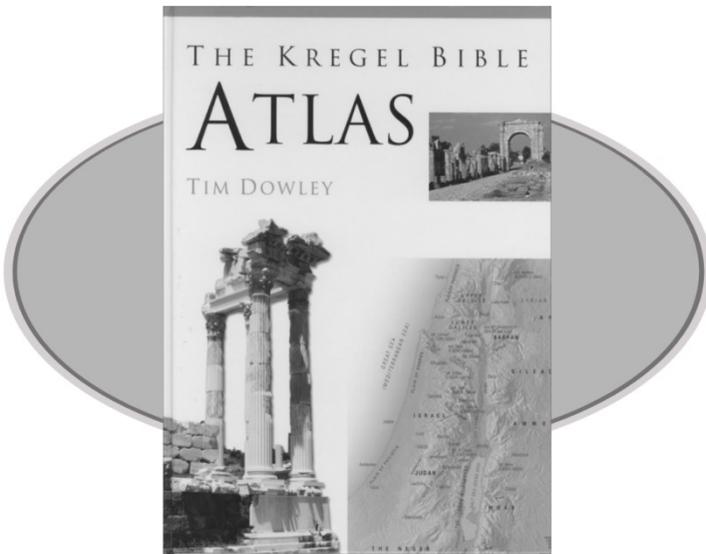


Book Reviews

***The Kregel Bible Atlas.* Tim Dowley. A worldwide coedition by Angus Hudson Ltd., London. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2003, 96 pp., hc. ISBN 0-8254-2467-4**



At last an affordable, accurate and readable atlas with super photographs and maps for Christians to gain tremendous insight into the Scriptures! I was introduced by a student to this fine, little atlas as a valuable resource for colleges in the developing world. It is suitable for the whole world, and I encourage readers in any country to consider this excellent publication.

The book is divided into four parts: “The Lands of the Bible”, “The Old Testament”, “Between the Testaments” and “The New Testament”. I am convinced many Bible colleges in the developing world can use this for several courses, such as Old Testament and New Testament

introductions or surveys. I tested it out for a New Testament Introduction class in Africa and found it very helpful.

Few atlases can combine three things well: written commentary, good pictures and illustrations, and high quality maps. *The Kregel Bible Atlas* manages to do all three, no doubt due to the writer and compiler's knowledge and abilities. Tim Dowley has traveled extensively in Turkey, Israel and the Bible lands; and this book clearly reflects a seasoned and knowledgeable writer. He is also the editor of the noted *Baker Atlas of Christian History*, not to mention several other resources, and he appears to have a good understanding of the visual cultural age in which we live. Yet this is not just a carefully crafted visual work, but in addition the written commentary is so highly informative that it helps open up much of the Scripture. The text truly complements the maps, illustrations, photographs and charts.

The author provides a good starting point with his first map of "The Fertile Crescent" and starts us with a fine geographical study of this area and a more concentrated study on Palestine (pp. 4-16). Great to see proper geographical reference to the Rift Valley and the Dead Sea. A good understanding of the geography of Palestine will help Bible reading – just think of Psalms and so many of the allusions. Then with this geographical basis, the author takes us into part two, "The Old Testament", starting with Abraham's journeys and then proceeding basically chronologically through the remainder of the Old Testament and Palestine after the Exile.

I find myself being shy to pass any critical comments but will venture one or two. It is standard to have maps of Paul's three missionary journeys, but since Dowley appears to have taken a decided view (p. 87) that Paul was released from custody in Rome "and resumed his travels", a fourth map would have helped the reader quickly locate some places he names with this thesis. I also felt the commentary section on "The Fertile Crescent" needed expansion.

Part three, "Between the Testaments" (pp. 59-64), is most interesting and starts with Alexander the Great. (Better connection here could have been made.) The section on the Maccabean Revolt is good and is sufficient for such a survey.

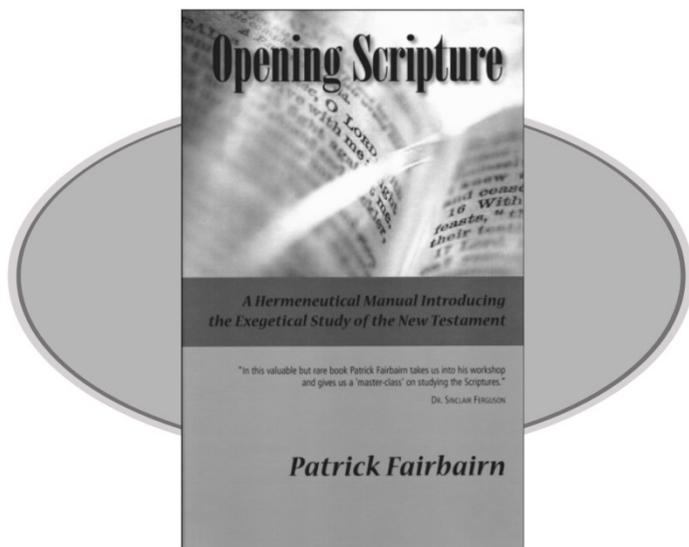
The section on the life of Jesus is well done and could be useful to an adult Bible Class leader. The material on Paul and the spread of Christianity is excellent. There are two maps (pp. 90 and 91) on "The Spread of Christianity by A.D. 100" and "The Spread of Christianity by A.D. 300", both with good resolution and colouring.

Thank you, Kregel, for making this fine and affordable Bible atlas available. An excellent companion to this volume is Kregel's newly

revised and updated *St. Paul, the Traveler and Roman Citizen*, by William M. Ramsay (see book notice, p. 111). This classic work has been updated by Mark Wilson and includes modern illustration and archaeological photographs. I am delighted to see an evangelical publishing house producing these high quality study materials. All who love geography, history and the Bible will benefit from these.

Reviewed by Jack C. Whytock

***Opening Scripture: A Hermeneutical Manual Introducing the Exegetical Study of the New Testament.* Patrick Fairbairn. Birmingham, AL: SGCB, no date, 480pp., hc. ISBN 1-932474-51-X.¹**



Patrick Fairbairn² was one of the last biblical theologians of the nineteenth century to be moving forward with the study of hermeneutics based on the inspiration and authority of the Word of God. He contributed classic studies on Typology, on Prophecy and on The Law. He wrote commentaries on Ezekiel and on The Pastoral Epistles. By the time of his death in 1874, evangelical biblical scholarship had descended into in-fighting as liberalism made its inroads into what were previously orthodox seminaries and denominations. The conservative wagons were circled, the polemics begun, and years wasted until the middle of the last century, when evangelical scholarship, leaving the liberals to their own thoughts, again came into its own.

¹ This book is a reprint of the 1858 edition, by T & T Clark, of Fairbairn's *Hermeneutical Manual or Introduction to the Exegetical Study of the New Testament*.

² For more information on Fairbairn see *Haddington House Journal*, Volume 6, 2004, 110-116.

It is these years which the locusts have eaten which give Fairbairn's works their freshness and relevance. Even though his style is decidedly Victorian, his thoughts are surprisingly up to date because discussions have only recently – comparatively speaking – been taken up from where they were left in his day. Fairbairn has clear and balanced opinions on preaching Christ from the Old Testament; on the Old Testament, New Testament and present uses of the Law; and on understanding the place of Israel and features of the millennium in the prophetic portions of Scripture. He speaks to issues which are hotly debated in Reformed circles today.

This book is the last of Fairbairn's major works to be reprinted. It has three parts to it:

- 1) Discussion of facts and principles bearing on the language and interpretation of New Testament Scripture.
- 2) Dissertations on particular subjects connected with the exegesis of New Testament Scripture.
- 3) The use made of Old Testament Scripture in the writings of the New Testament.

One of the reasons why it has not been reprinted earlier might be that it is really three books rather than a book in three parts as each part easily stands on its own. The first gives an introduction to the Greek of the New Testament and the ground rules of New Testament interpretation. It is this section which most matches the original title of the book as a hermeneutical manual. After a description of the language of the New Testament, which is not substantially different than the conclusions reached by more recent writers, there are sections dealing with, among other things, the interpretation of parables, figurative language, the relation of the Old Testament to the New and the Analogy of the Faith.

The second part contains word studies and exegetical essays. It is doubtful that they could be called an introduction to the exegetical study of the New Testament, and given their style, there are other writers whose essays would be better models to follow. However, the content of these studies makes them highly recommended reading for anyone engaged in the exegesis of the New Testament. Fairbairn's study on the *baptizo* word group is both edifying and entertaining. The findings of his essay on *diatheke* are corroborated by that of Leon Morris³ writing one hundred years later. His articles on the names of

³ Leon Morris, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965), 65-111.

Christ, the genealogies of Christ, angels and Hades are informative, thought provoking and marked by moderation.

