

Book Reviews

- The Art of Biblical History*, p. 135
- Belonging to God: A Commentary on a Brief Statement of Faith*, p. 135
- Brief Pastoral Counseling: Short-Term Approaches and Strategies*, p. 136
- A Captive Voice: The Liberation of Preaching*, p. 136
- Christian Perspectives on Human Development*, p. 137
- Clergy Response to Suicidal Persons and Their Family Members*, p. 138
- Cross-Cultural Conflict: Building Relationships for Effective Ministry*, p. 138
- Death and Eternal Life*, p. 139
- The Death of the Messiah: From Gethsemane to the Grave, A Commentary on the Passion Narratives in the Four Gospels*, p. 139
- Evangelical Interpretation: Perspectives on Hermeneutical Issues*, p. 140
- The Hindu Connection: Roots of the New Age*, p. 141
- I Suffer Not a Woman: Rethinking 1 Timothy 2:11-15 in Light of Ancient Evidence*, p. 141
- Introducing the World Council of Churches*, p. 142
- Israel and the Politics of Land: A Theological Case Study*, p. 142
- Leaving Home*, p. 143
- Let It Grow!*, p. 143
- Ministry In an Oral Culture—Living With Will Rogers, Uncle Remus, and Minnie Pearl*, p. 144
- Ninety-Nine Reasons Why No One Knows When Christ Will Return*, p. 144
- Not the Way It's Supposed to Be: A Breviary of Sin*, p. 145
- A Practical Guide to Community Ministry*, p. 145
- Professing the Faith*, p. 146
- The Protestant Wedding Sourcebook: A Complete Guide for Developing Your Own Service*, p. 147
- Revival and Revivalism: The Making and Marring of American Evangelicalism*, p. 147
- Sacraments and Struggle: Signs and Instruments of Grace from the Downtrodden*, p. 147
- Sex for Christians*, p. 148
- Sharing Faith With Children: Rethinking the Children's Sermon*, p. 148
- The Soul of Science: Christian Faith and Natural Philosophy*, p. 149
- St. Paul versus St. Peter: A Tale of Two Missions*, p. 149
- Systematic Theology*, p. 150
- Systematic Theology, Vol. 2*, p. 150
- A Theology of the New Testament*, p. 151
- Toward a Theology of Nature: Essays on Science and Faith*, p. 152
- The Veneration of Divine Justice: The Dead Sea Scrolls and Christianity*, p. 153
- The Visionary Leader: How Anyone Can Learn to Lead Better*, p. 153
- Winds of the Spirit: A Constructive Christian Theology*, p. 154
- The Work of Christ*, p. 154
- World Religions in America: An Introduction*, p. 155
- The Writings of John Calvin: An Introductory Guide*, p. 155
- Written Also for Our Sake: Paul and the Art of Biblical Interpretation*, p. 156
- Zephaniah: A Translation with Introduction and Commentary (The Anchor Bible, Vol. 25A)*, p. 156

The Art of Biblical History, by V. Phillips Long, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994. 247p.

This book provides methods of assessing the historicity of the narrative books of the Bible and appears as volume five of a seven-volume series on biblical hermeneutics, entitled *Foundations of Contemporary Interpretation*.

V. Phillips Long examines first of all the "truth claim" (pp. 29-30) before he determines the "truth value" of the narrative. If the biblical writer makes no apparent claim to be giving an actual historical account, then he cannot be faulted if internal consistency or external sources (pp. 186-194) do not confirm the historicity of the narrative. By "truth value," Long does not mean to cast aspersions on parables or other non-historical forms. He uses the terms in the technical sense applying to historicity.

Long combines three principles (following Meir Sternberg) to analyze the purposes of biblical narrators: ideology, historiography, and aesthetics. Because the historian has a theological position (ideology) and an aim to produce good literature (aesthetics), he must combine these two principles with the underlying intent of narrating the events of his history (p. 53).

It is for this reason that no single form of criticism, whether historical criticism, cultural criticism, or literary criticism, can be applied in isolation from the others (pp. 128, 136, 149). Each, if properly employed, can contribute to the interpretation of the passage. Long seems to have a low opinion of archaeology, suggesting that archaeologists fail to take the Bible into account when they interpret their findings (pp. 144-146).

In closing, Long compares Simon DeVries's treatment of Elijah and Elisha with his own previously published work on Saul. DeVries is criticized for comparing the prophets' miracles with the parables of Jesus, rather than his miracles. Long, on the other hand, uses Toulmin's argumentation chart to assign a "probable" historicity to the narrative of the rise of King Saul.

