully overcome so that we can meet as equals in Christ. There is also deep inertia among many Christian traditions in the West, evangelical or liberal: denominations and congregations are often unwilling to alter inherited doctrines or practices of faith. Granberg-Michaelson suggests that while many congregations in North America are keen to welcome immigrants into their midst, their welcome does not attain the true openness to which God calls the church. He quotes an Anglican pastor's tongue-in-cheek remarks.

We're so glad you're here! Now this is the Book of Common Prayer. Obey it. This is our musical tradition. Master it. This is our English heritage. Adopt it. This is our sense of order. Assimilate. And the gifts from your home culture, your young culture, your lower-class culture? Would you leave them at the door and pick them up on your way out? There not quite Episcopal enough. (p. 112)

When "Episcopal" is replaced by "Presbyterian" or "Evangelical" and "Book of Common Prayer" replaced by "Westminster Confession" and "English heritage" replaced by "Dutch heritage", we are all left uncomfortably aware of how few of us are truly open to the world Christianity on our doorstep! At this point one wishes that Granberg-Michaelson had not omitted from his discussion those smaller conservative fellowships like the World Reformed Fellowship (WRF) or International Lutheran Council that represent denominations around the world that find their point of unity in the classic confessions of the Reformation. Can the sort of open, respectful encoun-

ter with churches in the global south that the author believes necessary take place on the basis of western confessions of faith? Does the WRF's recent statement of faith (<http://wrfnet.org/about/statement-of-faith>), which was written "to include the voices of evangelical Reformed Christians from the entire world, in light of the fact that all of the historic Reformed confessions were written in Western Europe or Great Britain", manifest the fruit of the "walking together" (p. 152) between north and south that Granberg-Michaelson counsels? A further controversial section of *From Times Square to Timbuktu* (pp. 146-52) again broaches the need for respectful engagement of global Christianity by churches in the minority world. Granberg-Michaelson is critical of those evangelical denominations in America who enlist support from churches from the global south in battles over homosexuality. This is "the wrong place to start", he argues. Instead of engaging Christians in the global south on their terms (where the issue of homosexuality in the church and culture is largely non-existent), we end up simply using them in our cultural and ecclesiastical wars.

Granberg-Michaelson's *From Times Square to Timbuktu* is a thoughtful, passionate challenge to majority world Christians. Although its focus is narrowly on the American context, pastors, elders, and parachurch leaders in Canada and Europe will also profit enormously from this book, especially if they work in urban settings. Granberg-Michaelson is at his best when he poses questions or challenges. (Indeed, sometimes the book's suggestiveness sinks into platitudes, e.g. "Our call is to link hearts and hands across all that would divide us and walk together towards God's future" [p. 161]). Those who love the classic Protestant confessions and liturgical traditions will have much to ponder from his questions and challenges, as we remain thankful to God for our heritage, yet seek to be faithful to where he is leading us.

Todd Statham lectured at Zomba Theological College in Malawi from 2011 to 2014, and in 2015 works for Theological Education by Extension Malawi, developing theological education for lay leaders in Protestant churches.



George Whitefield: America's Spiritual Founding Father. Thomas S. Kidd. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2014, 325 pp., hc. ISBN 978-0-300-18162-3

This excellently crafted new biography of the noted 18th century evangelist George Whitefield appeared at the time of the 300th anniversary (1714-2014) of his birth. Yet it will be invaluable for many years to come as a standard biography and trustworthy work on Whitefield. The author, a former student under George Marsden, has been faithfully researching and writing in the general area related to Whitefield for many years now. His earlier books on Patrick Henry, the Great Awakening, and the religious side of the

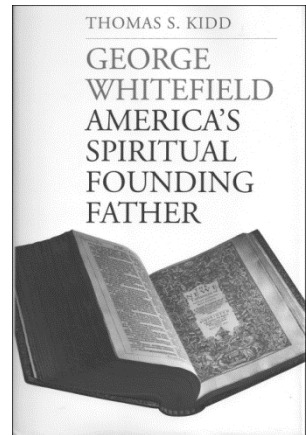
American Revolution have all no doubt contributed to the context he brings to the subject of Whitefield, something which is often not evident from authors of other biographical studies on Whitefield. This is the real strength of the work – providing excellent context from which to understand Whitefield.

As one would expect, the biography does chronicle Whitefield's life from his birth in Gloucester, England to his death in Newburyport, Massachusetts with key events of his life and ministry well recorded and assessed in the twelve chapters. I will forego a detailed summary of the actual life story and confine my comments to how I see this biography advancing studies on Whitefield and where to place the book.

Personally I found the greatest help this book provides in advancing our understanding of Whitefield is the repeated discussions on Whitefield and the Holy Spirit. Kidd takes what is now commonly called the Bebbington four-fold (quadrilateral) thesis of evangelicalism and changes it to really a five-fold thesis by adding the fifth – the Holy Spirit – and the emphasis which Whitefield and others placed upon the ministry of the Holy Spirit (p. 36). This is interwoven into virtually every chapter of the book. Kidd tells about the early converted Whitefield and his “impulses”. The author explains the constant emphasis on the effectual calling work of the Spirit in bringing someone to Christ and the prompting work of the Spirit in the life of the evangelist and others. At times these points in Whitefield's life were controversial but he also grew in maturity. Kidd's emphasis on the Holy Spirit brings a great corrective to some biographical works which fail to understand this key aspect of Whitefield. A failure here leads to a false understanding of Whitefield; it will then invariably focus attention primarily on his fundraising efforts, theatrical rhetorical abilities, and promotional work. Studies of Whitefield can easily display him as a pragmatic and utilitarian man only, yet this is not who Whitefield was in essence.

Five other important themes which come through this book are the incredible trans-Atlantic nature of Whitefield's ministry and the interconnectedness of trans-Atlantic evangelicalism; the bitter rivalries and divisions which occurred with the evangelical leaders and from the Protestant Churches; the role of an evangelist; Whitefield and slavery/slaveholding; and, of course, Kidd's title itself, Whitefield as America's spiritual founding father. These six themes constitute the key contributions of this biography from my perspective and bring distinction from other biographical studies whether Dalimore, Stout, Lambert, or Mahaffey. There are other themes which emerge but they are not as pervasive.

Whitefield's seven trans-Atlantic trips are well documented and contextu-



ally described by Kidd. Kidd shows spiritual development and change with Whitefield in these seven trips across the Atlantic. This is most valuable and again often missing in biographies on Whitefield. Yet to make the work just a little more user-friendly for the reader, a chart of the seven trips to America would be helpful and a map would also be very useful.

Kidd makes us very aware of divisions and rivalries – some of which were theological, some the result of immaturity, and some no-doubt rooted in jealousy and the lack of spiritual concern. It does make one sad at times and also reflective of the modern state of divisions amongst much of evangelicalism.

The discussion of Whitefield as an evangelist presents a most important theme. Kidd reminds the reader of the context – many saw the work of the evangelist as having ceased – but goes on to show how Whitefield saw himself as being called to this ministry and did not believe it had ceased. The book then clearly develops Whitefield's strategy and approach to evangelism through his itinerant preaching. A biography is not the place for an in-depth analysis of the sermons of Whitefield on all aspects of evangelistic preaching. I would expect that as a separate study. Kidd makes many hints throughout for another to take the next step. The issue of "cessationism/non-cessationism" here should be carefully noted as it does contain significant modern applications.