The third part lists the Old Testament passages quoted in the New, noting the manner of their citation and the mode of their application. In the first section of this part, Fairbairn divides these quotations into four categories: those which match the Hebrew Old Testament exactly, those which match the Hebrew but have differences which do not alter the sense, those which match the Septuagint and those whose source is not clear. Notes are attached to each quotation helpfully explaining the manner of its citation. Roger Nicole says of the second section:

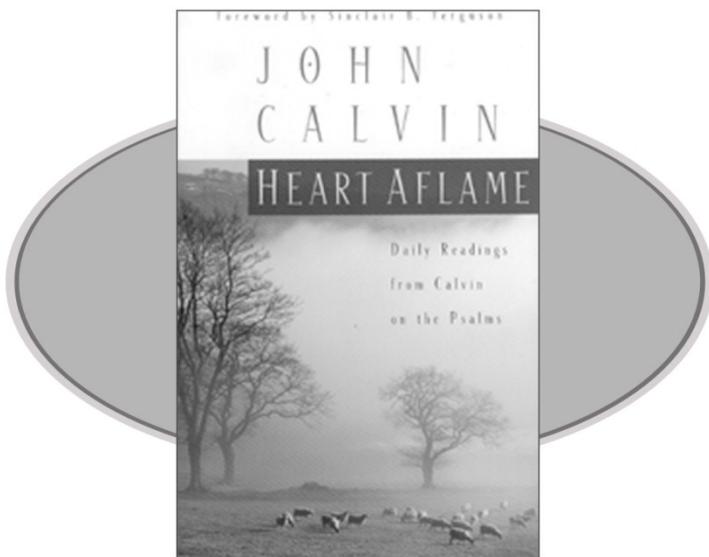
In a second section Fairbairn discusses singly a number of quotations, some nineteen of them to be exact, in which the meaning of the Old Testament in its context does not seem to have been properly considered in the New Testament usage. Here again Fairbairn comes forth with extremely helpful comments in which he supports the practice of the New Testament writers in every case. It is high time that in the midst of controversies in which all kinds of accusations are leveled against the use of the Old Testament by New Testament authors the painstaking work of Patrick Fairbairn and his monumental scholarship be once again taken into consideration. I am sure that those who read his volumes will find themselves amply rewarded.⁴

Opening Scripture is no less thorough a study of its subjects than any of Fairbairn's other works. It is, however, a book which will interest different people for different reasons. The last part on its own is worth the price of the book simply because there are not many other in depth studies of the Old Testament quotations in the New. The dissertations in the second part will be of interest to students of the New Testament when the subject treated is before them. The first part is as good a summary of its subject as is available and should be required reading for all students entering into a study of the New Testament. As this book is only in print once every one hundred and fifty years, it is recommended that the interested reader obtain his copy soon.

⁴ Roger Nicole, *Standing Forth* (Fearn: Christian Focus Publications, 2002), 87.

David Douglas Gebbie is a regular reviewer for this Journal. Rev. Gebbie is a native of Scotland and was educated at Glasgow College of Technology and the Free Church of Scotland College, Edinburgh. Before his induction to the Presbyterian Reformed Church (PRC) in Chesley, Ontario, he served Free Church of Scotland charges in Raasay and Achiltibuie and pastored the PRC's congregation in Portland, Oregon.

Heart Aflame: Daily Readings from Calvin on the Psalms.
John Calvin. Foreword by Sinclair B. Ferguson.
Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 1999, 378 pp., paper.
ISBN 0-87552-458-3



In his foreword to this book, Sinclair Ferguson immediately points out that it is quite rare and unusual to use the writings of John Calvin as a part of one's daily devotional readings. However, this collection has made Calvin's *Commentary on the Psalms* very appealing to those who have a desire not only to learn more about the Psalms but also to understand more about a man with a rich biblical understanding and a remarkable spiritual intelligence.

The book is organized into 366 daily readings and uses excerpts from Calvin's commentary on all 150 psalms. More time is spent on some psalms than on others in the daily readings. For instance, the 176 verses of Psalm 119 are divided into 21 daily readings. Each daily reading averages 300-400 words.

This book is a noteworthy resource for studying the Psalms and should be read in conjunction with the corresponding reading from the Book of Psalms itself. Calvin vividly described the Psalms as "an anatomy of all the parts of the soul". Ferguson states that "in these pages you will find the Spirit-inspired biblical anatomy of the Psalms

and the hands of an outstanding physician and surgeon of the spirit. Reading them on a daily basis can hardly fail to bring you spiritual health and strength.” (p. vi)

The daily readings generally highlight one or two verses and then proceed to offer teaching upon them in the way a pastor might present in an expositional sermon. For example, the first reading is from Psalm 1: 1-2. Calvin here elaborates on “Blessed is the man”:

The meaning of the Psalmist is that it shall be always well with God’s devout servants, whose constant endeavor it is to make progress in the study of his law. He teaches us how impossible it is for anyone to apply his mind to meditation upon God’s law, who has not first withdrawn and separated himself from the society of the ungodly. It is necessary to remember that the world is fraught with deadly corruption, and that the first step to living well is to renounce the company of the ungodly, otherwise it is sure to infect us with its own pollution. (p. 1)

The insight that Calvin draws from these four simple words have great implication that even an advanced Christian might not see. This makes the daily reading a far better guide for Bible study than is generally available in the average devotional.

Commentaries such as Calvin’s on the Psalms are most often used for in-depth study and exegesis by theologians and pastors or for quick reference in a seminary library. However, this book of daily readings makes Calvin’s exposition more accessible to the average Christian reader.¹ With this in mind, the publisher informs us that he chose to use the NIV translation of the Scriptures except for cases where Calvin’s argument required the original wording. He also reworked Rev. James Anderson’s English translation of Calvin’s commentary on the Psalms, originally published in 1845, updating it into modern English.

In Calvin’s commentary we find evidence of his own love of the Psalms, as expressed in excerpts from his July 1557 preface to the book:

I have been accustomed to call this book, I think not inappropriately, “An Anatomy of all the Parts of the Soul”;

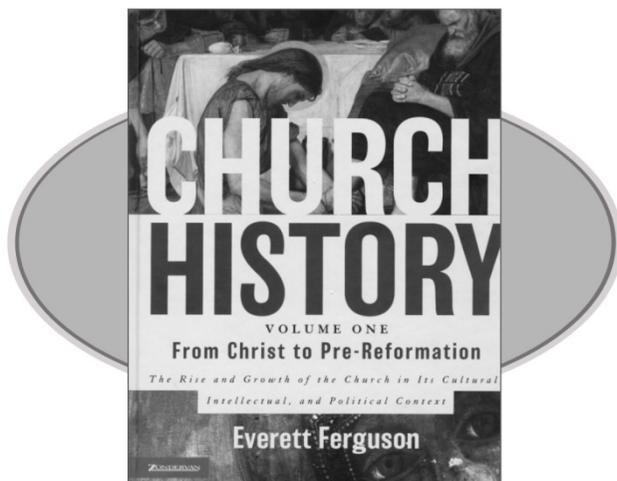
¹ Compiler’s preface, ix

for there is not an emotion of which any one can be conscious that is not here represented as in a mirror. Or rather, the Holy Spirit has here drawn to the life of all the griefs, sorrows, fears, doubts, hopes, cares, perplexities, in short, all the distracting emotions with which the minds of men are wont to be agitated. (p. x)

The Reformed heritage of faith has continually sought after counsel for spiritual guidance from the book of Psalms. This book serves as an excellent resource and devotional guide for daily insight into the Psalms. Words cannot adequately express the inspiration which comes from this book of the Bible and how powerfully the words can penetrate the hearts of sinners. Calvin also very eloquently teaches from the Psalms the traits that believers of Christ should exemplify on a constant basis. As a person who did not grow up with the regular exposure to the Psalms, I have benefited greatly from reading this daily. *Heart Aflame* is a helpful, Bible-based devotional that will give Christians an opportunity to study the Psalm in a very concise yet thoughtful manner.

Reviewed by Gabriel Statom. Dr. Statom is the Director of Music at First Presbyterian Church, Lake Wales, Florida and is a graduate of the University of Mississippi, Florida State University and The Institute for Worship Studies.

***Church History Volume One: From Christ to Pre-Reformation.* Everett Ferguson. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005, 544 pp. ISBN 0-310-20580-8**



It is well known that most recent biblical scholarship takes a decidedly skeptical attitude toward the Bible's historical accuracy. Unfortunately, it is less well known, but equally true, that most scholarship about the history of the Christian Church is also quite skeptical, in ways that I will explain below. In the midst of such academic skepticism, this book, whose author is a noted and prolific scholar of the early Church, comes as a breath of fresh air. In this review, I would like to discuss four major ways in which I think this book is a significant improvement over other textbook-level surveys of the early and Medieval periods, and in the process, I will also have occasion to point out what I see to be the major problems with other books of its genre.