Sylvio J. Scorza

Belonging to God: A Commentary on a Brief Statement of Faith, by William C. Placher and David Willis-Watkins, Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1992. 214p., \$9.99 (paper).

In 1983 the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. (mostly in the north) and the Presbyterian Church in the U.S. (mostly in the south) reunited to form the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). During the period of separation dating from the time of the Civil War, they had come to have different confessional standards, and they intended to include these in their *Book of Confessions*. They felt a need for a new statement to be used in a church which remained conscious of the many issues which divide it. *Belonging to God*, officially adopted in 1991, is intended to be an inclusive statement, enabling the church to confess together what it believes.

The statement has just 80 lines and is intended for use in worship and in teaching. Particularly noteworthy to readers of the *Reformed Review* is its strong reliance on Q. & A. 1 of the Heidelberg Catechism in the first six lines:

In life and in death we belong to God.
Through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit,
We trust in the one triune God, the Holy One of Israel
whom alone we worship and serve.

Belonging to God has an introduction, a conclusion, and three middle sections, each devoted to confession of one of the persons in the triune God. It admirably sets forth distinctive themes in the Reformed tradition while maintaining a vision of the one catholic faith. My sense is that *Belonging to God* is a valuable resource for teaching and worship and could be used with profit in new members classes and in Christian education.

William C. Placher and David Willis-Watkins have written this very helpful commentary on *Belonging to God* for use in

the churches. While they were members of the fifteen-member committee which produced the document, they write that one should not regard their commentary as its official interpretation. The line-by-line commentary, complete with references to older confessions and to the teachings of theologians like John Calvin, is very well done. The cross-references to Scripture and other documents in the *Book of Confessions* will be of permanent value to students of the church's confessional tradition.

This book is to be highly recommended to anyone who wants to know what the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) believes and to all who are intentional about confessing the faith in worship and in daily life.

Eugene Heideman

Brief Pastoral Counseling: Short-Term Approaches and Strategies, by Howard W. Stone, Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994. 170p., \$9.60.

Howard Stone does not try to make counseling shorter or faster, but relates that his experience and research reveal that many people will not commit themselves to long-term arrangements. He cites that our hurry-up culture is one contributing factor, but there are others, such as finances and the fact that we live in a highly mobile society. Whatever the reasons, the reality—not only for clergy but for mental health professionals as well—is that brief counseling is all people allow care-givers. This book offers some approaches and strategies to assist pastors in the situations in which they currently find themselves.

Stone says that the short-term approach is not only defined by the number of sessions but also by the "orientation" of the minister. For example, one need not address all the problems a person is experiencing. Rather, one focuses on one problem in particular with the assumption that the change initiated in one area will spread to others. This theory is based on Milton Erickson's concept that change in behavior is contagious and will spread.

The book is divided into two parts. Part one discusses the strategy of short-term counseling. The process has some familiar steps to it, such as establishing an empathetic relationship, focusing on the problem, and assessing the problem. One way to look at this method is that it does not spend time looking for the root causes of the problem but looks for a solution that works. The focus of brief counseling is to locate the problem and assess what cues or stimuli trigger it and what reinforcers or rewards maintain it. Then, one looks for the exceptions, which are the moments when the behavior is not triggered, possibly providing the counselor with a focus for changing behavior. The final part of the process is to build on the strengths of the counselee(s) setting goals or homework to assist in changing behavior. As Stone puts it, "The focus in brief pastoral counseling is therefore less on pathology, problems, and explanations and more on competence, strengths, and solutions" (p. 30).

The second part of the book deals with some specific case types and how the brief counseling method is used. It deals with some very common situations that most pastors encounter, including marital distress, parenting issues, obsessive thoughts, depression, anxiety, and tension.

While I find the book a good resource, I also realize it is not an all-in-all method for every case. Stone recognizes this as well by discussing the limits of the short-term approach, the need for longer methods at times, and the need for referral. He very clearly and helpfully writes this book with the belief that pastors have more to offer than a referral, and they only have a limited amount of time with which to work.

Robert J. Rook

A Captive Voice: The Liberation of Preaching, by David Buttrick, Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1994. 176p., \$12.99.

This provocative book devotes four thoughtful, well-researched chapters to the

relationship of preaching to Bible, church, culture, and method, closing with an afterword on the future of preaching. The word "Liberation" in the title raises our question: liberated from *what*? The author answers: from bondage to Bible, lectionary, liturgy, cultural cul-de-sacs, outdated methodology, and theology with an anti-culture stance. Granting value and achievement to scripturally based preaching, he argues that it nevertheless, along with lectionary-practice, has turned our attention away from current social evils and needs. He suggests that preaching should focus on the good news that comes to us through the Bible rather than on the text in and for itself. He thinks that the Enlightenment model of a sermon based on a biblical passage from which one derives rational "points" (preferably three) must give way to a model more adapted and attuned to modern consciousness. Instead of derivative points, he thinks we might construct sermons in a series of correlative "moves" based on the passage. He shows how one might do that using Luke 16:19-20 (the Rich Man and Lazarus) in the chapter on method.