Concerning slaveholding and slavery, Kidd makes this actually a very significant point for discussion. Kidd shows the dynamics within Whitefield's perspectives on his own owning of slaves and the role that they played in Bethesda as part of his entrepreneurial development there. Kidd is very good at showing context on this and how there was a growing change in many throughout the 18th century, and he is careful to place Whitefield within that continuum.

Regarding the actual theme which is reflected in the book's cover concerning Whitefield's place as a spiritual father of America, Kidd is able to draw upon his past writing experiences which help again to provide worthy context for this discussion. The theme is not there in every chapter but builds as the book unfolds and reaches its crescendo in the conclusion (p. 255) where Kidd amasses here his arguments and final illustrations on this subject. He says here what is again not always acknowledged in other biographies on Whitefield: the spiritual freedom which Whitefield preached would increasingly be also a mirror to liberty for the colonies. Kidd also shows that after the death of Whitefield the sentiment also turned increasingly to seeing Whitefield as a spiritual hero and took on unusual and non-protestant veneration. Kidd presents Whitefield as providing a legacy for evangelicalism in America right through to today. He makes a fair case here even if one in the end may desire to nuance the argument somewhat.

Thomas Kidd's biography combines strong academic ability with a commitment to evangelical Christian doctrine. He is sympathetic towards Whitefield but also willing to disagree and show problems and inconsistencies.

Some biographies in the past have failed to do this and others perhaps have only seen the inconsistencies and have lacked true sympathy. So by-and-large here is quite a balanced biography on Whitefield. The size is not overly daunting, and the reader can check the notes for further reading. The author has amassed a very good knowledge of his subject and this is reflected in his notes. There is no separate bibliography provided; I would assume this was omitted to keep the page numbers down. Some will wish for more details at times, such as about his marriage or his role within Calvinistic Methodism or his work with the Countess of Huntingdon or his views on free masonry. This is not an exhaustive study but a readable work and hopefully one which will introduce many readers to Whitefield – truly a most remarkable gospel labourer. If you have not read a biography on Whitefield, then this will be an excellent one to start with.

Reviewed by Jack C. Whytock

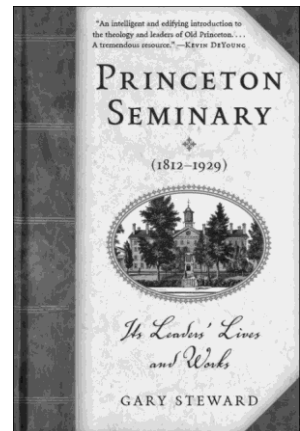
***Princeton Seminary (1812-1929): Its Leaders' Lives and Works.*
Gary Steward. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2014, 321 pp., paper.
ISBN: 978-1-59638-397-5**

This latest volume on the life and personalities of Old Princeton comes from the hand of Gary Steward who was, at the time of writing, a Ph.D. candidate at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and formerly pastor at Calvary Baptist Church in St John's, Newfoundland.

Steward's format is simple and helpful. He introduces the principle personalities through mini-biographies and surveys each individual body of work that contributed to the corpus of Princeton's theology.

Steward takes us to the obvious places first (as Princeton found its first beginnings under Tennant) in the founding of the "Log College" in Neshaminy, Pennsylvania, through the formative period of the Great Awakening and to the "providential" expulsion of David Brainerd from Yale. This expulsion led to a re-evaluation among Presbyterians about the kind of ministerial training that was so needed: one which wasn't being provided at places like Yale. This led to the founding of The College of New Jersey (later named Princeton University) and eventually to a separate faculty devoted strictly to theological education (eventually named Princeton Theological Seminary).

Steward highlights how the stature and structure of the College grew under the great John Witherspoon (not only a revolutionary in American educa-



tion but a signer of the Declaration of Independence). He quotes Mark Noll as saying, "Witherspoon altered the course of the college and defined its direction for at least the next century" (p. 38).

Steward notes some of the tensions between Thornwell as a Southern Presbyterian and Hodge regarding the level of cultural engagement the church ought to be involved in. Yet, he shows that regardless of their respective views, the Civil War demonstrated that there were times when the church needed to provide a prophetic voice on morally complicated issues, such as the war and slavery. Though this was not their most enduring legacy, yet, I personally, found myself most engaged here.

In particular, the discussion on Old Princeton's views on slavery was most enlightening. The seminary, especially J. W. Alexander and Charles Hodge, tried to take a balanced position on slavery. They saw that the abolitionists, though sincere, were misguided and realized that abolitionists' intentions to help the slaves would serve their harm if accomplished too quickly. Rather than seeking immediate abolition, Old Princeton believed that a more biblical approach was to work for a gradual abolition that would serve the interest of slave owners and more particularly the slaves themselves. Many slaves, after their freedom was secured by the war, found no means of support, having been left without the basic necessities of life. Alexander and Hodge believed that the New Testament, while recognizing the reality of slavery in society, does not call openly for its immediate abolition. They saw that the gospel contained the seeds of slavery's abolition and believed that Christians would eventually recognize their mutual worth and dignity in the eyes of Christ. Their sense was that this sentiment was emerging more and more among the slave-holding population of the south. Alexander wrote "I am more and more convinced that our endeavours to do at a blow, what providence does by degrees, are disastrous to those whom it would benefit." (p.234)

Steward, in accessing the life of Archibald Hodge, highlights the robust theology of missions that emerged from Princeton Seminary. Hodge, himself a missionary to India, though for only three years, was nevertheless passionately committed to the task of worldwide evangelism and sought to ensure Princeton's place in it. Seminary president Francis Patton said of him,

"His experience in the mission field enhanced his zeal for the missionary cause, gave him a grasp of the missionary problem, and an interest in missionaries that made him always the trusted counsellor of all those among his pupils who contemplated a missionary career." (p. 246)

This was not simply a personal infatuation of Hodge's but was an institutionalized vision of the College and Seminary. He writes,

The "Plan of the Seminary" adopted in 1811 stated that the seminary was to establish a "nursery for missionaries to the heathen,

and to such as are destitute of the stated preaching of the gospel; in which youth may receive that appropriate training which may lay a foundation for their ultimately becoming eminently qualified for missionary work.” (p. 247)

In fact, Steward states that a third of students that left the seminary in its first fifty years went out to preach the gospel “on missionary ground” (p. 247).