First, Ferguson is obviously sympathetic to the way the Church has understood itself. During the time period the book covers (NT times to A.D. 1300), the Church clearly saw itself as the guardian of the truth it had received from God through Scripture and as the holy opponent of those who would distort the Christian faith. In spite of this, most contemporary historians tend to disregard the way the Church told its own story, to regard "orthodoxy" as an arbitrary idea, and to overemphasize the significance of competing versions of the Christian

faith. The not-very-well-concealed agenda behind such treatments of Church history is to “prove” that there was not a single kind of orthodox Christianity, but rather, that there were many “Christianities,” many versions of the faith that were – in the eyes of modern relativism – all equally good. Such an agenda seems, to a greater or lesser degree, to pervade recent books on the period, but Ferguson’s work is dramatically different. Rather than treating Gnosticism as a viable alternative incorrectly suppressed by the Church, Ferguson writes of a clear *consensus faith* held by the Church, on the basis of which Gnosticism was found to be wanting (p. 98). Discussing the formation of the New Testament Canon, Ferguson does not try to argue that the Church *decided* (arbitrarily) which books belonged, but instead argues correctly that the Church *recognized* which books carried divine authority (p. 121). Against the prevailing view that “tradition” dominated the theology of the early Church, Ferguson points out that in the minds of the Church fathers themselves, their dominant task was simply to interpret the Bible correctly (p. 225). And perhaps most noteworthy in our current political climate, Ferguson points out – again, correctly – that during the Crusades the Christians were *not* more brutal than the Muslims were (p. 417). These are just a few of many examples one could give to demonstrate that Ferguson is willing to take seriously the way the Christian Church has told its own story.

Second, as he discusses the development of the Church, Ferguson is able to show the importance of context without unduly condescending to the attitudes of early and Medieval Christians. To many contemporary historians, the fact that people in earlier eras were influenced by their context becomes an excuse for discounting the ideas of those earlier periods. *They* were bound by their context, so *we* need not take them seriously. In contrast to this sort of attitude, some conservative thinkers tend to ignore context altogether and to paint the picture of earlier times as if it were nothing but a clash between the unalloyed truth and complete falsehood. Ferguson does not fall into either of these traps, but instead, he is able to describe the influence of the Greek and Latin mindsets on the branches of the Church, without thereby implying that one need not take one or the other seriously. He sets the tone for this careful treatment of context at the very beginning, by discussing “three concentric circles of influence” on the world of Christianity: the Roman, the Greek, and the Jewish (p. 27), and he points out significantly that “Paul was spiritually a Jew, legally, a Roman, and intellectually a Greek” (p. 37). Later, Ferguson explains that the legalism of the Western Church was “a wedding of Rome’s legal traditions with the Mosaic law read as applying directly to the

church's institutions" (p. 128). As he moves from the early Church to the Middle Ages, Ferguson summarizes (quite simply, but without undue oversimplification) that Medieval civilization was built on the theology and spiritual practice of Augustine, the culture of the declining Roman Empire, and the customs of the Germanic peoples who conquered that Roman Empire. In contrast, he asserts (equally simply, and accurately) that Byzantine civilization was based on the culture of ancient Greece, the institutions of the Roman state, and the customs of the Near Eastern peoples who had been first Hellenized and then Christianized (p. 286). Through such attention to the varying contexts that influenced the developing Church, Ferguson gives the reader a clear sense of how Eastern and Western Christianity diverged during the Middle Ages.

Third, Ferguson's discussion of Western doctrinal development is excellent. Since most evangelical readers of Church history are primarily interested in the Reformation, one of the major tasks of any early/Medieval survey book should be to help the reader understand the environment from which the Reformation sprang. Unlike many books in its class (in which social and political factors take pride of place), Ferguson's work shows clearly the *theological* development of the Medieval Western Church that made the Reformation both necessary and possible. He traces the idea of the Church as an all-inclusive institution (the forerunner of the Medieval concept of the Church) all the way back to the early third century (pp. 136-8). Ferguson's summary of Augustine's theology (p. 279) clearly lays out the way Augustine's ideas influenced the rise of Medieval theology later. His discussion of the rise of scholasticism in the eleventh century (pp. 422-4) and the shifts within scholasticism in the thirteenth century (pp. 489-90) help to show how dramatically the intellectual climate changed between A.D. 1000 and A.D. 1500. And Ferguson's assertion that in the later Middle Ages, the Church began to regard any lack of submission to its own authority as "heresy" (p. 501) goes a long way toward helping the reader grasp the stifling religious climate that preceded the Reformation. From Ferguson's excellent treatment, it is clear that doctrine, as much as politics and social forces, created the Hydra of late Medieval Roman Catholicism against which the Reformation rebelled.

Fourth, Ferguson's presentation of Eastern doctrinal development is considerably better than is typical in survey books written by Westerners, although there is still much room for improvement. Western books on historical theology tend to depict the Eastern

controversies over the Trinity and the Person of Christ as largely philosophical and terminological debates, in which two distinct schools of thought clashed and then eventually compromised. Such a way of depicting these controversies fails to recognize both the *significance* of the debates (that is, that they were not merely logomachies devoid of any practical interest) and the *degree of consensus* present in the Church (that is, that they were cases of the whole Church opposing a few people, *not* cases of equally-represented schools clashing over words). In contrast to such approaches, Ferguson does considerably better. He recognizes correctly that the Trinitarian Controversy was fundamentally a clash between differing views of *salvation*, one held by Athanasius (and the Church) and the other held by Arius and his followers (p. 205). In fact, Ferguson later argues correctly that *all* the major doctrinal controversies of the early Church may be seen as disputes about what salvation is, who achieves it, and how it is achieved (p. 326). In spite of these improvements, however, I still believe that Ferguson has imbibed too much of the approach to the controversies as clashes and later compromises between equally-represented (and equally-acceptable) schools of thought. This shows up most clearly on page 330, where Ferguson describes the four Christological councils as representing a pendulum swing between the emphases of Antioch and Alexandria. This is pretty standard, but it is at odds with the way the Church has historically understood those councils (as a straight line of development and interpretation of previous councils), and thus at odds with Ferguson's general sympathy for the way the Church has understood itself.

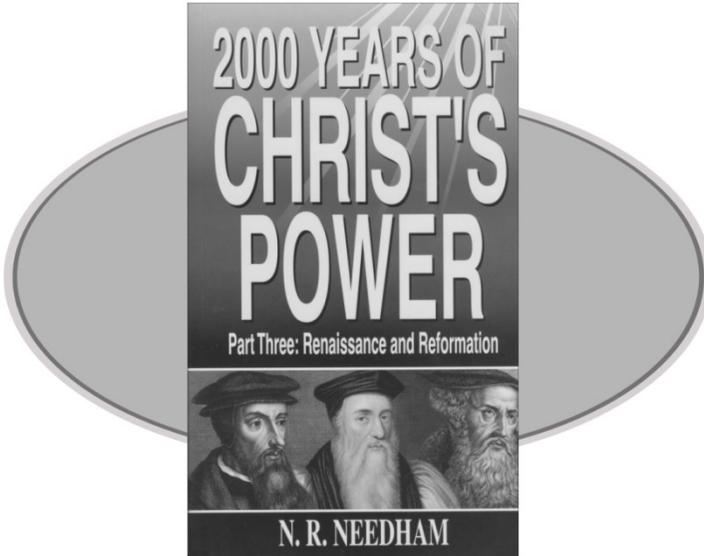
Overall, Ferguson's work is a considerable improvement over other survey-level treatments of the Church prior to the Reformation. As this review has sought to emphasize, Ferguson avoids most of the problems that plague typical survey books of this kind. The balance between doctrinal development, social and political issues, and institutional concerns is excellent. The book is generally clear and readable. And significantly, it is a good length for a book of its scope: At 544 pages, it is considerably more detailed than Mark Noll's *Turning Points* (which is a wonderful book to read but not detailed enough for textbook use), but it is much more manageable than longer, tougher reads such as Latourette's *A History of Christianity*. As a teacher of early and Medieval Christianity, I have found myself changing the textbook for my course every year I have taught it. Now I think I have finally found something suitable for long-term use.

I feel compelled to close with one more criticism of Ferguson's work. There were many places in the treatment of the Middle Ages

where I thought that the author was simply presenting an aggregate of facts, and the cohesiveness that had been there in the early part of the book was somewhat lacking. Thus, I got the impression that he was less able to weave his material together into a coherent story when he was discussing the Middle Ages than when he was writing on the early Church. This is hardly surprising, since Ferguson is an early-Church scholar. But I noted that the forthcoming second volume of the series (dealing with the Renaissance, Reformation, and modern periods) is to be a collaborative work written by John Woodbridge and Frank James III. In light of how much smoother Ferguson's book is on the early Church than on the Middle Ages, it might have been useful for the first volume of the series to have been a collaborative effort as well, with a true Medievalist writing the second half of it.

Reviewed by Donald Fairbairn, the Associate Dean of Theology and Professor of Historical Theology at Erskine Theological Seminary, Due West, South Carolina. Dr. Fairbairn is a graduate of Princeton University, Denver Seminary and Cambridge University. He has served as a missionary in the Ukraine and is a part-time Professor of Historical Theology at the Evangelical Faculty in Leuven, Belgium. He has also taught for two Summer Schools at Haddington House in Charlottetown. Dr. Fairbairn has a desire to impart in his teaching "a vision for the world and an understanding of the task of proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ in widely divergent cultural situations".

***2,000 Years of Christ's Power, Part Three: Renaissance and Reformation.* N. R. Needham. London: Grace, 2004, paper, 624 pp. ISBN 0-946462-66-6**



This book is the third volume in Dr. Needham's projected comprehensive history of the church from the age of the church fathers to the present day. While Dr. Needham is an accomplished scholar in the fields of church history and historical theology, in these volumes he brings his learning to bear in a manner which is easily accessible to the layperson.¹ In a time where neither history nor the reading of books seem to be a particularly strong part of church culture, the fact that there are books such as these which compress so much valuable information into a such a relatively short compass is to be welcomed by all who have a concern for the church's historic heritage.