Since gospel is prior to Bible, we must not idolize the Bible and diminish the gospel. Toward that end, theology will play an important role as a source and means of understanding and proclaiming the gospel. Buttrick predicts that "in the twenty-first century we will recover the gospel of the kingdom, God's new order," and that "preaching will be eschatological rather than existential, and social rather than solipsistic" (110).

Readers familiar with Buttrick's previous books will expect and find here his expertise in homiletics and his extensive knowledge of church history and theology (see, for example, sections on the Reformers' views of preaching). They will also find his alert recognition of what is going on in contemporary culture. This book deserves attentive reading and discussion by all who are involved with preaching. Readers may not agree with all Buttrick's assertions, but they will be urged to do some crucial thinking of

their own on the nature and function of preaching now and in the years ahead.

Francis Fike

Christian Perspectives on Human Development, edited by Leroy Aden, David G. Benner, and J. Harold Ellens, Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992. 274p.

Christian Perspectives on Human Development is the sixth volume in a series on psychology and Christianity co-published by Baker Book House and the Christian Association for Psychological Studies. This volume is designed for those who are interested "in exploring the development of faith and the realization of a mature self from a Christian perspective."

Christian Perspectives focuses on certain well-known developmental theories with the hope of understanding better the nature and purpose of pastoral care. These theories are described and critiqued by several different authors. They are then used to gain a deeper understanding of the faith and ministry of the Christian church. Throughout this volume, sixteen different voices join in the discussion, including a wide variety of professors, psychotherapists, psychologists, ordained ministers, and a graduate student of theology.

The essays in Part One explore faith as a developmental phenomenon. The developmental theories of Erikson, Piaget, and others are related to growth in faith. Portions of the theologies of Luther and Rahner also shed light on this endeavor.

Part Two discusses the concept of a mature self. A model of relational maturity is proposed by one contributor, while another contributor argues that there is no single definition or model of religious maturity. Possible links between theology and psychotherapy are also examined.

Part Three applies developmental theory to particular situations such as the mid-life experiences of women, a famous ecclesiastical trial, and the dismissal of Jonathan Edwards from Northampton Church. *Christian*

Perspectives concludes with a fascinating developmental study of Jesus at the transitional age of thirty.

This volume is a broad and erudite exploration of the intersection between psychological theory and theologies of faith growth. In presenting a diversity of perspectives and opinions, *Christian Perspectives* allows the reader to contemplate the full complexity of faith growth. Because of the distinctly Christian approach assumed by all of the contributors, this book is entirely suitable for seminarians, pastors, and pastoral counselors. It may also serve as a resource for those in helping professions who will consider that Christianity may play a significant role in the realization of a mature self.

Alice Hartmans

Clergy Response to Suicidal Persons and Their Family Members, edited by David C. Clark, Chicago: Exploration Press, 1993. 219p.

I am a chaplain in a retirement community, including a long-term nursing/convalescent care facility. Twelve years ago we averaged one suicide a month. Through concerted efforts, we now average less than one suicide per year.

Clergy need to be informed about suicide, its nature, origins, and efforts in prevention. They need to be informed in order to act promptly to minister to the pastoral requirements of family, friends, and organizations to which the suicide had belonged.

This book provides that information. It begins with summaries of the present day theology of Roman Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish faiths. Each summary includes a history of theological thinking on suicide. They depict a common movement in thinking from the judgmental "he will burn in hell" to the inclusionary pastoral approach. A large portion of the book is devoted to pastoral issues: recognizing suicidal risk, responding to suicidal crisis, getting professional help, and

giving support for family and friends of a person with suicidal tendencies.

Each chapter concludes with several references for further reading. There are also three appendices: The Nature of Suicide Risk; The Center for Disease Control (Atlanta, GA) recommendations for the Prevention and Containment of Suicide Clusters (especially helpful in suicides by high school teenagers and the elderly in retirement communities); and Recommendations for a Community Plan for the Prevention and Containment of Suicide Clusters.

Several of the clergy who contributed to the book were associated with Rush-Presbyterian-St. Luke's Medical Center in Chicago. A series of conferences on "Clergy Response to Suicidal Persons and Their Family Members" has been conducted there. This volume is a continuing effort to disseminate information and educate *clergy* to this area of life where desperation, fear, grief, and hopelessness congregate.