I wish I could say the book’s only weakness was a small one. Rather, it is a glaring omission of a treatment of the lives of B. B. Warfield and J. Gresham Machen. While devoting two chapters to each of the founders up to A. A. Hodge, he doesn’t give the same treatment to Warfield and Machen. He treats both men and their writings under one short chapter of seventeen pages entitled “Old Princeton: Past, Present, and Future”. Perhaps time constraints or other factors prevented him from doing so, but it certainly guts the story of old Princeton as a whole. Neither is there a suitable apologetic given in the preface for the omission apart from saying, “I am all too aware of the many important individual and books I leave out” (p. 20). A fuller explanation is needed to justify such conspicuous omissions. While it is true that in covering such a wide period of time sacrifices have to be made, few would agree Warfield and Machen should be left on the cutting room floor! The modern debates surrounding the authority and inspiration of the Bible should be enough to give both of these men primacy of place here. While I found the lengthy discussion on slavery stimulating and enlightening, nevertheless more important for our modern audiences is the area of the authority of the Word in our contemporary world. I think we would have been better served by Steward if he had told us, in more detail, why Warfield and Machen are still eminently worthy of our time and attention, both of whose body of writings remain as fresh and relevant today as the day they were written. Both of these men are still the standard in the areas of biblical inspiration and theological liberalism.

Nevertheless, this volume is encouraging to see because it seeks to ensure that a responsible publishing world is seeking to keep alive the legacy of Old Princeton for a newer generation of readers. As well one could not help but be stirred in heart and render gratitude to God for such an institution ever existing.

I doubt any would assert that this work displaces David Calhoun’s masterly two volumes on Old Princeton published by the Banner of Truth, but it does serve to keep the legacy before us in a way that leaves us cognizant of just how we continue to be indebted to God for what he did through Princeton. Steward shows that over an amazing span of 117 years, Old Princeton demonstrated a consistent and faithful commitment to the whole council of God until its reorganization in 1929. The fact that it is a much shorter work than Calhoun’s will enable a broad spectrum of readers to survey at least

most of the main aspects and personalities of Old Princeton.

With above reservations I can warmly recommend this work.

Reviewed by Kent I. Compton, the minister of the Western Charge of the Free Church of Scotland, Prince Edward Island and a trustee of Haddington House Trust.



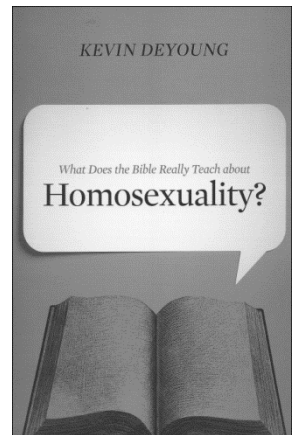
Applied Theology

***What Does the Bible Really Teach about Homosexuality?* Kevin DeYoung. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015, 158 pp., paper. ISBN 978-1-4335-4937-3**

In his most recent book, Kevin DeYoung, Senior Pastor of University Reformed Church, East Lansing, Michigan, tackles an issue that has already divided families, churches, and communities – homosexuality. Even though “gay rights issues” have largely been fought for in the West, the increased interconnectedness of the global community has pushed this topic onto every inhabited continent of the world. Thus Christians everywhere must be informed and courageous in answering the question of DeYoung’s book: “What Does the Bible Really Teach about Homosexuality?”

DeYoung has divided his book into two main parts. But before he tackles these divisions, he introduces the “big theme” of Scripture by answering the question, “What does the Bible teach about everything?” The author’s concern is that as we come to the topic of homosexuality and as we discuss this topic with others, we must be careful to place it within the framework of the whole Word of God that teaches us about the whole of our lives and indeed the whole of creation. This point is well taken and from the outset it is clear that DeYoung is the classic teacher; he starts at the beginning, lays a foundation, and incrementally works through this subject in a way that will be helpful to Christians and non-Christians alike.

Having laid this rudimentary foundation, the author then sets forth in Part 1 a biblical understanding of what the Bible has to say concerning homosexuality in particular. DeYoung explores five key passages and devotes one whole chapter to each passage. He begins with the creation of male and female in Genesis 1-2 and moves to Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 19), then to Leviticus, Romans 1, and finally 1 Timothy 1. Readers who have wondered about some of these difficult passages will find each one clearly explained and will almost certainly feel more able to discuss and explain them to oth-



ers.

However, sometimes we are ready to explain scripture but less ready to answer objections to clear biblical teaching. Part 2 sets out to help us with common objections that many of us have faced already: “The Bible Hardly Ever Mentions Homosexuality”, “Not That Kind of Homosexuality”, “What About Gluttony and Divorce?”, “The Church is Supposed to Be a Place for Broken People”, “You’re On the Wrong Side of History”, “It’s Not Fair”, and “The God I worship is a God of Love”. DeYoung’s answers to each of these objections reveal his pastoral heart and experience. They are very measured and loving, but firm, with plenty of Scripture to show that these are not DeYoung’s thoughts; they are God’s thoughts explained to us by one of His servants.

The author has included three appendices in order to apply his theological arguments from Parts 1 and 2. The topics here include homosexual marriage, homosexual attraction, and the church’s mandate to respond biblically to homosexual temptation and sin. These topics are only introductory applications, and DeYoung offers further assistance by way of an annotated bibliography that is helpfully divided into reading levels. The Scripture index at the close of the book is most useful and the publisher, Crossway, has also kindly provided a link to download a free study guide for this book.

Perhaps the best way to interest readers in taking up a serious study of this book is to close with DeYoung’s own challenge:

We don’t get to pick the age we live in, and we don’t get to choose all the struggles we will face. Faithfulness is ours to choose; the shape of that faithfulness is God’s to determine. In our time, faithfulness means (among a thousand other things) a patiently winsome and carefully reasoned restating of the formerly obvious: homosexual behaviour is a sin. (p. 129)

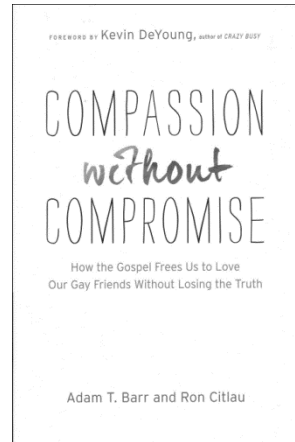
Reviewed by Nancy J. Whytock

***Compassion Without Compromise: How the Gospel Frees Us to Love Our Gay Friends Without Losing the Truth.* Adam T. Barr and Ron Citlau. Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House Publications, 2014, 158 pp., paper. ISBN 978-0-7642-1240-6**

As a vast array of homosexual “rights” are being legalized and legitimized in many countries around the world, Christians are being forced to find answers to questions that former generations did not even ask. How do we respond to relatives, co-workers, yes, even church members who have adopted a homosexual lifestyle? How do we show love without compromising the truth? In this book, Adam Barr and Ron Citlau have set out to answer some of these questions and to encourage Christians that a biblical response

is not only possible, it is imperative. Their underlying message is: don't panic!

Barr, Senior Pastor of Peace Church, near Grand Rapids, Michigan, and Citlau, senior pastor of Calvary Church, near Chicago, Illinois, have divided the book into chapters by using questions. At the end of each chapter there is a "take-away" paragraph in order to help the reader to grasp the main points. The chapter questions are ones that the authors feel many Christian, particularly in western countries, are asking today, such as: "How can a bunch of hypocrites cast the first stone?", "Why is sexual sin different from any other?", "How can homosexuals trust Christians?", "How should my church deal with this issue?", "Can the gospel transform someone's sexual orientation?", and "How can we navigate the issues of living in a gay world?"