Needham's work is divided into nine chapters. He starts off by helpfully outlining the background to the Protestant Reformation in the Renaissance, a movement of cultural renewal which transformed education, scholarship and much of culture in Western Europe from the fourteenth century. Then he deals in some detail with the figure of

¹ The author is presently a professor at Highland Theological College, Dingwall, and pastors a church in Inverness. The contents of this book originated as lectures at the Samuel Bill Theological College in Nigeria.

Martin Luther, without doubt the central theological personality of the Reformation, whose focus on justification by faith as the heart of the Pauline gospel was to have profound influence across the Protestant spectrum. After Luther, he discusses the contributions of Zwingli and Calvin, before spending a chapter examining the rise and development of the so-called Radical Reformation, a term which serves historians as a convenient catch-all for those disparate groups of Protestants who do not fall under the rubric of the so-called Magisterial Reformation of such as Luther, Zwingli and Calvin. This Magisterial Reformation was marked by a conscious attempt to forge new alliances between church and state in the wake of the rejection of Catholicism; the Radical Reformers tended to forge paths of reform which were independent from the established state authorities and even, in case of figures such as Thomas Muntzer, in violent opposition to such authorities.

Two further chapters outline the political impact of the Reformation on Europe and the path of reform in England and Scotland, and these are followed by a helpful discussion of the Catholic Counter-Reformation. The final chapter, on Eastern Orthodoxy, is a timely reminder that Christianity was not just a Western European phenomenon, and that Eastern Orthodoxy too experienced its own theological controversies and also connected at key points with the winds of change coming from the West.

A few observations are in order. First, I always find myself slightly irritated by the description of the Catholic Church as engaging in a Counter-Reformation. This makes it sound as if the Church was simply involved in anti-Protestant reaction. In fact, the Church contained numerous people from the fourteenth century onwards who saw the need for reform of some kind within Catholicism. Thus, the sixteenth century really gives examples of numerous types of reformers, some of whom could not be contained within the church (e.g., Luther), some of whom did remain within the church (e.g., Contarini). Needham is clearly aware of this; I simply wish that he had made it clear in his terminology: Catholic Reformation seems to me to be a much fairer presentation of the Catholic reform program.

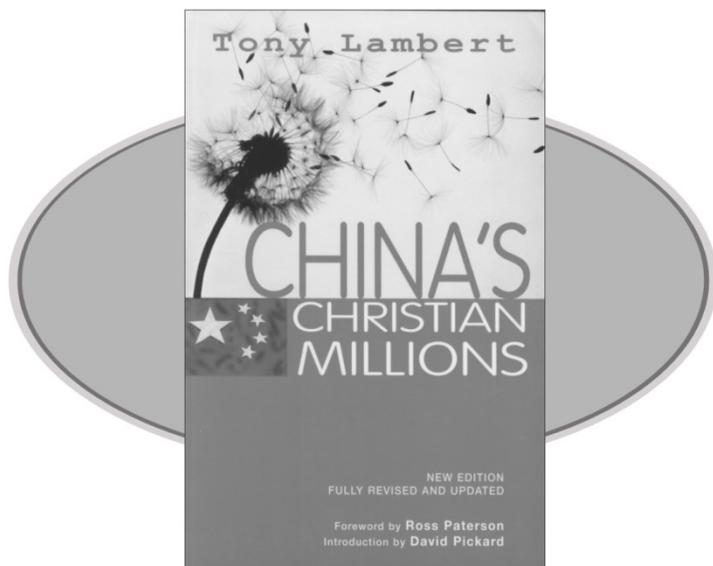
Second, the chapter on Greek Orthodoxy makes the volume extremely useful in bringing attention to this neglected area. If, as *Christianity Today* has recently claimed, the present century could be the century of Orthodoxy, then Protestants are going to need to know more about their Orthodox brethren and be able to connect their history to those of the Eastern churches more effectively if they are going to be able to make informed judgments on what unites and divides the two

traditions. That Needham has managed to do this so thoughtfully at such an accessible level makes the book ideal for use in Sunday School classes or as the basis for thoughtful church discussion.

In short, this book, indeed, this whole series, is well worth purchasing, reading and inwardly digesting.

Carl R. Trueman is Professor of Historical Theology and Church History at Westminster Theological Seminary, Philadelphia. He has an M.A. from St. Catharine's College, Cambridge, and a Ph.D. from the University of Aberdeen and has previously taught at the University of Nottingham and the University of Aberdeen. He is the editor of Themelios, the journal of the UCCF's Religious and Theological Studies Fellowship. He serves on the Council of Reference for Haddington House.

***China's Christian Millions.* Tony Lambert. Oxford: Monarch Books, 1999/2006, 288 pp., paper. ISBN 0-8254-6115-4**



In *China's Christian Millions* Tony Lambert presents a thoroughly documented, well-balanced and inspiring panorama and analysis of God's work in China over the last thirty years, a movement viewed by some as probably the biggest revival in world history. Lambert is singularly fitted to research and present such a study. Since having begun his Chinese language study in 1965, he has superbly mastered the language, worked in China and visited Chinese Christians in all sectors of the Church and all parts of China, worked with the British Embassy in Beijing and for over twenty years been the Director of China Research for OMF International (formerly China Inland Mission).

In the course of the book, Lambert presents a factual and thoughtful view of both the Three Self Patriotic Movement (TSPM) registered churches and the house church movement, clearly showing the way the Lord is working in *both* of these segments – in spite of a mutual suspicion that often exists between them, the fruit of years of bitter experience, persecution and betrayal. For both Lambert gives documentation of faithful preaching of the gospel, conversions,

baptisms and mighty working of the Holy Spirit, resulting in amazing growth. It was refreshing to read such statements by Lambert as, “At the heart of church growth and revival in China is personal transformation by the living Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit. At root, the church, whether house church or TSPM-related, is firmly biblical. The authority of the Bible is taken for granted as a divinely given axiom” (p. 22).

Showing the vitality experienced, he gives the example of a registered church in Beijing where an overflowing congregation of hundreds was streaming out of the first service to make way for an equally large group entering, to worship together with spirited singing, passionate congregational prayer and eager attention to sermons of an hour or longer. He also shows how many in the registered churches are actively taking advantage of their “official” position to reach out in social activism into their communities and nation, effectively breaking down prejudice and presenting a strong witness to the practical power of the gospel.

The house church particularly takes exception to the TSPM position in insisting that Christ is the only Head of His Church and steadfastly resisting government encroachment upon that liberty. In describing the house church movement, Lambert states:

The Chinese house church manifests a robust theology, far from being pursued in an academic ivory tower. It breathes a deep commitment to Christ and his Word and throughout there is a commendable emphasis on practical Christian living. There are important lessons to learn in Western evangelical circles from the way the Chinese Church rejects both legalism and antinomianism. For the Chinese Christians, discipleship is costly, involving “walking the way of the cross” and this shows itself in ardent evangelism. (p. 80)

Lambert gives abundant evidence that the claims of growth in the Church are not the product of inflated figures, including fifty pages of province by province facts and figures in the indices. The Communist government itself admits a twelve-fold growth in the registered church over the last twenty years (p. 38). Looking at this with a longer view, where in 1949 there were around 700,000 Protestants, today the “official” figure is between seventeen and twenty million in the registered church alone. A truer figure, including house church believers as well, is more likely to be around sixty million (p. 19)! And while for many years the Communist authorities tried to deny the

existence of the house churches, their internal reports clearly document them as a real force in China. In fact, so wide-spread are they that the Communists have created a special term for this “revival of unofficial Christianity” – “Christianity Fever”! (p. 57.)

However, not all is “rosy”. Lambert gives a full picture, pointing out the areas of weakness, but clearly portraying the large majority of churches as being very sound theologically and alive spiritually. Yes, there is an element of compromise frequently required of the registered churches in order to retain the opportunity to preach the gospel reasonably freely, and there is the reality of infiltrators and informants. Nonetheless, even within that situation, many pastors are boldly and fearlessly proclaiming the fundamental truths of the gospel of Jesus Christ in a way that few evangelical Christians would question. And, true, within the house church movement there is a fringe element that strays beyond the limits into the area of sects or cults, yet Lambert portrays this as a very small minority of the movement. Most proclaim a conservative, evangelical theology, as well as believing in...and manifesting...the power of the Holy Spirit through gifts of the Spirit. Many well-authenticated stories are given throughout the book of miraculous healings leading to wonderful conversions – sometimes of Communist village leaders. Other gifts, including the gift of tongues, are manifested; but the focus of the preaching in the majority of the house church movement remains salvation through the cross of Jesus Christ, and they clarify that such gifts are neither a sign nor a requisite of salvation.