George P. Timberlake

Cross-Cultural Conflict: Building Relationships for Effective Ministry, by Duane Elmer, Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1993. 189p.

Elmer points out that as our cities are becoming more and more culturally diverse, multiculturalism is fast becoming a survival skill. Cultures and racial groups will increasingly bump into each other, causing misunderstanding, tension, and conflict. It is imperative, then, according to Elmer, that we understand and respond wisely to conflict in order to survive and be successful in this new global world of business, travel, and mission.

The Bible has something to say about cultural diversity and our response to it. According to the Scriptures, God created human and cultural diversity and he pronounced it "very good" (Gen. 1:31). Unity in the face of human and cultural diversity is at the very center of God's message to his people and, therefore, is worth working for.

In John 17:21, Jesus prays "that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me." The unity (oneness) among Jesus' followers must be modeled after that found in the Trinity. The Trinity is characterized by diversity—different functions and roles—all within a perfect unity. However, Jesus also expresses another truth in this passage—there is a direct link between the unity of God's people and the fulfillment of God's mission in this world.

R. H. Thomas and K. W. Kilman identify five ways most Westerners handle conflict—the win-lose strategy, avoidance, giving in, compromise, and confronting. These approaches are characterized as being direct, confrontational, and individualistic. The Two-Thirds World countries manage conflict through mediation, the one-down position, proverbs and storytelling, inaction, misdirection, silence, and indefinite persons. All of these strategies are used in cultures where avoiding shame, saving face, and preserving honor are underlying values.

This book is a must for anyone who is serious about understanding and resolving cross-cultural conflicts. It is even more important for those who are concerned about the continued growth of Christ's church and preserving its unity in the midst of our growing cultural diversity.

John C. Hutt

Death and Eternal Life, by John Hick, Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1994. 495p., \$19.99.

This is a reprint of a previously published book, with a new preface. Hick begins by spelling out his methodology, which reveals the position for which he is famous (or infamous): that there is no absolute uniqueness about the Christian faith. Information about the subject to be studied is drawn from the Eastern religions and other sources on the same footing as the teachings of Scripture.

In considering life after death, Hick rejects the secular view that there is no life after death in favor of the religious view that there is. He begins with considering the nature of man and concludes "the goal . . . is a movement from pre-individualized unity through separate egoity to a supra-individual unity" (p. 53).

The resurrection of Jesus is one of the subjects Hick evaluates. He concludes that it was a real occurrence, but that it is impossible to know exactly what happened. He points out that the Christian belief in life after death preceded, and therefore is not dependent on, the resurrection of Christ. He then looks at the rest of the New Testament and concludes "we find in the New Testament a diversity of thought" (p. 190).

Hick also considers reincarnation. He examines the Hindu Vedantic theory of reincarnation and the Buddhist view of rebirth and concludes that "there are forms of reincarnation doctrine which *may* be broadly true pictures of what actually happens" (p. 391). He then combines the material provided by the *Trance Mediums* with the Tibetan Book of the Dead (Bardo Thodol) and with human reason to come to the conclusion that people progress "through ever higher spheres of existence toward a final state which may . . . transcend individual ego-hood" (p. 421).

Christian theology has always been based on the conviction that truth on matters of life and death is revealed to us in Scripture, which teaches the resurrection of the individual, who, after death, spends eternity in the presence of God through what has been done for us by Jesus Christ. Hick, because he looks elsewhere for his information, comes to an entirely different conclusion.

Harry Buis

The Death of the Messiah: From Gethsemane to the Grave, A Commentary on the Passion Narratives in the Four Gospels (2 vols.), by Raymond E. Brown, New York: Doubleday, 1994. xxvii, xix, 1608p.

This massive work is a part of the Anchor Bible Reference Library. Contributors to the series come from a variety of religious backgrounds and achievements. Raymond E. Brown is an internationally known Jesuit scholar who was the Auburn Distinguished Professor of Biblical Studies at Union Theological Seminary in New York City. He previously wrote for this same Reference Library series, *The Birth of the Messiah: A Commentary on the Infancy Narratives in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke*.

Brown works through the passion narratives of the four canonical gospels horizontally; that is, he divides each of the narratives into four "Acts" (some of which have two "Scenes"), and he deals with all four gospel narratives in discussing each Act. The four are prayer/arrest; Jewish trial; Roman trial; and crucifixion/burial.