While some of the chapters are helpful, the stated purpose of the book as being a resource for Christians as they respond to homosexuality in the culture is greatly overshadowed by the on-going use of illustrations from Pastor Citlau's past. Citlau was a practising homosexual, and we learn in great detail about his life before Christ. While the reader may rejoice, as all Christians do, in the marvelous grace of God to sinners, the details of Citlau's past and the use of himself for almost every example that is given in the book leaves the reader wondering if the book is really an autobiography rather than application from biblical teaching on the subject of homosexuality. Perhaps Pastor Citlau could have written his story as a separate book and Pastor Barr could have written a book about the practical responses to homosexuals that he has found to be most effective.

Speaking of effective responses, the authors' five simple applications from Colossians 4:2-6 are extremely helpful (pp. 117-118). In fact, from this point in the book on, the actual stated purpose of the book seems to come forth and the practical application of biblical truth that many Christians are seeking is there for us to read. There is a helpful appendix to explain the authors' viewpoint that the Bible is in fact the Word of God. The four points discussed are helpful, but perhaps the contents of the appendix would serve readers better if it were contained in the introduction. I doubt that many sceptics will make it to the back of the book.

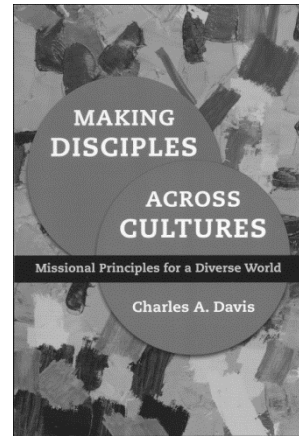
Barr and Citlau are to be commended for their courage in writing a book that clearly goes against the cultural norms of the West. They are to be even further commended as pastors, for it is obvious that standing for biblical truth in the area of homosexual behaviour is increasingly costly in many countries of the world. Kevin DeYoung, author of *What Does the Bible Really Teach about Homosexuality?*, wrote the foreword to this book, and he says of Barr

and Citlau “above all, they are hopeful” (p. 10). It is certainly the overall theme of this book: don’t panic, be hopeful. Can you actually be “a compassionate, uncompromising witness in a culture that celebrates what the Bible censors?” (p.18). Barr and Citlau say in chorus, “Yes!”

Reviewed by Nancy Whytock

***Making Disciples Across Cultures: Missional Principles for a Diverse World.* Charles A. Davis. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2015, 236 pp., paper. ISBN 978-0-8308-3690-1**

Charles Davis presents a wonderful work on disciple making and emphasises the role that all members of the body of Christ should be playing in doing so. This is a challenging and yet compelling compilation, which all pastors and missiologists should read. There can be little doubt that Davis’ work presented in this book will inspire many a believer to practise the missional principles contained therein. Davis draws from many years’ experience in countries such as Chad, Pakistan, and Venezuela, and his reflections on real-life events make the writing come alive. Davis also employs a somewhat narrative style which makes the presentation easy to follow. Therefore, *Making Disciples Across Cultures* would be appealing to scholars and laity alike.



In his introduction, Davis describes the metaphor of a “cultural music mixer board”, which he uses throughout the book to great effect. Through this metaphor he explains how one should attempt to strike a balance between the *visible* and the *invisible* world, a balance between *knowledge* and *experience*, a balance between *teaching* and *interacting*, and so forth. The metaphor is skillfully employed as Davis attempts to explain what happens when one aspect is given more attention than another. For example, in his comparison between *teaching* and *interacting*, Davis states that “both are important, but if one or the other is too high or too low, the dynamic tension is lost and our capacity and effectiveness at making disciples is diminished”. Just as a sound technician would use a mixer board to enhance an artist’s music, so Davis uses this comparison to assist ministry leaders in their endeavours to make disciples.

Davis provides the reader with a working definition of a disciple (“one who moves closer to Jesus as a learner, follower and lover, together with other disciples”) and then he unpacks this further with what disciples should be doing as they learn, follow, and love Jesus in a life-long process. The chap-

ters are fairly short and each one ends with practical examples relating to the respective topics at hand. These examples from Davis' personal experience or from that of others with whom he has engaged, help to drive various points home. As I read each chapter and became aware of this pattern, I began to anticipate the stories that would follow and in a sense looked forward to reach that final section of each chapter. Thus his style of writing entices the reader to read on.

The range of examples and illustrations that Davis has employed in this work – from those of Allen, Bosch, Stott, Hirsch, and Hiebert to even Don Richardson's *Peace Child*, to the likes of *Anne of Green Gables* and *The Lord of the Rings* – all serve to shed clearer light on Davis' presentation. Besides his personal experience and his diverse illustrations, Davis includes, at the end of the book, study questions pertaining to each chapter (compiled by Dietrich Gruen), making *Making Disciples Across Cultures* a useful study resource too. I was personally challenged by his chapter on "Disciples hear and obey" (chapter 3), where he focuses on the relationship of *knowledge*, *experience*, and *obedience* – all three needing to be equally balanced as far as possible. Chapter 9 also provided a strong challenge for Christians to live "countercultural" lives, and Davis uses the examples of Jesus and of Paul to drive this point home.

If one has a heart for serving God and a passion for His mission, then *Making Disciples Across Cultures* is certainly a recommended read. I would not hesitate to encourage pastors, theologians, missiologists, and similar scholars to include this book in their respective libraries.

Reviewed by Rev. Wayne A. Grätz, communications officer and part-time lecturer/facilitator at Dumisani Theological Institute, King William's Town, Eastern Cape, South Africa.

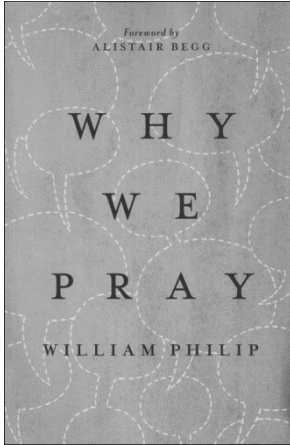


Why We Pray. William Philip. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015, 104 pp., paper. ISBN 978-1-4335-4286-2

William Philip's small book *Why We Pray* is huge on biblical direction and encouragement to Christian prayer. Right at the beginning Philip makes an important clarification between the questions "Why do we pray?" and "Why *should* we pray?" Philip does not start with exhortations to prayer, but with explanations as to why prayer exists at all. Fundamentally the answer is God. To Philip, the nature of prayer is inseparably connected to the nature of God. A conviction that runs throughout this work is that "we learn most about prayer simply by learning about God" (p. 18). Therefore, the author answers the "Why do we pray?" question with four biblical truths about God. These four biblical truths form the chapter divisions of this book.

I will briefly summarize Philip's chapters to give you a taste of this book,

and then give a conclusion.