Throughout the book Lambert also traces the reality of suffering and persecution experienced by our Chinese brethren – although not portrayed in order to pull the heart strings. In fact, the Chinese prize the privilege of suffering for Christ and are mindful that without this it is too easy to have a “cheap believism” where counting the cost is far from necessary. As has so often been the case in the history of the Church, the persecution has produced a strength and fire in the Chinese Church and has often provided an unequalled opportunity for witness to unbelievers.

One of the recurring themes throughout the book is the wonderful way that seeds sown prior to 1948 by missionaries, far from dying under Mao Zedong’s terrible persecutions and suppression, went underground to burst forth with tremendous power and vitality when the oppression was to some extent lifted. What a word of encouragement this must be to all who labour in difficult fields of

God's vineyard, seeing little present fruit. Surely God's word will not return to Him void!

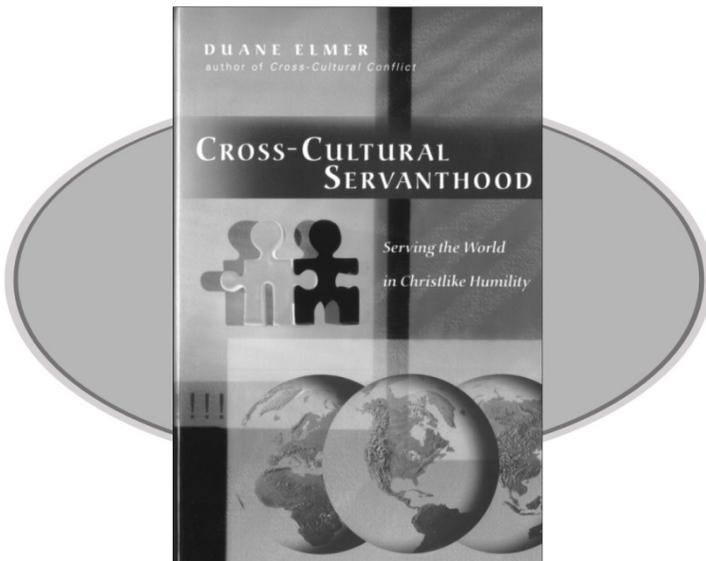
A second recurring theme is the need in both the registered churches and the house church movement for more and better trained pastors and Christian workers. Lambert documents that in Yunnan province in 2005 there were over 800,000 believers in the registered churches with only eighty pastors, and in some places the ratio is even lower. Another significant area of need is a way to reach children. Teaching religion and evangelizing those under eighteen is strictly forbidden, and the majority of Chinese Christians view children as too young to understand or be reached by the gospel. This is a real area for prayer for those who have a burden for the Church in China.

Lambert's book offers a healthy corrective for numerous misconceptions abroad concerning the situation of the Church in China. As well as being an inspiration, possibly more importantly, readers will find *China's Christian Millions* a challenge, and perhaps a rebuke, to those of us in the West where Christianity comes with such a small price tag and shows so little vitality and growth. As Lambert himself puts it:

It has been my steadily growing conviction over more than twenty years that we in the West need to learn from what God has done and is doing in China. In an era of superficial spirituality and spurious movements that have falsely claimed revival, it is vital that we learn lessons from God's people who have experienced genuine renewal (p. 24).

Reviewed by Christina Lehmann. Christina serves at Haddington House, Charlottetown, PEI, as Personal Administrative Assistant and as Registrar. She was born in Ohio, grew up in Pennsylvania and lived in New Hampshire, Bermuda and Carleton County, New Brunswick, before moving to Prince Edward Island.

***Cross-Cultural Servanthood: Serving the World in Christlike Humility.* Duane Elmer. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2006, 212 pp., paper \$15.00 (USD). ISBN-10: 0-8308-3378-1; ISBN-13: 978-0-8308-3378-8**



Duane Elmer, professor of International Studies at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, Illinois, delivers an engaging and easily read work, full of sage advice and principles for cross-cultural sensitivity. Those preparing to serve in ministry or mission work, either short or long-term, will find this book helpful.

One of the most attractive attributes to Elmer's writing is his humility, which permeates the book as he points out the faults missionaries have historically made, beginning with himself. We get the impression he is still open to learning and growing in the area of cross-cultural sensitivity and in his desire to serve as Jesus has done.

The book is divided into three parts – Part I: Servanthood: Basic Perspectives, Part II: Servanthood: The Process and Part III: Servanthood: The Challenges. The heart of the book is the unpacking of the “process” needed to become a good servant to the people to

whom we minister: openness, acceptance, trust, learning, understanding and finally serving.

The author very clearly writes:

This book is about servanthood, focusing primarily on *relationship* factors and the *adjustment* factors. I believe that most people going overseas are quite well equipped in *task* effectiveness; that is they are technically competent to do the job because most schools and workshops focus on job skills. This book focuses on relational and adjustment competency so that the servant spirit we wish to portray will, in fact, be seen and valued by the local people. All three competencies must be present in the servant for any one of them to be successful (pp. 13-14).

Elmer appropriately and helpfully warns Westerners of a tendency toward ethnocentrism, manifested in a superior and patronizing attitude.

The difficulty is in learning how to help in the best way possible, serving in a way that acknowledges and maintains the respect and dignity of those to whom we minister, while most definitely trying to teach and influence them for positive growth. This is the great tension in which we minister, being a leader while simultaneously trying to be a humble servant. It is interesting that Elmer objects to the perhaps trite term *servant-leader*, pointing out that it is neither explicitly biblical nor particularly helpful. If I understand his reasoning correctly, he is reacting to the fact that almost every Christian leader labels himself as a servant-leader without necessarily exhibiting an iota of humility or servitude. Nevertheless, it seems to me that pure servant-leadership is exactly what Elmer is trying to teach in this book.

The obvious model for us in this regard, as Elmer points out repeatedly, is Jesus, who came to serve and not to be served. He was humble and meek and gave of Himself completely for the benefit of others. Elmer does not nuance the fact that Jesus was also quite direct about sin and was hardly meek with the Pharisees. He scolded Peter for his worldliness (Mt. 16:23) and frequently lamented the disciples' lack of faith. Yes, He has affirmed our dignity, but He has literally come to rescue us. And He is worthy of our worship, because He is the very Son of God, the second person in the Godhead. As with the recently popular WWJD slogan, calls to imitate Jesus are always less than perfect, given His divinity and our humanity.

Although the author explains the necessary steps we must take to serve well in another culture, I found his definitions at times idiosyncratic. For example, he defines serving as “*the ability to relate to people in such a way that their dignity as human beings is affirmed and they are more empowered to live God-glorifying lives*” (p. 146). The author here is using the word “ability” in the sense of “capacity”. And with this in mind, I find it easier to grasp his definition.

My problems with his definitions weren’t purely grammatical or syntactical, though. His discussion of the concept of trust baffled me, though I think I understand some of the principles he was trying to convey. Obviously trust is necessary if we hope to maintain and build any relationship. Our ministry will clearly be stymied if the people to whom we minister do not trust us. But some of Elmer’s personal examples were unhelpful in illustrating the concept. He relates a story of giving his wife snow tires as a gift, which he thought would invite her to trust him. He says that he learned that more romantic gifts would serve that end better.

The greater confusion for me was when he spoke of the mutual trust between God and mankind. God has eminently proved his trustworthiness, and only the foolish (unregenerate) refuse to trust him. But the author says that God *entrusted* the world to us and that He *entrusted* His Son to us. He says that Jesus’ death on the cross was a great act of *trust*. I just didn’t catch his meaning. I cannot see how trust works both ways between faithful God and faithless man. As persistent covenant breakers, this is precisely why we need such radical salvation.

Somewhat perplexing to me was Elmer’s discussion of the forms of *learning*. He says that we need to learn *about*, learn *from* and learn *with* the people to whom we minister (pp. 93-106). The first of these categories is fairly clear, for we can learn *about* a people and their culture even from a distance. Learning *with* is not difficult conceptually, as we must understand that we all have much to learn from God and each other. But the category of learning *from*, while not difficult in denotation, remained unclear to me in concept in Elmer’s demarcation. For me at its best, it seems to be the same as learning *with* others. Elmer, however, sees learning *with* as “the rarest form of learning” (p. 103).

I appreciated the author’s discussion of openness and acceptance as steps toward cross-cultural servanthood. Still, these things are much easier said than done. For example, Elmer proposes that we withhold judgment. He says we must develop a tolerance for ambiguity. The steps he suggests are wise and should be helpful: recognition of the

judgment, aborting the judgment and discerning whether or not it is an issue of sin. If it is clearly sinful, we must communicate openly with concern. He suggests consulting a more experienced pastor/missionary when we are not certain. If the difference is merely cultural, he suggests that we appreciate it and celebrate the diversity.

Again, I speak with experience that it is not so easy for some of us to put this into practice no matter how much we are convinced of the necessity. It is possible that such skills could be learned, as I hope I have seen some progress in my own ability to do this. The greater application might be for missions/sending agencies to screen missionaries better for this trait, which might be more innate than acquired. But his point was well made. Awareness of this tendency, followed by the desire to be less judgmental, is perhaps half the battle won.

A number of very good points are raised, and I believe his “how-to” process of becoming a good cross-cultural servant has some merit. He raises many vital issues that we must consider if we are to serve cross-culturally in a Christ-like manner. Unfortunately I found his thoughts were not always clear or well developed. Nevertheless, this book might serve well as a primer for further thought and discussion.

