

The need of the church to be *semper reformanda* should be interpreted as a call to creative thinking. This is often misunderstood. The creativity to which we are called is not the spinning of ‘theologies’ out of thin air, or change for change’s sake. We are called, first, to advance in our understanding of the Bible, both through coming to know more about the biblical background, and by careful and exact exegesis; second, we are called to apply afresh the known teaching of scripture to our day. If our interest in the Reformers and Reformed theology is an expression of our desire to think in terms of biblical principle at every point, then this is good. But if it is an excuse for not thinking freshly and boldly, for judging our inherited traditions by scripture, then our claim to be ‘Reformed’ is a travesty, for we shall be following the Reformers for reasons that they would not have recognised as valid. Only time will tell which way we are going.

Paul Helm  
*Banner of Truth, “Semper Reformanda”*

## Book Reviews

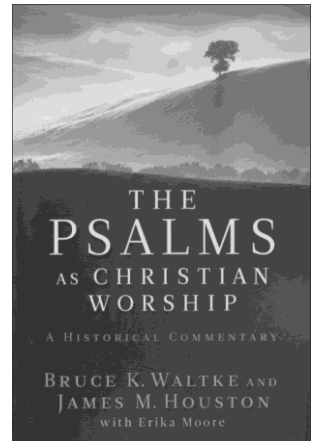
The *Journal* uses the standard abbreviation ‘hc’ to denote hard cover. The International Standard Book Number (ISBN) has been included with all books when available. We begin this section with “**Book Reviews**”, organized according to the four divisions of theology.

### Biblical Theology

***The Psalms as Christian Worship: A Historical Commentary.* Bruce K. Waltke and James M. Houston with Erika Moore. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010, 626 pp., paper. ISBN 978-0-8028-6374-4**

*The Psalms as Christian Worship* is described as an “historical-devotional commentary”. It is in a category all its own. The two authors, Bruce Waltke and James Houston, are senior scholars of the evangelical community. Bruce Waltke has spent fifty years teaching Psalms and is a noted Old Testament commentator. James Houston is a historical and cultural geographer and an authority on spiritual theology. Both men have been associated with Regent College, Vancouver, British Columbia, and there is no doubt this joint work represents the maturity of their lives as academics and Christian writers. They have been assisted by Erika Moore of Trinity School for Ministry, who wrote one chapter plus prepared the glossary and indices.

The objectives of this unique commentary are “to enrich the daily life of the contemporary Christian and to deepen the church’s community worship in hearing God’s voice both through an accredited exegesis of the Psalms and through the believing response of the church” (p. 2). The authors see the Scriptures as our source of authority – *sola scriptura* – but also want us to be edified by the selected great writers of Christian history. The vast majority of



these voices are from the ancient period, but certain medieval voices are also included as are voices from the Reformational period and also many in the modern period. In a cursory survey of the “Index of Authors”, the most referenced up to the end of the sixteenth century are: Alcuin of York, Thomas Aquinas, Augustine of Hippo, Bernard of Clairvaux, John Calvin, Cassiodorus, John Chrysostom, Denys the Carthusian, Erasmus, Geroch of Reichersburg, Jerome, Martin Luther, Nicholas of Lyra, Origen, Theodore of Cyrrhus and Theodore of Mopsuestia. One will be hard-pressed to find many of these names appearing in contemporary commentaries on the Psalms. Then again, Calvin’s references in much of his writing would rarely be used today by modern Christian writers. So there is a healthy respect for listening to the voices of the Church. This is coupled with a spiritual commitment to the Lord (p. 4) and, as they write, “Ours is a sacred hermeneutic because the Author is spirit and known in the human spirit through the medium of the Holy Spirit” (p. 4).

The authors tell us that they have selected the Psalms for their “interdisciplinary commentary” or “historic-exegetical study” (pp. 11, 10) for three reasons: to restore the unique role of the Psalms in worship, to restore the role of the Psalms in spiritual formation, and to restore the holistic use of the Psalms. These three reasons are highly commendable and need to be fully applauded.

And for whom was this commentary written? The authors state that they think it will benefit “thoughtful lay readers, as well as preachers and teachers”, and the footnotes in the exegetical portions are “intended mostly for more advanced students” (p. 11). Personally, I think few laymen and few preachers will wade their way through the text. A few may, but I do not think it is pitched at quite as popular a level as may be implied or hoped.

Following the prologue comes section 1, “Survey of History of Interpretation of the Book of Psalms”. This is divided into three chapters: “Survey of Second Temple Period Interpretation of the ‘Psalms’”, “Historical Introduction to the Interpretation of the Psalms in Church Orthodoxy”, and “History of Interpretation Since the Reformation: ‘Accredited Exegesis’”. I suspect much in the chapters in this one hundred page section will be bypassed and readers will go directly to the commentary section. Now, this hermeneutical history section would be an excellent resource for a seminary-level Psalms course.

Then follows the historical-exegetical commentary on thirteen Psalms: Psalms 1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 15, 16, 19, 22, 23, 51, 110 and 139 – for almost five hundred pages. A quick look at this select list immediately shows that the authors have attempted to show much variety of genre and content: wisdom, penitential, Messianic and hymnic. Some will be disappointed that the authors concentrate heavily upon the first book within the Psalter, yet their purposes overall are achieved with their selection, so I think they have selected reasonably well. This portion of the commentary will definitely have the

widest appeal. It will serve the classroom, the preacher and the informed laity.

Here is the content for Psalm 1 with the divisions – Part I: Voice of the Church; I. Seeking the Presence of *I AM*, II. Psalms as the Microcosm of the Bible, III. Divisions of the Psalter, IV. Psalm 1 as the Preface to the Psalter, V. A Wisdom Psalm, VI. Hilary of Poitiers' Commentary on Psalm 1, VII. Later Latin Fathers, VIII. Renaissance and Reformation Commentators, and IX. John Calvin's Commentary on Psalm 1. Then comes Part II: Voice of the Psalmist: Translation (I assume by Bruce Waltke). Then Part III: Commentary (with two subdivisions), and Part IV: Conclusion. This is nothing like reading Kidner's commentary in the Tyndale series! This is a very different, new work, and it will take time for serious readers to work through this material. Does one benefit from such close reading? Yes. I came away with a whole new appreciation for those who have gone before us. We moderns have not said everything! *The Psalms as Christian Worship* takes one deeply into these thirteen psalms and does it well.

One criticism is that I thought the glossary needed expansion. Many terms from the three introductory chapters on the history of interpretation should have been included in the glossary. For example, it was new to me to read of "accredited exegesis". Also, I did wonder why there was no bibliography included. The footnotes are quite extensive, but a bibliography would help to bring more order to the work overall.

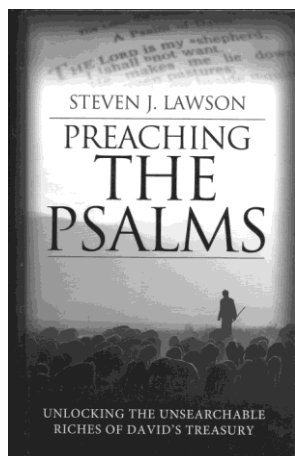
*The Psalms as Christian Worship: A Historical Commentary* will be a fine text for a senior level Psalms course. Some preachers will find great delight in using it as well as some laity. For a paperback book of 626 pages, it holds together very well with multiple usage, unlike many paperbacks of this size.

*Reviewed by Jack C. Whytock*

***Preaching the Psalms: Unlocking the Unsearchable Riches of David's Treasury.* Steven J. Lawson. Darlington, England/Carlisle, PA: EP Books, 2012, 383 pp., hc. ISBN 978-085234-783-6**

Steven J. Lawson, senior pastor of Christ Fellowship Baptist Church in Mobile, Alabama and visiting professor at Ligonier Academy, has already published a two-volume commentary on the Psalms and so is coming to this work having spent much time there already. That comes through as one senses, in going through this work, that Lawson is someone who is comfortable moving among the great themes of the Psalms.

The author begins by blending his love for history with the Word of God. In the preface he shows the effect that the Psalms had on, for example, Martin Luther in the formative years of the Reformation. It is widely known that his great hymn “A Mighty Fortress is Our God” is based loosely on Psalm 46. Lawson calls for nothing less here than a new Reformation; just as the Psalms had been central in the reformation of Luther and the church in the sixteenth century, so they must be now as well.



Coming from a denomination that has sought to give a preeminent place to the Psalms over the years, I delight to see a book that seeks to bring the riches of the Psalter to more pulpits.

The Psalms are the most quoted book in the New Testament. They shaped the self-identity of our Lord and His suffering. They also gave a context to the disciples of the Lord for what they suffered and the way the Lord was showing them through it how He was moving His kingdom forward. The importance of the Psalms in the diet of Christian worship cannot be over-stated!

Lawson does not begin with the Psalms themselves but with the preacher and shows that he himself must be a man of God. From there, the man of God must be fully convinced in his mind that his calling to preach is from God. He must be engaged in developing personal godliness. He is to be one not only prepared to preach but to model the message of the Psalms in terms of his joy and willingness to suffer for the truth it contains. The preacher must be fully convinced of the infallibility, inerrancy and authority of the Word of God if he is to be effective.

In particular, Lawson asserts that a commitment to an expositional preaching of the Psalms will yield for the preacher and his people a mine of riches of the manifold glory of God. In fact, he gives a long list from pages 47-54 of all the different characteristics of God contained in the Psalms. Along with this is the multifaceted range of human experience, the eschatological themes and, of course, and perhaps more importantly, the treasures of Christ's person and work. Here too, Lawson gives a helpful chart on the Christological passages of the Psalms and their New Testament fulfillment (pp. 55-56). The book's sheer size, says Lawson, will make it difficult for the preacher to know where to start. But preaching these passages in series would be a perfect place for the preacher to begin in introducing a congregation to the Psalms. In fact, says Lawson, "It is with this Christ-centered realization in mind that the expositor must approach the Psalms if he is to expound the Word accurately" (p. 57).

Preaching the Psalms in this way, says Lawson, will effect evangelization, ignite worship, cleanse lives and fortify the soul (pp. 61-62). He stresses that

one should have a good grasp as to how the Psalms are used by the New Testament writers in order to properly exposit the Psalms themselves (p. 179).

In chapter 14, Lawson gives an extended discussion on looking at all the historical events that have shaped the Psalms – creation, fall, flood, Abrahamic covenant, Davidic covenant and Babylonian exile, just to name a few – in order to properly expose what the writer was getting at. This in turn opens up for us the spiritual implications as these themes of creation, fall and redemption are applied to the souls of the congregation. “All human history is the unfolding of God’s eternal purpose and sovereign plan. The one who would rightly expound the Psalms must be keenly aware of these various stages of redemptive history . . .” (p. 240).

In chapter 15 the author underscores that just as we must master the history that surrounds the Psalms we also must master the geography that fills the Psalms. The geographical identity of the places contained in the Psalms strikes at the very heart of their meaning and again opens up riches for the listener. “Geography adds color and increases the emotional impact of the Psalms” (p. 242). Lawson himself is an excellent resource on outlining for the preacher the significance of these places as he looks into the historical significance of Jerusalem, Mt. Zion, Israel, Canaan, Judah, Shechem and many other places significant to the psalmists.

The expositor must give equal time to an investigation of the cultural world of the Psalmist and the surrounding nations to bring deeper colour to his preaching. Lawson quotes John Stott, who wisely said, “A true sermon bridges the gulf between the biblical and the modern worlds, and must be equally earthed in both” (p. 257).

In chapter 3 Lawson shows that having the right tools is essential. He gives about ten pages of study Bibles, Old Testament surveys, grammars, lexicons and commentaries which he has found particularly helpful. Just this resource alone makes this a volume to keep at hand!

In unit 2 he again begins to narrow in on the Psalms more specifically by looking at the general overview of the Psalms, understanding the different types, taking into consideration the various titles and determining their overall importance. What are some of the things that the Psalms have in common; what differences are there and why? He writes, “. . . the expositor must see the larger picture of the Psalms as a whole before he can skillfully preach any one psalm” (p. 91).

After looking into these aspects of the Psalms, Lawson says that each psalm must then be seen in the context of the rest of the Psalter, wisdom literature and the rest of the Bible. Scripture speaks with one voice (p. 283).

The points in his last chapter on “Deliver the Message” include denying self, preaching with the authority of God, being clear, being intensely passionate, and preaching with urgency in the light of eternity. One cannot help but feel the gravity of preaching in these reminders. Lawson tries to leave no stone unturned in impressing that on us. He concludes,

Are you willing to pay the price for excellence in the pulpit? Are you ready to make whatever sacrifice is necessary to be properly prepared to preach? God's Word deserves the best we have to give. . . . Let us study, practice, and preach as if lives depend upon it. The fact is, they do. (p. 310)

Though the title of the book is *Preaching the Psalms*, it could just as easily be called simply *Lessons in Expository Preaching* (with examples from the Psalms). It is a book with somewhat of an identity crisis. Is it a book about preaching the Psalms or is it a manual on preaching period? Well, it is both! What we find in this volume is a very passionate case for why but also how to preach the book of Psalms from one who is himself a gifted experiential and expository preacher of the Word of God.

As far as helping us to investigate the technical elements of the Psalms, there is much here that can be found in other commentaries on the Psalms. Yet the value of this book is great nonetheless. Its simplicity of language and style make it very accessible to a wider audience other than scholars. Furthermore, Lawson speaks with a prophetic voice and not simply an academic one. The book of Psalms is full of passion, agony, joy. Lawson shows that it cannot be approached with a cold, indifferent heart. If it is as Calvin said "an anatomy of all the parts of the soul", then with soul it must be delivered. I heartily commend this to all students of the Psalms.

The book's foreword was written by Hughes Oliphant Old, the noted historian of liturgics.

*Reviewed by Kent I. Compton, the minister of the Western Charge of the Free Church of Scotland, PEI. Rev. Compton is a graduate of the University of Prince Edward Island and the Free Church College, Edinburgh.*



***A Commentary on the Psalms: Volume 1 (1-41). Allen P. Ross. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2011, 887 pp., hc. ISBN 978-0-8254-2562-2***

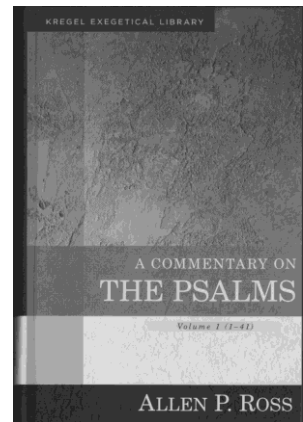
Allan P. Ross is professor of divinity at Beeson Divinity School and has authored other commentaries on the Old Testament including *Creation and Blessing: A Study and Exposition of Genesis*. I have used these commentaries with much profit over the years, and so was very much looking forward to reading through this new volume on the Psalms. He doesn't disappoint!

In the preface, Ross gives a detailed apologetic for writing the commentary. Regarding the important place of the Psalms in the life of the church, he says among other things, ". . . so many people have come to love the psalms, having learned to live by them in times of trouble and distress, as well as to celebrate with them in times of victory and blessing" (p. 12). Concerning his purpose he states, "My commentary is designed to move from the exegesis of

the text to the formation of the exposition, that is, not simply commenting on lines and verses but putting the material together in an expository format” (p. 13). He says that his desire was not only to see the Psalms in the light of the immediate context but to write knowing that the Psalms are contained in the full canon of Scripture, and therefore strong connections are made with the New Testament’s use of the Psalms both explicitly and implicitly.

Correlation with later Scripture will, of course, focus on messianic elements in the psalms, whether prophetic or typological, but this has to be done carefully: the exposition must first develop the theological message of the psalm as it was written and then show how it came to fulfillment in the New Testament. . . . I have attempted to follow this procedure in the messianic and eschatological passages. (p. 17)

In the introductory chapters Ross gives a series of short essays on various aspects of the Psalms. He looks at the value of the Psalms as viewed through the lenses of various churchmen down through the years. The introductory chapters also include a look at the title headings and their historical value. Ross makes a strong case for Davidic authorship where the headings ascribe them to David and where David is specifically mentioned by Jesus and the New Testament authors (p. 43). Ross says,



I am not bound simply to say a psalm is David’s because a traditional note credited him with the psalm; but neither am I ready to dismiss the tradition without good reason. Each psalm must be studied individually, and then the traditional notes and the modern theories may be equally evaluated critically. (pp. 46-47)

I profited greatly by his article on the Imprecatory Psalms. He confesses that the tone found in them has troubled many over the years, but he concludes, “. . . the psalms were hymns to be sung in public worship; they are not simply records of personal vendetta” (p. 115). In fact he gives one of the best defenses I have read anywhere on the place of these psalms. To highlight a few remarks, he says that they are written in a hyperbolic style; that they are expressions of the longing of the believer for the vindication of God’s righteousness, of zeal for God and His kingdom and for His hatred for sin. Finally, and perhaps most compellingly, they are a part of the “prophetic teachings about God’s future dealings with sin and impenitent and persistent sinners” (pp. 116-117). Should not these remarks cause the church to re-evaluate her approach to these concepts in the Bible’s book of praise rather



than looking at them as sub-Christian and beneath the character of God?

Ross categorises the psalms under the following headings: the enthronement psalms, royal psalms, psalms of thanksgiving, hymns, wisdom and Torah psalms, and psalms of lament. Over all the introductory articles are very profitable and give the student a very comprehensive introduction to the Psalms.

As for the main body of the commentary, he has divided each chapter under section headings; the first section is called “Text and Textual Variants”. Here he supplies his own translation of the text, explores other possible translations and examines the textual variants that have also been a part of the history of the Psalm’s interpretation.

His next section is entitled “Composition and Context”. This is a very helpful section. Here Ross draws our attention to the possible authors and tries – based on the evidence of the heading, internal evidence or how the psalm is quoted elsewhere – to determine the historical context of the psalm. This, of course, is not always possible; however, where he does find it, it makes it very helpful in setting the psalm in some sort of context. For example, in Psalm 2 Ross observes,

Psalm 2 is a royal psalm focusing on the coronation of the Davidic king in the holy city on Mount Zion. It was included in the collection to be sung by the choirs at any appropriate time – certainly at the coronation of kings, but also in times of national crises when the people needed to be reminded that God had installed their king and the threats from the nations would fail. . . . Thus at the outset of the book we have one psalm focusing on the way of the righteous, and another psalm focusing on the victory of the LORD’s anointed king over the nations. (pp. 199-200)

These connections and observations serve the student of the passage well!

Ross then moves on to “Exegetical Analysis”. Here he structures the psalms into main heading and sub-headings, as he sees them emerge, to give the preacher a better framework for delivering the Psalm. His next section is called Commentary in Expository Form. In it he engages the text of the Psalm, drawing on connections to the revelation that has preceded it and especially what comes after it in the New Testament. It is here as well that he draws attention to words or phrases that enable us to bring out the meaning of the passage more clearly.

The author concludes with the “Message and Application”, where he draws the reader’s attention to the main point of the Psalm, how it applies in the life of the believer, and any Christological applications that can draw those that believe to put their trust in the One to whom all Scripture points. Thus in concluding Psalm 22 he says, “. . . the Spirit of God inspired the psalmist in the writing of this psalm so that he used many vivid and at times hyperbolic expressions to describe his own suffering that would ultimately be

true in a greater way of David's greater son, the Messiah" (p. 548). He goes on to say,

One of the amazing things about the excessive language of the psalm is that it fits a death by crucifixion very well . . . the suffering psalmist never curses his enemies for their attacks and he never confesses sin as the reason for his suffering. There is not a word of remorse or penitent sorrow. (p. 549)

One unique feature that Ross has in the section "Message and Application" is a one-sentence summary of the psalm, a very helpful feature in preaching and something in which every preacher ought to be competent. It is often said that if one is not able to summarize the sermon in one sentence, he has not fully grasped the message he wants to deliver. So his commentary on Psalm 30 is summarized in the words, "God heals and restores his people whom he has chastened so that they might declare to the congregation that the lifetime in his favor overshadows the time of suffering" (p. 678).

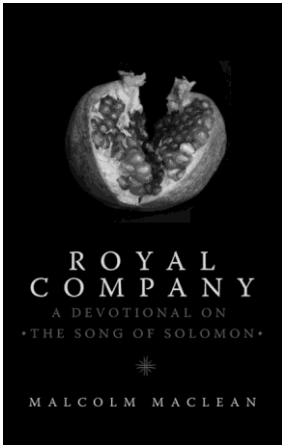
Ross has done a lot of spade work for the preacher in covering the Psalms from a variety of angles. This commentary is just technical enough without being overwhelming. He has heavily footnoted his work, which is a further witness to his competency and years of working with this book of the Bible.

One can tell that Ross is writing with the preacher in mind and has given him an ideal tool for preaching Psalms. The close to 900 pages on just the first forty-one psalms is a testimony to his desire to deliver a comprehensive commentary on Psalms – a book on which there is a short supply of good commentaries!

This volume retails for \$60 but no doubt could be obtained online for significantly less. It is nonetheless one of, if not the best commentary that I have used on Psalms. Early on in my reading, I felt compelled to have this commentary as part of my library despite the price. In my opinion it is a valuable, and no doubt an enduring, contribution to the literature on Psalms. Highly recommended.

*Reviewed by Kent I. Compton*

**Royal Company: A Devotional on the Song of Solomon.** Malcolm Maclean. Fearn, Ross-shire, Scotland: Christian Focus Publications, 2012, 236 pp., paper. ISBN 978-184550718-3



Full disclosure: I had a hand in editing this book and shared my reservations with the author prior to publication. My basic concern is that while this is in many ways a fine devotional commentary, its value is limited by the author's insistence on interpreting the Song exclusively as an allegory of Christ's love for the Church (i.e. the traditional interpretation). I agree that too much modern interpretation goes to the other extreme of making it only a marriage manual for Christians. But are the two perspectives mutually exclusive? Could the song not be understood as a picture of marital intimacy that finds its ultimate fulfillment in Christ and the Church?

When no less careful a biblical scholar than the late Professor John Murray considered, "I cannot now endorse the allegorical interpretation of the Song of Solomon", such an approach should give us pause. Murray found that:

... the vagaries of interpretation given in terms of the allegorical principle indicate that there are no well-defined hermeneutical canons to guide us in determining the precise meaning and application if we adopt the allegorical view. However, I also think that in terms of the biblical analogy the Song can be used to *illustrate* the relation of Christ to His church. The marriage bond is used in Scripture as a pattern of Christ and the church. . . .<sup>1</sup>

That said, Malcolm Maclean makes a commendable case for following the tradition interpretation followed by such leading lights from the past as Robert Murray McCheyne, C. H. Spurgeon, Hudson Taylor, Jonathan Edwards, John Owen and others. Indeed, "From the time of the early church fathers down to the beginning of the twentieth century, the almost universal opinion among devout commentators was that this book was an allegory depicting the relationship between Christ and his people (either individually or corporately)" (p. 13).

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in *The Monthly Record of the Free Church of Scotland* (March, 1983): 52. Interestingly, the author of the present work under review is now the editor of this magazine – now simply *The Record* – as well as Minister of Greyfriars Free Church in Inverness and Editor of the Mentor imprint of Christian Focus Publications.

Maclean makes an interesting observation:

Sometimes one's interpretation of the Song is connected to one's Christian interests. Some believers are more active than contemplative. . . . But activity, even Christian activity, cannot feed our souls. And I suspect today that there has been a subtle shift from contemplative religion to a form of Christian activism that is commendable in several ways; yet instead of maintaining a balance between a healthy heart religion and a healthy walk, the heart has been largely jettisoned and we have produced a kind of Christianity that is not as warm as the spiritual life of our forefathers. (p. 13)

This is well put and I entirely agree!

What I disagree with is the author's assertion that if the Song "is taken to describe an ideal human marriage, then it ceases to be descriptive of the love between Christ and his people" (p. 14). Why? Maclean goes on to speak of it being spiritually unwise "to remove Jesus from a book of the Bible" (p. 14). Granted, but why does it have to be a case of either/or, especially given the fact that all of Scripture points to Christ (Luke 24:27)?

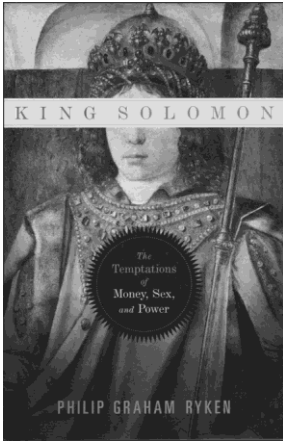
The book comes highly recommended by several noted church leaders. Curiously, more than one of them appear to advocate the both/and approach to the Song which Maclean not so much rejects as ignores. Yet, we can agree with Alec Moyter that while Maclean "will not carry every reader with him all the time . . . everything he writes is true to the full biblical revelation of God in Christ, of the marvel of his love for us, and of our often faltering walk with him".

*Royal Company* is divided into eight poems. Maclean draws on the wealth of older traditional interpretations but does not always follow them in the details. There are several spiritually enriching quotations from authors and preachers of the past. The book originated as a sermon series. As is appropriate for such a genre, the author does not concern himself much with technical issues of authorship, date and such like. There is, as indicated above, much edifying material to meditate on, but perhaps a devotional commentary that pays sufficient attention to the biblical author's original intent and the Song's redemptive historical fulfillment in Christ has yet to be written.

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***King Solomon: The Temptations of Money, Sex, and Power.***  
**Philip Graham Ryken. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011, 254 pp.,**  
**paper. ISBN 978-1-4335-2154-6**



It is not a struggle to read *King Solomon-Temptations of Money, Sex, and Power*, but the title of the book does not accurately reflect the contents. No doubt the title grabs attention, but the book is about much more – the temple, the priestly work, the Ark of the Covenant, contemporaries of Solomon, etc.

Ryken's style is contemporary and engaging with such memorable quotes and theological tid-bits as: "Our hearts are directly tied to our bank accounts," (p. 112) and "[God's] wrath is not a character flaw." But he has a noticeably wandering style of writing. Example 1: Ryken at one time makes reference to the atoning sacrifices of Solo-

mon and neatly applies it to Christ's atoning sacrifice. But then he goes into a call for singing and praise in response to the atonement of Christ and then speaks of how a Christian must be willing to face persecution (pp. 121-122). Every statement he says is true, but it is hard to relate them to *King Solomon: The Temptations of Money, Sex, and Power*. Example 2: Ryken deals with the Ark of the Covenant and the Temple, explaining the spiritual implications of different aspects of the temple and then applying them well to the Christian life today. However, Solomon had nothing to do with the details of the Ark – how it was made, what was inside, and the meaning of what was inside. The wanderings are interesting and useful, but they can be distracting.

Determining the target audience of this book is a little more difficult. The book is not technical enough to quite engage a serious seminary student or a pastor, yet it might help a pastor with some contemporary applications and valuable and quaint illustrations. It is more likely to appeal to the reading laity and serious young people.

Ryken chronicles the life of Solomon, his good and bad, in a semi-orderly way. He deals with some eye-opening issues in the book. For instance, Ryken highlights Solomon's decision early in his rule to eliminate his enemies. Ryken considers Solomon's action in contrast to the present day tolerance of those who no longer see treason as treason and who may excuse treason as freedom of speech. He points out that Solomon's reaction to Adonijah (and Joab and Shimei), for instance, was not self-serving but was showing his love for the kingdom of God (p. 30). Ryken also highlights some helpful ways to avoid falling into Solomon's sins and how to get out if one has fallen into these sins. He warns that one can fall into these serious sins even through little compromises.

Chapters 9, 11 and 12 are particularly good in explanations and applications. The writer deals at length with Solomon's sinful marriage with the Egyptian Pharaoh's daughter and how and why that affected Solomon and Israel for years to come. Maybe if Ryken had followed Solomon's Ecclesiastes it might have helped him to point out many of Solomon's autobiographical failures in detail and provide a little more focus.

The work of Christ to save and sanctify sinners and the promise of redemption comes out well, though sometimes Christ comes out more as a moral example than a Redeemer.

Negatively for me, Ryken uses broad interpretations to get to the meaning of some texts. Example 1: Ryken argues that Adonijah's request for Abishag as a wife was partly to satisfy his sexual impulse (and to get a consolation prize after the kingdom was taken from him). But Ryken does not prove this. Many scholars indicate that intimate contact with the king's wife or concubine in Eastern countries was a power play, just as Absalom did to King David by publicly being with his wives. The author does admit later that this was a power play as well (p. 33). Example 2: Ryken argues that Solomon departed from God toward the end of his life (hence a "tragedy" and not a "comedy"), but many scholars believe that he returned to God toward the end of his life, hence Ecclesiastes, and that it was in his middle years that he departed from God and went after many strange women and their strange gods. Ryken is reluctant to say if Solomon repented or was a believer at death (pp. 185-186). The book somewhat falls apart for me here. Ecclesiastes and other accounts in the Bible convince me otherwise.