Chapter 1: “We Pray Because God is a Speaking God”. Essentially this chapter is a redemptive-historical presentation of God’s creative and gospel work in relation to God’s attribute of speech. As God spoke our world into existence for His glory, so He spoke with mankind, covenanting and fellowshiping with them in the Garden. However, man fell into sin, and Philip relates how in sin man stopped answering God – he stopped praying. But God would not stop speaking with us. In a masterful stroke, Philip shows a glorious truth of God’s gospel when he writes, “The whole story of the gospel is of a God who, from the very beginning, determined that he would say these

words, ‘I want you to come back in’” (p. 34). God in Jesus Christ is the Word of God, sent for us so we could be redeemed and again pray. Prayer then is a fruit of redemptive history

Chapter 2: “We Pray Because We Are Sons of God”. As believers we call God our heavenly Father because we are in union with Christ and adopted into God’s family through the Spirit. Consequently, as Philip brings out, God will hear His family’s prayers. Philip brings this assurance by driving the reader to the doctrines of Christ’s humanity, union with Christ, and adoption. For six pages Philip lucidly describes the amazing prayer life of Christ. Of course he anticipates the reader’s response, “*I’m not Jesus! I can’t pray as Jesus can*” (p. 49). Philip’s answer is “yes, you can” if you are a believer. From Galatians 4:3-7 he shows that being in Christ brings the “legal transfer of sonship from one father to another” (p. 51). In Christ, God becomes our Father, even as He is Christ’s Father, and as He hears Christ so He hears us.

Chapter 3: “We Pray Because God Is a Sovereign God”. After asserting Scripture’s truths of God’s sovereignty and human responsibility, Philip explains what he calls “the logic of God’s sovereignty in prayer” (p. 73). Just as God sovereignly saves us in His Son, joining us to His kingdom purposes, so God calls Christians to pray to God to fulfill His kingdom purposes. God wants us to think His thoughts after Him and do our part to bring in the Kingdom of His Son (p. 80). Doing our part includes prayer.

Chapter 4: “We Pray Because We Have the Spirit of God”. Christians pray because they have the Person of the Spirit dwelling in them. Only the Spirit can make us “pray-ers,” writes Philip (p. 87). Quoting John 15:7 and Romans 8:26-27, Philip shows it is God’s Spirit who enables us to pray in Jesus’ name and to pray with real faith and feeling through his saving witness in our hearts (p. 92). God’s Spirit makes our prayers real to us because He uses His Word in our lives. Philip brings out that the Spirit is our Helper who comes alongside of us to help us, not only in sanctification, but also in pray-

er. Christians can pray in the Spirit (Eph 6:17-18). That is, they will be led by God to pray according to the directives of Scripture.

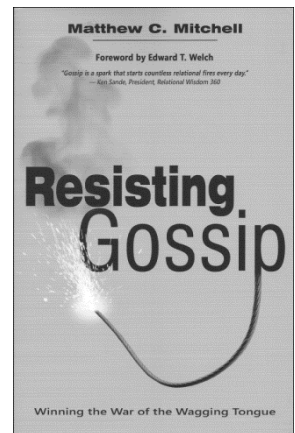
Though this is a short book, I highly recommend it for two reasons. First, Philip shows that the blessing of a Christian prayer life is a reality due to God's gospel. Initially preached as sermons for his congregation at the Tron Church of Glasgow, Scotland, Philip's chapters retain a gospel centre. This is why this small book on such a huge topic does such a great job in spurring us on to prayer with God. After all, a Christian does not just say his or her prayers; a Christian is a praying person, a person in relationship with God in the gospel of Christ. Quoting his father, Philip writes, "It's not so much *what* we pray but *what we are* when we pray that matters" (p. 36). Secondly, Philip is keen to give Christians direction in what they ask for in prayer. In chapters 3 and 4, he explains that God sovereignly leads us to pray prayers according to God's will to advance His Kingdom. We can bring our personal needs to Him, but prayer ultimately is His calling on our lives so the pattern should be the Lord's Prayer. This is a refreshing reminder in our self-focused age which has lassoed prayer as a self-activity.

Reviewed by Henry Bartsch.

***Resisting Gossip: Winning the War of the Wagging Tongue.*
Matthew C. Mitchell. Fort Washington, PA: CLC Publications,
2013, 191 pp., paper. ISBN 978-1-61958-076-3**

Matthew Mitchell, pastor at Lanse Evangelical Free Church in Lanse, Pennsylvania, has tackled an age-old problem that modern technology has regrettably enhanced – gossip. The sub-title of the book gives a succinct description of the gossip problem: "Winning the war of the wagging tongue". Mitchell has divided his work into four parts and has helpfully used alliteration to distinguish them: recognizing, resisting, responding to, and regretting gossip. Each part contains two or three chapters and each chapter is divided into sub-headings that clearly reveal the outline of the material. At the end of each chapter, there are questions for group discussion.

The first part, recognizing gossip, is obviously foundational to the rest of the book. Here Mitchell sets forth a basic definition of gossip: "Sinful gossip is bearing bad news behind someone's back out of a bad heart" (p. 23). Each phrase of this definition is unpacked, and the author points out that having more and more ways to communicate quickly with others (telephone, email, Twitter, Facebook, etc.) only increases this incredible temptation to gossip.



However, Mitchell, an experienced pastor, does not leave the reader in despair but reminds us of Paul's words to the Corinthians, "No temptation has seized you except what is common to man" (1 Cor. 10:13). The author concludes his introduction to the topic of gossip with these words: "Although it is not easy, it is possible to win against sinful gossip" (p. 31). This hopeful word sets the stage for the remainder of the book.

The second and third parts of the book form an offensive/defensive unit; that is, offensively fighting against gossip and defensively preparing to respond in a godly fashion when made the subject of gossip. Concerning the subject of resisting gossip, Rev. Mitchell looks at the problem we have of rushing into judgments, of judging matters that are none of our business, and of judging to be unkind and unloving. He then moves on to discuss ways that we can guard our listening and our speaking so as to proactively resist gossip when we are tempted. These offensive measures are then balanced by the defensive measures we need when we find ourselves to be the victims of the gossip of others. Here the author challenges us with two Christ-like defences: trusting God with our reputation and seeking to love our enemies. Anyone who is sincerely desiring to grow in holiness will be blessed and challenged by these chapters.

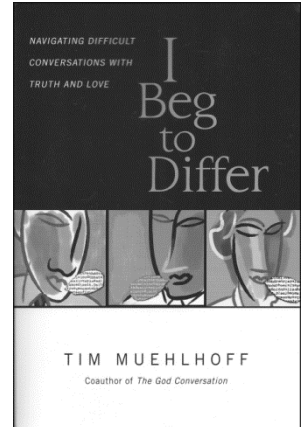
The final part is sadly, but predictably, regretting gossip. Rev. Mitchell provides much pastoral care here to those who have yielded to the temptation of gossip and are now grieving over their sin. In light of this chapter, it is not surprising that the author has included a bonus chapter for pastors on how to deal with gossip both proactively and reactively in an effort to maintain unity and the bonds of peace in a local fellowship. Again, this section contains questions for church leadership teams to discuss.

As one who has been both a pastor's daughter and a pastor's wife throughout my life, I have seen and experienced the destructive power of gossip within the church. I commend Rev. Mitchell for his hard work in producing this book. I believe its primary use would be in small groups and agree that it is a topic that should be tackled in local congregations on a regular basis, as gossip seems to be like burning coals that are easily blown into flame and must be doused at regular intervals. Perhaps one of the primary ways that the world will "know we are Christians by our love" is the manner by which we speak of and listen to one another in the body of Christ. Matthew Mitchell certainly challenges us to examine our tongues and our ears for Jesus' sake.