Elmer is the author of *Cross-Cultural Conflict* and *Cross-Cultural Connections*. The present book, *Cross-Cultural Servanthood*, comes highly recommended by leading missiologists Scott Moreau and Paul Hiebert.

Dr. David Galletta serves with the Mobile Theological Training Team (MT3) with World Witness. He has served in Moscow, Russia, for four years and more recently has taught in Africa, Mexico and the Ukraine. He and his family live in Greenville, South Carolina.

“If you ask me what is the first precept of the Christian religion, I will answer first, second and third, Humility.”

AUGUSTINE

Book Notices

In *Book Notices* we inform readers about works which have been recently added to the Haddington House Library. Most entrants are currently in print, but on occasion we include rare and valuable books we have acquired which students and patrons may want to come and consult. *Book Notices* are made in keeping with our editorial policy; that is, to help our readers in the stewardship of their resources and time. 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.

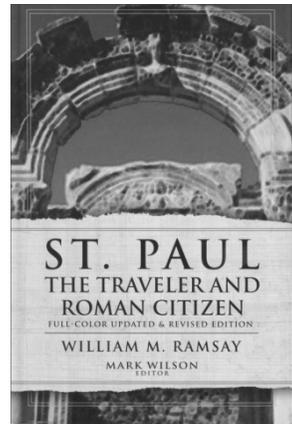
Biblical Theology

***St. Paul: The Traveler and Roman Citizen.* William M. Ramsay. Revised and updated by Mark Wilson. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 2001, 319 pp., hardcover. ISBN 0-8254-3639-7**

William Ramsay (1851-1939) is a name which every New Testament student should know. His studies and explorations on Turkey resulted in a profound increase in background knowledge of the epistles and seven churches, and over the last one hundred years conservative New Testament scholarship has been greatly indebted to him for his work.

Ramsay was born in Glasgow and educated in Aberdeen and Oxford. He taught at Oxford before returning to Aberdeen. *St. Paul: The Traveler and Roman Citizen* was actually one of his more “popular level” books

and reached a wide readership, giving Ramsay a reputation as “an



apologist for conservative views in New Testament criticism". He was convinced of the historical incorrectness of the German Tübingen school, centred around such thinking as Acts being a second rather than first century work.

It is good that Kregel Publications is introducing the current generation to this great pioneering archaeologist and biblical scholar. Kregel has now published three of Ramsay's books under the editorship of Mark Wilson, current director of the Biblical Turkey Research Institute. The others include William M. Ramsay's *Historical Commentary on First Corinthians* and *Historical Commentary on Galatians*. It is not easy editing older books, but Wilson has generally done a good job in *St. Paul: The Traveler and Roman Citizen*. He tells us in the editor's introduction (pp. 11-13) what he has removed, which is within reason. Wilson has deleted Ramsay's translation of Acts. Also he has adopted the growing, popular move to transliterate the Greek, helping to make the book marketable to a more general audience. Wilson alerts the reader at the outset that Ramsay did modify some of his views over the years "...as he became more familiar with the Pauline landscape in Asia Minor" (p. 12). Thus I conclude that the editing is not major, but rather is designed to reduce the overall size of the book and to generally make such updates as to conform to modern punctuation and grammatical style.

The other update is the modern colour photography and map work. I found this very helpful. Only once or twice did I think the colour digitization lacked precision – not bad considering there are over one hundred colour photographs. Wilson has added fifteen sidebars throughout, which I think should have been signed "the editor". Nonetheless, these are helpful.

The book contains seventeen chapters, starting with "The Acts of the Apostles" and then basically following Paul's life and travels chronologically, with chapters on background interspersed to highlight certain places, eg., chapter three – "The Church in Antioch".

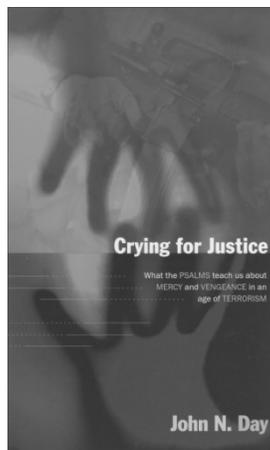
Anyone who has a keen interest in the geography of the lands of Paul's travels will find this a good text to read. Also, anyone who is contemplating a career as a Bible geographer or archaeologist must read Ramsay. The Church is blessed by those who have devoted their energies to such pursuits, and interested young people should seriously consider this field. Bible college libraries will need this book on their shelves. Appreciation is offered to Kregel for giving a new design to Ramsay's classic work.

Crying for Justice: What the PSALMS teach us about MERCY and VENGEANCE in an age of TERRORISM. John N. Day. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 2005, 199 pp., paper. ISBN 0-8254-2446-1

There are some matters in the Psalms that have often confused Christians; such as, Psalm 137: 8-9: “O Daughter of Babylon, doomed to destruction, happy is he who repays you for what you have done to us – he who seizes your infants and dashes them against the rocks.” Psalm 137 belongs to that group of psalms known as the imprecatory psalms. In recent years there have been a few studies done on these. One popular book from the 90s was James E. Adams’ *War Psalms of the Prince of Peace: Lessons from the Imprecatory Psalms* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1991). In many regards this was a standard book on the subject until John Day’s *Crying for Justice: What the PSALMS teach us about MERCY and VENGEANCE in an age of TERRORISM*, copyright 2005. Now readers clearly have a second book from which to choose, and it is certain the Adams and Day books will be compared.

Day commences with a brief introduction (pp. 9-17), where he offers a short definition of *imprecatory psalms* – “psalms that declare a desire for God’s just vengeance to fall upon enemies”. He discusses modern attitudes and views on these psalms and one quickly discerns that the book is very much a distillation from the author’s 2001 Ph.D. thesis. At times the book retains aspects of a more intended academic audience, and I think this may limit its market appeal. The actual text of the book ends at page 122, followed by endnotes that occupy almost sixty pages. This may make some readers view it as an academic text rather than the popular read suggested by the title.

I do not believe this book will reach a popular level of readership. It is more appropriately marketed as Kregel has done, placing it in its “Academic and Professional” book niche. It is clearly relevant for Bible professors and others to take its themes seriously. I appreciated Day’s stress upon the persecuted church around the world. Day is an ordained



Presbyterian Church in America pastor serving the Bellewood Presbyterian Church in Bellevue, Washington.

J. C. Whytock

From the back cover:

Preachers and teachers who have been at a loss as to how to understand and proclaim [the imprecatory texts of the Old Testament] will find a way out of their impasse by a careful reading of this fine work.

– Eugene H. Merrill

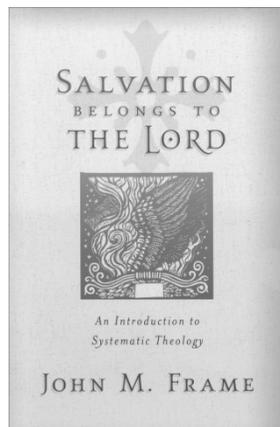
Systematic Theology

***Salvation Belongs to the Lord: An Introduction to Systematic Theology.* John M. Frame. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2006, 382 pp., paper. ISBN 1-59638-018-7**

This work comes as the expanded notes for an ITS (Institute of Theological Studies, Grand Rapids, Michigan) course which Dr. Frame produced for the Institute, entitled “Foundations of Systematic Theology”. That course is soon to be released by ITS as one of their new course offerings and is destined to become a very important overview selection. Dr. Frame currently teaches at Reformed Theological Seminary, Orlando, and is the author of the award winning book *The Doctrine of God*. In fact, some chapters of *The Doctrine of God* are summarized in the opening chapters of *Salvation Belongs to the Lord: An Introduction to Systematic Theology*.

This book, at Frame’s admittance, is aimed at “beginners in theology, people who are seeking a basic introduction” (p. x). With this in view, the author has tried to explain all technical terms and to maintain more of a conversational tone. It is certainly more demanding than J. I. Packer’s *Concise Theology*, yet the two are very complementary. Frame wants this book to be used as a college or seminary textbook. Its approach is exegetical, Reformed and “focused on the lordship of God and of Jesus Christ” (p. x).

There are twenty-five chapters arranged into two parts, with chapter one being “God, the Lord” and chapter twenty-four taking the reader into Christian ethics, “How Then Shall We Live?” (a title somewhat



reminiscent of Francis Schaeffer). Chapter twenty-five is a summation, followed by brief endnotes and a very select annotated bibliography.

The *loci* covered is very standard; there is nothing unusual as to contents. Many will be critical, no doubt, because they will want more depth, while others may be critical that it is too deep! I think it will be interesting to see how this book will be used and if it will displace the use of Louis Berkhof's *Systematic Theology* and the most popular one-volume systematic text world-wide, Wayne Grudem's *Systematic Theology*. It is still too early to tell. There is no doubt that Frame's writing style is appealing. This may carry the day for many to switch to this as a class textbook.