The work has a 93-page introduction followed by a 13-page general bibliography. In the introduction Brown states that it is his purpose to explain what the evangelists intended and conveyed to their audiences by their passion narratives. In doing so, he also deals with the questions of history and theology. He gives special attention to sources for the narratives, though this is not his primary concern. For example, he has a section on the issue of whether or not there was a pre-Markan passion narrative. There is also an appendix by Marion Soards which details thirty-five different reconstructions by various scholars of such a pre-Markan narrative. Yet both have their doubts related to the existence of such a narrative. Brown accepts the priority of Mark, with Matthew more closely following or using that source with his own additions than does Luke, who also has other additions. He often speaks of the role of oral tradition and the aspects of historical occurrences it might have contained.

Of particular interest to this writer is the excellent review of contemporary scholarly opinion regarding the title "Son of man" and the special concerns and topics regarding the passion narratives found in nine appendices. The latter deal with the Gospel of Peter, date of the crucifixion, difficult translations, Judas

Iscaiot, Jewish groups and authorities, the sacrifice of Isaac, other Old Testament background, Jesus' predictions of his passion and death, and the aforementioned question of a pre-Markan narrative.

In addition to the above, the reader will find interesting information and conclusions regarding such issues as the physical cause of Jesus' death, which veil of the temple was torn in two, the location of and a history of the tomb in which Jesus was laid, and the like. This work will be a constant source by which other scholarship, research, ideas, and commentaries will be measured.

In the preface, Brown comments that many have asked if he plans a trilogy to conclude with a study of the resurrection of the Messiah. He has written two books on the resurrection which are not truly commentaries as he sees it, but, nevertheless, he states that he has no plans and that he would rather explore that area "face to face."

David W. Jurgens

Evangelical Interpretation: Perspectives on Hermeneutical Issues, by Millard J. Erickson, Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993. 132p.

Erickson begins by examining the view of Walter C. Kaiser that a biblical passage can only have a single meaning—that intended by the author. He agrees with Kaiser's (and E. D. Hirsch's) opposition to the subjectivity of the reader-response approach, but believes that Kaiser's view needs significant correction.

Erickson also examines and disagrees with Daniel Fuller's view that an unbeliever can fully understand a text, even though the unbeliever is unwilling to accept the truth of the text for his own life.

Erickson goes on to examine the problem of contemporization, "The problem of getting from there to here" (p. 56). He believes the answer is to discover "the timeless elements of content" (p. 69). He then goes on to illustrate the value of the knowledge of church history, theology, and cross-cultural studies to gain a better understanding of a text.

The author concludes by examining the way in which modernism has been replaced by postmodernism, which appears in its most radical and dangerous form as deconstruction. He believes that deconstructive postmodernism presents two challenges to the evangelical. The first is to evaluate this position critically. The second is to provide a postmodern evangelical hermeneutic. He then sets forth eleven points which spell out his idea of what such a hermeneutic should be.

Harry Buis

The Hindu Connection: Roots of the New Age, by A. R. Victor Raj, St. Louis: Concordia, 1995. 240p., \$12.99 (paper).

In this study, A. R. Victor Raj attempts to show that the ideas of the contemporary New Age movement are in fact rooted in the ancient religious tradition of Hinduism. He points out that in 1991 alone at least ninety Hindu evangelists visited the United States.

Raj shows how Hindu beliefs have been indigenized into Western culture, in particular the belief in monism, which asserts that ultimate reality is One. As examples of this Hindu influence, Raj cites New Age ideas concerning the Cosmic Christ, the concept of synergism whereby God and humanity cooperate in the work of creation and salvation, and the denial of original sin.

Perhaps the most interesting section of the book is where philosophical Hinduism and its resurgence and what Raj calls the Hindu-Christian connection are considered. Brief biographies and doctrinal summaries are provided for such important figures as Sri Ramakrishna, Mahatma Gandhi, S. Radhakrishnan, Sadhu Sundar Singh, M. M. Thomas, and many others. Raj shows how Christianity actually played a role in the resurgence of Hinduism as modern Hindus struggled to rethink their tradition in order to come to terms with an advancing Christianity.

The final chapter of the book is a statement of evangelical Christianity as understood from a classical Lutheran

perspective. Emphasis is placed upon salvation by grace alone, the problem of human sin and the need for repentance, the Lutheran understanding of the two kingdoms, and the church as the community of believers. The New Age is faulted for its denial of salvation by grace alone, its rejection of original sin and the need for repentance, and its self-absorption, which cuts it off from true fellowship in the church.

In addition to a critique of the New Age, the author takes swipes at deconstruction, which really has nothing to do with either Hinduism or the New Age. He also criticizes feminism, Westerners who practice yoga only as a form of physical exercise, interfaith dialogue, and those forms of modern theology that focus on environmental issues and new forms of spirituality.