Reviewed by Nancy Whytock

***I Beg to Differ: Navigating Difficult Conversations with Truth and Love.* Tim Muehlhoff. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2014, 224 pp., paper. ISBN 978-0-8308-4416-6**

The author of this book is professor of communication at Biola University in California, one of America's larger Christian universities. This book emerged out of his lectures for a senior communication course he taught at Biola. *I Beg to Differ* is organised around three main sections: understanding communication, organising a conversation, and putting it into practice. The author works from two main agendas – what the Scriptures teach us about communication and what we can learn from theories in communication. He combines these two platforms with personal stories and examples as well as case studies and surveys to make for an interesting and non-abstract study.



In his foundational first section, Muehlhoff includes chapters which remind us of the power of words, the causes of verbal dams rupturing, the management of emotions amidst disagreement, and the place of the spiritual disciplines. I was surprised to see this last point being included but was very encouraged that it was, as it creates a spiritual tone for the subject of good communication. The author sees spiritual disciplines as the “power to resolve conflict”. (One inconsistency here, it should read Donald Whitney, not David Whitney, p.67).

The section on organising a conversation is most helpful and is the heart of the book. Here we learn about the steps in conversation: listening, gaining understanding, finding common ground, reciprocation (the sowing and reaping principle), and cultivating a person-centred communication. There is much here for study in these chapters and the wonderful thing about this book is the recaps at the end of every chapter. In one or two pages the author recaps the whole chapter with subheadings. This will make for a good textbook for college communication courses or small group studies, as one cannot help but get the content of each chapter. Muehlhoff is a clear writer and communicator.

The final section presents three case studies: marital disputes about finances, disagreements over religions in the workplace, and teens and excessive use of video games. These are personal and the names of the characters given, we assume, are changed or fictitious. Each case study seems very real and plausible. I do think this section of the book needs elaboration with more case studies. For example, there are many congregational disputes which could have been included as further case studies. The focus of the book ap-

pears to not relate sufficiently to congregational life but focuses more on home and work. *I Beg to Differ* is good, as far as it goes, but the reality is that church life needs to be examined and applied as a more integral part of the book. There seems to be a disconnect between the foreword by Gregg Ten Elshof, which opens with the first paragraph talking about the call to unity in the local church in Corinth and Ephesus. That thread is not woven through sufficiently in this book.

Overall one will find this to be a helpful book on communication. As one would assume, many Proverbs are brought forward to bear on the subject. Also, some of the theories and surveys were helpful to consider and appear to provide quantitative data for common sense assumptions. The author tries not to overload the reader with a lot of technical communication theory jargon; when he does, he carefully defines the meaning. A drawback for global readers may be the many references to the American presidency. A wider use of illustrations would be more inviting to a global audience.

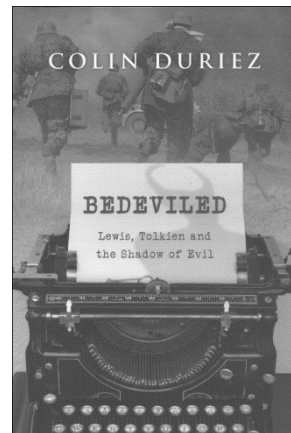
Reviewed by Jack C. Whytock

***Bedeveled: Lewis, Tolkien and the Shadow of Evil.* Colin Duriez. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2015, 235 pp., paper. ISBN 978-0-8308-3417-4**

With all the scholarship that has gone into the study of Lewis, Tolkien and the other Inklings whose work has been so influential to modern Christian thought, it may seem excessive that yet another book about their work should be written. We know that Lewis and Tolkien were masters of literature in both their fiction and their non-fiction. Woven deeply into their writings is a fusion of faith, grace, and virtue. They wrote out of a fierce love for God and the world he made, and we can go back to them again and again to see their mastery, and more importantly, the wisdom in their aims.

The author of this particular study of Lewis and Tolkien is well versed in the writings of these prolific thinkers. Duriez's previous books include *The C.S. Lewis Encyclopedia* and *The Inklings Handbook*. He is also a recipient of the Clyde S. Kilby award for his research on the Inklings.

In this study, Duriez opens up the work of these prolific scholars with the goal of discussing their view of evil; what they thought it to be, how they sought to depict it in their fiction, and their ultimate hope of it being overcome one day. His angle is interesting because he seeks to learn from two prominent Christian authors who experienced evil on a scale that was un-



precedented up to that time in history. As young men in the First World War and older men in the Second World War, they turned to their faith to answer the darkness falling upon their nation. As the author states early on in the book, “Lewis had lived through World War I and experienced trench warfare on its front line in France. Some of Lewis’s most popular writings on the forces of evil and goodness came into existence in the second global war, with its even more advanced modern weapons of terror” (p. 23).

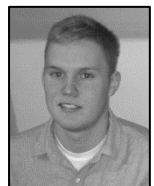
While most of the book focuses heavily on the work of C.S. Lewis, Duriez does take some time to discuss the importance of Tolkien’s work in regard to his treatment of evil in fiction and non-fiction. A recurring theme that comes up between points is the close friendship of Lewis and Tolkien and how this itself was a bond forged against evil. Duriez explains that the high value that Lewis placed on friendship was because of the emergence from the self that such a relationship necessitates:

Lewis took a classical view of friendship that owed much to the philosopher Aristotle, which he looked at in the light of his Christian understanding, seeing it as the “school of virtue”. Properly lived out, friendship could open one’s eyes to previously unseen aspects of reality. In our modern times – in the new post-Christian West and its sphere of influence – friendship can function in a restorative way, bringing us back into contact with lost reality, drawing us out of ourselves. (p. 171)

It is apparent from works like *The Screwtape Letters*, and other more subtle examples in the characters Lewis created for his other stories, that he knew evil to be a consuming force that draws an individual into an obsession with his or her own self and away from a love for others. Duriez picks this trope out again and again as he walks through all of Lewis’s major works.

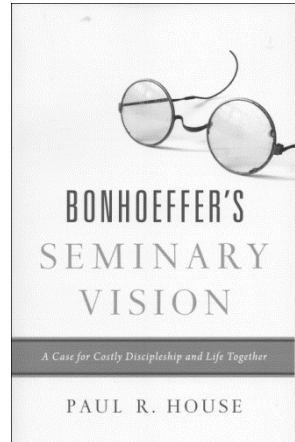
While there may be nothing “groundbreaking” or particularly exciting about the release of yet another study of the two most famous members of the Inklings, this book is worth reading. Duriez concisely sums up Lewis and Tolkien’s beloved works and clearly identifies their themes. This makes the book a logical point of entry or companion for anyone studying these writers. Apart from offering a survey of two writers whom you would benefit richly from knowing well (if you don’t already), he also gives the reader some weighty truths to consider as he explores thinkers who made it their life’s aim to shine the light of Christ on a world in which there is undeniable darkness, both within and without.

Reviewed by Andrew M. Whytock. Andrew has a B.A. in creative writing from Cornerstone University, Grand Rapids, Michigan.