William Edgar wrote the following for the book's back cover:

John Frame is not only one of the most productive theologians of our day, he is also one of the most lucid. Deceptively so, for behind every sentence in this extraordinary volume lies deep reflection. It is at once vigorously orthodox and sweetly pastoral. We can be grateful for such a powerful and clear exposition of the whole range of theology.

Conclusion – a good overview textbook. Time will reveal what niche it will fill.

J. C. Whytock

Historical Theology

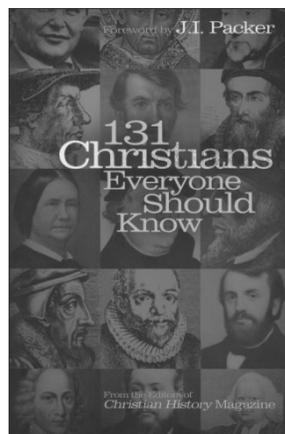
***131 Christians Everyone Should Know.* Eds. Mark Galli and Ted Olsen. Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2000, 384 pp., paper. ISBN 0-8054-9040-X**

For some time I have been searching for a paperback book that contains biographical stories of prominent Church history figures. My purpose is to use such a book for a biographical Church history course, almost as a primer course and text, a way to start to introduce people to the history of Christianity where the study of history may not have been a major part of their education previously. I feel I now have something that I will be able to use for this purpose with *131 Christians Everyone Should Know*.

The authors/editors, Mark Galli and Ted Olsen, have a philosophy behind this book; namely, that “history is biography” and that they continually want to ask, “What’s really interesting...”. Many Church history books do not emphasize biography sufficiently to appeal to the general audience, so I give these two fine editors full marks here.

Next, they use the noun “Christians” broadly, because many of these 131 people contributed significantly to the history of Christianity, but not necessarily because they had a full-orbed faith. This is the reality in studying the history of Christianity – it is the study of “the good, the bad and the in-between”.

Galli and Olsen have also endeavoured to separate “myth from history where necessary” (p. xiii) and to determine “the callings which Christians have practiced through the ages”. I thank the writers for stating their philosophy and approach so clearly in their introduction. It



is like a preacher standing up to preach and explaining what he is going to deal with. All then will judge if he delivers. My conclusion – these two authors clearly deliver for their intended audience and within the parameters they have set forth.

Here are the thirteen categories into which they group the various callings of Christians throughout the history of Christianity:

- Theologians
- Evangelists and Apologists
- Pastors and Preachers
- Musicians, Artists, and Writers
- Poets
- Denominational Founders
- Movers and Shakers
- Missionaries
- Inner Travelers
- Activists
- Rulers
- Scholars and Scientists
- Martyrs

Overall I applaud these thirteen classifications for study. I would question one as a category, “Movers and Shakers”, but know in some form the category needs to be there. Each classification receives about ten biographical sketches. It is admittedly extremely difficult to be representative with these ten selections. I do think that, under the last two classifications, the authors should have roamed more widely. But apart from that, they have done an excellent job.

Each sketch includes a graphic timeline, an excellent primary source quotation and then the authors’ very engaging written sketch. An illustration is also included for most. I think a few more illustrations should have been added to enhance each entry which would not have added significantly to the book’s size.

Thank you, authors/editors of *Christian History Magazine*, for preparing this readable book. I look forward to using it as a textbook in 2007 to introduce a new generation to the wonders of Christian history.

J. C. Whytock

***Pages from Church History: A Guided Tour of Christian Classics.* Stephen J. Nichols. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2006, 329 pp., paper. ISBN 0-87552-686-2**

The “Guided Tour Series” is a wonderful set of books which introduces readers to noteworthy individuals in Church history. To date, the series includes:

Heidi L. Nichols, *Anne Bradstreet*

Stephen J. Nichols, *J. Gresham Machen*

Stephen J. Nichols, *Jonathan Edwards*

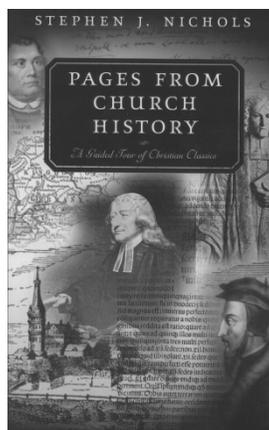
Stephen J. Nichols, *Martin Luther*

This latest one, *Pages from Church History: A Guided Tour of Christian Classics*, is not devoted to just one individual, but rather to twelve from Polycarp to Bonhoeffer. Each entrant receives an average of about twenty pages, usually including an illustration, map or chart. On occasion there is no illustration, for example with Bonhoeffer, which one would have expected to find.

Like *131 Christians Everyone Should Know*, Nichols employs the selective style with a goal to making a vast subject manageable. However, he obviously is much more focused, twelve selections versus 131 for basically the same number of pages. Next, Nichols tries to provide a context from which the reader can start his or her own pursuit of what these famous Christians have actually written. Thus Nichols is writing a secondary source book to prepare the reader to dig independently into the primary source material – a very noble goal and one which I believe he generally achieves.

Since there are only twelve figures from two thousand years of Christian history, I will list them: Polycarp, Augustine, Anselm, Aquinas, à Kempis, Luther, Calvin, Bunyan, Edwards, the Wesleys, Carey and Bonhoeffer. All are written with an excellent style; in fact, the whole book has a good publishing style – P&R has come a long way since they first started publishing. All the normal apparatus we have come to expect is there – introduction, bibliography, indices, etc.

It is a pleasure to recommend this book. It fills a niche in introducing the study of Church history to another generation and



would provide a good starting point for a twelve week group study on key writers in the history of Christianity.

J. C. Whytock

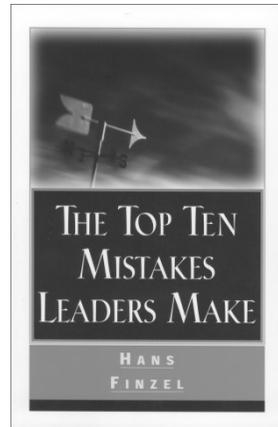
Applied Theology

***The Top Ten Mistakes Leaders Make.* Hans Finzel. Colorado Springs: Nexgen/Cook Communications, 1994/2000, 200pp., paper. ISBN 0-7814-3365-7**

“In praise of common sense.” This is both my reaction to Hans Finzel’s *The Top Ten Mistakes Leaders Make* and also my summary of the book. I believe it is worthy of “praise” and appreciation that there are Christian writers who possess a good dose of common sense in leadership.

I have seen the familiar reaction to many popular level books such as Finzel’s: “He is no one I know from my ecclesiastical camp”;¹ “It will lack in-depth theology”; “It is pure business marketing strategy”; and, “We read the Bible to learn about leadership”. With one or more of these preconceived ideas, one can quickly dismiss this book and move over to a recent book on systematic theology. Thus life will simply continue to roll along. I would plead for an alternative – perhaps someone outside of our normal orbit could really speak to us with a fresh jolt of common sense understanding and insight on leadership. With this attitude I believe we as leaders can all benefit from Finzel’s fine work.

Mistake number one dealt with by Finzel is “The Top-Down Attitude: The Number-one Leadership Hang-up” (pp. 21-35). Finzel is blunt, “I believe that the number one leadership sin is that of top-down autocratic arrogance” (p. 22). He goes on to describe this, then offering a contrast with “servant leadership” where he points us to Jesus Christ.



¹ Finzel is president of World Ventare, adjunct at Trinity, Deerfield, and author of *Change Is Like a Slinky* and *Empowered Leaders*.

There is certainly nothing complex to follow in this chapter. Often it can be the simple which can cause us to struggle the most.

Chapter two, or mistake number two, “Putting Paperwork before Peoplework” (pp. 37-52) again should be mandatory reading for every Christian leader. The following “one liners” give insight into this chapter: “In this age of telecommunications and teleconnecting, there is still no substitute for quiet, prolonged exposure of one soul to another” (p. 58) and, “Effective leaders make room for people. Leaving them out is a big, big, leadership mistake.” (p. 49) Again, there is nothing new here – just good common sense basics, but it takes humility in all of us to hear and do.

Finzel’s other chapters on “mistakes” follow a similar style of writing and layout – illustrations, quotations, scripture and his own analysis are written integratively, while he “boxes” significant points. He concludes each chapter with what he calls his “powerpoints” as well as usually outlining some areas for personal assessment.

One chapter which I thought particularly held many perceptive insights was chapter eight, or “mistake eight”, “Missing the Clues of Corporate Culture: The Unseen Killer of Many a Leader” (pp. 133-156). Finzel employs the language of the secular world, “corporate culture”, but it is parallel to that which one studies in the theological world of missiological studies as cross-cultural communications and cultural anthropology. He tries to explain this concept through many illustrations, and I believe overall he succeeds. It is perhaps the most difficult chapter, yet very important, and unfortunately Christian leaders often run shipwreck right here. His comment, “I have found that most Christians still don’t know a lot about the concept” is apropos. The “organizational culture” (p. 136) he speaks of is very much a reality; just violate it and you will see it exists. It is the “unseen meaning between the lines in the rulebook that assures unity” (p. 139). Finzel offers advice to find the culture we serve, etc. His paradigm model I might re-name (pp. 142-143), yet in essence it is valid. Note his distinction between “values” and “beliefs”. You will find it very helpful.