The Hindu Connection deals with a most important issue for contemporary Christians, and Raj is to be commended for pointing out the Hindu roots of New Age thought. The connections to which he gives so much attention, however, are not the connections that have directly influenced the New Age. For an in-depth study of those connections the reader must look elsewhere.

Daniel J. Adams

I Suffer Not a Woman: Rethinking 1 Timothy 2:11-15 in Light of Ancient Evidence, by Richard Clark Kroeger and Catherine Clark Kroeger, Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992.

Richard and Catherine Clark Kroeger have presented a book that equips people with exegetical, cultural, and historical insights that support the inclusion of women in ordained ministry. They also beautifully model inclusive cooperation, as they weave their female and male sensitivities and scholarship into a united work.

Richard and Catherine invest a great amount of research in reconstructing the culture of Ephesus, the context for the epistle of 1 Timothy. They explore the influence of goddess mystery cults, female domination, and

dramatic distortions of the Hebrew Scriptures within the early church at Ephesus. A convincing argument is made that the writer of 1 Timothy was concerned with guarding the nascent Christian community from the cultural influence of goddess fertility cults.

One outstanding example of their exegesis is a suggested reading of 1 Timothy 2:12. The NRSV reads: "I permit no woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she is to keep silent. For Adam was formed first, then Eve." Richard and Catherine present the following alternative:

I do not permit woman to teach nor to represent herself as originator of man but she is to be in conformity [with the Scriptures]. For Adam was created first, then Eve (p. 103).

Part of the basis for their argument for this alternative is the prevalent practice of secret cults in Ephesus which promoted the idea that women have dominion over men because Eve was the primordial originator of Adam, all men, and all creation.

Overall, this work by Richard and Catherine may help biblically conservative pastors and parishioners open up the doors of ordained ministry to women willingly, graciously, and with the biblical integrity they demand. Critically, I would suggest that the book's strength could also become its greatest weakness. Even as Richard and Catherine seek to free the Bible from bondage to literalism, they come dangerously close to playing the game of proof-texting and counter proof-texting. The church could pursue justice and equality more effectively with the understanding that God's reign continues to call people forward to new levels of awareness and sensitivity, which can grow beyond the boundaries of biblical history.

Don W. Battjes

Introducing the World Council of Churches, by Marlin Van Elderen, Geneva: WCC Books, 1990.

Marlin Van Elderen, member of the Christian Reformed Church and former editor of *One World*, has written an informative book on the programs and scope of the World Council of Churches (WCC).

He outlines the various ways members look at the WCC and why they value it. Some see it as a council of churches encouraging church unions and/or unity at pulpit and table. Others see it as a networking organization, a convener of forums, a think tank. Still others see it mainly as a source of funds.

Van Elderen writes about the decline in the importance of the church in secularized societies and the revitalization and spread of non-Christian religions and new religious movements. Church growth is occurring in the Pentecostal movements of South America.

He is quite open and frank about objections to the WCC and to its stands and actions from the right and from the left, but he closes by telling why he believes the WCC matters: Christian disunity can be dangerous and even lead to hatred, whereas Christ clearly wants his people to be one. Van Elderen sees the WCC as a representation of the enduring conviction of Christ's people that unity is something worth working for.

Raymond E. Weiss

Israel and the Politics of Land: A Theological Case Study, by Wallace Eugene March, Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1994. xiii, 104p., \$12.99.

The author argues the thesis of God's primary ownership of all land and his assignment of humans as "earth-keepers" with goals of reconciliation, justice, and compassion. Dr. March is the A.B. Rhodes Professor of Old Testament and the Dean of the Faculty at Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary. He has collaborated on several study papers on Israel for his denomination.

He attempts a balanced political view of Israel/Palestine, asserting rights of both Palestinians and Israelis to home territories.

March looks for sensible people of faith who will translate their belief in the Creator God into reasonable solutions to land problems in the modern state of Israel. Therefore he answers "No" to the following questions: (1) Is Israel "Israel"? (2) Is the church Israel? (3) Is God's gathering "Israel"? (4) Is Israel God's chosen? (5) Is Israel's land God-given?

To two other questions he gives qualified answers: (1) Is Israel God's creation? Yes, like all other nations. (2) Is Israel spiritually significant? Insofar as it attempts to be a Jewish, state it shares some of the same burden and blessing as ancient Israel.

The thesis of the book can be extended to other land disputes around the world, such as those in Ireland and Bosnia.