***Bonhoeffer's Seminary Vision: A Case for Costly Discipleship and Life Together.* Paul R. House. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015, 207 pp., paper. ISBN 978-1-4335-4544-3**

There are very few books which one can recommend that are must reads for those involved in theological education, but Paul House's book, *Bonhoeffer's Seminary Vision*, is certainly one of them. It will likely remain such for some time. Bonhoeffer is usually remembered as one of the martyrs of the 20th century and so a statue was placed in a niche of the west towers' facade of Westminster Abbey, London in the row of 20th-century martyrs. Bonhoeffer is also remembered for his contributions in the fields of ethics and ecclesiology. However, what are generally ignored are his contributions and profound thoughts on theological education. Hence this is a most unique book.



House begins with an engaging personal preface. He briefly chronicles his own life-story with Bonhoeffer, beginning with a 1970s class at Wheaton College, where he was introduced to Bonhoeffer's *Cost of Discipleship* through a course with Tom Padgett. Later at seminary he took another course where more Bonhoeffer books were studied. However, in each course it was also the professor who presented the course in a very incarnational teaching manner that embodied what Bonhoeffer was actually saying. The journey continued with House teaching in theological seminaries, and there he continued to interact with Bonhoeffer studies. House does not see himself as a Bonhoeffer specialist, but he has spent many decades clearly rambling his way around the life and world and thought of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, perhaps much more a specialist than he humbly admits. House calls himself "a Bonhoeffer reader seeking biblical-theological understanding of my vocation for the sake of the church, the body of Christ" (p.16).

The first two chapters, "Bonhoeffer's Path to Seminary Ministry" and "Bonhoeffer and His Seminaries", are contextual chapters which allow one to gain real insight into Bonhoeffer before turning to the actual writings of Bonhoeffer. These will deepen one's understanding of the situation of the Confessing Church in Germany in the 1930s and also Bonhoeffer's vision for what he hoped to see occur in its seminaries. House begins chapter 2 with this first sentence: "Bonhoeffer engaged in university-based theological education before he began his seminary work" (p. 31). This highlights the fact that we are on a journey of discovery of different models in theological education in Germany at this time. I did wish that House had unpacked this more

concerning the university-based model so that readers will have a clearer insight here.

Chapters 3 and 4 examine Bonhoeffer's now classic books, *The Cost of Discipleship* and *Life Together*, respectively setting forth the theme and context of what Bonhoeffer was trying to achieve with the seminaries of the Confessing Church through the lens of these books. Many will greatly benefit here to discover the context for these two books, let alone the clear application for all seminary leaders and instructors. House summarises here repeatedly the vision of these seminaries' and their six-month programmes: "the seminary was expected to provide them [students] with fellowship, accountability in daily spiritual disciplines, further Biblical studies, pastoral care skills, and preaching opportunities" (p. 45). Yes, the students used Kittel extensively; but they also walked, recreated, mediated, sang, prayed, were silent, went preaching, worshipped, and ate together. By the end of these chapters, House has given us a clear impression of this seminary programme and also some of the tensions which were there. I will never again read *The Cost of Discipleship* or *Life Together* without thinking of House's statements about these books. In *The Cost of Discipleship* "a theology of the seminary's mission, the seminary's recruitment of faculty, the seminary's recruitment of students, and the seminary's goals for its graduates" (p. 100) is set forth. Likewise, *Life Together* sets forth that extension of a patterned life in the seminary reflecting a theology which embodies the Christian community (p. 101) and seminary as "a time for students to learn how to lead a faithful Christian community" (p.105).

After the analysis of the two books by Bonhoeffer, House turns to the theme of perseverance and the training of seminarians. Again he sets this forth through the context of the situation in Germany at that time. The applications are clear for the spiritual formation of seminarians who are called to live under the cross of Jesus Christ in faithfulness to the Lord. House concludes this chapter with three challenges for incarnational seminary work today. First, to not forget alumni (p. 179) – his thoughts are very perceptive on this point. Next, to persevere amidst many up-hill struggles to stay the course, and, finally to be "a visible testimony of the importance of ministerial preparation as one of the acts of Christ's body" (p. 180). House loves the term "incarnational seminary". His final chapter is an exploration of applications of what it could mean today to be an incarnational seminary. There is much here to ponder.

House has written a book which will be surprising for some readers. Bonhoeffer has not been seen by many as a theological educational reformer and visionary so this book is a welcome corrective. However, there are two points to note. First, readers must bear in mind that, like many studies on Bonhoeffer, this book does not explore in-depth the development of the systematic theological dogma of Bonhoeffer. House, a past president of the Evangelical Theological Society, does not make the biblical dogmatic formu-

lations of Bonhoeffer the theme of this book as a precise theological study. Bonhoeffer is not easy to categorise. Second, the other fact to bear in mind is that this book does not explore the theological educational context in Germany with any depth. This fact could create some false conclusions by some as to what this word “seminary” actually means in the book in distinction to the university-based system. Readers should be careful to keep these two points in view.

I reiterate, anyone involved in theological education should read this book. Yes, House will upset some as he holds back no punches as to what he thinks of distance theological education as generally non-incarnational. However, that is not the only theological educational model that can fail incarnationally. Some will find much of what is said in this book as non-applicable to the role of a theological institution and hence quickly dismiss the thesis presented here. This in itself raises serious questions as to who or what is really driving the theological educational agenda and establishing the models? Are we listening to the right sources for direction? This book could serve as an excellent catalyst for a faculty retreat and board retreat. Buy a few copies for senior-level administrators, give them out and take it from there.

Reviewed by Jack C. Whytock

Book Briefs

In this section we acknowledge new books we have received over the last year for which we have not provided full book reviews. We have organized these into topical categories to help readers become aware of new books in specific areas. Unsigned book briefs are by the editor.

Spiritual Formation

***Fasting with the Lord's Prayer: Experience a Deeper and More Powerful Relationship with God.* Elmer L. Towns. Ventura, CA: Regal, 2014, 206 pp., paper. ISBN 978-0-8307-6880-6**

This book offers a unique presentation on the study and application of the Lord's Prayer in our spiritual lives. The author works from the premise that we should read Matthew 6:9-18 together and not just focus upon verses 9-13 – the Lord's Prayer. Since the days of the Authorised King James Version, verse 14 has been the beginning of a new paragraph. This does not eliminate seeing a connection; spiritually there is benefit for linking the sections. Fasting is not one of the top elements discussed in spirituality presently, but by linking this prayer there is real merit. This is an easy-to-read book with plenty of illustration and application being made. It could be used in private devotions or a study group. The book has three sections: the first about prayer and fasting; the second about the seven petitions as Towns divides the Lord's Prayer (not quite identical to the Westminster Shorter Catechism); and the third section about 21 days of daily reading on fasting using the Lord's Prayer. I found myself generally following along and in agreement, but I did not fully endorse the foreword and its view of fasting; on occasion this view also emerges in the main text.

Christian Education

***Evangelical Christian Education: Mid-Twentieth-Century Foundational Texts.* Fernando Arzola Jr. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2014, 100 pp., paper. ISBN 978-1-62564-596-8**

What an amazing little text to use in all foundational level Christian education or catechetical courses in Christian colleges around the world. It could also be used for Christian education seminars, workshops, or training events.