I could say much positively about the other chapters/mistakes: “The Absence of Affirmation”, “No Room for Mavericks?”, “Dictatorship in Decision-Making”, “Dirty Delegation”, “Communication Chaos”, “Success without Successors” and “Failure to Focus on the Future”; yet some things need to be reserved for the readers. I hope I wet your appetite to delve into this book.

This book was originally published in 1994, with the copyright being renewed in 2000 before the present printing. The fact that a 1994

book remains in print in 2007 tells me something. There is an enduring relevance which many continue to find in Finzel's book. An updated edition would enhance the work, but the concepts and principles in this present edition are fully valid and applicable.

Last, how may the book best be used? Pastors, theological students, laity in leadership, do read this book. I think it will be of prime relevance to readers in the Western world. I do not think it would have the same impact for Christian leaders in the non-Western world, although a speaker could extract concepts from it to build a framework for teaching leadership in the non-Western world, using more indigenous illustrations, etc.

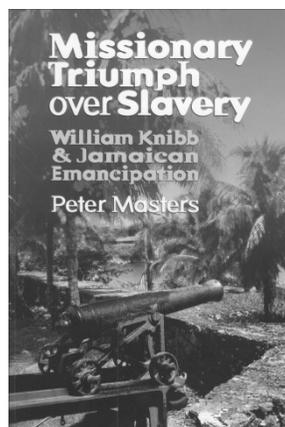
The Top Ten Mistakes Leaders Make is full of common sense wisdom written in an engaging and plain style, full of good instruction. If it sounds like it is out of your normal orbit of reading, why not give it a read? *Tolle legge*.

J. C. Whytock

***Missionary Triumph over Slavery: William Knibb and Jamaican Emancipation.* Peter Masters. London: The Wakeman Trust, 2006, 51pp., paper. ISBN 1-870855-53-1**

What an amazing little book! This is truly an inspiring read and something to be given out to senior Sunday School and camp children and to be used in Christian schools and with home-schoolers. There is just so much packed into these fifty-one pages. I am amazed at how Peter Masters has so skillfully woven together the narrative of the great life mission of William Knibb (1803-1845), one of Jamaica's pioneer Baptist missionaries.

Knibb needs to be known today alongside a name like William Wilberforce, who in 2007 is gaining international attention with the release of the new movie, "Amazing Grace", celebrating the story of Wilberforce (played



by Welsh actor Ioan Guffudd) and the 200th anniversary of the ending of the slave trade in the British Empire. Masters' book helps us appreciate others who were faithful in spreading correct information about what was actually happening on this Caribbean island.

The author asserts at the beginning that modern historians by and large are adopting a revisionist agenda, arguing that much of Protestant missions was but a handmaiden to imperialistic policy. The story of Knibbs and the Jamaican Awakening is a clear rebuttal to such thinking (p.7).

Knibb and his wife Mary went to Jamaica in 1824 (replacing his brother Thomas, who had died there in 1823). He was a tireless church planter and educator across the island. It appears that Dr. John Rylands was his personal inspiration for the mission and, as is usually the case, Knibbs was a "missionary" before he ever went to Jamaica. The story of his life is incredible to chronicle. Slanders and libels were his constant companion. Imprisonment and threats were a reality. Yet in the midst of all this, the beat of the gospel continued constantly to sound at the centre of his work.

Masters includes extracts from Knibbs appearance before special committees of the House of Commons and House of Lords (1832). These demand close reading because they show Knibb's careful reasoning ability. These pages (31-35) are the most difficult in the book and could be summarized in a class presentation if a teacher so decided.

Knibbs was clearly a visionary following emancipation in 1834 and full emancipation in 1838. He saw what was so desperately needed to help build the society of the freed peoples with wage agreements, free village developments, education and foreign missions. Here there is a tremendous model for much further study. After reading Masters, I think you will be inspired to want to know more. The years of 1838-1845 have become known as the Jamaican Awakening, when an incredible harvest of souls occurred on Jamaica under the instruments of Baptists, Methodist, Moravians and Presbyterians.

Allow me to quote Master's concluding paragraph (p. 51):

William Knibb, above all, was an evangelist. A true lover of lost souls, he was a child of that wonderful and long season of church history, when Calvinists were activists and soul-winners, and when young men proved themselves for the Gospel ministry by street preaching and ragged-school evangelism. Knibb learned his missionary zeal in that golden age, believing that a missionary should never stand still. To

such labourers the Lord came down in sovereign mercy and touched their lips to preach an irresistible call of mercy.

This book is tastefully illustrated; has an attractive, colour cover; and is printed on high quality, gloss paper. Churches, buy several and pass them out!

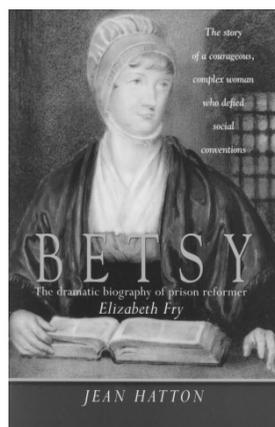
J. C. Whytock

***Betsy: The dramatic biography of prison reformer Elizabeth Fry.* Jean Hatton. Oxford: Monarch Books, 2005, 368 pp., paper. ISBN 0-8254-6092-1**

In recent years books on prominent Christian women have been receiving more attention than a generation ago, such as Faith Cook's excellent biography, *Selina Countess of Huntingdon*. Jean Hatton adds to these with *Betsy*, presenting the life of the famous prison reformer of the first half of the nineteenth century, Elizabeth Fry (1780-1845), in many ways a very different person from the Countess.

While digesting this book, I was reminded that as we read Christian biography, we read to learn and to uncover who the leaders were. In no way does this mean we will endorse all that was done, but we should nonetheless read widely and with discernment. In the history of Christian activism, one of the prominent female biographies to read is, of course, that of Betsy Fry.

Jean Hatton presents a well-researched and full-orbed picture of this very complex person, making significant use of Elizabeth Fry's voluminous journals kept throughout her life. Very sensitive and often deeply troubled emotionally and beset by nightmares from her childhood, Betsy, as she was known to her family and friends, experienced recurring periods of depression, guilt and spiritual uncertainty throughout her years. A far from satisfactory marriage,



rebellious children and financial difficulty eventually leading to bankruptcy further complicated her life.

Betsy found purpose and respite from personal difficulties in throwing herself into helping the poor, the sick, the downcast and particularly London's desperate prison population. In addition, she became a very active Quaker. Although raised within the branch of Quakerism that put few restraints on worldly activities and deportment, following a "conversion" experience, Betsy joined the "Plain Quaker" branch, but with a strong evangelical bent. In this regard and as her fame as a reformer grew, she was also in demand for public ministry, "preaching" and praying. She struggled throughout her long, public life of ministry and reformation leadership with nagging doubts about the neglect of her family that her activities caused and questions raised both by one branch of the Quakers and by her conscience in light of Scripture concerning being a woman with such a public ministry. She settled this to her own satisfaction only late in life, deciding that Scripture also makes clear that one should not "quench the Spirit", thus she must follow the inner leadings she felt came from God. Needless to say, many of us would find a real problem with her conclusion.

As one reads about Elizabeth Fry, one does conclude that grace was at work, although not in the orderly ways we might hope for. As often in the history of Christianity, we see God using frail vessels and at times unusual means to nonetheless spread His Word and the gospel of His Son, Jesus Christ. Thus, many parts of the book are truly inspiring and thrilling from a gospel as well as a humanitarian perspective. The records given of her "preaching" indicate it to have been very conservative, evangelical and Christ-centred with a clear call for repentance, conversion and righteous living. In addition, her innovative ideas for addressing and reforming the unspeakably filthy, corrupt, immoral and unjust penal and prison system of the day are inspirational, as is her self-sacrifice and tremendous energy and zeal in pursuing change. From leading a throng of women (many from the top echelon of society), eager and inspired by the reform cause and her example, to addressing royalty, nobility and political leaders, Betsy pursued her vision of reformation and was at the forefront of the prison reform that became a reality within her life-time.

She became quite a celebrity in her time, not only throughout the UK but throughout Europe as well, where in later life she was feted by the royalty and high society of several European countries. Everywhere she was enabled to press forward the cause of prison reform as well as numerous other projects to promote the welfare of the downtrodden through government action, distribution of Bibles and other wholesome

books, education and the encouragement of Christian standards applied to all walks of life.

As with any biography, the author and his/her views colour the presentation, and Jean Hatton's portrayal of Betsy is no exception. Hatton is evidently a woman of the late twentieth and early twenty-first century. The modern psychological approach as well as admiration for equality for women on all fronts is evident throughout. I thought one comment rather telling: "More recently, however, another strand [of Quakerism] had emerged of an extreme Evangelical persuasion bordering on Calvinism..." (267). Such a comment did lead me to suspect that Hatton had less than a clear understanding of either Calvinism or evangelicalism.

So, if you'd like a very revealing look at both the high society and abject poverty of the period, a chance to "rub shoulders" along with Betsy with such as William Wilberforce and Queen Victoria, and a thought-provoking read, turn to Jean Hatton's *Betsy*.

Christina Lehmann