Ryken makes what could be perceived as overextended applications of the text on some occasions. But then again, not all Reformed expositors have had uniformity in applying a text. I could say this of Matthew Henry and others whose applications I may question or disagree with, calling them excessive typological or forced application. Thus, it is true that most writers do take some literary liberties, but these were notable issues which took away from the effectiveness of a much needed book. I will use three examples. Example 1: Ryken argues that the Queen of Sheba came from a far distance to learn of Solomon's wisdom. He goes on to use that fact to challenge the reader to see how far he is willing to come to learn of Christ. That application would be more appropriate if the Queen of Sheba had truly come to learn of Christ (pp. 145-146). We have no evidence to prove that that was her reason for her trip – the evidence is that she sought wisdom. This type of broad application can easily come from reading a history book. Example 2: Ryken describes in detail the great and multiple gifts the Queen of Sheba brought to Solomon, but he uses this fact to rebuke those who ask if serving the Lord costs too much (p. 155). It is true that in some ways Solomon was a type of Christ, but can we confirm that the Queen of Sheba was a type of Christian and a godly example to follow? She came to gain wisdom. She did not come to seek Christ. Typologically, Ryken and others see wisdom as Christ. Example 3: After

explaining the beauty of the temple and that God is a beautiful God, one of Ryken's applications is that Christians must love beautiful things – beautiful music, beautiful art, etc. (pp. 90-91). But that is not a proper application, in my opinion, especially when one considers that the tabernacle was not attractive on the outside with all those rustic animal skins covering it. Jesus Himself was not known for His beauty, a point the writer concedes later. Yes, the temple was beautiful. Yes, Christians must love beautiful things and harmonic music. But the temple is not the reason we must love beautiful architecture. To compare Divine and spiritual beauty with physical beauty is not really a proper comparison. He writes: "When Christians settle for poor aesthetic standards, we compromise the character of our God. So notice the auburn leaf, hear the call of the wild eagle . . ." (p. 91, par. 3). Could it be that some hear the wild eagle's call and think of it as menacing and not beautiful? Could it be that some things have been affected by the fall and are not as beautiful? Must we treat the crocodile as a thing of rapt beauty? Some may love Bach but some cannot process that kind of music. Some don't love auburn leaves, which picture death, but only love rich green leaves. To a degree beauty is subjective. Surely loving green instead of auburn will not compromise the character of God. And I am sure the author would not say that, but he unnecessarily stretches the application and distracts from the main point of his book.

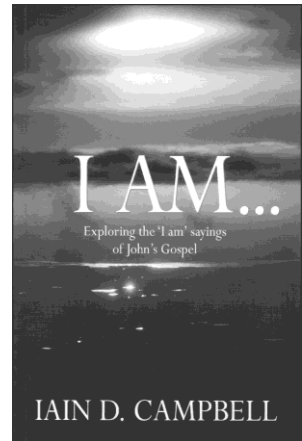
There is much to learn in this book. It is theologically sound, and there are some great stories and powerful warnings to guard against falling into Solomon's sins, but I was a little disappointed as well. I expected it to be a stronger systematic exposition of Solomon's personal failures and how Christians may prevent them through Christ. Because it sometimes meanders, at times I was lost. And without the author being convinced of Solomon's restoration at the end of his life, the book lost some of its effectiveness. Because I am convinced that Solomon was restored and died a believer, I reveal my bias, and I have been wrong before.

*Reviewed by Mitchell Persaud. Mitchell was born in Guyana, South America and now is a church planter at New Horizon United Reformed Church in Scarborough, Ontario, working mainly with Chinese peoples. Mitchell is from a Hindu background and his wife, Shabeeda, comes from a Muslim background.*



***I AM . . . Exploring the 'I am' Sayings of John's Gospel.* Iain D. Campbell. Darlington, England/Carlisle, PA: EP Books, 2011, 121 pp., paper. ISBN 978-085234-774-4**

Interpreting and applying the text of the Bible can be a daunting task. There is a plethora of guides and aids, yet reliable guides are too often unavailable. Such is not the case with this little gem treating the "I am" statements of our Lord in the Gospel according to John. Campbell presents Jesus as the bread (6:35), the light (8:12), the door (10:9), the shepherd (10:11), the resurrection (11:25), the way (14:6) and the vine (15:5). With great skill, Campbell weaves together a number of critical elements that set forth the meaning of John's Gospel for the original reader and thus for today's believer.



The premise of Campbell's book is that Jesus' use of "I am" statements conforms to the self-disclosure formula of the Old Testament. Campbell states, "So in the context of the grand Christ of John's Gospel, John picks up these seven distinct sayings of Jesus, all of which expand on the name of Jehovah, the name I AM, the name that belongs to Jesus because he is the God of the Old Testament" (p. 12-13).

In particular, Campbell accomplishes his task by doing three things. First, he roots every "I am" saying in its Old Testament context. This is crucial as each statement is considered in light of Old Testament revelation. For instance, the bread of life statement is connected to the feeding of God's people in the wilderness and their subsequent rejection of the God who redeemed them from Egypt. Another example is Jesus' declaration to be the light of the world and its identification with the Feast of Tabernacles (p. 28-29). This approach is critical because it guards the interpreter from fanciful and baseless interpretations. The New Testament revelation regarding Christ is nothing less than the unveiling of the Christ revealed in the Old Testament.

Second, Campbell draws out the theological implications of each statement. As glorious as was the provision for the wilderness wanderers and hungry crowd, the greater provision is found in Jesus Christ, the bread of life. Again, Campbell draws out the theme of "light" in John's Gospel as well as the wider context of Scripture. He develops the theological truth of the exclusivity of Christ in salvation in the Good Shepherd statement (pp. 64-66). This is great fodder for spiritual growth and faithful preaching.

Finally, Campbell does not hesitate to appeal to the affections in order to bring the truth of God's word to bear on his reader. In the third "I am" saying, Jesus is declared to be the "door." Campbell suggests the door is a sym-



bol of identity, access, security, and division. These are thoughtful and faithful applications that help to imbed the truth spoken by Christ into the conscience and will.

The benefits of securing and reading this book are many. First, Campbell provides an excellent example of intertextual interpretation and how it ought to impact preaching. Campbell's interpretations carefully incorporate Old Testament themes and events into New Testament texts. He demonstrates, as all good preaching ought to do, the interdependence of the Old and New Testaments in the unfolding of God's glorious plan of redemption.

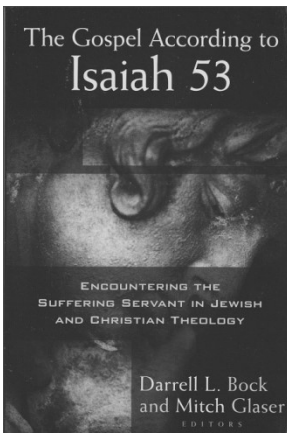
Second, Campbell provides an excellent example of great doctrinal preaching. He does not stray from the text under consideration but presses its meaning until it releases its God-inspired truth. This process always results in good and faithful doctrinal truth for the believer and the church.

Third, Campbell provides an excellent example of how "devotional literature" ought to be written. Beginning with the text of Scripture is essential, but it cannot end there. Devotional literature can tend to resort to proof-texts. The reader will find no such penchant here. The hard-won truths extracted via faithful exegesis redound to the glory of God as God's people are changed into the image of the great "I AM", the Lord Jesus Christ.

*Reviewed by William Emberley, who is the pastor at Grace Baptist Church in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia. Bill was born in Newfoundland.*



***The Gospel According to Isaiah 53: Encountering the Suffering Servant in Jewish and Christian Theology.* Eds., Darrell L. Bock and Mitch Glaser. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2012, 334 pp., paper. ISBN 978-0-8254-2593-6**



*The Gospel According to Isaiah 53* is a series of essays on the 53<sup>rd</sup> chapter of Isaiah from a solidly evangelical perspective. The editors are Darrell Bock, a research professor of New Testament Studies at Dallas Theological Seminary, and Mitch Glaser, president of Chosen People Ministries. Their aim in publishing these essays is to highlight just how powerfully the gospel is presented here in the heart of the Old Testament Scriptures and why Christians from the very beginning of the church have seen this chapter in particular as the high point of Old Testament Messianic revelation.

The authors are hoping that the book will have many uses, but chief among them is to produce a

useful tool in Jewish evangelism. That itself is a concept that is charged with much controversy and emotion. Jewish evangelism is seen by many as nothing short of cultural genocide. So a very strong case has to be made for why Jews are bound to believe Jesus to be the Messianic-Servant described here. Moreover, in studies done by Chosen People Ministries among six hundred Jewish families in New York City, an astounding seventy-two percent of respondents had little familiarity with the passage. As the authors say, "Isaiah 53 is unquestionably our most powerful biblical tool for Jewish evangelism, as it answers many of the fundamental issues Jewish people might have regarding the possibility that Jesus might be the promised Messiah" (p. 27).

This volume fulfills its remit and more. It is not exclusively for Jews, but the editors hope that it will be a powerful tool in the hands of pastors as they minister to their congregations, helping them unfold the glorious riches of the gospel found in Isaiah 53.

Richard Averbeck begins the book with an overview of the many competing views regarding the identity of the "Servant" in Isaiah as a whole and then as it relates to specifically chapter 53. He highlights the three more popular theories. The identity of the servants has been either 1) the nation of Israel as a whole, 2) the elect remnant within Israel, or 3) a single servant who suffers vicariously for the nation. His conclusions are simple. Despite the fact that Israel is sometimes identified as "My Servant", in this chapter he suffers for "his people", "my people". In fact the prophets include themselves in the "we, us, our" of Isaiah 53 as those who have sinned and whose sins have been laid on the servant. ". . . They too were in desperate need of the sacrificial substitutionary atonement and reparation made by the servant." So, argues Averbeck, there is no way that the Servant could be identified with the nation when the prophet himself includes himself in such company as one in needs of this redemption!

Michael Brown pursues this argument further in chapter 2 as he traces the history of Jewish interpretation on the passage. He takes us verse-by-verse and gives the popular Jewish interpretations on the verse. One of the most popular interpretations is that the "we, us" passages in the chapter are spoken by the Gentiles who are saved through the suffering of the nation of Israel and that in some way Israel, through its suffering, provides an atonement of sorts for the Gentiles. Brown responds by saying, ". . . It is somewhat ludicrous to put the loftiest theological statements in the Bible into the mouths of pagan idol-worshipping kings. This is not only illogical; it is without biblical precedent" (p. 76).

In chapter 3, renowned Old Testament scholar Walter Kaiser looks at the fact that the designation "Servant of the Lord", though applied to many prominent figures in the Bible, took on a distinctly messianic flavour. Kaiser states that the Servant of Isaiah 49:5-6, rather than being the nation of Israel, is sent to "raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore Israel" (p. 89). He states further that the prophet makes a point of saying that the Servant was "cut off

for my people” and that He was “made a covenant for the people” (p. 90).

Isaiah explained that this Servant had “done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth” (53:9c-d). Israel is not depicted by the prophets as being an innocent sufferer; rather, the prophet Isaiah, for example, describes Israel as a “sinful nation, a people . . . given to corruption!” (Isaiah 1:4). (p. 91)

Kaiser makes a very significant point as related to the suffering of Jesus and those with whom the Servant suffers. He says,

Didn’t anyone notice in that day that the word for “wicked” was plural? Or did no one notice that the word for “rich” was in the singular form? This is only to note how utterly precise the text is in its prediction of the Messiah . . . ” (p. 103).

This chapter alone is worth the price of the book!

Moving into the gospels, Michael Wilkins explores the self-identity of Jesus with regards to Isaiah 53. Citing over fifty examples, he leaves no doubt that Jesus and the gospel writers saw these passages fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth. In fact, he argues that Matthew’s gospel can be structured along the lines of Isaiah 53 very closely. He is the “Divine Nazarene, Righteous Son, Healing Servant, Blood Ransom and Transforming Master” (p. 115). He opens each of these up to show how the pattern found in Isaiah 53 is very consciously transferred to Mathew.

New Testament scholar Craig Evans moves us further into the New Testament epistles to show how the chapter has been used by Peter, Paul, and John. He shows how it informed Peter in Acts 3 and 10 along with his first epistle. Paul, too, argues not only for the doctrines of the substitutionary atonement and justification from Isaiah 53 but also the reason for why it was that ethnic Israel was rejecting the message in the first place (p. 160). All this and more from these twelve verses in Isaiah!

Robert Chisholm shows the need for the substitutionary atonement strictly from the Old Testament scriptures themselves. This no doubt is for the benefit of a Jewish audience. He shows how the nation, being guilty of breaking covenant with God and desecrating His law, is in need of atonement by something or someone completely outside itself as a nation. The Servant in Isaiah is described as doing just that. He writes,

First, the Servant removes, by his own suffering, the persistent consequences of past sins. Second, he “makes the many righteous,” meaning at the very least that the Servant, as God’s representative, declares the offenders no longer legally accountable for their past transgressions. (p. 202-203)

John Feinberg even gives us arguments as to why this chapter is applicable to post-moderns. He draws out attention to the fact that the chapter deals with things post-moderns make much of, namely narrative, community and social justice. All of these are covered in the chapter in some form. He says,

It is the story of a seemingly ordinary man with extraordinary love for those who hated and abused him. His is a love which even to this day is largely unrequited and rebuffed. It is the story of the worst case of mistaken identity ever. . . . It is also the story of a God who wants so desperately to have a relationship with his people that he sent his servant to tell them and show them how much he cares for them. (p. 214)

And yet he shows how, though all these are desirable, they are only made possible through the substitutionary death of the Servant. He is alone the door to enjoying these ideas as God meant them to be enjoyed. "God is a God of justice, so he cannot ignore the debt that sin has accrued. . . . As a gracious God, he generously pays the debt himself . . . . In so doing, he serves both justice *and* mercy" (p. 222).

Certainly for the preacher, it is a fresh approach to a very familiar passage. This is an approach that would appeal not only to post-moderns, but a creative way of impressing the passage upon the mind of a child.

Mitch Glaser relates in chapter 10 the painful experiences of having grown up in a Jewish home and ending up estranged from his family, who in no way embraced his new-found Christian faith. Having a firsthand experience of becoming a Christian in a Jewish home, he is able to equip the reader with what he needs to be sensitive to in Jewish evangelism. He says relationship evangelism is so important in just getting a hearing. His caution not to preach but to dialogue is I think wise.

Sometimes the issue is not whether or not Isaiah 53 can be demonstrated to prove that Jesus is the Messiah but whether or not a person is ready to hear it. Before we can proclaim Isaiah 53, we must become Isaiah 53. Jewish people need to see Isaiah 53 in action before we can win a hearing for the gospel . . . . (p. 245).

In many ways, this chapter distills the best of the others. If a person is pressed for time, Glaser wonderfully pulls together the more popular objections and answers regarding Isaiah 53.

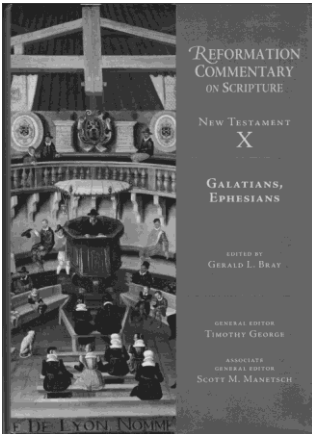
A sample expository sermon by Donald Sunukjian concludes this fine work, illustrating how the chapter can be structured for preaching and delivered.

There is far too much to say about this book in a short review. It is a gold mine for those approaching this cornerstone Old Testament passage. Isaiah 53 is a passage that ought to be mastered, especially by the preacher. I can't

think of a better resource to help one do that. Suffice it to say that the authors leave no stone unturned, and if the student of Isaiah gives himself to the arguments and conclusions of this book, he certainly will be far more capable in using Isaiah 53 to unfold the Messianic treasures in much the same way the writers of the New Testament did.

*Reviewed by Kent I. Compton*

***Galatians, Ephesians.* Ed., Gerald L. Bray. *Reformation Commentary on Scripture, New Testament Vol. 10*, gen. ed. Timothy F. George. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2011, lvii + 446 pp., hc. ISBN 978-0-8308-2973-6**



In recent years there has been a growing appreciation of the value of so-called ‘pre-critical’ biblical interpretation in providing ‘theological interpretation of Scripture’ (TIS) which is done for the good of the church as a believing community. One of the distinct benefits of this trend towards theological interpretation of Scripture has been the desire to see the writings of Christian commentators from the centuries prior to the Enlightenment made more widely available. This led first to IVP publishing the *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture*, which gathered selections from the writings of the Early Church Fathers into a commentary format.

Now IVP is following up their earlier valuable series with the *Reformation Commentary on Scripture*, under the general editorship of Timothy George of Beeson Divinity School, and the first volume to be published is this substantial and handsome volume edited by Gerald Bray, who himself taught at Beeson for many years.

The commentary opens with a twenty-five page General Introduction by Timothy George. This identifies the four goals of the series as: ‘the enrichment of contemporary biblical interpretation through exposure to Reformation-era biblical exegesis; the renewal of contemporary preaching through exposure to the biblical insights of the Reformation writers; a deeper understanding of the Reformation itself and the breadth of perspectives represented within it; and the recovery of the robust spiritual theology and devotional treasures of the Reformation’s engagement with the Bible’ (xiii). There then follows a significant discussion of the historical context of the Reformation era and of the various exegetical schools which can be identified, such as the Humanism of Erasmus, Luther and the Wittenburg School, the Strasbourg-Basel tradition, the Zurich group and the Genevan Reformers.

There follows a further seventeen-page introduction to this specific volume by Gerald Bray. This briefly discusses the way in which the Pauline Epistles were treated in the Reformation era, before considering significant interpreters first of Galatians and then of Ephesians. In a short section on the principles of the commentary, Bray acknowledges that the work has been necessarily selective and explains that, since reliable editions and translations of the writings of Luther and Calvin are freely available, he has given preference to writers and works which will be less familiar to most readers. Even where the work of Luther on Galatians has been included, Bray explains that he has drawn more on Luther's 1519 lectures rather than his 1535 commentary 'partly because of their brevity but also because of their relative unfamiliarity to most modern readers' (lv). Bray further explains that he has selected passages which he believes would be of particular interest to modern readers, either because they illustrate distinctive characteristics of Reformation-era interpretation or because they are particularly useful for modern preaching and pastoral care. Bray's considerable linguistic skills are well-employed as he has 'rendered many of the selections prepared for this volume directly from the original works only available in Latin, French, German, Dutch or Italian' (lvi) and many of these had not been available in English previously. In this regard, this commentary makes a distinct contribution to Reformation studies.

One of the criticisms made by some reviewers of the *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture* was that the excerpts were sometimes so brief as to leave the reader of the commentary unaware of the context of the excerpt and therefore liable to misrepresent the thinking of the author in question. While this is almost inevitable in a work of this nature, and this commentary too includes numerous brief quotations, the editor does seem to have addressed this issue to some extent as many of the citations are considerably longer than was typical in the earlier series. For example, one section of comment on Galatians 1:1-5 by Wolfgang Musculus extends to almost four columns of text in the commentary (9-11) and a further comment by the same writer of the same passage extends to approximately two and a half columns (14-15).

This type of commentary cannot replace a good, recent exegetical commentary, and any preacher should ensure that he has at least one such volume available for sermon preparation. However, each section of text in this commentary does begin with a brief comment which helps the reader to read the comments in their proper relation to the exegetical task and not as purely of historical interest or as spiritual reflections.

It may be useful for potential readers to have some indication of the nature of the comments, so I include a selection of brief comments on various significant verses: On Galatians 1:6 (Paul's astonishment that the Galatians are deserting God who called them): 'Paul wants to impress on the Galatians that they had been called by the immense mercy of God to be the compan-

ions of his Son. Nothing in this world could ever be greater or more salutary than that. What good are wealth, high office and fame if you are not called by God to belong to Christ's church?" (Johannes Wigand, *Notes on Galatians*). On Galatians 4:6 (God sends his Spirit who cries 'Abba, Father'): 'Paul translates a Hebrew word into Greek thereby showing that the Holy Spirit does not only cry in Hebrew, nor is it necessary to call on him in that language alone. The name "Greek" applies to all the nations except the Jews, as is often the case in Romans: "To the Jews first and then to the Greek." If the Holy Spirit cries to the Father in the language of the Gentiles as well, that means that the Spirit of adoption has also been given to them, as appears from Acts 15, where it says, "God bore them witness that the Holy Spirit was given to them as well as to us.'" (Robert Rollock, *Analysis of Galatians*). On Ephesians 1:6 ('to the praise of his glorious grace with which he has blessed us in the Beloved'): 'In our own strength, we could not possibly be anything other than enemies of God ... but he has reconciled us to himself in Christ, whom he loves more than any words can express, and so has made us who were once damnable wretches his own dear children. As long as we belonged to the devil, we could neither love God nor be loved by God. But because his dear Son has redeemed us from the bondage of sin with the price of his most holy blood and has incorporated us into himself as members of Christ's body, the Father cannot possibly choose not to love those he has been pleased to unite with his Son.' (Desiderius Erasmus, *Paraphrases*). These quotations are clearly only a tiny selection from a rich collection, but perhaps they give some indication of the care for the text, the theological depth and the pastoral warmth which the reader of this commentary will find in the citations which it contains.

Gerald Bray has done the church a great service in preparing this commentary, as have IVP, Timothy George and all those associated with the RCS project. I hope that this volume will be widely used and that readers will be enthused by the short selections to read more widely and deeply in the biblical interpretation of the Reformation. We look forward eagerly to further volumes in this series.

*Reviewed by Alistair I. Wilson. Dr. Wilson serves as principal of Dumisani Theological Institute, King William's Town, South Africa and holds an extraordinary professorship of New Testament in the School of Biblical Studies and Ancient Languages at North-West University, Potchefstroom, South Africa.*



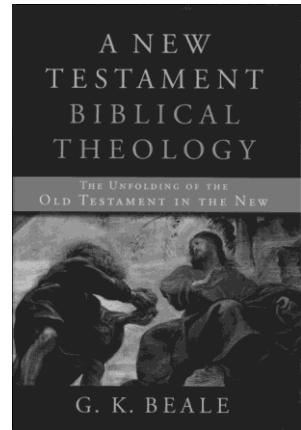
***A New Testament Biblical Theology: The Unfolding of the Old Testament in the New.* G. K. Beale. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011, 1047 pp., hc. ISBN 978-0-8010-2697-3**

As with many published works, the recent offering of G. K. Beale can be traced to its beginnings in a New Testament theology class. In 2007, Beale summarized this theology course that he began teaching at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary over twenty years ago, giving it essay form and the title, “The Eschatological Conception of New Testament Theology”. Beale had continued to develop his thinking in this area as he taught and published related articles. The accumulated result is this volume on New Testament biblical theology.

The volume contains an extensive 1,047 pages covering a substantial amount of material; hence Beale suggests that his study may also function for some as a reference source. The size of the work is a result not only of the wealth of material collated, but it is unfortunately also a reflection of Beale’s tendency toward pleonasm. This unavoidably does put unnecessary demands on the attention of the reader. The study has ten parts, which together contain a sequence of twenty-eight chapters. Included are a bibliography and author, scripture, ancient sources and subject indices.

Beale provides an introduction to the legitimacy of his study by pointing out the need to validate the work of P. Stuhlmacher and C. H. Dodd on the use of the wider theological framework of the Old Testament (OT) in the New Testament (NT) (pp. 11, 13). Beale affirms with Stuhlmacher that it is important to assess each testament independently on its own terms before any interrelation can be made (pp. 12-13). Though in-line with both Stuhlmacher and Dodd, Beale approaches the relationship of the testaments not on the basis of central concerns but by summarizing the main storyline of the Old Testament and then relating it to the New Testament (pp. 10, 12, 14). To accomplish this Beale utilizes an eclectic mix of canonical, “genetic-progressive”, exegetical and intertextual methodology (p. 15). A mere paragraph only briefly notes these approaches.

The resultant, distilled NT storyline is, Beale states, “Christ’s establishment of an eschatological new-creational kingdom and its expansion” for the glory of God (p. 16). Thus, Beale identifies eschatology, the end-times, as governing the biblical storyline. He defines his conception of eschatology in greater detail only later in chapter 6. In addition, it is unusual that the reader must wait until chapter 6 to better understand how Beale constructs a biblical





storyline since he has already distilled the OT redemptive historical and eschatological storyline in chapter 3. For the sake of clarity, all definitions, assumptions and methodologies should have been treated in the introduction rather than as further observations in chapter 6.

Part 1, entitled “The Biblical-Theological Storyline of Scripture”, is comprised of chapters 2 to 6 and provides a foundation upon which following chapters are built. Indeed, Beale’s entire argument developed in its various aspects stands or falls on the assertions made in this first part. Genesis 1-3 is “the” text for Beale in that the entire biblical theological system balances on it. Beale argues that Adam as image bearer “represents God’s sovereign presence and rule on earth” (p. 32). Adam thus enabled was to fill the earth with God’s glory (p. 38), in effect to begin the “Great Commission” (pp. 57-58), and as priest-king was commissioned to subdue the earth, beginning with the defeat of the serpent. He was also to maintain and protect the physical and spiritual welfare of the Garden of Eden, that is the first temple (pp. 30, 32). If obedient, he would have achieved an irreversible state of eternal life for himself and for humanity, with whom he would have been reflecting God’s glory in all the earth (pp. 36, 38-39). This translates into an eschatological rest (pp. 39-41). In Beale’s words, “In light of Gen. 2:16-17 and 3:22, Adam would receive irreversible blessings of eternal life on the condition of perfect faith and obedience, and he would receive the decisive curse of death if he was unfaithful and disobedient” (p. 42). Adam, however, failed in his task and did not guard the Garden and defiled the image of God (p. 45). Had Adam not fallen, the promise of eschatological rest would have become a reality (p. 39). Importantly, Beale makes this point the end goal of the biblical storyline, such that, as Beale contends, “the movement toward new creation and kingdom is the main thrust of the NT storyline” (p. 23).

In the OT, Beale argues, other Adam-like figures to whom the initial commission is passed on appear, yet because of sin and idolatry they fail consecutively. Thus Israel fails to fulfill the Adamic commission (p. 85), until a last-Adam fulfills the commission on behalf of humanity (p. 46). Within the storyline are cycles of cosmic judgments and new creation episodes culminating at the final new creation in Revelation (pp. 58-85, 182-184). Beale states that Adam as priest-king in a pristine creation and the pure state of the garden (as well as the other related concepts) are eschatological by nature, for “Adam’s goal as a priest-king was to rule in a consummated eschatological creation in which the blessings of Eden would reach a final escalation” (p. 88).

Beale goes on to show that the eschatological concept, inaugurated renewed creation concept (pp. 178-179), is a major thematic part of the OT’s storyline (pp. 88-116). He observes that in the OT story God “progressively reestablishes his eschatological new-creational kingdom out of chaos over a sinful people...” (p. 116). Beale also argues in a thin chapter for the prevalence of the eschatological latter days concept in early Judaic literature as further support for the eschatological OT-NT storyline he proposes (pp. 117-

128). He assumes that the evidence refers to the completion of God's plan, with respect to the patriarchal promises, for all of history (p. 128) yet does not indicate clearly that there existed a heterogeneity of eschatological expectations, one could say, a general tension between restorative vs. utopian interpretations (G. Scholem, 1971; M. Smith, 1959). This acknowledgement would somewhat complicate the issue. Even so, Beale pushes forward. Chapter 5, which identifies the relation of the OT storyline to the NT, was perspective changing for Beale, a defining transition for himself (p. 130). In the chapter he argues the NT is characterized best by the "inaugurated eschatology" concept, the latter days already began in the first century with the entrance of Jesus (p. 130). Parts 2 and 3 continue in particulars to illustrate how the NT understands eschatology, how end-time new creation and kingdom began with Jesus' first coming (pp. 187-354). Firstly, Beale presents the time of Jesus and the Church as following the OT cycles of cosmic judgments and new creation episodes in that the church age is a recapitulation of the trial by Satan of Adam and Eve and sinful behaviour (pp. 187-221). Secondly, Beale sees Jesus' resurrection as the sign of the latter days, effecting the new creational order, and as linked to Jesus' kingship (pp. 227-248). Furthermore, Jesus' resurrection is generative for NT biblical theology and fundamental for understanding regeneration, justification, reconciliation, sanctification, anthropology, ecclesiology, etc. (pp. 296-297). Beale states that the comprehension of it is "crucial for understanding the remainder" of his book (p. 354).

Part 4 deals with the restoration of God's image by Jesus, the last-Adam, in the inaugurated end-time new creation (pp. 357-465). Adam became an idolater and lost God's image taking on the image of his idol. As in most cases in the book, selective texts show how Jesus as humanity's representative restores God's image – a theology of anthropology (pp. 438-465) – and inaugurates the kingship of God (pp. 381-437).