Here is an excellent introductory primer on the basics through five primary texts carefully selected and compiled. Arzola, who teaches at Nyack College in New York, has made only brief comment to each document, thus ensuring that the essays speak for themselves. The work is introduced and commended by Kevin Lawson of Biola University and an editor for the Christian Educators of the 20th Century Project (www.christianeducators20.com). The five selections are Charles Eavey, "Principles of Teaching for Christian Teachers"; Frank Gabelein, "Christian Education in Democracy"; Findley Edge, "Teaching for Results"; Lois LeBar, "Education That Is Christian"; and Lawrence Richards, "Creative Bible Teaching". Each in its own way states classical evangelical principles on Christian education. I plan on using this small book in college classes and in Saturday workshops – delighted to have something this small and economical to use as a text. Hopefully a second printing will correct some typesetting problems (pp.13, 18, 20).

Christianity and Culture

***Christianity and the Veneration of the Ancestors: Should a Christian Consult the Dead?* Afrika Mhlophe. Belville, SA: SALT Publishers, 2013, 332 pp., paper. ISBN 978-1-92057139-9**

Here is a recommended new publication from an evangelical Christian perspective, offering a biblical challenge to think through this subject of the veneration of the ancestors (sometimes simply referred to as ancestral worship for short). Lest readers think this is just an African interest subject, readers should think deeply about early Celtic or Druidic spirituality and new/renewed spirituality practices in the Western World – the topic is much more global than often conceded. In twenty-five easy-to-read chapters, Mhlophe surveys the issues of death, the afterlife, ancestors and the living, and their interactions with the dead. He concludes with clear warnings about idolatry and syncretism. If as a preacher or Christian you have not carefully thought through for instance the story of Saul seeking a medium to consult the dead prophet Samuel (1 Samuel 17), then this book will help you. A bibliography has been included by the author. Afrika Mhlophe lives in Port Elizabeth, South Africa, where he is a pastor and also a speaker at many conferences.

***Freed by God But Imprisoned by Culture.* Afrika Mhlophe. Port Elizabeth, SA: Step Up Foundation, 2015, 327 pp., paper. ISBN 978-0-620-64687-1**

What a great title for a book! The title should alert us to the reality that, though some of the specifics may be African, the subject is something that global Christianity has dealt with in the past and continues to wrestle with. The subject is as old as both testaments of the Bible. This book shows

marked organisational structure from the one above. *Freed by God But Imprisoned by Culture* is divided into seven parts with thirty-one chapters. The book's foreword is by Michael Cassidy, founder of African Enterprise. The seven parts are: understanding where we have come from, understanding culture, understanding issues of identity, understanding the power of influence, understanding the power of culture, understanding African cultural practices, and understanding cultural fascism. The book once again is based upon evangelical theological presuppositions and in many ways helps deepen the 2013 book and build upon that book by providing the larger context. On occasion a reader may also ask for further clarification such as on current circumcision practices beyond tribal cultural reasons. A bibliography is also included in this book. The theme of the book is well stated on the back cover: "This is a book of freedom. It is a gift to those who are imprisoned by culture and also to those who desire to be equipped in how to guard their freedom from the control of man-made culture."

Christian Ethics

***Work and Wealth in Scripture: How to Grow, Prosper, and Work as a Christian.* Lawrence A. Clayton. Eugene, OR: Resource Publications, 2015, 148 pp., paper. ISBN 978-1-62032-256-7**

The subject for this book is wonderful but unfortunately I did not feel the writing matched my expectations. The book contains many stories and illustrations and sprinkled texts throughout, ranging over some excellently entitled chapters such as, "What is Valuable?", "Name it and Claim It", "The Protestant Work Ethic", and "How Work Got to be a Dirty Word". As I read the book I felt like I was reading a self-published work that lacked a strong advising editor to help the writer achieve the goal. There are some good thoughts about the rise of the Prosperity Gospel, yet strange enough some of the key texts did not surface in the chapter dealing with this subject. We hear much in the book about Max Weber and also about certain views of the Puritans, but I was not convinced at the end of the day that the title matched the contents – did the book really present a fair treatment of work and wealth in Scripture? No. It was disappointing for a study book on the subject.

Pastoral

***Autopsy of a Deceased Church: 12 Ways to Keep Yours Alive.* Thom S. Rainer. Nashville, TN: B&H, 2014, 102 pp., hc. ISBN 978-1-4336-8392-3**

This small book began as the author's blog postings called "Autopsy of a Deceased Church". They became his most popular postings and hence this

book. Autopsies are performed upon the dead to discover the cause of death. Rainer applies it to both “dying” or churches near death and closed churches. The sad reality is that many church members and their leaders do not want to admit the reality of death. Amongst his topics one will find discussions about the past – “the golden days”, failure to consider the changing community and the development of a fortress mentality, inward budgets and being driven by paying the staff, the Great Commission becoming the great omission, lack of real congregational prayer, and churches with no clear purpose. Rainer concludes with some practical suggestions in two closing units. Each chapter/unit has discussion questions. This little book could serve as a helpful tool in church revitalization discussions with church leadership. It should also be in Bible college and seminary libraries, as it addresses something not always considered in training for the ministry.

***Disunity in Christ: Uncovering the Hidden Forces That Keep Us Apart.* Christena Cleveland. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2013, 220 pp., paper. ISBN 978-0-8308-4403-6**

This book is a social psychologist’s efforts to help explain why Christians cannot always get along. The author also offers suggestions as to how to try to overcome such divisions, although I felt the book was much more on the analysis side than on the practical side of what to do. It begins with an intriguing story/narrative of the Right Christian and the Wrong Christian, which is very captivating if not also humorous. Then we are led through various analytical chapters and introduced very well to several social or psychological tests, experiments, theories about divisions in human groups, which the author thoughtfully applies to the Christian community. One will learn that culture and our desire for homogeneity are often much bigger factors than we recognise. This book is a helpful tool for reflection over what are really our blind spots which become great tragedies leading to numerous divisions amongst Christians. This is not a theological tome on Christian unity – rather a Christian psychologist’s analysis and resource to help deal with a common problem.

Theology

***The Doctrines of Grace: Student Edition.* Shane Lems. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2013, 143 pp., paper. ISBN 978-1-59638-740-9**

Introducing others to the doctrines of grace can be a daunting task. Shane Lems has endeavored to aid the teacher in reaching that goal by providing this concise overview in an accessible format. This helpful little work of twelve lessons – including the introduction and conclusion – devotes two chapters to each of the five points as they are dealt with in the familiar TU-

LIP succession. Lems has intended that this book be used in a classroom setting, but it could just as easily be utilized as a self-study for the discerning student. Individual chapters are well divided, emphasize key terms or principles, and conclude with study questions and memory verses. These components work together to provide the student with the biblical basis for each belief. Appendices start on page 91 and offer suggestions for further reading; a reference chart for TULIP in the confessions; Scripture index; and, finally, the Canons of Dort in their entirety. Although brevity may just as often be a liability as it is a virtue, Shane Lems has diligently pursued the latter in this primer on the doctrines of grace and provides an excellent introduction to this essential body of truth.

Steve Mollins