In order to accommodate the book to study groups, March has prepared study questions for each chapter at the end of the book. He includes bibliographies at the close of each chapter. There is also a suggestion that the thesis of God's ownership of land and our assignment as earth-keepers can help combine theology and ecology.

Sylvio J. Scorza

Leaving Home, by Herbert Anderson and Kenneth R. Mitchell, Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1993. 160p.

Leaving home is a logical extension of the formation of self begun at birth. Home is the place we start, and leaving is necessary so we can go home again. According to the authors, this paradox is a constant condition of human life. Leaving home involves both the joy of new life and moving on and the pain of change and saying goodbye.

Each of us reads within the context of our own experience. I read this book from the perspective of a recent loss (the death of my husband) and an anticipated one (our oldest child's expected departure to college). In both cases, the "leaving" process as explained in the book contains two essential movements: the actions of the person leaving and the letting go by those left behind. When done well, the

leaving is publicly marked and acknowledged. The family celebrates and grieves and then reorders itself. Whether the leave-taking is via death or moving on with life, it is an essential part of the human experience.

From my own experience with our daughter's impending departure to college, the process of leaving is indeed bitter-sweet, a paradox. On the one hand I am thrilled for her because I remember with great fondness my own college experience. I am excited as I look at the person she is becoming. And yet there is the knowledge that I will miss her and that the family structure will permanently change. This book is "must" reading for anyone who has ever left home or been left behind.

Barbara Pekich

Let It Grow! by Josh Hunt, Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993. 199p.

If the realities of your parish area demand that you begin to offer different types of worship experiences in order to meet the needs of different types of people, this book may be helpful. It is a classic 'how-to' volume based on Josh Hunt's experience at Calvary Baptist Church of Las Cruces, New Mexico. Given that it is so heavily based on experience, the reader may be distracted by Hunt's own story.

In the second chapter Hunt makes his greatest contribution to the field of church growth by helping us to understand the difference between traditional, multi-service, and multi-congregation congregations. Traditional congregations may offer more than one worship service, but mostly they are clones of one another and are provided for the convenience of a homogeneous population. Multi-service congregations may offer a number of services with a wide variety of formats, but they perceive themselves to be one congregation with one preaching minister and one congregational life. Multi-congregation congregations enjoy the preaching of many staff members and do not regard the "senior" minister as the only interpreter of the Word of God in the community.

If the realities of your parish area demand that you begin to offer different types of worship experiences, I suggest that you make your appeal to the elders on the basis of common sense and refer to the Reformed Church in America's 1989 Directory of Worship for guidance with worship planning.

Peter M. Paulsen

Ministry In an Oral Culture—Living With Will Rogers, Uncle Remus, and Minnie Pearl, by Tex Sample, Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1994. 128p., \$11.99.

Recently I offered to a man working in my house some theological reading material. "I don't read much," he said. "Ain't read a book since high school. I get *Bass Magazine*, but I don't read it." To Tex Sample (Professor of Church and Society at Saint Paul School of Theology and author of *U.S. Lifestyles and Mainline Churches: A Key to Reaching People in the '90s*), such a person represents about half of our population, people who work primarily out of a *traditional orality*," and whose "appropriation and engagement with life," even though most can read and write, "is oral" (6).

Since "most churches have a clear majority of their membership who work from a traditional orality," they pose a serious problem of communication for clergy, who, because of their seminary (literate) training, may not only be unequipped to deal with such people, but may even be predisposed to dislike them and to discount their culture. Sample thinks another way is called for—an "indigenous ministry . . . done in terms of a traditional orality instead of a literate style" (9). Towards that task, he takes us through a survey of the "practices" of traditional orality (memorization, learning by doing, thinking based on concrete life), an examination of how traditional/oral people do ethics (by means of story, proverb, and communal relationships), a description of how such people deal with change in church and society (by adding to rather than destroying tradition), and a look at

how they express their "faith language of the heart" (based on their "struggle . . . to cope and survive, to seek out a faith of trust and assurance, and to claim who they are and to whom they belong" [83]). He is concerned not to get the church to drop literate practices, which are valuable and needed in proper contexts, but to be aware of the needs of those who function otherwise, and to incorporate an "array of indigenous practices for a contextual ministry" (some of which are summarized on page 72).

This is a challenging and useful book because our culture generally seems to be tending away from literacy toward orality, and that shift deserves our concerned attention. Sample's book offers us wisdom from his experience and research that provides a sound basis on which to begin thinking about and doing "ministry to an oral culture."

Francis Fike

Ninety-Nine Reasons Why No One Knows When Christ Will Return, by B.J. Oropeza, Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1994. 225p.