Parts 5 to 9 deal with the expected chief theological categories and related subcategories within the context of the salvation process. The first chapter of the fifth part presents justification; however, Beale also examines reconciliation in terms of new creation and restoration from exile (pp. 469-555). Beale shows how Jesus fulfills the Adamic commission (p. 480) and how the nature of justification is eschatological in that the cross begins the eschatological judgment (pp. 480-492) and the resurrection inaugurates eschatological vindication (pp. 492-562). Complete justification is grounded in the believer's faith union with Jesus.

Part 6 introduces the pneumatological category and describes the role of the Spirit effecting new-creation by giving resurrection life (pp. 559-648). The Spirit effects not only individual renewal but also the transformation of believers into the eschatological Temple. Beale argues that Acts 2 depicts the "descent of the heavenly end-time temple of God's presence upon his people on earth" (p. 606). The Spirit effects the reestablishment of the Garden of

Eden's sanctuary and Israel's Tabernacle with the Church (pp. 626-648). As such, in part 7, Beale states that there is a transferral of stewardship of the Kingdom from Israel to the end-time new people of God, substantiating this claim by examining the fulfillment of restoration prophecies (pp. 680-694).

Part 8 is entitled the "Church's New-Creational Transformation of Israel's Distinguishing Marks". In this part Beale discusses the distinguishing ecclesiastical marks of the Church as transformations of those of Israel. The very first he identifies is the Sabbath observance (pp. 775-801). The resurrection of Jesus and His rest at God's right hand fulfilled the creational seventh day rest and is witnessed to by the observance of believers on Sunday (p. 801). Other new-creational marks include baptism, the Lord's Supper, the church office of elder and the NT canon (pp. 802-832). Part 9 deals with the life of the believer as a new creation in Jesus (pp. 835-884). The conclusion, part 10, reviews principles described throughout the volume and attempts to highlight the implications of discontinuity and continuity with a view to ultimate consummation.

In short, I believe Beale's volume may accurately be characterized as over ambitious. This evaluation is in no way meant to denigrate his scholarship or results; it only points out that the breadth of material he has taken on cannot be treated adequately in the amount of space devoted. Secondly, it would seem the greatest strength of Beale's argument, which is a basis for his storyline, is perhaps the presentation of the image of God as defiled by idolatry and recovered by the work of Jesus' resurrection. Beale is right to identify resurrection as fundamental for it was central to the gospel of the early Christian community.

In terms of particulars, one major concern is Beale's methodology – it is never clearly laid out. Instead he refers the reader to a previous book (p. 3). An outline of his approach should at least have been provided in the footnotes. Reading the analysis of paralleled texts, it becomes clear that Beale's intertextuality is very loose and maximal. The result may be his tendency toward a sermon style within the manuscript.

Another major concern is the theological implication of Beale's fundamental understanding of Genesis 1-3. It may very well strengthen the case against theodicy, specifically by suggesting the very real possibility of an alternate outcome for Adam, humankind and the world if he remained obedient. Beale does not seem to be concerned with how the possibility of an alternate world history reflects on God as an omniscience and infallible being.

Beale suggests that eschatology tends to be a far more overarching concept useful for organizing a theological system (pp. 171-175). The biblical evidence suggests differently. The covenant concept does not seem to be governed by the eschatological idea. In fact it contains in it the eschatological dimension, as it is able to transcend the historical and speak of an inviolable relationship between God and His people. In this regard it is better suited to define the parameters of salvation history and mark its progress. Beale sees the covenant primarily as static and elemental (pp. 42-43).

Positively though, Beale's work is commendable simply for the attempt at a comprehensive harmonization of biblical themes within the framework of an OT/NT storyline. In this regard it should be very clear that the work presents a basis for NT biblical theology. Hence, it is a work that lends itself readily as a reference for preachers and expositors of Scripture. As per the above limitations and advantages, I submit that Beale's work will find the most usefulness in the hands of pastors; however, it may also prove to be a stimulating resource for students of the Bible in all capacities.

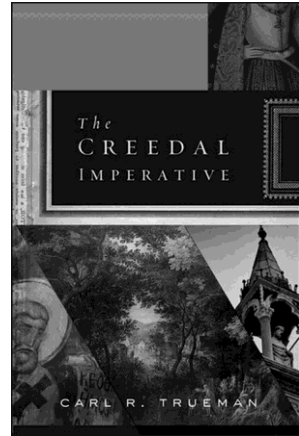
*Reviewed by Rev. Dr. Frank Z. Kovács, Ontario, a trustee of Haddington House and Ph.D. graduate from North-West University in South Africa. Dr. Kovács tutors undergraduate and postgraduate students for Greenwich School of Theology and is an Extraordinary Senior Lecturer in Research at North-West University.*



## Systematic Theology

***The Creedal Imperative.* Carl R. Trueman. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012, 208 pp., paper. ISBN 978-1-4335-2190-4**

One would assume that everyone has heard someone use the phrase, “we have no creed but the Bible”. The instinct behind a statement like this is usually good; it seeks to uphold the ultimate authority and teaching of Scripture over and against any man-made document, interpretation or tradition. One would hope all Protestants – Baptists, Pentecostals, Lutherans, Presbyterians, etc. – would uphold the notion that Scripture is the ultimate authority. Yet the statement “we have no creed but the Bible” with all of its good intentions is often misleading; as Carl Trueman argues in his new book, *The Creedal Imperative*, it actually fails to preserve the authority and teaching of Scripture.



Trueman takes his years of experience as a church historian and develops what can seem like a backwards argument to many modern-day evangelicals: Scripture’s authority is best preserved not by churches who claim to have “no creed but the Bible” but rather by churches who subscribe to the historic creeds and confessions. Well argued, charitable, and accessible to a wide audience, in just under two hundred pages Trueman manages to demonstrate not only the biblical and historical rationale for the use of creeds/confessions but also powerfully refutes many evangelical objections regarding the authority of Scripture and the necessity of creeds and confessions.

Divided into five main parts, *The Creedal Imperative* addresses the sources of modern suspicion of creeds/confessions, the foundation of creeds in the ancient church, the confessions of the Reformation, how confessions are confessing Christ and worshipping God, and the overall usefulness of creeds/confessions. Written primarily for a broader evangelical church that does not subscribe to any historic confession (39 Articles, The Book of Concord, The Three Forms of Unity, Westminster Confession, 1689 Baptist Confession, or otherwise), Trueman challenges the cultural presuppositions that often make confessions and creeds seem improbable. In his words, the church can be “as a goldfish swimming in a bowl is unaware of the tempera-

ture of the water in which he swims, so often the most powerfully formative forces of our societies and cultures are those with which we are so familiar as to be functionally unaware of how they shape our thinking about what exactly it means to say that Scripture has supreme and unique authority” (p. 21).

In diagnosing the modern church’s hesitancy with confessionalism, Trueman reasons from Scripture that despite many assumptions to the contrary, confessionalism is not only plausible but necessary for the modern church to preserve Scriptures’ teaching. To defend this, he traces the historical development of creeds and confessions through the ancient church and Reformation periods documenting how and why they arose as necessary summaries preserving scriptural authority. From this he concludes that creeds and confessions have historically and biblically provided churches and their elders with the binding documents necessary to both preserve and defend the clear teaching of Scripture as defined in particular confessional content.

Drawing primarily from Paul’s use of “tradition” and “form of sound words”, Trueman demonstrates how creeds and confessions operate as subordinate signposts of scriptural teaching intended not to supplant Scriptures’ authority but rather to preserve it. Thus in arguing from 2 Thessalonians 2:15 and 2 Timothy 1:13, he shows the question for modern evangelicalism is not tradition vs. Scripture but rather has always been scriptural tradition vs. unscriptural tradition.

An important contribution, *The Creedal Imperative* proves the position of “no creed but the Bible” is fundamentally untenable. Tradition is inescapable, not only because of a variety of biblical texts commanding as much but also because of tradition’s latency within every church wishing to remain “orthodox”. Even a non-confessional church will still display dependence on traditional language of confessions and creeds if it wants to remain within the bounds of historical orthodoxy. Any church that uses the terms “Trinity” or “two natures of Christ” is no longer operating within a biblical framework alone. While Trueman argues the Bible most certainly teaches God is Trinity and Christ has two natures, the fact remains that neither of those terms is found explicitly in the Bible; rather they develop within a particular context and tradition. Thus for Trueman, the Reformation doctrine of *Sola Scriptura* or Scripture alone was never Scripture in a vacuum. He notes,

Christians are not divided between those who have creeds and confessions and those who do not; rather, they are divided between those who have public creeds and confessions which are written down and exist as public documents, subject to public scrutiny, evaluation, and critique; and those who have private creeds and confessions which are often improvised, unwritten, and thus not open to public scrutiny, not susceptible to evaluation and, crucially and ironically, not subject to testing by scripture to see whether they are true or not. (p. 15)

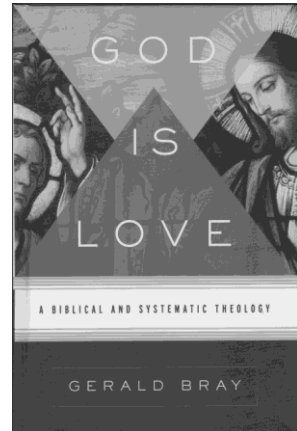
In *The Creedal Imperative*, Trueman has provided the evangelical church with a clear imperative for confessionalism. Intentionally not advancing his own particular confessional polity, he convincingly demonstrates the biblical requirement for the establishment of creeds and confessions. A must read for minister and laypersons alike, Baptist, Brethren, Presbyterian, Lutheran, or Pentecostal, *The Creedal Imperative* will challenge all readers to re-examine the role of creeds and confessions in the life of the church.



*Reviewed by Ryan Mark Barnhart, associate pastor at Faith Bible Church, Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island and a graduate of Moody Bible Institute. His interests include J. G. Hamann, Hans Urs von Balthasar, 17<sup>th</sup> century history and Reformed theology.*

***God Is Love: A Biblical and Systematic Theology.* Gerald Bray. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012, 768 pp., hc. ISBN 978-1-4335-2269-7**

There has been a recent proliferation of major works published as one-volume systematic theology texts. Gerald Bray's *God Is Love* is perhaps the latest. Given the current published tomes in this field, Bray has attempted a rather unique approach. First, the book's subtitle is most revealing: *A Biblical and Systematic Theology*. Clearly the author and/or publisher's intent cannot be mistaken – this work proposes to be clearly rooted in Scripture as the seedbed for good systematic theology. The reader will then be forced to evaluate this intent and determine if it is indeed rooted in solid biblical study. In a recent interview, Bray said that the book “is very different from any other systematic theology on the market today because it takes the Reformation principle of *sola Scriptura* seriously. It is not just a question of backing up everything from the Bible but of trying to convey God's self-revelation in the Bible in a biblical way.” (See also p. 11.) I have concluded that Bray is unique on this point for a full systematic theology text.



Another feature which does not take long to discover when reading the book is the absence of footnotes or endnotes. Ninety-five percent of the footnotes are Scripture references and the others contain some basic definitions but no references. This is in stark contrast to Michael Horton's *The Christian Faith: A Systematic Theology for Pilgrims on the Way* (2011). In part this must be Bray's goal: “to reach the kind of people who cannot or will not read systematic theology, because to them it is too technical and confusing.” He

further states, “I have written for ordinary, educated non-specialists. I have also aimed to reach people in developing countries and to deal with issues like demon possession, astrology, and polygamy that most people in the West tend to ignore, even though they are issues for us too.” (See also p. 12.) Regrettably, many systematic theology texts lack universal and contemporary appeal. The new abridgement of Bavinck’s *Reformed Dogmatics* is a wonderful work but unfortunately dated in its approach regarding theological concerns of the global church.

Regarding Bray’s approach to try to be as close to Scripture as possible rather than to have the text full of reams of historical theological commentary, he tells us in the preface that there will be a companion volume issued (p. 11). I do wonder what the size of this next volume may be.

Bray has divided the book into six major divisions, and each in some way speaks of God’s love – the overall unifying theme of the book. The divisions are as follows: part 1, “The Language of Love”; part 2, “God’s Love in Himself”; part 3, “God’s Love for His Creation”; part 4, “The Rejection of God’s Love”; part 5, “God So Love the World”; and part 6, “The Consummation of God’s Love”. The author certainly is endeavouring to communicate theology in a very creative and imaginative manner. There is something very refreshing about seeing a theologian crafting his work and inviting all manner of people to come with him on this very rich exploration.

Some may be interested to know that Bray’s first chapter is not about Scripture; that comes in chapter 2. Rather, he begins with “The Christian Experience of God”. Some will disagree with this order, but Bray has many classical theological works which take the same approach. It is also interesting that chapter 3, “The Christian Worldview”, is included in a systematic text. This was perhaps a first to see. (The word “worldview” does not appear in Horton or Grudem’s chapter titles nor in the subject index in their respective systematic theologies.) Bray speaks here of “the coherence of the universe” (p. 67). Personally, I concluded that the section needed a better introduction to lead the reader into the whole idea of worldview. So perhaps this is where the proposed second volume takes over. Another idea is that somehow the use of terminology cannot be avoided and maybe a short glossary would have made this work more reader-friendly. This could be a downfall of this work as a textbook.

In part 4, “The Rejection of God’s Love”, there are four most interesting chapters which would rarely be found in a systematic theology text. The very fact that they are here speaks volumes concerning Bray’s commitment to a full-orbed perspective on systematic theology. One chapter is on the religions of the world, followed by “Christianity and Religious Syncretism”. Here Bray’s sub points include “The Uniqueness of Christianity”, “Christianity as an Expression of Western Culture” and “The ‘Religion(s) of Abraham’ and Baha’i”. These sub points will help many theology students prepare for an integrated theological education and ministry. Since they do not have reams



of footnotes, it will be much easier to engage students and laity in these chapters. I did appreciate very much Bray's list in chapter 22, "Deviations from Christianity", and discussion on heresy as a way of introducing such things as Unitarianism, Christian Science and the Kimbanguists. However, I personally then found it confusing when he concluded the chapter with "The Nature of Christian Sectarianism". I was expecting something totally different, and yet it was about cults *and sects* basically as one, without clarity of definition. This ambiguity ends an otherwise excellent chapter with a note of confusion.

In reading Bray's section on baptism (pp. 625-637), one senses certain strong affinities to what Bray had written in his earlier work *The Faith We Confess*. (See review, pp. 75.) This is not surprising and is acceptable. He expands his discussion here in *God Is Love*.

Bray is not afraid to express himself in discussing today's controversial issues in marriage and church leadership. He raises some very helpful points on Christian marriage and really tries to make sure we return to Scripture. He is a complementarian, and this comes through both under marriage and gender and in his sub point on "The Ministry of the Church" (pp. 701-708).

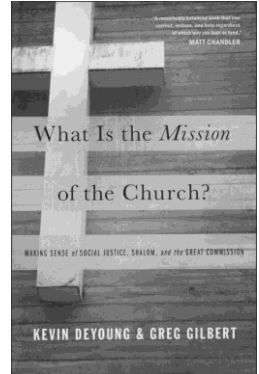
If there is any reservation I have about the book, it would be about the inconsistency on occasion of the amount of space given per sub point. It appears that sometimes a point takes just too much space or too many words and then another point is shortchanged. I felt that more editing was needed to bring about more evenness. The result may have been to shorten the work or to have allowed more even treatment to all the various points covered, even if the total page count ended up the same.

*God Is Love* has a beautiful tone which will make it appealing to many. It has a freshness without being quirky or trendy. It has a contemporary approach which shows a theologian at work in his generation and is realistic to today's context yet still classically balanced. The book will be most helpful for theological teaching as a primary text or as an additional reading work in the right context and will be able to be used in denominational or interdenominational settings as an introductory work. Its sheer size may deter some, but it is not densely typeset so a page reads quickly. The work may also be read simply for personal use as an exploration of theology, almost as a conversation of engagement at a very serious level.

*Reviewed by Jack C. Whytock*

***What Is the Mission of the Church? Making Sense of Social Justice, Shalom, and the Great Commission.* Kevin DeYoung and Greg Gilbert. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011, 283 pp., paper. ISBN 978-1-4335-2690-9**

Kevin DeYoung, a Reformed Church in America pastor, and Greg Gilbert, a Reformed Baptist pastor, are on a mission to clarify the church's mission. They are not satisfied with recent formulations of the church's mission by such contributors as Christopher Wright and Reggie McNeal, nor the older and influential proposal of John Stott. Their aim, however, is to make a positive contribution to the discussion that will include correcting "an overexpansive definition that understands mission to be just about every good thing a Christian could do as a partner with God in his mission to redeem the whole world" (p. 20). For the authors, Stephen Neill got it right when he quipped, "If everything is mission, nothing is mission."



They also want to make a positive contribution by providing a careful analysis of the biblical teaching on kingdom, gospel, social justice and shalom. Guided by an accurate understanding of these concepts "we will be better able to articulate a careful, biblically faithful understanding of the mission of the church" (p. 16). Such an understanding of the church's mission will keep the making of disciples of Jesus Christ front and centre in the church's life and ministry.

For the authors, "Mission . . . is not everything we do in Jesus' name, nor everything we do in obedience to Christ" (p. 29). In short, they want to limit the church's mission to the Great Commission, which they define as follows:

The mission of the church is to go into the world and make disciples by declaring the gospel of Jesus Christ in the power of the Spirit and gathering these disciples into churches, that they might worship the Lord and obey his commands now and in eternity to the glory of God the Father. (p. 18)<sup>1</sup>

They support their case by arguing the biblical story of creation, fall and redemption presses forward to the Great Commission and the church finding its mission there. They go on to make three further supportive arguments. They argue that whether the gospel is understood in a narrow or a broad sense, the gospel's focus on the cross focuses the church's mission on the

<sup>1</sup> The authors state that this quotation has been taken from Keith Ferdinando, "Mission: A Problem of Definition." *Themelios* 33, no. 1; <http://thegospelcoalition.org/publications/33-1/mission-a-problem-of-definition>.

Great Commission. They argue that the kingdom as something proclaimed and its blessings received in a faith response to the King narrows the church's mission to the Great Commission. They argue that a clear understanding of social justice texts along with grasping the reality that the shalom that is eternal is obtained only in Christ leads to the Great Commission as the church's mission.

The authors fear being misunderstood. They do not want readers to conclude that mercy, justice and cultural engagement are unimportant. Rather, they strongly support churches undertaking such ministries. Good works are necessary, and we do them for a number of reasons including to function as salt and light in the world and "to win a hearing for the gospel" (p. 227). However, good works are not a component of the church's mission; they "are simply doing things that redeemed human beings do" (p. 229).

Better and more faithful to Jesus' commission "As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you" (Jn. 20:21 ESV) is to understand the church's mission involving both Word and deed. Word and deed ministry are both necessary and exist in a relationship of interdependence with making disciples of Christ the overarching goal of both Word and deed ministry. Word ministry, however, is foundational and thus central because the gospel message is God's solution to man's fundamental problem, namely, the guilt and power of sin.

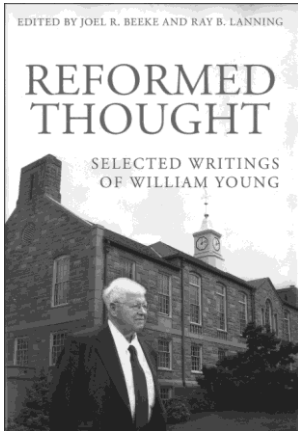
DeYoung and Gilbert's formulation of the church's mission and good works creates an awkward dualism for the follower of Christ. Sometimes he is participating in the church's mission, sometimes he is doing what believers do. Better to understand the believer as participating in the church's mission in whatever he does. The believer driven by the gospel orients his whole life to fulfilling the Great Commission. He sees bringing all aspects of his life under the lordship of Christ as demonstrating the power of the gospel, dramatizing the kingdom's presence, and along with other believers, providing a preview of life in the consummation kingdom. In so doing, all aspects of his life make a necessary contribution to the church's mission to make disciples of Christ.

There is much in this book to praise God. It dramatizes the urgency of making disciples of Christ, encourages ministries of mercy and justice, reminds us that the ballast that keeps us on course as we seek to love our neighbour in gospel words and deeds is the awesome reality "there is something worse than death and there is something better than human flourishing" (pp. 23, 242-246). It is clearly and engagingly written and irenic in tone. Nevertheless, as far as defining the church's mission, DeYoung and Gilbert fall short.

*Reviewed by Howard M. McPhee, the former pastor of the Springdale Christian Reformed Church, Bradford, Ontario, where he served for seventeen years.*



***Reformed Thought: Selected Writings of William Young.* Eds., Joel Beeke and Ray B. Lanning. Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage, 2011, 430 pp., hc. ISBN 978-1-60178-159-8**



This book is a collection of writings of lectures, essays, sermons and book reviews. The volume is warmly commended by Paul Helm who supplied the introduction (pp. 1-7).

Widely read in philosophy and theology, both ancient and modern, Dr. Young's theological sympathies lie much with the Puritans and the old Dutch writers. In the sense in which Lloyd-Jones referred to himself as an eighteenth-century man, Young can be fairly called a seventeenth-century man.

A major section of the book contains entries under the general heading "Theology and Doctrine". Several of these were originally addresses delivered at Christian family gatherings. One is impressed by the theological level of hearers who could appreciate such discourses. Pastors should consider that their congregations need instruction in sound theology.

Young is a thoroughgoing Calvinist of the old school. One of his central concerns is with regard to experimental religion. He regards this term as appropriate because a Christian's profession should be tested. Believers are to examine themselves with regard to their experience of faith and repentance.

In a chapter entitled "Historic Calvinism and Neo-Calvinism", first published in the *Westminster Theological Journal*, the author voices strong opposition to teaching which regards all children of professing believers as regenerate. The author traces this view to the Dutch theologian Abraham Kuyper. Although he acknowledges that Kuyper was very appreciative of the practical theology of the older Dutch writers and of the English Puritans, he contends that in this point of presumptive regeneration he differed from them.

Young says that the successors of Kuyper have gone further than their mentor and that they are responsible for what he has coined "Hyper-Covenantism". He presents seven theses of this teaching. Among these he lists the following: Thesis 1, "The covenant is not to be viewed primarily as soteriological but as cultural, Genesis 1:28 being construed as containing a 'cultural mandate' for the human race." Dr Young says, "Talk of a cultural mandate should be banned from the language of Canaan and recognized as a shibboleth of Hyper-Covenantism" (p. 36).

Thesis 5, "Doctrinal knowledge, and ethical conduct according to the Word of God, are sufficient for the Christian life without any specific reli-

gious experience of conviction and conversion, or any need for self examination as to the possession of distinguishing marks of saving grace” (p. 51).

Herman Dooyeweerd is the central figure in the development of “Hyper-Covenantism”. Young has known him personally, and he collaborated with David Freeman in translating the first volume of *A New Critique of Theoretical Thought*.

There is an interesting chapter on antinomianism, originally published in the *Encyclopedia of Christianity*. The author indicates that there has been a good deal of misunderstanding regarding the view of law and grace as held by some prominent writers usually classed as antinomians. Here again he shows himself familiar with a wide range of literature going back to the earliest period of the church. The Libertines who presented a serious problem in Calvin’s Geneva were antinomians. But the English Hyper-Calvinists held the law to be a rule of life for the Christian and did not regard themselves as antinomians. Young accepts this. But as they did not urge the claims of the gospel upon all, it would appear that, in their view, inability is inconsistent with obligation.

Dr. Young mentions the *Marrow of Modern Divinity* in passing, only observing that some Scottish theologians were opposed to it because of what they felt were its antinomian tendencies. The “Marrow”, we feel, deserves a more positive notice. Its opponents were influenced by neonomianism or newlawism. This obscured the freeness of the gospel offer. James Walker in *Theology and Theologians of Scotland 1560-1750* asserts the thorough orthodoxy of the supporters of the “Marrow”.

In a chapter on conversion, Young gives much emphasis to a preparatory work of the Spirit. He speaks of a habit of faith. By this is meant regeneration and the seed of faith, which may precede “closing in” with Christ in actual faith. This suggests a temporal lapse between regeneration and conversion. The reviewer thinks that the careful words of the Westminster Confession and Catechisms are adequate to cover the spiritual experience of God’s people. Dr. Young is rightly concerned about easy-believism. But it is well to be reminded that the parable of the sower teaches that superficial professions are not a new phenomenon. It is good to read of the author’s emphasis on the convicting and enabling work of the Holy Spirit in connection with conversion. At the same time, too much emphasis on the preparatory work of the Spirit may hinder the preacher from extending the gospel invitation freely to all without exception or qualification.

There is a chapter on “The Puritan Principle of Worship”. It is an important subject and one that deserves to be pondered. The author includes a section on the Regulative Principle applied to song. He is an earnest promoter of the exclusive use of the biblical psalms in public worship. Other material in this section include the Westminster Confession on Church and State and another essay discussing a counter view of Abraham Kuyper.

The book contains a number of Dr. Young’s sermons. In these we are provided with examples of competent exegesis and a good experimental em-

phasis. In a sermon on the controversial passage Romans 7:14-25, he presents the view that when Paul spoke of his wretchedness he was referring to his experience as a Christian believer. In contrast to much modern preaching and writing, the author takes a serious view of sin in its different manifestations.

The section on “Christian Philosophy” contains a number of essays or lectures on various subjects. An excellent chapter entitled “Theory and Theology” consists of a lecture delivered at Westminster Seminary. Here Young includes advice that ministers should have some instruction in traditional formal logic and also in modern symbolic logic. Also in this section the reader is treated to several papers on Wittgenstein, originally published in proceedings of the *International Wittgenstein Symposium*. Dr. Young has an international reputation as an authority on this noted philosopher.

A final section contains a number of book reviews. Included is an appraisal of R.T. Kendall’s book *Calvin and English Calvinism to 1649*. Young is very critical of Kendall’s attempt to show the Puritan theology to be a departure from Calvin.

“Rabbi” Duncan, the Scottish philosopher, theologian and brilliant linguist, is mentioned several times in the volume, and in this last section there is a warm review of his *Colloquia Peripatetica*, a collection of his reflections on various subjects.

In *Reformed Thought* the author provides much food for meditation.

*Reviewed by William R. Underhay, a retired minister of the Free Church of Scotland, Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island. He now makes his home in Montague, PEI. Rev. Underhay has been a regular reviewer for the Haddington House Journal.*



***The Faith We Confess: An Exposition of the Thirty-Nine Articles.* Gerald Bray. London: The Latimer Trust, 2009, 229 pp., paper. ISBN 978-0-946307-84-5**

This is the first commentary or exposition that I have ever read on the Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion of the Church of England. It was a delight and a most stimulating read. Even though one is customarily to reserve their applause to the end of the review, this book, given its unique contribution and its readability, allows one to break from convention. It is welcomed and helpful.

The author, Gerald Bray, has made a considerable contribution to the scholarly work of historical Christianity. He holds many positions: director of research for the Latimer Trust, research professor at Beeson Divinity School, Alabama and Oak Hill Theological College, and distinguished pro-

fessor of historical theology for Knox Theological Seminary, Florida.

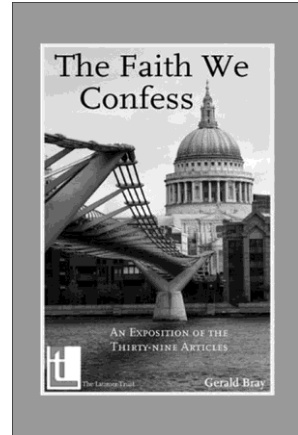
The outline of the book is very straightforward. The first eighteen pages are all introductory points on the articles; that is, their origin, revision and structure along with a bibliography. The focus of the book for the next two hundred pages is the exposition of each of the thirty-nine articles, followed by two appendices and an index of Scripture references. The expositions average about five to six pages each.

The style is to “exposit” the article without footnote apparatus in an engaging and yet highly informed manner. Behind each exposition there is richness of knowledge, yet the author is able to communicate this so well. He then concludes with three or four questions for discussion, a list of key Bible passages and a “For further reading” list. These are qualified as not “definitive” but simply to enable “those who want to pursue the matter further for themselves”. Bray recognizes that not all texts share the Evangelical faith of Latimer Trust, but they are important works on the particular subject.

Evangelical Anglican theological colleges should use this in their courses but so could others with great value. Presbyterians would find it valuable as would other evangelicals. My favourite exposition by Bray is Article 27 “Of Baptism”. This chapter should be used with students in any number of evangelical theological colleges. The author raises many questions here and answers them very judiciously. It would be a most helpful essay for teaching a confessions of faith course or an introduction to theology course.

Bray recognizes the contextual setting for the Articles and particularizes this when necessary, such as on “Of Sin after Baptism”, “Of Works of Supererogation”, “Of the Marriage of Priests” and “Of excommunicate Persons, how they are to be avoided”. The last mentioned was good on historical context but not as good on modern applications and discussion in the local church situation (pp. 183-188). The same comment could be made on Article 23 “Of speaking in the Congregation . . .”, excellent on historical discussion with much comment but very brief on application. Perhaps the book should expand its subtitle to read “An Exposition of the Thirty-Nine Articles with Historical Context” or something to that effect. Bray is an historical theologian so naturally this work is chiefly an historical exposition.

*The Faith We Confess* is perhaps the most significant commentary on the Thirty-Nine Articles since the classic work by W. H. Griffith Thomas appeared posthumously in 1930 as *The Principles of Theology*. Such works are not regular systematic theology texts but, like J. I. Packer’s *Concise Theology*, provide generally an introductory text on theology. Bray’s *The Faith We Confess*, though an “exposition” on the Thirty-Nine Articles, is like reading

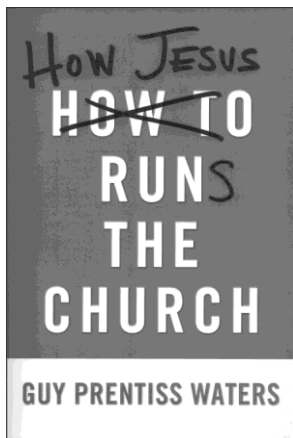


an introductory theology text, only organized along the lines of a classical confession of faith.

*The Faith We Confess* is clearly a welcome addition to the study of the great evangelical and Reformed Confessions. It is readable, judicious and historically lively and opens up good discussion; its weakness is inconsistent treatment of application.

*Reviewed by Jack C. Whytock*

***How Jesus Runs the Church.* Guy Prentiss Waters. Philipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2011, 178 pp., paper. ISBN 978-1-59638-252-7**



Guy Waters is Associate Professor of New Testament at Reformed Theological Seminary, Jackson, Mississippi and a minister in the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA). In this book, he sets himself two goals: the first is to present a scriptural case for Presbyterianism which might be of use inside and outside the PCA; the second is to make such a case as accessible as possible.

Waters more than achieves his second goal. This book is a model of how to convey doctrine in the twenty-first century. The look, feel, and pitch of the book are reminiscent of the IVP *Contours of Christian Theology* series. The chapters and sections are well organized and clearly labeled. Here

is a slim volume of Presbyterian ecclesiology which gives more than the basics and should whet the appetite for the further study encouraged by the annotated bibliography at its conclusion.

Chapter 1 answers the question: What is the Church? Here Waters uses the Westminster definitions of the visible and invisible church to define church membership and to reflect upon the meaning of baptism. Chapter 2 establishes that the church has a government distinct from the civil government and that Christ, as King and Head, is the source and definer of that government. Chapter 3 describes the nature and extent of church power. Chapters 4 and 5 deal with by whom and how the church power is administered: office-bearers and courts.

To answer the usual questions, Waters holds a two office view (elders and deacons) with the office of elder divided into two orders (teaching and ruling); and he argues against both women elders and deaconesses.

Given the general high standard of this book, it is disappointing that there is one rather glaring omission and two places where differences between the positions adopted by Waters and those of classical Presbyterianism are not



noted. While Waters discusses whether Christ rules over nations as the Second Person of the Trinity or as Mediator (he argues for the former) and hints at further discussion, there is not a developed section on the relationship between the church and the state. He adopts a position of a separation of offices rather than the classical Presbyterian view that the functions of a lesser office are contained in a higher. More significantly, he does not argue that presbytery is the radical court of the church but that all church courts have inherently the same rights and powers.

Regarding his first goal, the author has written a book which describes Presbyterianism from a decidedly Southern and PCA perspective. His positions rely greatly on the work of Thomas Peck, who was a colleague of R. L. Dabney at Union Theological Seminary, Virginia. They are supported and illustrated from the PCA's Book of Common Order (BCO) to such an extent that in some sections of this book the BCO is inextricable from its warp and weft. Waters cannot be faulted for this. Every author on this subject will write out of his own tradition and reflect his denomination's distinctives. Alas, having done so to the degree that he has, he has limited the usefulness of his book to those outside of the PCA and, thus, not achieved part of his first goal.

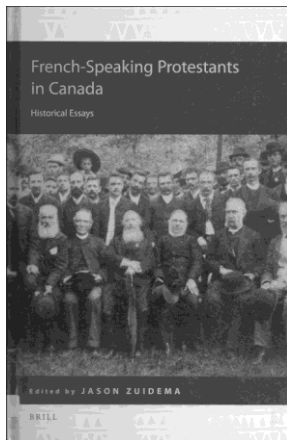
This book, then, is an accessible conservative ecclesiology text for those in the PCA. For others, it will help them to understand their Southern trained neighbour; and, it is a pattern for how they might write a really useful ecclesiology text reflecting their own tradition and denominational distinctives.

*Reviewed by D. Douglas Gebbie. Rev. Gebbie is a regular reviewer for this journal. He is a native of Scotland and was educated at Glasgow College of Technology and the Free Church of Scotland College, Edinburgh. He serves the Presbyterian Reformed Church in Chesley, Ontario.*



## Historical Theology

***French-Speaking Protestants in Canada. Historical Essays.* Ed., Jason Zuidema. Religion in the Americas Series. Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2011, 318 pp., hc. ISBN 978-90-04-21176-6**



Thirty-three years ago when I was taking a course in French at Glendon College, York University, Toronto on the history of Quebec, I chose as my research project an essay on Father Chiniquy. My instructor, very much a product of the new Quebec, had never encountered this unique individual, a Roman Catholic priest who turned to Presbyterianism, was subsequently immersed, and caused a riot in Montréal with his best-selling (and lurid) exposés of his former religious affiliation. With titles such as *Fifty Years in The Church of Rome* and *The Priest, The Woman and The Confessional* and claims he knew Abra-

ham Lincoln personally and that the American Civil War was a Vatican conspiracy, who could take the man and the movement he identified himself with seriously? She marked down the paper and stated Chiniquy was a curiosity who had little relevance to modern Francophone identity or history, a best forgotten development in nineteenth-century Quebec.

How attitudes among academics have changed in the meantime. Not that, aside from various abstruse papers read at academic gatherings, there have been many further contributions to the study of French Canadian Protestantism. Now, at last, we have such a volume, featuring thirteen contributions from knowledgeable scholars on the subject, tracing Protestantism in Francophone Quebec from earliest French colonizers to the second sovereignty referendum of 1995. Editor Jason Zuidema, presently of Farel Faculté de Théologie Réformée (Farel Reformed Theological Seminary), Montréal and at the time of publication teaching at Concordia University, is to be commended on his success in enlisting fifteen other contributors and collaborators, assembling all the material in a single volume, and doing the organizing and proofing as a labour of love. For anyone who is interested in the extension of the kingdom of God in Canada, this is essential reading.

The story starts with an essay, translated by Zuidema, on the early Huguenot immigration to New France. Robert Larin in this chapter provides solid evidence of such activity. I have always found earlier treatments of the subject as unconvincing. The story moves to the nineteenth century and the unique figure of Henriette Feller, told by well-known chronicler of fundamentalism Randall Balmer and his wife, Catharine, interspersed with quotes from Feller which I found made the chapter a bit disjointed. Feller is the reason why nineteenth-century Québécois converts to Protestantism were dismissed as “les suisses” and their faith regarded as an affront to French Canadian identity.

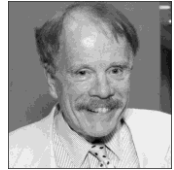
John Vaudry of King’s College Edmonton brings an Anglican perspective with the conversion in 1846 of another significant figure in outreach to the Québécois under the Colonial Church and School Society. Glen Scorgie, whose departure to southern California was such a loss to Canadian evangelicalism, includes an update of an earlier article on the French-Canadian Missionary Society, which he describes as “one of the most extensive Protestant efforts ever made to evangelize the French-speaking inhabitants of North America” (p. 79). It gives a welcome correction to some erroneous impressions widely disseminated. Richard Loughheed analyses three stages in the progress of nineteenth-century French-Canadian outreach and concludes that the virtual disappearance of earlier commitment to evangelistic witness (and its absorption into less challenging educational activity, which was happening at the time all over the world in denominational Protestant missions) was due to the rise of liberal theology at the turn of the twentieth century. A second factor explaining the eclipse of earlier progress was the assimilation of Francophone Protestants into Anglophone society, faced as these converts were with obstruction and opposition of every kind. Roderick MacLeod and Mary Anne Poutanen chronicle the educational dilemmas of converts.

Other little-known names surface: Joly de Lotbinière is introduced as a part of a wider study by the eminent scholar J. I. Little of Simon Fraser University. Zuidema unravels the Chiniquy mythology. Jean-Louis Lalonde, secretary of la Société d’histoire du protestantisme franco-québécois, provides an overview of a century of missionary activity in Quebec, translated by Richard Loughheed, who contributes a fascinating analysis of the brief 1960s and 1970s evangelical revival as La Révolution Tranquille was transforming Quebec society. Further denominational perspectives from Denis Fortin on Adventism in Quebec and Sébastien Fortin on Baptist ministry over two centuries round out the studies, along with a concluding demographic analysis of French speaking Protestants given by the well-known Glen Smith of Christian Direction Montréal.

*French-Speaking Protestants in Canada* is a substantial and thorough analysis of Protestant advance, decline, revival and retrenchment among Québécois evangelicals. As national director of Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship in the heady days of the seventies in Quebec, our Francophone ministry, now known as Groupes Bibliques Universitaires et Collégiaux du Can-

ada, was an integral part of our Canadian student and camping ministry. A few years after I left in 1980, the movements separated to the loss of both. It is hoped that this volume will alert English-speaking Canadians to their responsibility for the evangelization of the whole country and our solidarity with Francophone brothers and sisters in their long and often discouraging attempt to reach Quebec with the gospel.

*Reviewed by A. Donald MacLeod. Don MacLeod is research professor of Church History at Tyndale Seminary. He serves as the president of the Canadian Society of Presbyterian History and is very active in other societies. He is a widely published writer and biographer.*

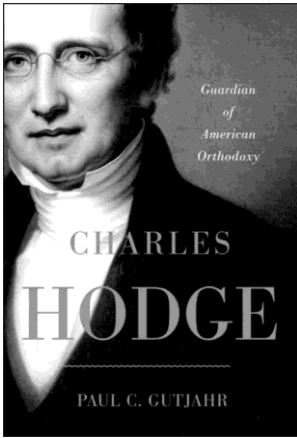


***Charles Hodge: Guardian of American Orthodoxy.* Paul C. Gutjahr. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011, 518 pp., paper. ISBN 978-0199895526**

***Charles Hodge: The Pride of Princeton.* W. Andrew Hoffecker. American Reformed Biographies. Philipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2011, 460 pp., paper. ISBN 978-0-87552-658-4**

It must have been slightly disconcerting for Andy Hoffecker, retired professor of church history at Reformed Theological Seminary, Jackson, Mississippi, to discover that his biography of Charles Hodge, on which he had been working for ten years, was not going to be the only one published in 2011. But now that both volumes have appeared, they helpfully supplement and complement each other and both make a substantial contribution to our knowledge of this great Reformed theologian. Hoffecker provides the theological ballast that Gutjahr lacks, while Gutjahr gives a thoughtful and well-written analysis as an historian of Charles Hodge in a volume that is beautifully produced.

The interest in Charles Hodge has been comparatively recent. For almost a hundred years, and certainly after the death of the so-called “old Princeton” in 1929, Hodge has been caricatured as a dour and priggish Calvinist. Nothing, of course, could be further from the truth: his grandson, the paleontologist William Berryman Scott, stated that “never, in any part of the world, have I met such a sunny, genial, kindly and tolerant people as my Grandfather and his children.” Only on the bicentenary of his birth, 22-24 October 1997, was due recognition given Charles Hodge with a colloquium at Princeton University featuring some outstanding historians, all celebrating his seminal contribution to American Christianity and the brilliance of his mind and writing.



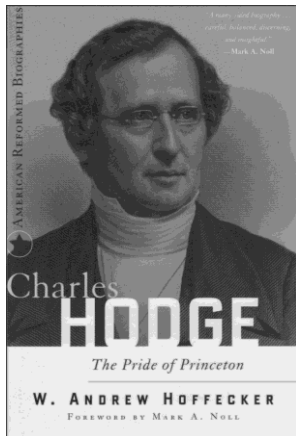
Paul Gutjahr's volume is a delight. It features a whole gallery of rough sketches of the persona of Charles Hodge's circle and contemporaries. The pictures, portraits, and lithographs reproduced in the body of the book are stunning. Gutjahr was helped by the fact that Bill Harris, who headed the Luce Research Library at Princeton Seminary and was an inspiration to many of us, not only suggested the writing of this book but in retirement moved to Indiana, near where Gutjahr teaches. The book involves an impressive amount of research and, as one would expect from a Professor of English, is beautifully written. As one of my faculty friends at Westminster Seminary remarked, "It's a real page-turner."

As the story of Hodge's life unfolds one is caught up in the grandeur of his faith, the tragedies that he weathered with a supreme confidence in divine providence, and his breadth of intellect and scholarship.

That said, and to take nothing away from the achievement of this biography, there are definite *lacunae*. The twenty-second chapter on "The Imputation Controversy" which on occasion dominated Hodge's theological conversation and formed a disproportionate amount of treatment in his commentary on Romans, in chapter 5, shows a lack of insight characterized by the phrase (citing Taylor) of "Adam's choice to eat the apple". Likewise the forty-third chapter, "The Inspiration of Scripture", falters in its comparison between Hodge's view of the Bible as "infallible" (as in the Westminster Confession) and that of his son and Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield, to whom is attributed the concept of inerrancy. As David Kelsey of Yale said at the 1997 colloquium, "Hodge's actual practice of biblical interpretation was deeply informed by and consistent with his theology of the Bible as God's inerrant word, plenary and verbally inspired" (*Charles Hodge Revisited*, p. 218).

The other concern that I would have is the way in which Gutjahr speaks of the dependence of Hodge on Scottish Common Sense Realism. A familiar and often repeated assumption about the old Princeton maintained that the theology of the Seminary was shaped by Scottish Common Sense Realism and thus diluted its Calvinism. Gutjahr appears to agree: "Scottish Realism put a tremendous emphasis on humanity's moral intuition and its ability to detect and be moved by truth. Calvinism, with its doctrine of total depravity, held a much lower view of human moral ability" (p. 203). He then constructs an unfortunate dichotomy between *The Way of Life* and his later *Systematic Theology*. He claims that the one deals with sin in the traditional Reformed way while the other has a more positive view of the human ability to discover truth. This latter emphasis, Gutjahr claims, was increasingly evident as Hodge aged.

My father, a product of the “Old Princeton”, translated into Chinese Hodge’s *The Way of Life* to do for the Chinese church what Hodge intended for it: a basic primer for entry into the Christian faith. Hodge’s magisterial *Systematic Theology*, which shaped theological education for more than half a century across the spectrum of denominations and was the text originally favoured by the Presbyterian Church in Canada in its theological colleges, assumes on the part of the student an already existing faith that seeks to be further instructed. You cannot say that one is pessimistic, the other optimistic: they are both of a piece.



It is at this point that Hoffercker’s insights are so essential in supplementing Gutjahr. My heavily high-lighted copy of his 1981 *Piety and the Princeton Theologians* helped me thirty years ago to strike the balance between piety and theology and impacted my own teaching ministry to its great advantage. His *Charles Hodge: The Pride of Princeton* takes the argument one step further, balancing Hodge’s Old School orthodoxy with a warm and passionate faith too often identified solely with Finney and the New School. Hodge was initially ambivalent about the division of 1837, as Gutjahr helpfully points out and Hoffercker amplifies with an analysis of the ecclesiastical issues involved. He did not have a concern about slavery, being a slave-owner himself for some years before the Civil War (a strange anomaly here), and was sympathetic to the southern majority in the Old School. At the same time he spoke of the work of the Holy Spirit in bringing life to the church, a view that made him suspect to some who were denigrating the place of emotion in the Christian life.

It is in this context that Hodge’s *Constitutional History of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America* must be placed. To Hodge, who admitted he was not a church historian, all theological studies were ultimately historical. “Hodge believed,” Hoffercker asserted, “historical study was essential to defending Reformed dogmas and correctly understanding current controversies” (p. 191). The chapter about Hodge as “Revisionist Historian” is particularly relevant to an understanding of the price we pay today for our neglect of church history both in congregations and seminaries.

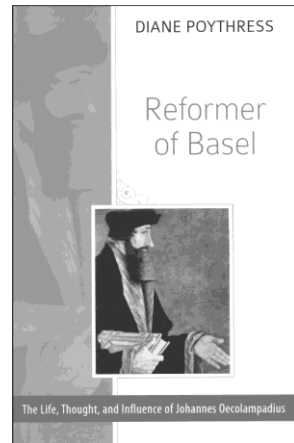
Charles Hodge was a man for our times. In his closing chapter Hoffercker applies the lessons that Hodge can bring us: “He enabled a church not only to maintain its spiritual footing doctrinally as others sought an innovative Calvinism but also to retain its essential spiritual mission when parties diverted it into a political agenda contrary to the church’s calling” (p. 359). We are indebted to both men, Paul Gutjahr and Andrew Hoffercker, for their holding up to us the life and teaching of Charles Hodge as a guide for a church that

often, especially in Canada, seems in retreat if not in a rout. Orthodoxy, Hodge would say, need not be reactionary and defensive: with him we can indeed engage the culture and challenge its presuppositions in the name of a sovereign Lord.

*Reviewed by A. Donald MacLeod*

***Reformer of Basel: The Life, Thought, and Influence of Johannes Oecolampadius.* Diane Poythress. Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage, 2011, 230 pp., paper. ISBN 978-1-60178-150-5**

Diane Poythress has provided us with the first monograph in English that focuses on a significant but forgotten Reformer, John Oecolampadius (1482-1531). *Reformer of Basel* is a biographical and thematic study, which Poythress describes as a “survey of the life and thought of this saintly man” (p. 2). Her expressed goals are to inspire Christians today from the life of Oecolampadius and to demonstrate that Oecolampadius was arguably the spiritual father of John Calvin and the entire Reformed church (pp. 1, 127-128). The book is divided into five chapters and includes an English translation of Oecolampadius’s exegetical comments on Isaiah 36-37 as an appendix.



The first chapter provides a biographical summary of Oecolampadius’s life. Poythress divides Oecolampadius’s life into five time periods: his early schooling and priesthood (1482-1514); his first work in Basel, theological training, and time in a monastery (1515-1521); his return to Basel and the beginning of the Eucharist controversies (1522-1525); the introduction of reform measures (1526-1528) and the acceptance of the Reformation in Basel to his death (1529-1531). This sketch highlights the work of Oecolampadius in collaborating with Erasmus on the first edition of the Greek New Testament, translating patristic texts, reforming liturgical activity, introducing the role of lay elders, establishing church discipline practices, engaging in the Eucharist controversy, and regularly preaching, teaching, and writing biblical commentaries. A brief timeline of the significant events in Oecolampadius’s life and ministry concludes the chapter (pp. 35-36). Poythress indicates that she utilized previous German biographies and studies, such as those by Karl Hammer, Ernst Staehelin, Olaf Kuhr, and Rudolf Wackernagel. For English readers, this chapter offers an update to the biographical section on Oecolampadius in Gordon Rupp’s *Patterns of Reformation*.

The next three chapters survey the thought and contribution of Oecolampadius. Poythress devotes the second chapter to Oecolampadius’s associations with other reformers to show that, “By God’s grace he had become a

funnel for collecting past faithful doctrine, pouring it into his generation and beyond” (p. 37). She compares the teachings of Oecolampadius with Capito, Bucer, Zwingli, Luther, Melancthon, Erasmus and Calvin on topics including the covenant, election, church discipline, church and state, the Lord’s Supper, baptism, justification and the law. She shows how Oecolampadius anticipated and influenced many of the reform ideas and actions by later reformers. She notes the influence of Oecolampadius on reformations that happened elsewhere in Europe but particularly draws attention to Geneva’s implementation of church practices taught by Oecolampadius and Oecolampadius’s influence on Calvin’s theology and exegesis. She establishes that the teaching of Oecolampadius has unknowingly reached many preachers today through Calvin (pp. 54, 71). Poythress insists that “although Calvin is perceived as the father of the Reformed Church, he is actually the son of Oecolampadius” (p. 55).

The third chapter then focuses on Oecolampadius’s study of Scripture. Poythress identifies some of the sources Oecolampadius used but emphasizes that Augustine and Chrysostom were the primary influences on his exegesis. She specifically denotes Chrysostom as a tutor for Oecolampadius because they both interpreted Scripture grammatically and historically, with “sober typological exegesis” that minimized allegory and speculations (p. 58). Poythress describes Oecolampadius’s “Christocentric” methodology that began at the heart; utilized the resources of grammar, language, history, genre, and parallel scriptures; and ultimately led the interpreter “to see Christ with the eyes of faith” as the goal of all Scripture (pp. 76-77, 82-84, 121). The fourth chapter endeavors to derive his “doctrine as it might have appeared in a systematic theology” (p. 85). Poythress summarizes Oecolampadius’s views on scripture, theology, the church, original sin, free will, election, icons, relics, worship of saints and angels, the sacraments and other important topics at the time of the Reformation. Among other things, she contends that Oecolampadius “might be considered the father of covenant theology, after Paul and Augustine” (pp. 49, 97). The final chapter of the book is a catalog of Oecolampadius’s publications with the titles and some bibliographic information translated into English (pp. 135-170).

Poythress has undertaken the difficult task of introducing a historical figure who made very significant contributions but has been unjustly overlooked for a long time. She has been diligent to revise her dissertation to make this a well-organized, readable and concise presentation. Poythress writes in an engaging style that draws in the reader. Though there are certainly more significant two-chapter excerpts from Oecolampadius’s commentaries, the publication of the first English translation of a major portion of one of his commentaries is a tremendous contribution (pp. 171-201). The appendix effectively demonstrates his exegetical practices, the style of his commenting and the way he approached the biblical text to draw out theological implications. I echo her desire that this book will “encourage others to



translate remaining buried treasures from his commentaries” (pp. 2, 171).

While I do not want to undercut the importance of the contribution Poythress has made, there are a few aspects of this book that are problematic. It is daunting to criticize a book that includes sixteen very positive reviews on its inside cover from well-known historical scholars, but there are some features that regrettably limit its value. The frequency with which Poythress explicitly identifies God at work in the life and ministry of Oecolampadius will unfortunately make it difficult for this book to be received well by historians or used in history classes. While I definitely appreciate Poythress’s devotion to Reformation theology and acknowledgement that God is the primary cause of all things, this approach implicitly claims the authority to determine where God was active and where he was not. Only what was eventually favorable for Oecolampadius or the Reformed tradition is portrayed as God’s work. In contrast, Poythress begins the book by attributing the limited amount of research done on Oecolampadius to Satan without any acknowledgment of God’s providence.

Similarly, in her quest to show the significance of Oecolampadius, Poythress portrays him as a “saint” that is closer to a modern-day Presbyterian than a theologian emerging from the late medieval context. Her accounts of how Oecolampadius’s contemporaries viewed him are nearly all favorable, with no indication of the negative views which Luther and others held toward him. She diligently defends his integrity for not technically breaking his vow when he left the monastery and for not revising or tampering with patristic texts he gathered and translated. She refers to Oecolampadius “ushering in modern hermeneutics” (p. 62) and contends his exegesis “continues rivaling many moderns of today” (p. 84). Her selective portrayal of Oecolampadius’s thought gives the impression that he had entirely abandoned medieval approaches and interpretations in favor of an exclusive use of the grammatical-historical method and adherence to Reformed doctrines. In many respects Oecolampadius was a “father” to Calvin and the Reformed church but in others he would be unrecognizable. A broader study of Oecolampadius’s writings beyond the Isaiah and Romans commentaries, however, would demonstrate that much of what she critiques about Calvin and medieval interpretation is also present in the writings of Oecolampadius. Perhaps most unconvincing is her conjecture that Oecolampadius was particularly interested in evangelizing the Jews. She asserts that his attention to Hebrew and use of rabbinical sources was “just to better communicate with contemporary Jews” and his use of Israelite traditions “aided his solidarity with Jewish adherents” (pp. 126-127). While Oecolampadius may not have expressed the kind of contempt toward Jews that others at the time did, he most often included Jewish exposition in his commentaries to refute it, not to make his theology more accessible to Jewish readers. I find it completely unnecessary for Poythress to overstate what can be said about Oecolampadius. The life and contributions of Oecolampadius are important enough that he warrants dedicated attention without needing to be depicted as “unique in his

ability as a scholar and in his depth as a biblical expositor” (p. 126) or to claim that “the theological correctness of his scholarship, and the breadth and depth of his understanding, remain unsurpassed to this day” (p. 128).

A final criticism has to be made about chapter 5. The purpose of this chapter is unclear and its contents are unreliable. If the purpose was to demonstrate the breadth of Oecolampadius’s writing, then all the detail is unnecessary and distracting. If the purpose was to provide an English bibliography comparable to Staehelin’s *Oekolampad-Bibliographie*, then the arrangement, the haphazard format of data and the inaccuracies are not helpful for the interested student. When the contents are compared with bibliographical information in Staehelin and online sources such as *WorldCat* or the *Post-Reformation Digital Library*, it is evident that there are several incorrect entries. She attributes a commentary on Psalms to Oecolampadius (pp. 133, 168, 208) that is actually one of the commentaries edited by Augustin Marlorat in 1562, which only included excerpts from sermons by Oecolampadius on a few of the Psalms. Her catalog also includes a commentary on Daniel and Job, supposedly published in 1530 even though Oecolampadius had not yet lectured on Job. It also includes misdated information for a translation of Chrysostom’s homilies and the commentary that included the Minor Prophets and Job. The obvious reason for these mistakes is that she gave preference to Salomon Hess’s work published in 1793 rather than more recent and more reliable sources (p. 134). Any use of the information in this chapter would require verification from other sources, and with more than 120 writings by Oecolampadius now available digitally, its usefulness is uncertain anyway.

Despite these shortcomings, I would recommend *Reformer of Basel* to pastors, professors and students interested in the Reformation era and Reformed theology as a way to get a sense of the life, thought and significance of John Oecolampadius. The historical sources may not be able to substantiate all of Poythress’s presentation of Oecolampadius as an inspiring figure and the father of Calvin and the Reformed church, but hopefully this book will serve as a useful introduction for English-speaking readers to Oecolampadius and will inspire further studies on the contributions of Oecolampadius and the connection between Basel and Geneva.

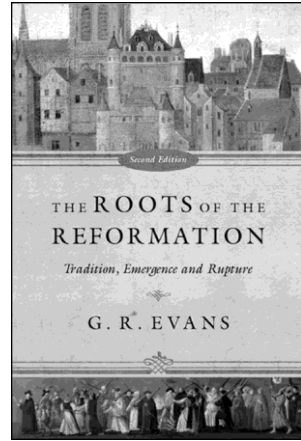
*Reviewed by Jeff Fisher, a Ph.D. candidate at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, IL and adjunct professor of theology at Trinity Christian College in Palos Heights, IL. He is also an ordained minister in the Christian Reformed Church in North America.*



***The Roots of the Reformation: Tradition, Emergence and Rupture*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. G. R. Evans. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2012,**

**480 pp., paper. ISBN 978-0-8308-3996-4**

Many people understand the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century as a movement in the Western church that arose in reaction to certain social and ecclesiastical developments in the preceding century or two. While there certainly were developments in European society, and in the theology and practice of the church, in the latter Middle Ages that were factors in shaping the Reformation, its roots are much deeper. The Reformation dealt with issues with which the church had wrestled right from its birth. (In fact, these issues are still being dealt with by Western Christians today.) It is the concern of G. R. Evans in this fine work to give the reader a broad historical perspective on the causes, concerns and results of this movement for church reform.



The book is divided into three parts. Part 1, “The Bible and the Church” deals with the eight foundational issues which arose early in the church and which resulted in disagreements between the Reformers and the Church of Rome in the sixteenth century.

- 1) “The Idea of Church”: What constitutes the true Church of Christ – an unbroken line of apostolic succession or one whose teaching is in line with that of the apostles? Related issues are the nature of proper church polity (bishops or elders, patriarch or pope) and the grounds for the validity of the preaching and sacraments of a particular church.
- 2) “The Idea of Faith”: Building on the Apostles’ Creed and the Niceo-Constantinopolitan Creed, what were the essentials of the faith and what were merely indifferent matters?
- 3) “Where Was the Bible?”: What books are to be included in the Bible to reflect the conclusion that they were produced by divine inspiration? What was the proper way to interpret the Bible? Were there multiple interpretations for each passage in the Bible (Pope Gregory the Great taught fourfold interpretations), or was there only one way to interpret each one?
- 4) “Becoming and Remaining a Member of the Church”: The issue of the true members of the church arose as a result of the need to catechize children baptized as infants but also to evaluate those who lapsed from the faith under persecution or immorality and wished to be restored to the church.
- 5) “Penance and the Recurring Problem of Sin”: What provided assurance of forgiveness of sins in the Christian life? Was it necessary to confess one’s sins to the priest to receive absolution, confirmed

through penance in this life and in purgatory after death? Or did this undermine the sufficiency of the work of Christ, and did it assume that human works (of penance) had merit?

- 6) “The Eucharist and the Idea of Sacraments”: Were there seven sacraments as the church in the latter Middle Ages came to teach? And what exactly happens at the Lord’s Supper in the words of institution by the minister? What does the congregation eat and drink in communion?
- 7) “Organization, Making Decisions and Keeping Together”: How binding are the decisions of church councils, especially those after the Council of Chalcedon (451)? This question became more pronounced with the great schism of the church between east and west in 1054. What is the relationship between the authority of the pope and of church councils?
- 8) “The Church and the State”: Who wields ultimate authority in spiritual and temporal matters – the church or the state? And which weapons could be used to enforce those authorities?

In Part 2, “Continuity and Change in the Middle Ages”, Evans unfolds five developments in the thought and practices of the church in European society during the centuries preceding the Reformation. These provide the proximate context for its concerns. First, the monasteries grew in prestige and influence, especially as centres of education, though they often fell into corruption due to their growing wealth. Periodic movements of reform attempted to return these communities to their original disciplined ascetic principles. Second, the rise of the universities in the twelfth century was a response to the desire for education for a career in church and society at large. This resulted in a more academic study of theology and of the Bible shaped by the categories of logic and by the desire to study the original sources (*ad fontes*). Third, the period also saw the rise of “evangelical movements”, such as the Waldensians and Albigensians, motivated by the desire to live the simple life of the early Christians and to be guided by the preaching of Scripture. There was a growing interest in preaching evident both in the academic study of rhetoric but also in the founding of the preaching orders of the Dominicans and Franciscans. Fourth, there arose a number of religious movements to heighten people’s spirituality; some of these were focused on the individual life and some involved group associations committed to common causes. Fifth, during these centuries there arose pre-Reformation movements of church reform, such as the Lollards (influenced by Jon Wyclif) and the heirs of John Hus. Although they were suppressed by the church, they had lasting effects.

Part 3, “Continuity and Change from the Reformation”, presents the various streams of the Reformation through the framework of the eight foundational issues of concern which Evans unfolds in Part 1. Evans devotes a chapter to each of the following: The Renaissance, Luther and his heirs, Hen-

ry VIII and the English Reformation, the Anabaptists, and Calvin and his Reformed disciples. The author does an able job of expounding the key concerns of the Reformers: studying Scripture directly in the original languages, recovering the biblical teaching of justification by faith alone, providing lay people with the tools to appropriate the faith for themselves via translations of the Bible and instruction via catechisms, abolishing unbiblical teachings and practices of the late medieval church, clarifying the true church of Christ, and formulating systematic theology, liturgical practice and church polity that conforms to Scripture.

Evans presents an accurate portrait of the twists and turns in the various leaders and movements of church reform. She is generally fair to the various streams of the Reformation and their key leaders. Anabaptists will not be happy that Evans only devotes eight pages to the Anabaptist stream. The lengthy chapter on Calvin and his disciples has some puzzling features: it deals with his doctrine of predestination as if it were his key doctrine; it concludes with considerable material on the Puritans in the New World; and it has eight pages on the Quakers, Amish and Mennonites in the New World (which would be better situated in the chapter on Anabaptists). It seems out of place to have historical material that takes the reader into the eighteenth century.

In Part 3 Evans includes a chapter on the Counter-Reformation, focusing on the Council of Trent. Here again, it is puzzling why she includes a section on the church and Galileo since this takes us into the seventeenth century. There is also a chapter on church and state, reflecting the fact that the formation of new (Protestant) churches required a new understanding of this relationship.

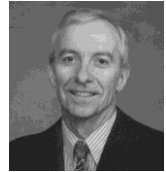
Since the Reformation raised key questions about Scripture, Part 3 concludes with a lengthy chapter on continuing questions about the Bible: What is the relationship between the Divine and human authors? What is the correct way to interpret it? What is the role of tradition and the institutional church in interpretation? How does one determine when interpretations become unacceptable? Evans does two things here that are unfortunate. First, she attributes views on the Bible to the Reformers that they did not hold (for example, that Scripture contradicts itself and that textual variants make it difficult to arrive at the true text of Scripture). Second, she again presents questions about Scripture raised after the sixteenth century, some of which are posed by early Enlightenment figures. This is out of place in a work on the Reformation.

The "Conclusion" ties together the points raised in Part 1 so as to enable the reader to see the continuities and discontinuities of the Reformation with the medieval church. The book ends with a chapter entitled "Handlist of Reformation Concerns and Their History". This is a very valuable guide for the reader to see how the perennial themes (in Part 1) forming the background to the Reformation played themselves out in the actual events of the sixteenth century. Evans presents a helpful overview of the conclusions of

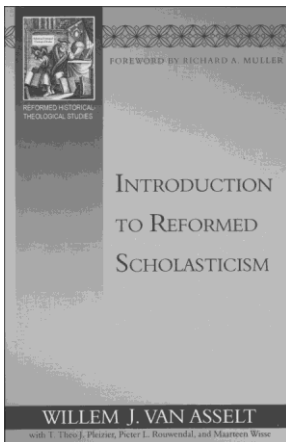
the Reformers concerning these issues and questions. She includes sidebar references to chapters and sections within chapters where the book deals with these topics.

In conclusion, Evans' book is a good presentation of the Reformation through the perspective of the long-standing questions with which the church has wrestled from its beginnings. The concerns I note above are minor and do not detract from the general value of this work. I recommend it for those desiring a deeper and broader understanding of the Reformation.

*Reviewed by Guenther ("Gene") H. Haas. Professor of Religion and Theology, Redeemer University College, Ancaster, Ontario. Dr. Haas is a minister of the Presbyterian Church in America.*



***Introduction to Reformed Scholasticism*. Ed., Willem J. Van Asselt. Reformed Historical-Theological Studies. Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage, 2011, 247 pp., paper. ISBN 976-160178-121-5**



The present volume of essays provides a remedy for a condition – which though widespread among thoughtful Protestants interested in Christian theology in the Reformed tradition – goes largely unacknowledged, and because unacknowledged, unresolved. This condition sometimes shows itself in those who suppose that any detectable divergence from the views of John Calvin in subsequent centuries is a sign of definite decline. Alternately, the condition appears among those who suppose that Reformed theology eventually suffered a hardening of the arteries in the two hundred years after Calvin. On either understanding, only hewing close to Calvin would have staved off

trouble. Both viewpoints are widespread, with especially the first being popular among evangelicals in the Reformed tradition; some can recall the impact made by the volume of 1981, R.T. Kendall's *Calvin and English Calvinism to 1649*, which stirred up that pot. Kendall blamed the Puritans for departing from Calvin in one particular respect, the Christian's assurance of standing in grace.

But I have said that this book of essays is a remedy for a condition. And that condition is the under-developed appreciation that the Reformed theology – which had its beginnings in the careers and writings of Huldreich Zwingli (1484-1531), Martin Bucer (1491-1551) and John Calvin (1509-

1564) –was steadily thereafter an international and regional movement which had many major representatives and took on many distinctive hues. Of course, not all of these hues were deemed legitimate; Arminianism and Amyraldianism were developments of a subversive type. The volume under review traces such regional and chronological developments in Reformed theology from Calvin’s time into the second half of the eighteenth century.

Central to its purpose is the clarifying of the important difference between the terms “scholasticism” and “orthodoxy”. The first has come to have a negative connotation while the second has a generally positive association. The authors of our volume are at pains to impress on us that while “orthodoxy” entailed the formal elaboration of Reformation theology in textbooks and creedal statements in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries (a good and necessary elaboration), “scholasticism” refers not to the content of orthodox theology but to the form of argument used in stating and defending orthodox belief. After Calvin, Reformed theology increasingly employed terminology and categories (but not convictions) borrowed from Aristotle both because of their utility in making a clear argument and because theological opponents (such as the Jesuits) were themselves employing Aristotle in their polemics. The era of orthodox elaboration may be said to have lasted about a century after 1560 and to have encompassed the Reformed creeds and confessions of the seventeenth century. Meanwhile, the use of scholastic method in elaborating orthodoxy endured into the eighteenth century. After that time, new theological methods stressing the right interpretation of ancient texts and the weighing of historical evidence (approaches popular in the Enlightenment) began to prevail among the Reformed.

Now, such distinctions will at first seem dry and pointless to many readers of this review. But what this volume offers us is a virtual “roadmap” indicating the course taken by Reformed theology in Switzerland, Germany, Holland, France and Britain well into the heyday of the Enlightenment of the eighteenth century. Why do we need such a roadmap?

Because, if we prefer (and many do) to read Calvin’s writings above those of all other human authors, we need to have a sense of what happened when Calvin departed from the scene in 1564. In short, whatever primary role he may have filled while among the living was rapidly ceded to other writers such as Bullinger, Beza and Perkins who outlived him. Or, if we prefer to read the Puritan writers of the age of the Westminster Assembly (1643-49) or their Nonconformist successors in the Restoration period (post-1660), we need to be able to “place” such writers in the flow of developing Reformed theology, considered as an international current. The still-revered John Owen (1616-1683) can in this way be viewed as the intellectual contemporary of his Geneva counterpart Francis Turretin (1623-1687) – whose writings played such an important role in Reformed theology in both Britain and North America well into the nineteenth century. The still-consulted commentator Matthew Henry (1662-1714) stood at approximately the same stage of

Reformed theology as did Benedict Pictet (1655-1724), the moderating – but still orthodox – successor of Turretin of Geneva.

In recent times, there have not been such aids available to the one who wanted to grasp the flow of the history of Reformed theology. Some may have consulted the 1965 volume of J. W. Beardslee, *Reformed Dogmatics* (which provided excerpts from major Reformed theologians in the age after Calvin); yet it provided no adequate account of the “flow” of things. Others will have seen the nineteenth-century volume of Herman Heppe, *Reformed Dogmatics Set Out from the Sources* (E.T. 1950); this provided illustrations of the ways in which formulations of different Reformed doctrines were enhanced over time. But neither of these volumes provided an account, a roadmap to explain the change of terrain from the death of Calvin to 1750 – and this has been a very great need.

To accomplish a useful interpretation covering two hundred years in brief compass is a very tall order, and so it is not surprising that this volume has its thin patches. All of the contributors to the volume are Dutch academics interested in the history of Reformed theology; they certainly understand the unfolding of this story in their own country and its immediately neighboring territories. But one cannot say this regarding their attempts at description of the history of Reformed theology in England (John Gill is the only eighteenth-century figure mentioned, excluding such writers as John Edwards, Thomas Ridgley – and especially Phillip Doddridge). And eighteenth-century Scotland hardly fares better, for in addition to Thomas Boston and the Erskine brothers (Ralph and Ebenezer), attention might have been given to John Brown and John Erskine. The University of St. Andrews is twice mislocated in Edinburgh. As for America, there are no more than passing references made to Jonathan Edwards and his successors.

But having noted this shortcoming, I also state the wish that this volume had been available decades ago. It would have saved many from the too-narrowly focused understanding of Calvin or the Puritans so prevalent today, which is more or less the equivalent of being interested in one tree yet not the forest in which it stands. Thank you, Willem Van Asselt and contributors for a fine foundational volume which ought to be digested by all Presbyterian and Reformed theological students and ministers concerned for maintaining a thoughtful Reformed theology today!

*Reviewed by Dr. Kenneth J. Stewart, professor of Theological Studies at Covenant College, Lookout Mountain, Georgia. He is an ordained minister of the Presbyterian Church in America and the author Ten Myths About Calvinism (IVP, 2011)*



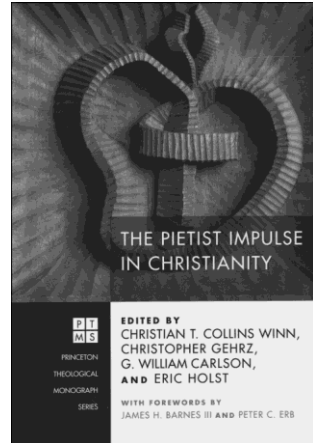


***The Pietist Impulse in Christianity.* Eds., Christian T. Collins Winn, Christopher Gehrz, G. William Carlson, and Eric Holst. Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2011, 340 pp., paper. ISBN 978-1-60608-327-7**

Evangelicals in the Reformed theological tradition are torn in two directions by the subject of Pietism, the European post-Reformation movement beginning within the Lutheran and Reformed families of churches.

On the one hand, there is the recollection that this movement which emphasized personal Bible study and prayer, devotional meetings with like-minded believers, a readiness to distinguish between pastors who were “in earnest” and those who were not, and the advance of world missions through voluntary agencies (earlier than their denominations) was very often a thorn in the side of the churches of the Reformation. Especially in Europe, there were periods when devotional meetings in homes (labeled “conventicles”) were banned by the public authorities, as tending to subvert the structures of state Protestantism. In addition, there has always been the lingering suspicion that the Pietists, who stressed the absolute necessity of inward religious feeling (in distinction from formal ritual), contributed over time to the weakening of doctrinal commitments. Was not Friederich Schleiermacher (1768-1834), the German theologian reckoned to be the father of modern religious liberalism, raised in a pietistic Reformed home? These are the reasons for wariness.

On the other hand, as Pietism has been, in effect, the European term of choice for movements of those same centuries which in the English-speaking world have been called “Puritan” and “Evangelical”, which have emphasized the need for earnest pastors, personal devotion through Scripture and prayer, the necessity of spiritual re-birth, the importance of foreign mission and the need for national spiritual awakening – how can we look askance at those European movements which are, on closer inspection, our own Evangelicalism by another name? If Pietism had on its fringes persons not sufficiently anchored in the Scriptures and too trusting of their own private judgment, has not Evangelicalism faced the same quandary? It has indeed. Therefore, for thoughtful evangelicals in the Reformed tradition, there can be no dismissing of Pietism out of hand. The two movements stood in conscious solidarity; English Puritan authors were devoured in Dutch and German translation. In the eighteenth century, John Wesley personally consulted with German Pietists in Georgia and in Saxony.



Christian T. Collins Winn and his three collaborating editors have done us a great service in editing the proceedings of a kind of “congress” on Pietism held at Bethel University, St. Paul, Minnesota in March 2009. The gathering drew one hundred eager participants and the fruit of it is this volume of twenty-five essays. It is the judgment of this reviewer that this stimulating volume accomplishes four things through these essays, grouped into seven categories.

First, two excellent essays by Roger Olson and Peter Yoder go a considerable distance in showing the extent to which Pietism has been misjudged, both in its original European setting and within North America. In its origin, Pietism was a strand within the churches of the Reformation seeking the advance of holy living, biblical knowledge and a curb on excessive doctrinal wrangling (as if that by itself assured Christian vitality). Olson – himself a somewhat controversial Baptist theologian now at Baylor University, Texas – convincingly shows that the Pietist tradition has been misrepresented on this continent. Yoder, an Iowa graduate student at the time of the congress, rendered the same service regarding Pietism in Europe.

Deserving also of comment is a second grouping of essays (encompassing two of the seven categories), also historical in character, indicating the trajectory of Pietism in the period to 1900. It is here that we begin to see the diversity of views encompassed within the Pietist movement and to grasp how, over time, there would be elements of this evangelical tradition which would serve to call into question the integrity of the movement as a whole. Seventeenth-century Pietist leaders such as Gottfried Arnold and Johann Heinrich Reitz dabbled in alchemy and Rosicrucianism. In the next century, a Pietist such as Johann Salomo Semler, in becoming one of the pioneers of biblical criticism, helped to sow seeds which are still yielding bitter fruit. Pioneering liberal Protestant theologian Schleiermacher (see above) and Christian philosopher Søren Kierkegaard were influential figures, drawn from Pietist stock in the nineteenth century; no one can claim that their Pietist roots set them in an unwaveringly steady course. Their Pietist devotion did not unerringly keep them on an even keel.

A third grouping of essays (sections 5 and 6) explore the ways in which the European Pietist movement, already transplanted to young America in the colonial period through Dutch Reformed and German Lutheran immigration, grew in North America due to waves of immigration from newly-emergent expressions of Pietism within Europe. From Switzerland came evangelical believers who had been awakened in the “Réveil” movement which followed Napoleon’s defeat. From German and Scandinavian regions came evangelical believers who had only very recently begun to stand apart from their state churches. By mid-century, these newer Pietists had begun to make common cause with North American revivalism and the emergent holiness movement. Here we can observe that Pietism had moved well beyond the “church within a church” model practiced by European believers who were solicitous for the

quickenings of their state churches; by mid-nineteenth century, transplanted Pietism had become the seed-bed of the founding of new denominations, which over time had tilted more and more in the direction of Anabaptism – a quite distinctive trajectory of Protestantism.

Fourth, we are treated to a final grouping of essays which have as their theme the contribution of Pietism to the growth of world mission since 1700. In the English-speaking world, we go on speaking of William Carey (1761-1834) as the “father of modern missions”. But on closer inspection, it turns out that Carey was quite fully apprised of the earlier eighteenth-century German Pietist missionaries sent to South India with the backing of the King of Denmark and the German Moravian (Pietist) missionaries sent to the plantations of the Caribbean and the Eskimo peoples of Greenland and Labrador. It is past time for us to pay proper tribute to this movement which was the actual Protestant missionary pace-setter for three quarters of a century before Carey was prompted to attempt a mission to India.

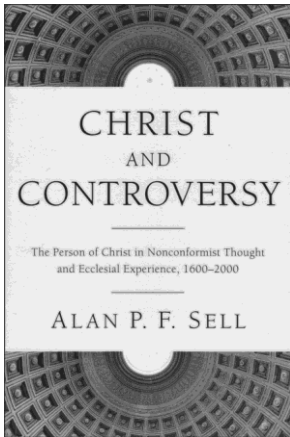
The volume leaves us with a mixture of gratitude (for the great, though under-recognized, contribution that Pietism has made to world Christianity) and concern. Concern is appropriate because Pietism has done its best work when associated with major strands of Reformation Christianity and aiming to bring to fruition seeds of the Reformation (such as the universal priesthood of believers) not fully worked out in the decades following Luther. It was on its surest footing when the doctrinal legacy of the Reformation provided it with its own framework of Christian convictions. The volume begs the question of what is to become of a Pietist stream in Christianity which, when severed by controversy or immigration from European Pietist roots, becomes a virtual stream of world Christianity in and of itself with no clear doctrinal heritage to call its own.

*Reviewed by Kenneth J. Stewart*

***Christ and Controversy: The Person of Christ in Nonconformist Thought and Ecclesial Experience, 1600-2000.* Alan P. F. Sell. Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2011, 217 pp., paper. ISBN 978-1-61097-669-5**

Besides the late Geoffrey Nuttall, Alan P. F. Sell would be one of the most informed scholars on English and Welsh Nonconformity. This book deals with the question, “Who do you say Christ is?” and provides the answer from what the book cover calls “Old Dissent: the Congregationalists, Baptists, Presbyterians and their Unitarian heirs; and the Calvinistic and Arminian Methodist bodies that owe their origin to the Evangelical Revival of the eighteenth century”. Thus this book, though only two hundred seventeen pages, is encyclopedic in scope. How did the author manage to press it all in and yet survey from 1600 to 2000? He tell us in his preface that one way he

did it was by omitting bibliographical and biographical references, since much of this is “readily available [in] dictionaries, yearbooks, and online resources” (p. ix). This has certainly helped to pare down the book’s size. Likewise he does not include the Muggletonians and Sandemanians or any Dissenting groups such as Plymouth Brethren, Pentecostal or Black Churches which have formed since 1800 (p. 1).



Sell asserts, and I believe correctly on the whole, that it was Christological topics which played a very significant place in Nonconformist experience, secession and discussion. This is a fact which is all too often overlooked today in contemporary studies of the Nonconformists historically.

One particular matter which really was a delight to see was that Sell indicates where the Nonconformist leaders (divines) were educated. This is an extremely interesting detail and a very complex one. To try to sort out the various dissenting academies is no small task. Thus I was glad to see that a separate index was given as “Index of Academies, Colleges, and Universities” (pp. 211-213).

The author has arranged his study under nine chapters, the first being introductory. Chapter 2 is “Classical Affirmations and Alternative Stances in the Seventeenth Century”, and then the remainder follow chronologically and also on occasion regionally (England and/or Wales).

One will find some interesting details as one ploughs through the chapters. Page 73 gives the complex details of what happened at Matthew Henry’s Chester Chapel and the Christological and ecclesial partitions there. It can make some contemporary realignments pale in comparison!

The book will serve as a helpful reference more than anything. It clearly highlights the complexity and confusion of Nonconformist thought concerning Christology and the changing ecclesial scene which resulted. Surely Christology should ever concern us. It is a most helpful antidote to the flip-pant polity discussions that one sometimes hears. It will help advance discussions with more care of historical nuance. Likewise, it will also acquaint a new generation with authors, such as P. T. Forsyth, who have been virtually forgotten.

Alan Sell knows his way around his subject. He writes well – but sometimes with opinionated comment not always germane to the subject, although maybe entertaining; see, for example, his comments on hymns (p. 3). For its size and price, this volume will be a helpful reference beside the larger dictionaries in the field. One detraction is that some Nonconformist names do not appear; that may be in part because their role in the Christological controversies was negligible, but even this needs stating. Perhaps the volume

needed another fifty pages.

The author taught at the United Theological College in Aberystwyth until it closed and is now a visiting professor at several posts as well as a prolific writer.

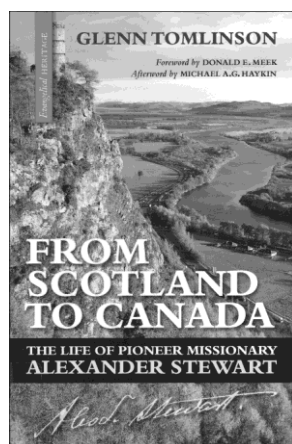
*Reviewed by Jack C. Whytock*

***From Scotland to Canada: The Life of Pioneer Missionary Alexander Stewart.* Glenn Tomlinson. Guelph, ON: Joshua Press, 2008, 331 pp., paper. ISBN 978-1-894400-29-9**

There have been very few recent biographies written about early Baptist ministers to Canada, so Glenn Tomlinson's book is certainly a noted and welcomed work. It is much more than the story of Alexander Stewart (1774-1840), the Baptist minister who came from Perthshire, Scotland to Toronto (York) and ministered in the early days of what would become the noted Jarvis Street Baptist Church. All good biography sets the historical context for the person, and Tomlinson has done this.

The book's foreword is by Professor Donald Meek, and this clearly is a statement that the study helps connect this work with the wider Scottish evangelical and Highland community and its export. Tomlinson sets the context for the first chapter in the revival in Moulin, Perthshire and the influence of Charles Simeon and James Haldane. The Alexander Stewart who came to Canada was converted under the instrumentality of the Rev. Alexander Stewart, the Church of Scotland parish minister in Moulin, Perthshire. This is followed by a chapter on "Alexander Stewart's call to the ministry". He did not prepare for the Church of Scotland ministry but trained for two years in Robert Haldane's theological school. Following this course of studies, Stewart went to mission stations in Kingussie, Avoch, and Elgin, ministering in basically "congregational" chapels. The years 1807-1808 were critical times for the Haldanes and the "Congregationalists" so this biography takes us through a period of very significant history, particularly in Highland Scotland and hence with Highland immigrants. Robert Haldane was immersed in 1808 and three months later so was Alexander Stewart. The result was that "Congregational" and "Baptist" churches more clearly emerged in Scotland.

Alexander Stewart now turned to Perth as a Baptist elder to minister there and did so from 1808 to 1818. While there, he was also involved in itinerant work, chiefly in the Highlands but not exclusively (p. 81) as he preached many times in the Lowlands. Tomlinson sees this itinerant work of Stewart



as paving the way in part for the Stewart family going to Lower Canada in 1818, then latterly to Upper Canada. It is with the arrival of Alexander Stewart here that the beginnings of the first Baptist church in York can be traced. (Previously it appears to have been thought that the first Baptist church was founded by runaway slaves in 1826 [p. 17].) Unfortunately this new Baptist church was short-lived and “closed” in 1820. Church history is always good to read for all church-planters in any time period. Finance of course was an issue, as was division over baptism – was the baptism done in Scotland valid even if by immersion if the person was not regenerate? Should they be “re-baptized”? Discerning readers will no doubt stop here and reflect.

Stewart’s family together with others went to the woods in the new territory of the township of Esquesing and the new village of Norval. Stewart sought and did obtain a land grant so that he could support his family and at the same time preach. He started preaching in Norval and then other itinerant work followed in adjacent townships. (Many Canadians today think more of Norval, Ontario and Lucy Maud Montgomery’s ten-year residence there than of early colonial Baptist history!) In 1826 the Stewarts returned to York and re-established the Baptist work there. Things did go well for a time – the congregation grew, a building was constructed, Rev. Stewart worked with the Bible Society – but then division struck once again. The author does his best to give a rational answer as to why the division occurred. In part division of Scotch Baptists with Campbellism, personality issues and demographic changes all combined to bring about this disunity.

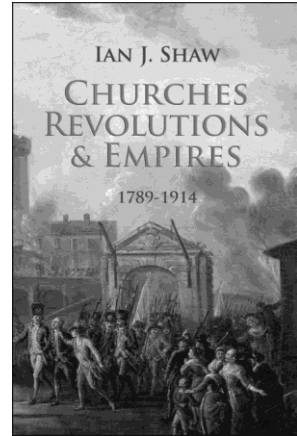
The author has combed many primary sources. He has subsequently furnished several fascinating appendices: “Roll of members, Perth [Scotland] Baptist church, 1812-1815”, “Roll of members, York Baptist church, 1818-1820”, Petition for land grants, “A sermon on baptism, by Alexander Stewart”, “Hymns written by Alexander Stewart”, “Roll of members, York Baptist church, 1827-1840”, “The York Auxiliary Bible Society”, and “Marriage Register”. An interesting biographical glossary has been included before the bibliography.

The book has an attractive cover, good maps and a few suitable illustrations. It is a most fascinating read and makes a valuable contribution to Scottish and Canadian evangelical history studies. The chapters are chronological and not too long, nor are they too encumbered with footnotes to discourage the reader who may want to read a more popular work; the work is both academically sound and popular. A fine contribution to an insufficiently mined area of biography and church history by a sympathetic pastor in Sarnia, Ontario.

*Reviewed by Jack C. Whytock*

***Churches, Revolutions, and Empires: 1789-1914.* Ian J. Shaw. Fearn, Ross-shire: Christian Focus, 2012, 576 pp., hc. ISBN 978-1-84550-774-9**

Ian Shaw, Ph.D., is currently the director of the Langham Scholarship programme in the UK and previously served as a lecturer in church history at International Christian College, Glasgow. His most recent work, *Churches, Revolutions, and Empires: 1789-1914*, has received recommendations from such well known church historians as Carl Trueman and Mark Noll. As a professor of church history, I am always looking for new resources for my classes. I whole heartedly agree with their summations, which commend Shaw's work for its clear, concise and informative account of the changes and influences found within Christianity during the early modern period.



All too often, church history books focus on the names, dates of people, and events from the past. Shaw's work is refreshing, providing keen insights and answers to pertinent questions – questions like: why did the American concept of democracy and personal freedom harmonize with free-will theology, signaling a departure from its Calvinistic roots? In what ways did France's Revolution contribute to its national atheistic ethos? How did Britain's religious moderatism insulate the nation from political upheaval yet foster the social gospel? In addition to these questions, the book explores changes in the mission field during the nineteenth century – changes based on efforts to harmonize the gospel with colonialism and Western political ideals. His chapter on theological revolutions in Germany tracks the steps of philosophical impacts on growing doctrinal liberalism. In the wake of the American Revolution, the author reveals how the religious sentiments of the pioneers became increasingly attracted to emotionalism. Even today's continuing creation debate is illuminated in Shaw's work as he documents how many in the church embraced religious emotionalism or existentialism, retreating from developing reasoned apologetic responses to Darwinian evolution.

What makes Shaw's work even more valuable is that each chapter is independent, presenting clear dossiers of some of the most dramatic periods of change in Western Christianity. This feature fosters flexibility, allowing the reader to identify and investigate a single subject. Even though the chapters stand alone, the work can still be read cover to cover because of its logical flow. From the perspective of Christian education, Shaw's book would work best in a focused study of nineteenth-century Western Christianity, as one might find at seminary. But this is not to say that the work is overly tech-

nical; one should not consider this to be a purely academic endeavor. Shaw's writing is readable, and the subject matter is relevant – so relevant that teachers, students, pastors and laity who have an interest in studying this period of church history will find his work edifying.

Shaw's goal is to inform the reader of the unintended consequences of secular, political and scientific influences on the church in general and the Reformed faith in particular. His work serves as a compendium to the broader subject of church history during the nineteenth century, focusing on what the author says are "some of the most profound challenges since the time of the apostles" (p. ix).

Those who read this book will have a better understanding of history's influences on their religious presuppositions, an awareness that will enable them to sift out that which is not biblical. Ian Shaw has provided the church with an important resource to assist in combating theological liberalism and secular intrusion, both of which have contributed to a departure from the tenants of the Reformed faith. These are serious issues for today, not just historical truisms. As has been said by many a historian, people should know their history, else they are doomed to repeat its mistakes. The origins of the issues Shaw presents in his book should be understood by Christians as they will help to strengthen the church for tomorrow.

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***Presbyterian and Reformed Churches: A Global History.* James E. McGoldrick. Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage, 2012, 566 pp., hc. ISBN 978-1-60178-162-8**

The stated objective of this comprehensive history of Presbyterian and Reformed churches is to revise and update a standard textbook on the subject, *History of the Presbyterian Churches of the World* by Richard Clark Reed published in 1905. Each chapter focuses on one or more countries, starting with Geneva and ending with the Cook Islands; the account also progresses chronologically from the Reformation to the end of the twentieth century. In between is a fascinating story of gospel advance. While it is not easy reading, being dense with facts, dates and mini biographies, it is immensely informative. The record is occasionally distressing, more often inspiring as it portrays the progress of Reformed teaching and the origins of the many strands that make up a complete picture of the Presbyterian and Reformed scene worldwide today.



The untangling of the complex history of post Reformation schism and secession – whether in Scotland, Ireland, the USA or more recently, Korea – is one of the chief merits of the book. Anomalies are also elucidated, such as why a few Unitarian churches in Northern Ireland call themselves Presbyterian. In general, relevant background historical knowledge is provided in simplified form, though a surprising omission is any discussion of the troubles in Northern Ireland. Offence is more likely to be caused, however, by calling Eire, Erie (pp. 164 and 169).

The book, as one might expect, reflects an American approach, particularly in its allocation of space. Canadians will be disappointed that less than six pages are allotted to Presbyterian and Reformed churches north of the border, in contrast to eight chapters on the churches in the USA. While in general showing a good understanding of Canadian church history, it should also be noted that it is not accurate to say that Presbyterians going into the United Church in 1925 “kept control of all the denomination’s colleges” (p. 274).

Among the most interesting sections of the book are the chapters detailing missionary work during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Here, as throughout, distinction is made between those adhering to strict Calvinist theology and those affected by liberalism and ecumenical tendencies.

Though this book has immense value, the reader should be aware that not all factual material included in it has been properly verified. It raises some questions as to whether the volume was properly peer reviewed for accuracy. It could serve as a helpful reference work but not as a last authority. This appears especially to be the case with many of the missions histories. For example, in Kenya the Reformed Church of East Africa is stated as being a member of “the fundamentalist International Council of Christian Churches. Its candidates for the ministry study at Faith College of the Bible and Mwingi Bible School” (p. 417). The work’s scope is immense and with that comes a real challenge for accuracy.

A book of this length and complexity is a remarkable achievement. As stated at the beginning, it cannot cover everything, but each chapter is followed by a helpful list of books for further reading. While a survey of this kind will be of most value to students in conservative and Reformed seminaries particularly in the USA, it will also be a useful addition to any church library. The general reader will gain an overall understanding of the history of Reformed and Presbyterian churches and will find many questions answered and some issues clarified.

*Reviewed by Judy A. MacLeod, a retired secondary school history teacher who lives in Brighton, Ontario. Judy also taught at Tyndale University College and was involved in Lausanne III, which met in Cape Town in 2010.*



## Applied Theology

***The Biblical Counseling Movement: History and Context.* David Powlison. Greensboro, NC: New Growth Press, 2010, 331 pp., paper. ISBN 978-1-935273-13-4**

David Powlison has emerged as a leader (perhaps the leader) of the “second generation” of biblical counselors (see review of *The Biblical Counseling Movement After Adams*, pp. 107). His history of the movement originated as a 1996 Ph.D. dissertation with the title “Competent to Counsel?: The History of a Conservative Protestant Anti-Psychiatry Movement”. In the preface to this revised edition, the author explains the change of title:

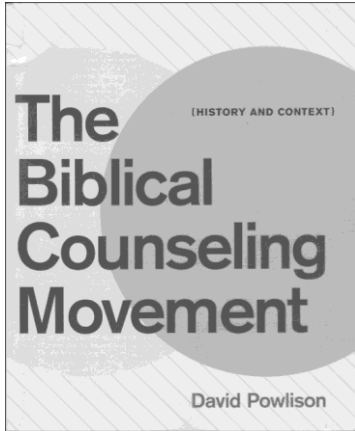
What communicated well to professional historians too easily miscommunicates to counseling practitioners trying to sort out the history of a movement in which they are actively engaged or about which they are curious. “Anti-psychiatry” tends to be read as a defining characteristic of the biblical counseling movement, as if negative rhetoric of attack is the leading edge. But as both the dissertation and a reading of relevant literature make clear, the biblical counseling movement has never been “anti-psychiatry” in the way the adjective tends to be heard by non-historians. Negative rhetoric appears on occasion (see chap. 7), but the movement essentially voiced a positive and practical intention: to enrich the practical theology and ministry of the church of Jesus Christ (for example, see chaps. 4-6). Regarding psychiatry, it has tried to define how a properly reconfigured psychiatric profession would go about the medical business, without trespassing in the work of theology and the church. Chapters 1 and 6 of the dissertation (and the citations therein) orient the reader to this question. (pp. xi-xii)

The present edition also contains some helpful appendices not present in the original.

Powlison traces the history of the movement until almost the close of the twentieth century. He provides some useful background on the influences of Adams’ early life leading up to his development of nouthetic counseling (from the Greek *noutheteo*, to admonish, based on the idea that the role of the counselor is to confront the counselee with his or her sin as the starting point

of healing through repentance and obedience to Scripture). Born on January 30, 1929 into a non-religious family, Adams was converted as a teenager when a neighborhood friend initiated a street-corner discussion on the truthfulness of the Bible. This led Adams to read the New Testament for himself and over a period of two months he came to “understand and believe the gospel”. His conversion, comments Powli

son, was “apparently unmediated by social or emotional inducements; the Word of God had spoken and the human creature had believed. The unadorned biblicism of this conversion established a characteristic theme; the way Adams himself had changed would reappear in the emphases he would bring to the tasks of counseling twenty years later” (p. 29).



Adams began attending a conservative Presbyterian church and through the pastor’s influence decided to attend Reformed Episcopal Seminary in Philadelphia. There he came under the influence of Robert Rudolph, the head of the systematic theology department. Rudolph was “noted for his zeal for conservative Protestant orthodoxy, the adversarial atmosphere of his classroom, and

his passionate conviction that true believers needed to separate from error rather than engage in cool discussion” (p. 29).

Powlison further develops Adams’ personal history, noting particularly the influence of O. Hobart Mowrer, a psychologist who in the early 1960s “had begun to challenge Freudian theory, to describe people as morally responsible, and to call troubled and troublesome behaviour ‘sin’” (p. 35). Attendance at one of Mowrer’s lectures led to Adams’ interning with him for a six week period which “proved to be a dramatic turning point” (p. 35). (An example of Adams’ later adaptation of Mowrer’s concepts into biblical ones was the way in which he would often speak and write of the process of “putting off” sin and “putting on” obedience (cf. Ephes. 4:22-24), using Mowrer’s language of “dehabitation and “rehabitation”).

Another influence, not fully developed here by Powlison, was Cornelius Van Til’s presuppositional apologetic method. Nouthetic counseling can be understood as an attempt to apply Van Til’s methodology to counseling theory and practice (cf. John Frame. *Cornelius Van Til: An Analysis of His Thought*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 1995, p. 394.) Powlison does note (p. 171) that Adam’s critics accused him of minimizing Van Til’s emphasis on common grace. Certainly, Adams has stressed the “antithetical” side of Van Til’s teaching more than he has the more positive doctrine of common grace.

At the time of Adams’ 1966 full-time appointment at Westminster Seminary in Philadelphia, he and his family attended a church pastored by John Bettler, who became the first pastor to train under Adams and later became a

colleague “second only to Adams in influence upon the nouthetic counseling ministry” (p. 39). There were, however, significant differences between the two men.

Bettler’s interest in and respect for scholarship and higher education was as habitual as Adams’s interest and respect for local church pastors. Bettler worked to open doors for women to train and to counsel; Adams worked to establish a male-dominated model of counseling training and practice. Bettler had been raised fundamentalist and reacted against it, coming to embrace a version of Reformed theology with a broad vision for social and intellectual engagement; he enjoyed the stimulus of dialogue with intellectuals to his “left” who differed from him. Adams reacted strongly against those to his left theologically and ecclesiastically and was comfortable with pastors from separatist traditions. (p. 40)

Adams was by far the more dominant influence in the early days of nouthetic counseling, but Bettler’s influence can be seen more clearly in the “second generation” of biblical counselors, who prefer the more general term “biblical” to “nouthetic” with its confrontational connotations.

Powlison notes of the early days that:

The movement was a hybrid, combining intellectual and practical features of both the Reformed tradition and the fundamentalist tradition. It hatched within Reformed circles, but found its widest reception in fundamentalist audiences. Adams himself combined Reformed commitments with certain fundamentalist tendencies that made him acceptable to some moderate fundamentalists. (p. 12)

Nouthetic counseling also found a home in, among others, “the milder sorts of charismatics and Assembly of God Pentecostals” (p. 12). The movement spread rapidly throughout the seventies, mainly due to the popularity of *Competent to Counsel* (1970). A major development, among others, was the spread of nouthetic principles initially through the armed forces and then in the National Association of Evangelicals due to the influence of John Broger, who at the time was Director of Information for the Armed Forces. Broger, an evangelical layman of Brethren background, adapted Adams’ material into a self-confrontation manual, originally self-published and later picked up by Thomas Nelson (1994). Broger also founded the Biblical Counseling Foundation in 1977, following his retirement from government service. Broger’s interest in lay-counseling picked up on a secondary theme in Adams but also led to some tension with Adams’ dominant theme that pastors should be the counselors.

The movement stagnated in the eighties as the evangelical psychotherapeutic “counterinsurgency” responded and claimed the position of authority among evangelicals. This included the popular Minrith-Meier clinics, books

and radio shows, the New Life Treatment Centers (owned by Steve Arterburn) and Rapha, founded by Southern Baptist psychotherapist Robert McGee. Meanwhile, books by theoreticians and practitioners like Larry Crabb, Gary Collins, David Benner, Stanton Jones, and publications like the *Journal of Psychology and Psychiatry* criticized Adams with varying degrees of hostility. The popular pastors' journal *Leadership* eclipsed Adams' *Journal of Pastoral Practice* and sided with the psychotherapists. James Dobson's Focus on the Family organization mushroomed in popularity and the Recovery Movement, adapting the 12-step program of Alcoholics Anonymous to every conceivable disorder, found its way into evangelical churches in a Christianized version. Meanwhile attendance at the conferences of the National Association of Nouthetic Counselors (NANC, founded in 1976) stagnated and subscriptions to Adams' journal dropped.

The early nineties saw the development of another Christian alternative when Gary Collins was invited to "remake a tiny, languishing association, the American Association of Christian Counselors (AACC)" (p. 204), and he began publishing *The Christian Counselor* in 1992. By 1995 "the AACC had rocketed past 17,000 members" (p. 205). Meanwhile, however, leading evangelicals like Os Guinness and David Wells were expressing serious reservations about the direction of evangelical psychotherapy. Larry Crabb in a 1995 *Christianity Today* interview repudiated the "three-sided model that therapists are qualified to treat psychological problems, pastors spiritual problems, and doctors physical ones." He "called instead for 'shepherding' and 'eldering' relationships in local church communities to replace the anti-septic world of a private-practice therapist" (p. 222). (It should, however, be pointed out that Crabb, in a subsequent "letter to the editor," clarified that he had not intended to debunk the role of Christian psychotherapy and that portraying him as anti-psychology badly misrepresented his position, placing him in company where he did not belong.)

Attendance at the NANC conferences began to climb again; the renamed *Journal of Biblical Counseling* grew from 450 to 2500 subscriptions between 1992 and 1995. Well-known preacher and author John MacArthur became committed to nouthetic counseling after his Grace Community Church in California had been "radicalized" by a court case in which the church was sued for failing to refer to a psychiatrist a young man who committed suicide while being counseled at the church. MacArthur developed a program at The Master's College and Seminary organized by Adams' associate Bob Smith and then headed by another associate, Wayne Mack. MacArthur's *Our Sufficiency in Christ* (1991) included an argument for the sufficiency of Scripture in counseling. Trinity Theological Seminary in Newburgh, Indiana, a rapidly growing institution offering programs by extension, hired NANC's former director, Howard Eyrich, to head up its counseling program. Another significant development has been the Institute of Christian Conciliation by Ken Sande, a lawyer and author of *The Peacemaker* (1991). All in all, nouthet-

ic/biblical counseling appears to have experienced a renaissance at the close of the twentieth century.

A persistent criticism of Adams is that his “approach to counseling is more a reflection of his personality than anything else. He tends to be a somewhat confrontational type guy, and he’s a confrontational counselor” (Gary Collins quoted on p. 186; cf. “Door Interview: Dr Gary Collins.” *The Wittenberg Door* 47. February-March, 1979, p. 13. 1979, 13.) The implication that Adams lacks psychological training and expertise is one which several other critics have made. Powlison makes reference to several of them. He then observes that (according to the critics) Adams’ alleged “ignorance and unfairness” relative to the major theorists “arose from an identifiable source. He was indebted to Mowrer far more profoundly than he acknowledged.” Adams might “disclaim Mowrer’s influence as nothing more than clearing the ground of Freudian influences”. Yet, “to critics who read Mowrer and Adams side-by-side, it was evident that the entire structure of (his) theory was Mowrerian” (p. 185). Although Adams has repeatedly and vehemently denied being a disciple of Mowrer, some critics see this as evidence that he is in fact a crypto-disciple; he “brings secular principles through the back door” (p. 185; cf. “Door Interview: Dr. Gary Collins,” p. 13).

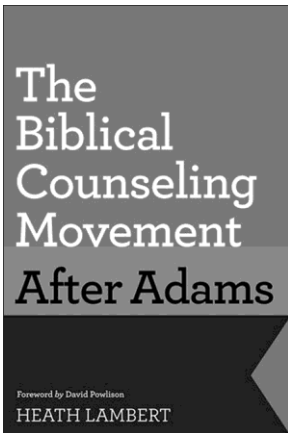
Powlison documents these and other criticisms of Adams, while in some cases offering Adams’ rebuttals and evidencing throughout his appreciation of Adams’ pioneering work in the development of biblical counseling. Although Adams continues to write and speak of “nouthetic” counseling, Powlison’s balanced and thoughtful approach, more reminiscent of Bettler than Adams, indicates the direction that he and others are taking at least one significant part of what is now better known as the biblical counseling movement.

*Reviewed by J. Cameron Fraser*

***The Biblical Counseling Movement After Adams.* Heath Lambert. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012, 220 pp., paper. ISBN 978-1-4335-2813-2**

Heath Lambert is assistant professor of biblical counseling and associate dean of applied studies at Boyce College of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. He also serves as pastor of biblical living at Crossing Church in Louisville, Kentucky. His book originated as a Ph.D. dissertation, with David Powlison as supervisor of the doctoral committee. Not surprisingly, Lambert evidences considerable dependence on Powlison, whom he recognizes as leader of the “second generation” of biblical counselors. Powlison provides a lengthy foreword.

The book is dedicated in part to Jay Adams, “who reawakened generations to the sufficiency of Scripture”. Lambert states that his goal is “to honor Dr. Adams by carefully considering his work and the context in which he built it and by highlighting the efforts of men labouring in the tradition he began, to improve on the good work he started” (p. 47). In the first chapter, after providing personal background on his own interest in counseling as a means of doing ministry well, Lambert notes the example of the Puritans and those who followed in their tradition. The last work before Adams’ 1970 book, *Competent to Counsel*, to offer uniquely biblical insights into helping



people with their problems was *A Pastor's Sketches*, published in the 1850s by Ichabod Spenser. For more than a century between these two, Christians “neglected a robustly biblical approach to counseling” (p. 26). Lambert offers nine reasons for this, including the rise of revivalism in the 1700s and the Fundamentalist Controversy of the early twentieth century. These movements had other priorities than biblical and pastoral counseling. The psychological revolution pioneered by Wilhelm Wundt (the father of experimental psychology) and Sigmund Freud (the father of psychoanalysis) are also mentioned briefly. These and other factors contributed to a theological neglect of the counsel-

ing endeavour which Jay Adams sought to address in his landmark book *Competent to Counsel* and in the numerous other volumes that followed.

Adams “argues against the existence of inorganic mental illness and against psychiatrists as ‘separate practitioners’”. While he has also had strong disagreements with those practicing psychotherapy,

. . . it would be going too far to say that Adams believed psychological science had no role to play. . . . When psychology stayed on its own turf and dealt with organic issues, Adams believed it could be helpful and beneficial. What Adams ferociously objected to, however, was the atheistic worldview of psychology as well as his perception that psychologists were meddling in the domain of the Christian ministry. (pp. 38-39)

In Adams’ system,

God is the fundamental reality, sin is the fundamental problem, and redemption in Christ is the fundamental solution. Therefore, the Christian minister operating in the context of the local church is called to the task of helping people with their problems, of mediating God’s truth to people, and of walking alongside them in the struggle to put off sin and put on obedience. (p. 43)

This laid the groundwork for what Adams continues to call “nouthetic counseling” and the “second generation” mainly speaks of simply as “biblical counseling”. Lambert notes:

Biblical counselors have advanced the theological reflection of Adams about how to do ministry in two important ways. (1) They have brought about great development in an understanding of how to do ministry to people who are suffering as well as to people who are sinning. . . . (2) More contemporary biblical counselors have developed the movement with regard to motivational issues . . . the issue of why people do the things they do. (p. 45)

While Adams has vehemently denied that he is a “biblical behaviourist”, it is undeniable that he has dealt primarily with observable behaviour rather than the underlying motivational issues of the heart.

The main part of Lambert’s book is largely taken up with discussion of the two major developments noted above. The one area where there has been no significant development has been in the commitment to the sufficiency of Scripture. Interacting with a book by Eric Johnson that argues for a contrary understanding, Lambert notes:

Of course, there may be differences of emphasis, tone, and application, but all the people Johnson cites in his book, upon more careful examination, hold the same basic position on Scripture and the relevance of outside information for the counseling task. (p. 136)

One major development in terms of understanding motivational issues has been the concept of “idols of the heart” utilized by Powlison and others. In her book of that name, *Idols of the Heart*, Elyse Fitzpatrick says,

Idols aren’t just stone statues. No, idols are the thoughts, desires, longings, and expectations that we worship in place of the true God. Idols cause us to ignore the true God in search of what we think we need.<sup>1</sup>

This is one area where Lambert sees a need for further development and he devotes a chapter to this. Following a brief survey of idolatry in the Old and New Testaments, Lambert argues:

The main problem sinful people have is not idols of the heart per se. The main problem certainly involves idols and is rooted in the heart, but the idols are manifestations of the deeper problem. The heart-problem is self-exaltation, and idols are two or three steps removed. . . . Even though idols change from culture to culture and

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<sup>1</sup> Lambert, 78; cf. Elyse Fitzpatrick, *Idols of the Heart* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2001), 23.



from individual to individual within a culture, the fundamental problem of humanity has not changed since Genesis 3: sinful people want – more than anything in the world – to be like God. (p. 148)

Citing Powlison's article "Idols of the Heart and 'Vanity Fair'", Lambert observes that Powlison seems to recognize a need for development along the lines he (Lambert) offers. Lambert continues,

No movement has "arrived" and therefore should always be mindful of the need to be ever reforming. . . . The motivational distinction being made here between specific idols and the sinful self-exalting heart is in many ways subtle, but the distinction has great practical relevance for counseling, which is seen in at least seven ways. (p. 150)

These seven ways are: a better understanding of pride, people, sin, and repentance; compassionate counseling; protection against "idol hunts" and against introspection.

Following a final chapter, "Conclusion: Increasingly Competent to Counsel", the book includes an appendix by Jay Adams in which he responds to criticisms of his view of "flesh" made by Edward Welch in an article "How Theology Shapes Ministry: Jay Adams View of the Flesh and an Alternative".<sup>2</sup>

Besides Powlison, those Lambert cites as representatives of the "second generation" of biblical counseling include Edward Welch, George M. Schwab, Tedd Tripp, Paul David Tripp and Elyse Fitzpatrick. Wayne Mack (a contemporary of Adams) is a "first generation" nouthetic counselor, yet several of his emphases also fit with the "second generation". Lambert gives insufficient recognition (with two references) to John Bettler, co-founder with Adams of the Christian Counseling and Educational Foundation and its Executive Director for over thirty years. Bettler was from the start more nuanced about counseling methodology and the value of psychological insights. As Lambert does recognize (p. 104), Bettler sought to be a bridge builder between Adams and his critics in the growing (non-nouthetic) Christian counseling movement, which has generally been more sympathetic to the integration of Scripture and psychology in counseling methodology. Bettler's influence on the "second generation" of biblical counselors should not be overlooked.

Overall, this book is a perceptive introduction to developments in the biblical counseling movement as well as a helpful contribution to the further development of biblically based counseling concepts.

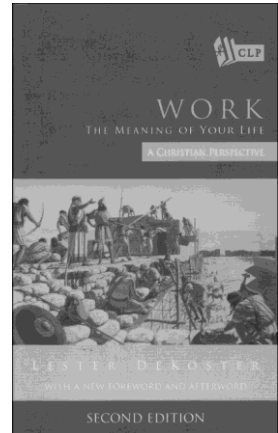
*Reviewed by J. Cameron Fraser*

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<sup>2</sup> *Journal of Biblical Counseling* 20, no. 3 [2002]: 16-25.

***Work: The Meaning of Your Life, A Christian Perspective, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.* Lester DeKoster. Grand Rapids: Christian's Library Press, 2010, 75 pp., paper. ISBN 978-1-880595-72-5**

Work – we spend a large portion of our lives engaged in it. It was part of God's design for man from before the fall, but do we have a well thought out, biblically based, God glorifying theology of work? One need only look historically back to the Reformation to see that a rediscovery of the doctrines of grace, the supremacy of the Word of God and of the Gospel itself left its mark on almost every aspect of life, including how people thought of work. Even paintings of the time moved from almost exclusively religious themes to one that celebrated the God-glorifying calling of ordinary occupations.



Lester DeKoster (1916-2009), who was director of the Calvin College and Seminary Library, gives us a brief (seventy-one pages) but compelling look at how we ought to approach work, not as a result of the Fall but something ordained for us to reflect who we are as those created in the image of the One Who Himself works and creates. Stephen Grabill, in the forward, outlines the main arguments DeKoster gives as to why work is meaningful. First, it is useful to others. Secondly, it is something that God has appointed to weave civilizations together. And thirdly, it “sculpts the kind of self we are becoming through the choices we make in the handling of our talents on the job” (p. x).

DeKoster's main argument is drawn from the words of Paul in Colossians 3:23, “Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ.” This means that all of life and principally our work is an arena where we can bring glory to God and serve our fellow man. He calls us to think broadly about life and to recover a creational view of living before the face of God.

These ideas DeKoster expands upon throughout the book. He asks in the first chapter “Why does work give meaning to life?” He answers:

First, God himself chooses to be served through the work that serves others and therefore molds working into a culture to provide workers with even better means of service. Second, God has so made us that through working we actually sculpt the kind of selves we are becoming, in time and for eternity. (p. 9)

DeKoster shows that work has nobility because we not only reflect our

Maker but serve our Maker. He emphasizes this through the words of Jesus in Matthew 25:31-46, where among other things Jesus says, “Truly, I say to you, as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.” In other words, God is served as we serve the needs of others through what we ourselves have produced through work.

The author points out that we are also sculpting our own selves at work through the choices we make. He says, “Indeed, that self is in fact by far the most important product we produce in the life and time granted us by divine grace” (p. 22).

But like all things we do for the glory of God there are challenges, and indeed, crosses that have to be born. He writes,

What are those wounds suffered on the job, and often carried home besides, but crosses laid upon our shoulders! Indifference? Being taken for granted? No bouquets, ever? . . . An endless round of drudgery? A cruel and demanding public? . . . How well workers know what surrendering life’s glitter to the gloom of the workplace means! (pp. 36-37)

He says further, “Work can be cross bearing, self-denying, and life-sacrificing; because work is following the Lord in ways of service, be that in ways hidden to all but God alone or at an envied occupation demanding sacrifices only the doer can know” (p. 37).

In fact DeKoster devotes several chapters to this idea of work as not only bringing glory to God and service to others but work as cross bearing in a world still heavily influenced by the Fall. This is an appropriate emphasis given how we so often struggle in this regard in finding work meaningful when it can be such a burden.

Though originally written in 1982, some of the items are still very fresh, including how we as workers are to respond to the advent of technologies that threaten to make workers redundant. Are we to reject them? Insightfully, DeKoster challenges us here asserting technology ought not to be viewed as an enemy. He says,

Well, what would your life, and that of the civilized world, be like if technology and its marvelous creations were abandoned? Work would slip from its civilized to its primitive forms, and we all would fall back into barbarism. . . . Technology has revolutionized civilization, and it promises untold achievements ahead. The work that serves it weaves the fabric of culture. (pp. 43-44)

He goes on to say, “. . . the cotton mills did once destroy the home-knitting industries – and then proceeded to clothe the world! Home industries would never have done that!” (p. 45).

So, technologies then are to be embraced as the provisions of God's common grace, while at the same time man has to know how to harness them responsibly to fit within the framework of the principles he has outlined.

In summary DeKoster says, "Our individual discipleship, our church communities, and our witness to society at large must recover a holistic theology of stewardship and calling. We must integrate our model of discipleship with the call to cultivate the world" (p. 64).

I have two words of caution about this book. First, throughout the author maintains that work is the meaning of our lives. My questions are: "What if, like many, one is unable to work and contribute in a concrete way to culture? Is one's life still meaningful? Is God 'glorified and enjoyed' without work and productivity?" This is an area that he never qualifies at all, and I felt that he should have.

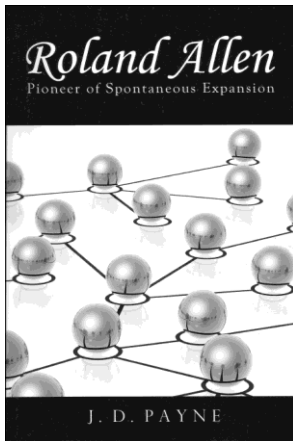
Second, DeKoster only very briefly qualifies his definition of having a meaningful life before God through work. He notes that work doesn't justify us before God but only the finished work of Christ does, and then from our faith in Christ we build our lives around work. However, he does this in all of fourteen lines. I think, given the inclination of man toward works righteousness, this topic needs to be given more attention.

Over all, this is a very satisfying and rewarding read; it is good to see this new second edition that will prolong the life of a worthy book. To be "reformational" in our theology and life, we do need a robust theology of work, and to allow people to see that their vocations are where they are to live out God's calling in the world, despite all its attendant problems, is commendable and encouraging. Even in work, as DeKoster says, there are crosses we bear in trying to live for the glory of God.

*Reviewed by Kent Compton*

***Roland Allen: Pioneer of Spontaneous Expansion.* J. D. Payne. J.D. Payne, 2012, 131 pp., paper. ISBN 978-1475123890**

The year 2012 marked the one-hundredth anniversary of the publication of Roland Allen's classic work, *Missionary Methods: St. Paul's or Ours?* Throughout the century-long existence of this book, countless Christians have been challenged and influenced by the missiological principles it contains. In light of this profound influence and in honor of the anniversary, J. D. Payne, associate professor at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, published a book *Roland Allen: Pioneer of Spontaneous Expansion*. Payne's 2001 Ph.D. dissertation on Allen makes him eminently qualified to write on the subject. This anniversary book is an attempt to provide a brief account of Allen's life followed by a summary of his teachings, from all of his writings, concerning missionary methods.



In order to first establish a definition of the term “spontaneous expansion” (as found in the title of Payne’s book), a brief introduction is provided that explains the biblical and theological underpinnings that support this term: the way of Christ, the apostolic approach, ecclesiology and pneumatology. However, Payne notes with caution that Allen did not leave behind a concise theology of missions and clarifies, “Though I have attempted to compartmentalize what I believe to be the four foundations on which Allen’s theology resided, the reader must understand that these four components permeated all of Allen’s thought” (p. 8). These four strands are then considered as four

different chapters later in the book.

After laying this introductory groundwork, Payne then provides an overview of Roland Allen’s life in chapter 1. This biographical sketch is important as it allows the reader to understand the providential opportunities Allen had to view the church in various parts of the globe. From England to China to Canada to Kenya, Allen was privileged to witness the progress of the gospel and analyze the methods that may have been either aiding or hindering spontaneous expansion.

Following this brief biographical sketch, Payne then attempts to organize Allen’s major teachings by devoting one chapter each to the following ten topics: the way of Christ, the apostolic approach, ecclesiology, pneumatology, the place of the missionary, devolution, missionary faith, leadership development, voluntary clergy and non-professional missionaries. There are ample quotes provided from Allen’s writings which give the reader a sense that Payne has digested the material well and has organized Allen’s teachings in such a way that readers can easily get an overview of his missiology. Furthermore, Payne provides diagrams of some of Allen’s key concepts; these are useful for comprehension but could also be used for teaching and discussion.

Payne includes a caution to any who would take up the writings of Roland Allen: “Once a person decides to walk the path with Roland Allen, he or she will likely experience a growing restlessness against the status quo. Gone will be the days when ministry and missions are approached with a lackadaisical attitude. The hunger for gospel advancement may take the place of business-as-usual” (p. 1). How true. Yet the author, far from trying to discourage the reading of Allen, provides a bibliography of Allen’s writings and a second bibliography of works written about Allen. The inclusion of these resources makes the book all the more valuable.

Through his book, *Roland Allen: Pioneer of Spontaneous Expansion*, J. D. Payne has given the present generation a challenge to consider the profound thoughts of Roland Allen concerning missionary methods. It is unfor-

tunate that the book was self-published as more editing would have made for a cleaner text. However, those who would take up the challenge will find this book a solid introduction to Allen and a fitting tribute to this brother who clearly laboured much in thought and prayer over the spontaneous expansion of the church.

*Reviewed by Nancy J. Whytock*

***Family Vocation: God's Calling in Marriage, Parenting, and Childhood.* Gene Edward Veith Jr. and Mary J. Moerbe. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012, 253 pp., paper. ISBN 978-1-4335-2406-6**

Lutheran author Gene Edward Veith Jr. has already written a book on the Reformation doctrine of vocation entitled *God at Work*.<sup>1</sup> In *Family Vocation*, he teams up with his daughter Mary J. Moerbe to continue the theme and apply it more deeply to marriage and family life. This book is refreshingly different than the usual exhortation on scriptural headship and submission, rules for success in marriage, or practical advice on parenting. Instead, the authors create a vision of a family where each member is transformed by the love of Christ and in turn lovingly serves the other members of the family, recognizing that it is God who has called us to serve Him in whatever “state of life” we are in.<sup>2</sup>



Following a brief introduction to the doctrine of vocation, *Family Vocation* is divided into three parts: “The Vocations of Marriage”, “The Vocations of Parenthood”, and “The Vocations of Childhood”. In each section, the authors draw out implications from the fact that our family relationships are to be reflections of the truth about God. For example, husbands are called to be “little Christs”<sup>3</sup> to their wives, loving them “as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her” (Eph. 5:25). Fathers are called to reflect what God

<sup>1</sup> Gene Edward Veith, Jr., *God at Work* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2002).

<sup>2</sup> Martin Luther, *The Table-Talk of Martin Luther*, trans. William Hazlitt (Philadelphia: The Lutheran Publication Society). Online at: <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/luther/tabletalk.i.html>, statement VII. “The right, practical divinity is this: Believe in Christ, and do thy duty in that state of life to which God has called thee.”

<sup>3</sup> Veith and Moerbe, 47. The term is quoted from Luther in his “The Freedom of the Christian”.

does as our Father as He tenderly loves us (Ps. 103:13, Matt. 7:11), provides for us physically and spiritually (Eph. 3:14-19), and disciplines us in love (Eph. 6:4, Heb. 12:5-11). Each section also expounds on the biblical responsibilities and privileges of marriage, parenting, and childhood and closes with a chapter on the crosses of each vocation, as it is in the context of vocation that we take up our cross and follow Jesus (Matt. 16:24). Along the way, the authors touch on many practical issues, including divorce, adoption, birth control, reproductive technology, and the growing fatherlessness of Western culture.

People in all stages of life and positions in their families will draw encouragement and blessing from this book. I was particularly inspired to think more deeply about my work as a mother. First, God is working through me, flawed as I am, using me as an instrument to accomplish His purposes in my family. It's His work, and the outcome is His as well. My faults and failures are not the determining factor in how my children turn out. Second, it is Christ I'm serving as I serve my family. My fulfillment and my happiness are not of primary importance, but whether or not I am serving the Lord faithfully in the place where He has called me. The daily, mundane little sacrifices of self I make are not in vain but have purpose and meaning as I do them "as to the Lord" (Col. 3:23-24, KJV). What a blessing to be reminded that waking while it is still dark to feed and change a crying baby can be as much a spiritual act of worship<sup>4</sup> as sitting down in peace for half an hour of Bible reading (p. 145).

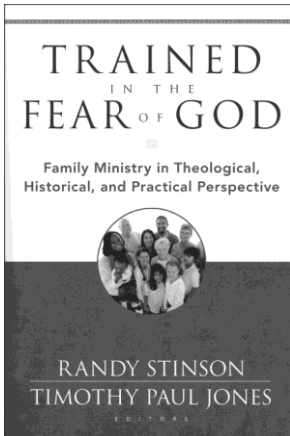
*Family Vocation's* unique perspective from Luther's doctrine of vocation makes it well worth reading. Whatever your callings may be in your particular family, you will be blessed by reading this book and thinking through its implications for your life.

*Reviewed by Nelleke Plouffe. Nelleke and her husband, Stephen, are the parents of three young sons, Seth, Josiah, and Moses. They live in Donagh, Prince Edward Island.*



<sup>4</sup> Romans 12:1, "Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God – this is your spiritual act of worship."

***Trained In The Fear Of God: Family Ministry in Theological, Historical, and Practical Perspective.* Eds., Randy Stinson and Timothy Paul Jones. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2011, 290 pp., paper. ISBN 978-0-8254-3907-0**



*Trained in the Fear of God* is a potpourri of essays by various writers which have been arranged to produce together a common theme – family ministry. Although at times it seems that a chapter/writer is veering off on an irrelevant tangent (chapter 5 on homosexuality, chapter 8 on the African American family and chapter 15 on feminism) and seems to be connected to the message only by a very weak thread, this book does rank high as a resource on how to equip families and churches for successful family ministry practices and approaches. Randy Stinson and Timothy Paul Jones, the publishing editors, do an extraordinary job of orchestrating many different authors to

write about a common idea and make it flow smoothly from writer to writer – not an easy task. There is some difficulty in keeping interest throughout the first third of the book as the reader may not understand what plan of action the editors are trying to accomplish. At times, the reading is like trying to pick up maple syrup with your hands; but the sooner the book's significance materializes, the plainer is the understanding of how this book can be a very valuable resource, one that will live on my office shelf for immediate use. The book is broken into three units: an historical biblical framework, an historical Christian analysis and finally, a practical strategy and application to be utilized within the church.

Unless one likes history and its impact on the present, the first two units can seem burdensome, almost like hiking through sand. These units document historical shifts in how children have been educated in respect to religion. They simplify and condense years of historical background in very small and short passages. As the book progresses into practical strategies and applications in the third unit, it pinpoints several specific pockets of sensitive issues and how to wrestle with these areas (e.g. feminism, singleness, submission, etc.). These are real issues that each church needs to address, but I'm not sure it flows accurately alongside this literary matter. However, I am challenged with the overall question of, "Do you want to be known as a disciple-equipping church OR a church full of disciples?" And, although I'm not certain this question is actually stated in the book, it is the answer to this question that needs to be wrestled with; to turn around and face into the torpedo of a perishing world (much like that decision made in the movie "The



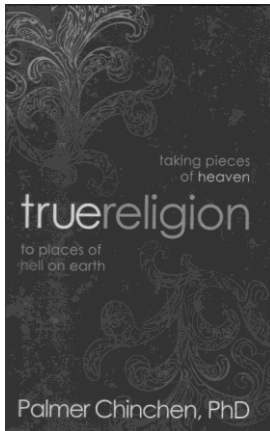
Hunt For Red October”, when the insane seems catastrophic but is actually their salvation) that by faithfully implementing practical family equipping strategies within your church, there will be the redemption of a new and stronger breed of Christian soldiers.

The entire book is anchored in the firm belief of the importance of family relationships. I especially like the thorough footnotes, which give an added splash of illumination or spur the reader on to further research these supplemental notes at greater length, if one has the time to do so. The pages are peppered with sidebar questions and helpful, highlighted information. It is unequivocally a book that grows on you, especially if you have a direct interest in youth ministry.

*Reviewed by Albert Huizing IV. Albert grew up in New Jersey and is a graduate of Calvin College. He has been involved in youth and singles ministries and Christian schools in the United States and Canada for the past thirty years. Currently he serves as Director of Youth ministries at the Charlottetown Christian Reformed Church, PEI.*



***True Religion: Taking Pieces of Heaven to Places of Hell on Earth.* Palmer Chinchén. Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook, 2010, 208 pp., paper. ISBN 978-0-7814-0343-6**



*True Religion* reads like a series of blogs that are all connected by one theme – the mandate that God commands us to reach out to others in need. The two worst parts of the book are the back cover’s tiny text (consequently, I didn’t know he was from Biola, my daughters alma mater, until page 75) and its ragged theme structure. Those faults certainly do not take away from the excitement that oozes out of this book. It is continually challenging the stagnant Christian to re-evaluate the way he or she thinks about reaching out to others in need. It is an excellent book to inspire those who want to have reasons for going on mission trips and is certainly one I am going to have on my shelf and am going to use of-

ten.

Palmer Chinchén’s examples are personal and heartfelt, and he ends each chapter with relevant examples for becoming an expatriate – people who leave their country to make a home in a far and away place. His point is that he is bothered by the abuse, injustice, poverty and oppression of the world. Chinchén succeeds in inspiring us to offer those blessings that we have been endowed with – knowledge, skills, talents, food, and yes, even money – those

“pieces of heaven” – and give them to those “places of hell on earth”. He reminds us of how we live in such a self-indulgent culture but that *true religion* is really about others and not self.

Palmer challenges us to notice those who fall through the cracks of society, to be aware of them and then to respond by living differently. Because of those examples of “hell-ish places on earth”, this book will tug at your heart-strings, put pressure on your conscience and provoke you to reach out and grab hold of the much bigger plan that God has for you. Knowing what needs to be done is not enough! Chinchén explains how missions will change you. Especially when you step out in faith, missions will cultivate a heart that “lives love”.

Once you are infected with that desire, you will see all kinds of resistance around you. He challenges us with the questions of, “What will be our legacy?”, “What is God calling each of us to do?”, “Where will we leave our mark?” But the true heart of his conclusion, which we wait the entire book for, comes in the next to last chapter when he gives the answer to the question of how we can accomplish this: be vulnerable to people. “Open yourself to that possibility. Give yourself to relationships. Allow them to mold your heart. Allow them to transform your soul” (p. 181). Building relationships, getting to really “know” people and partnering together with others are all significant factors for accomplishing the furtherance of *true religion*.

With so much pain expressed in this book, it’s encouraging that Chinchén ends it on a note of grace, of peace, of shalom. He reminds readers that someday there will be a new heaven and a new earth and God will say, “Well done, good and faithful servant.” When that happens, we will know that we have arrived in heaven.

Palmer Chinchén (son of Jack and Nell Chinchén) grew up in Liberia and has served in Malawi, Cuba and Haiti. Today he leads The Grove in Chandler, Arizona.

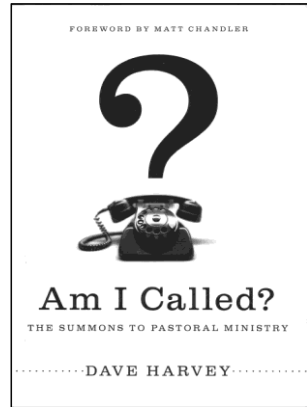
*Reviewed by Albert Huizing, IV*

***Am I Called? The Summons to Pastoral Ministry.* Dave Harvey. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012, 221 pp., paper. ISBN 978-1-4335-2748-7**

*Am I Called?* is not a book for pastors, although I found it stimulating; it is not a book for women, but women who may become pastor’s wives should read it. It is not a book with church members in mind, but members concerned for the future of their church should read it. It is a book designed to instruct and guide men who sense a summons to pastoral ministry – a weighty and solemn matter, vital not only for the man wrestling with the issue but also for the well-being of the church.

Harvey aims to help men diagnose their sense of call, but before diagnosis there are two foundational concerns. His first concern is the man seeking help to understand that the call to ministry is grounded in the effectual call to Christ. Dealing with a summons to ministry demands a firm grip on the gospel for it is the gospel which must supply our identity, provide our adequacy, set our personal priorities and be our aim in pastoral ministry. His second concern is the context of the call to pastoral ministry, namely, the local church. Pastors and church planters are called to love and serve “the flock of God” (1 Pet. 5:2).

Harvey seeks to help a man diagnose and confirm his inward call by working through the biblical qualifications for God’s shepherds as they are found primarily in Timothy and Titus. He applies these qualifications by way of the following questions: Are you godly? How’s your home? Can you preach? Can you shepherd? Do you love the lost? He takes up the external call, i.e. “the process of evaluation whereby the church affirms God’s call to the man” (p. 167), by way of the question, “Who agrees?” “External confirmation gives a man confidence that he isn’t deceiving himself about his qualifications for ministry” (p.174) and protects the gospel and the church.



In Harvey’s approach, there is not only the inward call and the external call but also a third element, namely, preparation. These three strands are not consecutive steps but work together in God’s providence to confirm and bind a man to his call to pastoral ministry. Preparation concerns “what to do during those months or years when you carry an internal call but wait for confirmation” (p. 167). In his discussion of preparation, he outlines practical things to do while you wait, shares some helpful insight into the purposes and value of waiting, and pastors those who while waiting discover their desire is not God’s call to “see it as God’s kind redirection” (p.195) not His opposition.

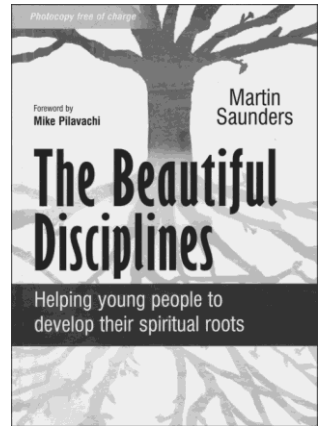
Included throughout the book are profiles of pastors who dramatize the author’s concerns. The eight men profiled are: Thomas Scott, Charles Simeon, Lemuel Haynes, Martin Luther, Martyn Lloyd-Jones, James Boice, Charles Spurgeon, and John Bunyan.

Dave Harvey writes out of a Reformed perspective and is well equipped to write this book from his experience as a pastor of twenty-six years and his work with Sovereign Grace Ministries identifying and equipping church planters. *Am I Called?* is rich in insight and practical guidance. Highly recommended.

*Reviewed by Howard M. McPhee*

***The Beautiful Disciplines: Helping young people to develop their spiritual roots.* Martin Saunders. Grand Rapids: Monarch/Kregel, 2011, 224 pp., paper. ISBN 978-0-85721-055-5**

Looking at twenty-first-century youth ministry, one has to wonder – are the spiritual disciplines that had for so long marked the life of the church dead? Have simplicity, meditation, and solitude been lost in the endless menagerie of instant, superficial pop-Christianity? In a culture marked by celebrities, entertainment and quick fixes, how does a youth leader help teenagers develop these classic disciplines? For any minister who has thought along these lines, Martin Saunders' *The Beautiful Disciplines* is a great resource. Former editor at *Youth Work Magazine* and seasoned youth leader, Saunders takes his years of experience and offers youth ministers a fresh interpretation of contemplative Christianity. Modeled largely after Richard Foster's classic *The Spiritual Disciplines*, Saunders' *The Beautiful Disciplines* develops a basic and easy-to-read, small-group curriculum for cultivating ancient spiritual disciplines in the twenty-first century.



It is true that the classic spiritual disciplines can seem cold and distant for young people; yet *The Beautiful Disciplines* helps such disciplines to come alive with a passion and intimacy that even older practitioners can appreciate. Saunders, who trial-ran the curriculum with his own youth group, does an outstanding job of providing leaders with a highly adaptable guide on how to integrate spiritual disciplines into their groups. Traditionally organized, the book contains the ten classic spiritual disciplines under three main headings:

- Inward disciplines (prayer, study, meditation, fasting)
- Outward disciplines (simplicity, solitude, submission, service)
- Corporate disciplines (worship, celebration)

Comprised of multiple resources, *The Beautiful Disciplines* is ideal for customization and application. Each topic contains background information, discussion starters, adaptable meeting guides containing games, discussion questions, personal stories and Bible studies as well as resources and activities for deeper investigation and practice. Saunders has made each section fully adaptable for older and younger audiences as well as for church and un-church teens.

A great introduction to leading others in developing the spiritual disciplines, the book is intended for those who have a prior knowledge of the dis-

ciplines which are grounded in a developed theological rationale. While the book provides an adequate introduction, its theological framework remains basic and causes some concern. As with any book addressing the topic of contemplative Christianity, *The Beautiful Disciplines* has the potential to lead the reader to an understanding of spiritual growth more in line with the works-oriented “infusion” of grace found in Roman Catholic mysticism. All leaders must be aware that while this book is a helpful contribution in guiding teenagers in the spiritual disciplines, anyone who abandons the grace-motivated, joy-inspired practices of spiritual disciples in favor of duty-bound disciplines meant to purchase joy will find neither joy or the much sought after prize of spiritual growth in the end.

*Reviewed by Ryan Mark Barnhart*

***Sex, Dating, and Relationships: A Fresh Approach.* Gerald Hiestand and Jay Thomas. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012, 154 pp., paper. ISBN 978-1-4335-2711-1**

In *Sex, Dating, and Relationships: A Fresh Approach*, pastors Gerald Hiestand and Jay Thomas attempt to bring biblical clarity to the area of sexual purity and relationships.

The most valuable aspect of this book is how the authors bring out the “why” of sexuality. God created it to be a picture of the intimate oneness that exists between Christ and the church (p. 18). The implication is that sex must always be in the context of marriage – one man, one woman, faithful and loving (p. 28). The authors tell singles: “...sexuality...was made first for the Lord as a divine illustration of his nature and purposes. To bypass this reality and use it prematurely for our own gratification is to rob it of its significance and meaning and thus of its true pleasure in our lives” (p. 46).

A more mixed benefit of this book was the point that a “dating relationship” is not an intermediate relationship between the “neighbour” relationship (in which sexual relations are forbidden) and marriage (in which sexual relations are commanded), in which people are free to experiment sexually. Rather, a dating relationship, like any other type of relationship other than marriage, falls under the category of the neighbour relationship. The authors’ main point here is that sexual relations of any kind are forbidden in the neighbour relationship, but I would really have liked to see them open up this point a bit more. How are neighbours (or better yet, brothers and sisters in Christ) to treat each other? I think young singles could really benefit from



being reminded of the “one another” passages in the New Testament, such as Philippians 2 and Romans 12.<sup>1</sup> This would be a good antidote to the selfishness that is at the root of so much sexual sin. The authors begin well with this point, but the book would have been much better if its authors had continued to explore the positive responsibilities of love and honour in what they call the “neighbour” relationship.

A third good point about this book is that it recognizes that lust must be dealt with at a heart level. Victory over lust can only come through union with Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit.

And yet, despite all this good, I will not be indiscriminately handing out this book to all my young single friends.

Early in the book, one of the authors speaks critically of a pastor’s counsel in his youth:

...he had no objective standard of purity with which to advise us. Instead he encouraged us each to prayerfully come to our own convictions about what was physically appropriate in a dating relationship and to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit. Ultimately we were left to seek our own wisdom. (p. 34)

In contrast, these authors claim to have found an objective, biblical answer to the question “How far is too far?” (If you’re curious, their answer is: any action that would not be appropriate with your brother or sister. For example, outside of marriage, even kissing is sexually immoral.) The problem is, the authors do not seem to realize that the interpretation and application of Scripture, wise though it may be, must not be placed on the same level with Scripture itself.<sup>2</sup> They begin with a legitimate biblical principle: The Bible prohibits sexual relations in any relationship other than marriage. They then define “sexual relations” very narrowly and give their conclusions the weight of the objective Word of God.<sup>3</sup> It can seem very attractive and safe to have every-

<sup>1</sup> I am indebted to “Darcy”, a blogger at “Recovering Grace”, for this insight. <http://www.recoveringgrace.org/2011/08/emotional-purity-and-courtship-a-conclusion/>. I can’t whole-heartedly recommend her whole series on the subject, but her conclusion is excellent.

<sup>2</sup> Joshua Harris makes this point in “Commands from God’s Word are different than suggestions for the wise application of Biblical principles”. [http://www.covlife.org/resources/2671712-Romance\\_Revisited\\_The\\_Necessity\\_of\\_Biblical\\_Conviction](http://www.covlife.org/resources/2671712-Romance_Revisited_The_Necessity_of_Biblical_Conviction). This clarity is a key difference between Harris’ books (*I Kissed Dating Goodbye*, *Boy Meets Girl*, and *Sex Isn’t the Problem, Lust Is*) and the book under review.

<sup>3</sup> See page 32, “Contrary to popular opinion, the Bible does speak with clarity – objective clarity – about what is physically appropriate between an unmarried man and woman in a pre-marriage relationship.” And p. 54, “According to God’s Word, we are to do nothing with a member of the opposite sex that we wouldn’t do with a blood relative. This clarifies things pretty dramatically and gives an objective answer to the question, How far is too far?”

thing spelled out, but it is very spiritually dangerous, as we can see from the Pharisees of Jesus' day. By contrast, the pastor's counsel these authors are so critical of seems very wise. It is not "leaving people to seek their own wisdom" to teach them biblical principles and encourage them to come to their own conviction following the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Another point that concerns me is the burden the authors will place on some of their readers by their interpretation of Jesus' teaching in Matthew 5: "But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart." They argue against the view that it is the intent of the heart that makes looking at a woman with desire<sup>4</sup> a sin. What makes desire sinful, they argue, is whether its object is legitimate. The text's reference to the heart is not so much about the disposition or intentions of the heart but that sexual desire is not only physical but also emotional. Therefore, the authors conclude, even spontaneous (inadvertent) desire when a man sees an attractive woman is sin, even when his heart's desire is to be pure and he does not dwell upon it in his mind or act on it physically. The implication seems to be that sexual attraction is always sin when it has no legitimate object (i.e. a husband or a wife). I am concerned that young people who are sincerely seeking to do God's will in this area of their lives will be thrown into confusion and guilt when they experience sexual attraction toward someone who is not (or not yet) their spouse. I realize that the authors are aiming their book at singles who (up till now) have been dating casually and using their relationship as an excuse to experiment sexually. But I can't help but think that there will be at least some readers who, like myself as a young single, do not treat sexuality or dating lightly. They may read this and gain an unhealthy view of the God-given sexual attraction that leads many (most?) of us to get married in the first place.

My third concern is how formulaic the authors are in describing "*dating friendships*,"<sup>5</sup> their wisdom on how to get to know someone before marriage. To be fair, they do acknowledge that "Scripture allows for a great deal of flexibility when it comes to pre-engagement relationships" (p. 93). However, the authors are very specific as to how their dating friendship system works, and their new terminology of "*dating friendships*" also seems to encourage the perception that their system is better than "dating" or "courtship".<sup>6</sup> This

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<sup>4</sup> The authors point out that the word translated "lust" is actually the word "desire", which is a neutral rather than a negative word.

<sup>5</sup> Page 92, "two friends getting to know each other with a view towards marriage". These friends just consider themselves friends, not boyfriend and girlfriend. There is no commitment, no sexual involvement, and no romance or trying to woo the other. Once the "*dating friendship*" has run its course, they either go back to a normal friendship or become engaged. Once engaged, romance and "wooing" are permitted, and the wedding is organized as soon as possible. There are currently many new terms being coined. Another new one by some Christian bloggers is "*dateship*".

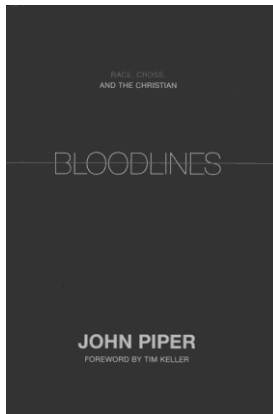
<sup>6</sup> Their views are essentially quite similar to Joshua Harris' *Boy Meets Girl*. There is one key difference, though. Harris is very clear where these authors are a bit fuzzy:

narrowness fails to recognize the differences across cultures in how people get to know and marry each other. Dating, courtship, even arranged marriage can all be done to the glory of God. What really matters when you walk through these things is whether you are honouring the Lord and treating the person you are interested in with the kind of love and honour Scripture calls for in all our relationships with our brothers and sisters in Christ. My concern is simply that young people will latch on to “dating friendships” as a formula for staying pure and safe from heartbreak, and no formula can do this for you.

In conclusion, this book does not bring the clarity its authors intended to the discussion of sexuality and dating. It fills a gap with its scriptural teaching on the “why” of sexuality. On the other hand, it has several flaws, and the authors’ failure to recognize that “Commands from God’s Word are different than suggestions for the wise application of Biblical principles”<sup>7</sup> is potentially spiritually dangerous. Contextually, this is very much a North American book. I will not be recommending this book.

*Reviewed by Nelleke Plouffe*

***Bloodlines: Race, Cross, and the Christian.* John Piper. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011, 295 pp., hc. ISBN 978-1-4335-2852-1**



This is an engaging book for many reasons, not simply because of its rigorous biblical scholarship and ruthless application of the gospel to one of societies more enduring problems – racism – but also because the author himself has given us perhaps one of his most intensely personal books to date. John Piper, until recently pastor for preaching and vision at Bethlehem Baptist Church in Minneapolis, writes about this matter as of a journey that has left him deeply scarred. Growing up in racially charged Greenville, South Carolina, Piper confesses to having been a full-blooded racist. He goes so far as to say that his mother would have cleaned out his

dating is not the issue, and it doesn’t matter what you want to call it, whether “dating” or “courtship” or anything else. The issue is love of God and love of neighbour, and there is tremendous freedom and diversity in following biblical principles in this area. (Summarized from “Romance Revisited”, a talk he gave at Covenant Life Church. [http://www.covlife.org/resources/2671712-Romance\\_Revisited\\_The\\_Necessity\\_of\\_Biblical\\_Conviction.](http://www.covlife.org/resources/2671712-Romance_Revisited_The_Necessity_of_Biblical_Conviction.))

<sup>7</sup> Harris, “Commands from God’s Word”.



mouth with soap if she'd heard him saying some of the things he did (p. 34). Speaking of enforced segregation during his time in Greenville, Piper says:

It was not respectful, it was not just, it was not loving, and therefore it was not Christian. It was ugly and demeaning. And, as we will see, because of my complicity I have much to be sorry about.

Which is one reason this book focuses so heavily on the gospel of Jesus Christ. I owe my life and hope to the gospel. Without it I would still be strutting with racist pride. . . . (p. 32)

Piper chronicles his journey to racial acceptance through the influence of his mother: "She was, under God, the seed of my salvation in more ways than one. . . . I knew deep down that my attitudes were an offense to my mother and to her God" (p. 34). He credits seminary professors Paul Jewett and Lewis Smedes with bringing this difficult issue out into the open and into the classroom.

It was important for Piper that this is where he had planted within him the seeds of change since so much of evangelical history on this matter is shameful. He writes,

There is no mystery in it as to why a young black man growing up there . . . would get his theological education at a liberal institution (such as Chicago Theological Seminary or Crozer Theological Seminary). Our fundamental and evangelical schools – and almost every other institution – especially in the South, were committed to segregation. (p. 33)

Having studied in Germany, Piper was able to relate the matter not just to America but as it unfolded in Nazi Germany. Here his thinking continued to be deepened. "Living in the literal and figurative shadow of such horrific effects of racism solidified the merciful reorientation of my mind" (p. 37).

Piper's journey later included pastoring a church in a racially mixed neighbourhood and culminated in adopting a black child. So the reader can see that the book is deeply personal for Piper and that he, given his background, is imminently qualified to write. "Nothing binds a pastor's heart to diversity more than having it in his home" (p. 39).

Moving on from the personal perspective, Piper traces the history of the race relations debate, principally over the course of the Civil Rights Movement. A pivotal point he recalls was the Supreme Court's decision on May 17, 1954. "That was the day that the Supreme Court decided the case called *Brown v. Board of Education*. It declared that state-imposed segregation in the public schools was a violation of the Fourteenth Amendment" (p. 24).

Although the race problem is an intensely complex one, Piper has chosen to look at two theories that have been offered as to why there has been such systemic racism in the United States.

Piper's vision for the book can be summed up in three remarks he makes early on in the book. "I believe that the gospel – the good news of Christ cru-

cified in our place to remove the wrath of God and provide forgiveness of sins and power for sanctification – is our only hope for the kind of racial diversity and harmony that ultimately matters” (p. 40). He goes on to say, “Therefore, I long to see the followers of Christ, especially myself, living the kind of lives that advance the cause of Christ-exalting racial diversity and Spirit-enabled racial harmony. I pray this book serves that end” (p. 43).

Of course for Piper the answers as to the origin of racism lie in the Word of God but so too do the solutions.

What is needed is a miracle. I mean that literally. A supernatural in-breaking of God through the gospel of Christ. It is not even possible to describe the hope-filled relational dynamics that may happen when the gospel explodes in two hearts that bring such radically different experiences of sin and suffering to the relationship. “What is impossible with men is possible with God.” (Luke 18:27). (p. 94)

With wonderful clarity Piper, magnifying gospel power, asserts: “Only the gospel can do two seemingly contradictory things: destroy pride and increase courage. Destroy self-exaltation and increase confidence. Destroy the pushiness of self-assertion and deliver from the paralysis of self-doubt” (p. 95).

Piper is able to weave historical precedent and scriptural truth. One of the best historical illustrations of the way the gospel of Christ transforms is the life of William Wilberforce (1759–1833) and the Clapham Sect. “One of the most important and least known facts about the battle to abolish the slave trade in Britain two hundred years ago is that it was sustained by a passion for the doctrine of justification by faith alone . . .” (p. 104).

Wilberforce believed that the nation was in particular need of recovering the truth that Christianity was a scheme “for making the fruits of holiness the effects, not the cause, of our being justified and reconciled” (p. 105). “In other words, Wilberforce’s unwavering, lifelong commitment to justice for the African slaves was built on the deep foundations of biblical doctrine” (p. 112). Piper boldly asserts,

My point is that the truths themselves, when rightly understood and embraced and cherished with a good heart, cut the legs out from under racist attitudes. That I am chosen for salvation in spite of all my ugly and deadening sinfulness, that the infinitely precious Son of God secured my eternal life through his own infinite suffering, that my rebellious and resistant heart was conquered by sovereign grace, and that I am kept by the power of God forever – if these truths do not make me a humble servant of racial diversity and harmony, then I have not seen them or loved them as I ought. (p. 130)

As with many of the problems Piper addresses in other books, it is not just a mild expression of the Christian faith that will do but the glory and power of a full-orbed biblical faith. He is arguing for nothing less. In fact, he argues that “racial harmony is to the praise of his GRACE. Diversity is more glorious than the unity of sameness” (p. 195). This is the line of argument Piper has used elsewhere. In *Spectacular Sins*, for example, he concluded that God revealed His glory in the Tower of Babel in making His Son the saviour not of one monolithic culture but of a multitude of people from numerous cultures.

In his second-to-last chapter, Piper continues to challenge the church regarding our ideas about interracial marriage along several lines. He says, “My aim in this chapter is to argue from Scripture and experience that interracial marriage is not only permitted by God but is a positive good in our day. It is not just to be tolerated, but celebrated” (p. 203).

He makes a very strong point in saying,

I cannot bring myself to believe that the mingling of racial traits in the children of interracial marriages is a “diluting” of the diversity God wills. The “races” have never been pure or well defined. The human lines that flowed from the sons of Noah (Shem, Ham, and Japheth) have flowed into far more diversity than three ethnic types of human beings. There is no reason to think that diversification has stopped. (p. 208)

He further says that while the Bible forbids marriage between unbelievers and believers, that doesn’t hold true across racial lines for the following reasons: in Christ our oneness transcends racial lines; criticizing one interracial marriage was severely disciplined by God; Moses, a Jew, apparently married a black African and was approved by God, while Miriam and Aaron’s criticism of it was judged by God in her turning leprous (p. 212).

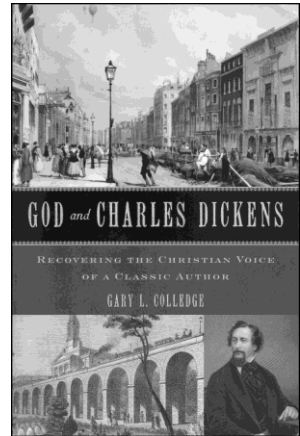
Certainly this book has an American context. However, I believe it needs universal readership. I heartily commend it for all theological training colleges to order for their libraries. We must be clear on what the Bible says about race as this is relevant for every culture and nation. Appendix 4, “What are the implications of Noah’s curse?” (pp. 263-267) will be a valuable read across many countries.

Personally speaking, this is a timely book. Where I live on Prince Edward Island, the cultural landscape is evolving daily. Non-traditional people groups are coming into the province and country at unprecedented rates. How will we as Christians respond? Will we respond with suspicion and segregation, or will we rise to the challenge that Piper gives in this very searching and challenging book to face these changes with the power of the gospel. Piper leaves us with no alternative but rather leaves us excited about racial diversity. His arguments are compelling and conclusive. The gospel must win the day!

*Reviewed by Kent I. Compton*

***God and Charles Dickens: Rediscovering the Christian Voice of a Classic Author.* Gary L. Colledge. Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2012, 224 pp., paper. ISBN 978-1-58743-320-7**

From *The Christmas Carol* to *The Tale of Two Cities* and *Oliver Twist*, the Anglo-American social conscience has been challenged by the prolific nineteenth-century journalist Charles Dickens. While Dickens' social morality is immediately evident, Gary Colledge also argues that Dickens wrote out of the centre of a deeply Christian worldview. Often missed in scholarship and overlooked in Dickens' own anti-ecclesiastical writings, Colledge aims to restore the Christian voice of Dickens for both appreciative readers and critical scholars in this reworking of his Ph.D. dissertation.



After a helpful introduction and first chapter laying out the project and Dickens' Christian perspective, *God and Charles Dickens* falls into five topical chapters. Each of these treatments covers an aspect of Dickens' Christian belief and peculiar social critique. In Colledge's presentation, we see a Dickens that is essentially Jesus-centred, relying upon the New Testament, and working his faith out in love and tangible "goodness" in the world.

While Dickens may look like he has some unorthodox critiques of theology and church, Colledge argues that they largely fall in line with nineteenth-century, popular lay Anglicanism. Dickens certainly understood the depravity of humanity – his tales tell that dark story most evidently – and he had hope for humanity when he was at his most optimistic. Weaving together Dickens' letters, essays, sermons, and novels, we see that Dickens' God is the providential Creator and Jesus is the Deliverer of humanity. Dickens launched satirical and open challenges to many aspects of his religious world not because he rejected faith but because he desperately wanted what he called "real Christianity". His critique of dissenters and Evangelicals comes out of a cultural dislike of the problematic Christianity he saw played out in the pulpits and streets of England rather than a sophisticated theological critique.

Intentionally, this book is a restrained guide where Colledge chooses to get out of the way and allow Dickens to speak. In this project, he is following Dickens' own advice to Christian preachers who so often draw people to themselves instead of Christ. It is probably a relevant critique for today – a relevance the author capitalizes upon as each chapter ends with a note to the church.

While letting Dickens speak is Colledge's goal, we must remember that

Colledge is still shaping the reader's perspective. In the project of recovering Dickens' Christian voice, we see a Dickens emerge that sits not uncomfortably with contemporary evangelicalism. One might be concerned that Colledge is in danger of washing Dickens as some have done with C.S. Lewis, lover of ale and tobacco, or as may be the case in Eric Mataxas' recent biography of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who now reads like an American evangelical. We are in nearest danger of this kind of treatment as Colledge shares Dickens' faith commitments to charity and social reform in his chapter on "Real Christianity".

However, I do not think that Colledge falls into this trap. He allows the ambiguity of Dickens' beliefs to hang in the air and occasionally critiques them. While I think a fuller treatment of Dickens' marriage breakup and his early flirtation with Unitarianism are warranted, Colledge doesn't run from other difficult moments. For example, due to his disgust with a popular rigid Calvinism, Dickens seemingly rejects substitutionary atonement through the vicarious suffering of Christ. Colledge sets this particular departure from Anglicanism in context but allows it to sit in all its complexity.

In his reading, I'm not sure that Colledge saw the lack of the cross in Dickens' thought – a lack of a Cruci-centric vision that stands in strange contrast to his Christo-centric spirituality. However, I think Colledge drew out Dickens' genuine faith and demonstrates superbly the Christian influence throughout all of Dickens work. In short, Charles Dickens' novels are soaked through with the Christian worldview and work to call people back to a heartfelt, Jesus-centred, New Testament-based faith. The result is a helpful, accessible book that comes out of Dr. Colledge's larger academic project to challenge mainstream thinking in Dickens study and at the same time augments our resources on Christianity and literature. A worthy contribution for 2012, celebrating the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Dicken's birth.

*Review by Brenton D. G. Dickieson. Brenton teaches in the Centre for the Study of Christianity and Culture at the University of Prince Edward Island, is an Adjunct Professor at Maritime Christian College, Charlottetown, and is an online instructor for Regent College (Vancouver, BC).*



## 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. Unless otherwise stated, all book briefs are by the editor.

### Church History

***The Kregel Pictorial Guide to Church History, Volume 6 – The Church and Postmodernity, A.D. 1900-Present.* John D. Hannah. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2010, 32 pp., paper. ISBN 978-0-8254-2787-9**

“Amazing” is a great way to summarize how John Hannah managed to pack in all he did in these thirty-two pages, including illustrations and maps. This little church history reference guide would be a wonderful overview for introductory modern history classes at the junior college or Christian high school level or for homeschoolers. The text does not define “neatly” many terms used, so the guide would need to be used with lectures and an additional textbook. Also, it is very Western in its orientation and weak on the work of missionary consolidation in the twentieth century. Yet despite these drawbacks, given the right teaching context, this is definitely a helpful guide to have students read through to gain several insights into the twentieth century. The section on “The Charismatic Movements” (pp. 19-22) serves as a good starting point for someone to gain a brief overview. This series of “Guides” is exactly that – brief guides – and should not be taken as anything more. They have a real place in the right context. Attractively illustrated, part of a series of six booklets, all authored by John Hannah.

***The Faithful Preacher: Recapturing the Vision of Three Pioneering African-American Pastors.* Thabiti M. Anyabwile. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2007, 191 pp., paper. ISBN 978-1-58134-827-9**

A wonderful corrective and resource to use in American church history. Anyabwile introduces us to three virtually forgotten African-American preachers – Lemuel Haynes, Daniel Payne and Francis Grimké. The book combines biographical study with primary source writings from the three preachers. This is truly a rich work and has been edited to make for a fine collection. It will certainly be valued for all who teach American church his-

tory. Also, readers of Christian biography in general will be blessed and find this a helpful work. There are two pages of notes at the back referring to sources consulted. The foreword is by John Piper. It is unfortunate to see a typing error for a date on a photo of Francis Grimké. A pleasure to recommend this book to a wide readership.

## Missiology

***Mission in the Old Testament: Israel as a Light to the Nations*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Walter C. Kaiser, Jr. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012, 107 pp., paper. ISBN 978-0-8010-3997-3**

This new, expanded second edition of Walter Kaiser's *Mission in the Old Testament* is most welcome. Three new chapters have been added, making for a total of eight chapters, plus study and discussion questions have been added for all chapters including the preface and introduction. *Mission in the Old Testament* has earned a special place in the study of the biblical foundations of missions; this new edition will ensure that it will continue to occupy a special place as a college text. The glossary is most helpful. Some have demurred that Kaiser presses his case too far, yet some new works have completely supported his conclusions. Each time I have used this book with students, I have seen the same results – new discoveries and excitement.

***The Local Church, Agent of Transformation: an Ecclesiology for Integral Mission*. Eds., Tetsunao Yamamori and C. René Padilla. Trans., Brian Cordingly. Buenos Aires: Kairos, 2004, 322 pp., paper. ISBN 987-9403-67-3**

I am ashamed to say, this is only the second time we have reviewed a book from South America in our journal. We need to become more proactive in our awareness of what is being published globally. Here is a most fascinating collection of essays which will be helpful to missiologists, pastors and systematic theologians across the world. There are twelve contributors for a total of thirteen chapters and most have a South American connection, with the majority an Argentinean connection. Lest some dismiss the work and quickly think it is just “liberation theology”, closer reflection will cause serious study. The title and sub-title are well-worded in the English translation from the Spanish *La iglesia local como agente de transformación: Una ecclesiología para la misión integral*. This work helps us to see the interdisciplinary and integrative role that missiology, praxis and systematic theology may have. It is about neglected areas in evangelical ecclesiology yet is intertwined with missiology and praxis. C. René Padilla's opening essay, “Introduction: An Ecclesiology for Integral Mission”, is worth the price of the

book. In this book “integral mission” means what is now usually described as “holistic/wholistic mission”. I strongly encourage missiologists and theologians to read this work. Yes, you may not agree with every viewpoint in the collection, I did not, but guaranteed it will stimulate you to think creatively about biblical life in the church.

## Systematic Theology

***Why Do We Have Creeds?* Burk Parsons. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2012, 39 pp., paper. ISBN 978-1-59638-202-2**

A stimulating, contemporary discussion in small booklet form dealing with the title’s subject, “Why do we have creeds?” The author, who is on the staff at Saint Andrew’s Chapel in Sanford, Florida, brings in a host of quotations and references in writing this booklet. Those familiar with the subject will expect to see a reference at some point to Samuel Miller’s *The Utility and Importance of Creeds and Confessions* (1839), and it is there but so are references to Augustine, Lewis, Bavinck, Dever, Warfield, Berkhof, McGrath, Pelikan, etc. For some readers this may start to become too heavy, whereas others will relish in it. Perhaps more emphasis on biblical exposition could balance this out. Parsons raises the practical question to those who say they have no creed and later you find out they have a very long creed, either written or unwritten. A helpful booklet for college or seminary classes on the value of creeds/confessions and an inexpensive text to supplement such a course.

***The Church’s Book of Comfort.* Ed., Willem van ‘t Spijker. Trans., Gerrit Bilkes. Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage, 2009, 291 pp., hc. ISBN 978-1-60178-056-0**

Here is a top-rate book about the Heidelberg Catechism authored by six very capable writers from the Netherlands under the editorship of Willem van ‘t Spijker. The book provides an opening chapter on the Reformation in Germany followed by two helpful essays (chapters) by Wim Verboom and Christa Boerke on the completion of the Heidelberg Catechism and the people behind it. Most helpful. Chapter 4 by van ‘t Spijker is on “The Theology of the Heidelberg Catechism” and again is an excellent chapter. The two longest chapters are chapters 5 and 6, “The Heidelberg Catechism in the Netherlands” and “The Heidelberg Catechism in Preaching and Teaching” (at 57 and 63 pages respectively). Curiously, chapters 5 and 6 have footnotes but virtually all in Dutch (not sure why they were not translated into English). The book ends with a discussion on the continued relevance of the Heidelberg Catechism. *The Church’s Book of Comfort* is well-illustrated and



certainly an edifying and intriguing work. It could have roamed more inclusively to explore the wider influence and relevance of the Heidelberg Catechism. Highly recommended.

## Denominational

***Our Anglican Heritage: Can an Ancient Church Be a Church of the Future?* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. John W. Howe and Sam C. Pascoe. Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2010, 237 pp., paper. ISBN 978-1-60899-489-2**

This is a major revision of a book written in the 1970s by John Howe, commissioned then by David C. Cook Publishing. This second edition has been updated by Sam Pascoe, now of the Anglican Church in North America. *Our Anglican Heritage* is an easy-to-read overview of the historic Anglican tradition. It is divided into fifteen chapters, six appendices, a full glossary and a bibliography. The chapters range from “An Ancient Church: The Historic Roots of the Church in England” to “A Confessing Church: *The Articles of Religion*” and “An Evangelical Church: The Great Missionary Expansion” to matters very contemporary, “A Church on the Fault Lines: The Episcopal Church in America”. Anglicanism is “the third largest branch of Christendom”, so if you are not an Anglican and know very little about Anglicanism, here is the book to begin with. The writing style is accessible and engaging.

## Pastoral

***Building Healthy Churches – Church Membership: How the World Knows Who Represents Jesus.* Jonathan Leeman. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012, 142 pp., hc. ISBN 978-1-4335-3237-5**

“Distilled to the basics” is how I describe this book of 142 pages by Jonathan Leeman, the editorial director of 9Marks Ministries. The eight chapters are each fairly short and can be read quickly. The language is at a good level that could be used in many adult study groups. What I really appreciated came out very clearly in chapter 8, “Must Membership Look the Same Everywhere?” You got it – the answer is yes and no. The yes is “The Biblical Baseline” and the no follows under “A Very Different Model?”, where “procedures, etc.” can differ. In essence, there is a catholicity or universality but not every “procedure” is identical. The work will be helpful not just for Baptists but also for Presbyterian theological institutions or training centres, and I think it would generate good discussion. This book is a companion to other larger volumes under the 9Marks series label. Will it convince folks to “join” local churches? It will certainly help, but some, sadly, will still try to wiggle

away from the clear mandate of Scripture. But I think many will benefit from Leeman's book.

***Facing Death with Jesus.* Christopher W. Bogosh. Yulee, FL: Good Samaritan Books, 2011, 18 pp., paper. ISBN 978-1466497023**

***Facing a Terminal Illness with Jesus.* Christopher W. Bogosh. Yulee, FL: Good Samaritan Books, 2011, 60 pp., paper. ISBN 978-1460976784**

***The Puritans on How to Care for the Sick and Dying: A Contemporary Guide for Pastors and Counselors.* Christopher W. Bogosh. Yulee, FL: Good Samaritan Books, 2011, 102 pp., paper. ISBN 978-1466455955**

Over the years I have given out many copies of the small Banner booklet, *Christians Grieve Too*. The first two mentioned above are similar resources which could stand alongside this older resource. They are all written by the same author, Christopher Bogosh of Florida, a pastor and a registered nurse and founder of Good Samaritan Books. *Facing Death with Jesus* is a booklet which could be bought by pastors to always have on hand in their studies. The print is very large and will be easy for all to read. *Facing a Terminal Illness with Jesus* is a slightly larger work and has an introduction plus seven days of meditations. These two works used appropriately could aid communications about difficult issues. The titles state their theses quite obviously. The last work, *The Puritans on How to Care for the Sick and Dying*, is specifically a work to be used by pastors and counselors as a "guide". It could also be included in a seminary-level, pastoral-care course. The three chapters are "Giving Advice, Information, and Reminders", "Exhorting the Sick or Dying" and "Comforting the Sick or Dying Believer", taken from "Concerning Visitation of the Sick" in the 1645 Directory for Public Worship of God. Helpful appendices are given, which could be very useful for training purposes. All three works are attractively bound and clearly evangelical and biblical.

***You Lost Me: Why Young Christians Are Leaving Church . . . and Re-thinking Faith.* David Kinnaman with Aly Hawkins. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011, 254 pp., hc. ISBN 978-0-8010-1314-0**

The author of this book is both the president of the Barna Group ([www.barna.org](http://www.barna.org)) and the co-author of the bestselling book *unChristian*. The purpose of *You Lost Me* is to give voice to North American young people who were raised in the church but have left it. It is a collection of blunt, sometimes painful and even irreverent stories of young people who are disillusioned with the church and are hurting. The book is divided into three

mains parts: a description of the dropouts based on their own testimony; a summary of their feelings of disconnection with the church; and recommendations and advice from the author and others on what will make reconnection possible for this generation of drop outs. While the tone of the material may sound negative, the book's intent is very positive: ". . . we need to help the next generation of Christ-followers deal well with cultural accommodation; we need to help them live *in-but-not-of* lives. And in the process, we will all be better prepared to serve Christ in a shifting cultural landscape" (p. 15). The church around the world can read this book and benefit from the insights it gives concerning the tension between truth and culture by examining North America as a case study.

Nancy J. Whytock

## Exegetical

**Proverbs & Ecclesiastes. Daniel J. Treier. Brazos Theological Commentary on the Bible. Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2011, 256 pp., hc. ISBN 978-1-58743-148-7**

If asked, "What should I buy on the book of Proverbs?", I would say buy Daniel Treier and Bruce Waltke<sup>1</sup>. The first helps one see the grand theological themes and the second is the finest exegetical commentary on Proverbs in recent generations. Treier devotes approximately one hundred pages each to Proverbs and Ecclesiastes. Treier serves as associate professor of theology at Wheaton College, Illinois – note, not "associate professor of New Testament". This in itself is significant in today's specialized world. I believe it helps redress some imbalances and helps bring integration. Reading Treier and comparing it with Waltke's introductory material in his two volume exegetical work is not like reading all the same ground. Treier is very fresh and brings fresh insights and organization to his material. I agree with Peter Davids that the Brazos Theological Commentary series "reveals major themes that are often unwittingly obscured in the detail of the major exegetical commentaries". In essence, we benefit from both types of work. The pages are not overly cluttered with countless footnotes. The author knows his subject. One paragraph on genre in Proverbs 10-29 was right to the point – "Proverbs do not offer ironclad guarantees . . ." (p. 62). Reflective reading of this work will deepen one's time spent in reading Proverbs and Ecclesiastes.

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<sup>1</sup> Bruce Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs*, 2 vols. NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004-2005).

## Guidance

***God's Will: Finding Guidance for Everyday Decisions.* J. I Packer and Carolyn Nystrom. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008, 270 pp., paper. ISBN 978-0-8010-1441-3**

This is a well-written and well-grounded book on living the Christian life as a believer faces making daily decisions. Sometimes believers are crippled by decision-making while some believers are all too cavalier about making decisions. This book is a balanced centre-course and heartily to be recommended. It begins with the broader picture in the first three chapters and then moves to chapter 4, which is foundational – “Guided by the Word of God”. This is followed by chapter 5, “The Way of Wisdom”, my favourite chapter in the book. I found myself highlighting several sentences in that chapter and am weaving them into my preaching and teaching. I will only give one here: “The life of wisdom is a life of constant learning: constant evaluating, constant discerning, constant extension of one’s understanding” (p. 125). The remaining chapters are solid meat on getting help from others, modelling or imitation, guidance concerning vocation, a true understanding of our situation and the last chapter, “Guarded and Guided by the Holy Spirit”. The book has an epilogue, a helpful appendix and an excellent section of discussion and questions for reflection, making this a fine book for private or group usage. Christian college libraries, make sure this book is on your shelves!

***God told me – who to marry, where to work, which car to buy . . . and I’m pretty sure I’m not crazy: learning to listen for guidance from God.* Jim Samra. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012, 204 pp., paper. ISBN 978-0-8010-1411-6**

This book also needs to be considered next to the Packer and Nystrom work. It probes matters which are either ignored or just discounted as “strange”. First, the author is not a charismatic, so the book cannot be said to represent classic Pentecostal or charismatic thought. But rather, it addresses questions addressed by virtually all evangelical Christians, so it should receive a fair hearing (read) by all. I am drawn instinctively to the Packer and Nystrom book, but I cannot ignore this book either. Samra has a D.Phil. in New Testament from Oxford, has written two other books and is an active pastor. His writing style is engaging and easy to read. The author draws upon familiar names in church history and provides many contemporary illustrations both from his own life and the lives of others. The book’s subtitle and the bi-line on the front cover really says it all: “learning to listen for guidance from God”. In case you are put off, Samra anticipates many questions; such as, “Isn’t the notion of guidance from God ripe for abuse?” (pp. 187-188). The book deserves our honest consideration.

## Preaching

***Why Johnny Can't Preach: The Media Have Shaped the Messengers.* T. David Gordon. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2009, 108 pp., paper. ISBN 978-1-59638-116-2**

Underlying this book is the thesis that western education and culture have greatly changed in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Thus young theologues today arrive at theological colleges/seminaries with a very different educational and cultural perspective than former generations. Hence, the book's title is a "knock-off" of the 1966 book *Why Johnny Can't Read* and the 1990 book *Why Johnny Can't Write*. The author is surely onto something, but his sub-title may have narrowed a full analysis of the situation to one dimension only – *The Media Have Shaped the Messengers*. It is true that our sound-bite culture has influenced oral communication and writing skills radically. I agree to a large extent with the thesis of the book, but I would want to also address other matters such as the spiritual. That said, this book with about one hundred pages of text is passionate, easy-to-read, provocative and worthy of inclusion in a homiletics course as a seminar topic. The book is worth purchasing simply for Gordon's summary of Dabney's seven requisites for every sermon (pp. 23-28), but this entire small book will be stimulating for all who teach homiletics.

## Devotional

***A Woman's Wisdom: how the book of Proverbs speaks to everything.* Lydia Brownback. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012, 223 pp., paper. ISBN 978-1-4335-2827-9**

This well-written book by Lydia Brownback is a wonderful example of extracting the timeless principles of the Scriptures, in this case Proverbs, and applying them to North American culture in the twenty-first century. It is remarkable how she is able to address single and married women without favouring either and with sensitivity to the unique responsibilities and challenges of both. The book is divided into three main sections: what is wisdom and why does it matter; six things wise women know; and a portrait of wisdom. In each case the book of Proverbs is expounded and applied in a refreshing and practical manner. There is a study guide included at the back of the book and the publisher, Crossway, has also made the guide available on their website as a free download (see the bottom of the page at this link – <http://www.crossway.org/books/a-womans-wisdom-tpb/>). This book would be great for use in a women's Bible study. Even for women living outside of North America, the well organized biblical principles could be taken and then applied to other cultural contexts. Highly recommended.

Nancy J. Whytock

***Zeal for Godliness: Devotional Meditations on Calvin's Institutes.*** Eds., Derek W. H. Thomas and R. Carlton Wynne. Darlington, England/Carlisle, PA: EP Books, 2011, 270 pp., hc. ISBN 978-0-85234-758-4

Here is a bite-size way to work through John Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. The book's title, *Zeal for Godliness*, is a wonderful complement to Calvin's goal and full title of his *Institutes*. *Zeal for Godliness* is made up of one-page readings, recast from the Alliance of Confessing Evangelical's online magazine at reformation21.org. It represents thirteen contributors, many whose names will be well-known; for example, Sinclair Ferguson, Paul Helm, Justin Taylor, Philip Ryken, etc. The book's cover says it is "Devotional Meditations on Calvin's *Institutes*". I was thus surprised to see that a scripture text or chief reference was not printed across the top of each page. The layout is as follows: each page has a reference to the section in the *Institutes* (e.g. 1.1.1-1.2.1), then the contributor's comments and his name. Sometimes scriptures are mentioned, sometimes not. The preface says that this may be used "as a travelling companion as you journey through the *Institutes* yourself or as a self-contained in-flight manual for those preferring a bird's eye view of Calvin's theological landscape". I believe that sums it up well. Not a general "family devotional" book, so read the word "devotional" with much latitude of definition.

## Worship

***Psalms for All Seasons: A Complete Psalter for Worship.*** Eds., Martin Tel, John D. Witvliet and Joyce Borger. Grand Rapids: Calvin Institute of Christian Worship/Faith Alive/Brazos Press, 2012, 1128 pp., hc. ISBN 978-1-58743-316-0

This anthology of psalms is thought to be the largest collection of psalms for Christian worship that has ever been published. It contains settings for all 150 psalms, in some cases multiple settings. The book is much more than a collection of traditional metrical psalms as it also includes contemporary settings, chants, responsive readings, hymns combined with psalms, refrains, and ideas for incorporating psalms into various worship settings. The indices at the back are extensive: authors, composers, and sources; genre and musical styles; subjects and seasons; metrical index of tunes; tune names; first line and common titles. This attention to organization and accessibility makes the book very user-friendly. There are also several psalms that include versions in other languages such as Portuguese, Greek, Spanish, Latin and Thai. This international flavour adds to the appeal of the book as a global resource.

Though it is doubtful that such a book will be purchased for general congregational use, there is no doubt that it is an excellent resource for any individual or congregation that desires to enhance and improve their use of the psalms in public or private worship. There are also teaching CD's available that music leaders can use to teach new psalms. The book and CDs can be ordered from the website – [psalmsforallseasons.org](http://psalmsforallseasons.org).

*Nancy J. Whytock*

## Biography

***Matthew Henry (1662-1714): His Life and Influence.* Allan Harman. Fearn, Ross-shire, Scotland: Christian Focus, 2012, 207 pp., paper. ISBN 978-1-84550-783-1**

This book is ordered by the author's preface followed by two contextual chapters: "The Puritan Environment" and "The Family Background". These contextual chapters are followed by ten chapters chronologically developing the life of Matthew Henry from his birth in 1662 to his death in 1714. The final four chapters are thematic, looking at Henry as a preacher and a commentator, his other writings, and his impact. The author then ends with a short conclusion and a general index. All of this in a paperback of about 200 pages and all, I might add, highly readable so that many will do well to select this as a *must read* biographical study on the esteemed commentator. The author is very familiar with his subject, this being his second published book related to Henry. A few illustrations are included. A map would have been of benefit for many readers. It was surprising not to find mention of Manser's new edited edition of Henry's commentary (recently published by Zondervan) with perhaps some evaluation.

There are some absolutely profound quotations sprinkled throughout the book. One I will end with:

Schism is an uncharitable distance, division, or alienation of affection among those who are called Christians, and agree in the fundamentals of religion, occasioned by their different apprehension about little things. . . .

And yet I am afraid even saints will be men; there will be remainders even of those corruptions which are the seed of schism, in the best, till we all come to the perfect man. (pp. 172-173)

Take up and read!