The approach of the year 2000 A.D. has resulted in a plethora of predictions of Christ's return. Some of the same hysteria that infected Europe as the year 1000 A.D. approached seems to be exciting some people now. Despite Jesus' very plain words in Matthew 24:36, "No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father," and Acts 1:7, "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority," some people continue to engage in date setting by various means. B.J. Oropeza has made a study of this phenomena and has written a book with the purpose of countering the claims of people who have indulged themselves in date setting and predictions of when Christ will return.

Why would people who call themselves Christians disregard the plain teachings of Scripture and try to set a date for Christ's return? Part of it, says Oropeza, is that some people are very ingenious in their attempts to

interpret Scripture. Other attempts at predicting Christ's return try to set a date from statements in the book of Daniel and natural phenomena, especially earthquakes and signs in the sky. Some engage in numerology, concentrating on identifying persons whose names or birth dates can be manipulated to arrive at the number 666. Speculation has seized upon a range of persons as different from each other as Ronald Reagan and Saddam Hussein. Others say that Jesus' return is imminent because they hear and believe rumors about rebuilding the Temple in Jerusalem. Still others try to beef up their positions by citing non-Christian sources like Nostradamus.

Oropeza's research introduced me to many movements and persons that I had never heard of before, most of whom seem to operate in the hazy "fringeland" between Christian churches and the cults.

Arie Blok

Not the Way It's Supposed to Be: A Breviary of Sin, by Cornelius Plantinga, Jr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995. 216p., \$19.99.

This stimulating book counters the current premise that no problem is too large to ignore. Not only has our society become prone to excuse and minimize sin's reality, but the church is often a full partner in this rationalization and denial. Plantinga, a systematic theology professor at Calvin Theological Seminary, believes it is crucial for us to rediscover the multifaceted nature of sin. His desire is not to strangle us with the oppressive burden of depravity. Rather, he understands the liberating and refreshing truth that we are able to appreciate and enjoy Jesus Christ and his grace only as we recognize the pervasiveness of our true human condition.

According to the author *shalom*—God's gracious wholeness and delight—is the way life ought to be. Unfortunately, we have vandalized the peace and wholeness of relationships that constitute God's desire and design for creation. Sin is defined as that which "offends God not only because it

bereaves or assaults God directly, as in impiety or blasphemy, but also because it bereaves and assaults what God has made" (p. 16). With graphic imagery the reader is guided in exploring how sin has corrupted not only the cosmic *shalom* but the spiritual hygiene (the Septuagint frequently renders *shalom* by this term) of the individual as well.

Once this philosophical foundation of *shalom*, sin, and corruption has been laid, the reader is invited to explore the themes of pollution, contradiction of character, deception, sin and folly, the need for discernment, and the various ways people take flight from sin and their sins.

The interested reader need not fear that this book will be ponderous or a mere dusting off of disconnected theology. The author is a master at observing and perceiving our contemporary culture. In light of this, his source materials are drawn not only from Scripture, Augustine, and the Heidelberg Catechism, but equally from movies, television programs, novels, and political vignettes from Winston Churchill, Lyndon Baines Johnson, and Ronald Reagan.

What I found missing was any treatment and interaction with the Puritans and their important concept of indwelling sin and how that divides and distorts our hearts. Plantinga is a person of considerable talents and I would have been intrigued by how he would have explored this aspect of sin. However, in a breviary it is difficult to address all the issues that are part of sin's widespread web. This illuminating book sounds a necessary note to our often tone-deaf culture. It deserves a careful reading by people in all walks of life.

Tom Schwanda

A Practical Guide to Community Ministry, by A. David Bos, Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1993. 112p., \$12.99 (paper).

Bos is an accomplished practitioner of the community ministry which he advocates. He contends that "the community ministry that I have in mind refers to a particular way of

ministering to society in which congregations of more than one denomination and of a particular locality (neighborhood, small town, rural county) agree to pool their resources" (p. 1). He then details three characteristics of these community ministries: they are congregation-based and very local; they are social ministries that see issues through the prism of their own communities; and they are ecumenical. Bos follows a discussion of these characteristics with a practical how-to chapter on organizing, staffing, and fund-raising.

This book could not come at a more opportune time. The great ecumenical social ministries which moved the church to action in response to perceived needs are either now outside the formal structures of the church (e.g., Protestant hospitals) or are in some disarray (e.g., migrant ministries). In the place of the big movement has come the community movement, for which this book might be the manual.

I missed any analysis of how this type of ecumenism will help us move beyond the joys of shared labors to the worship of a shared table. It is not enough to 'do good' if the doing good has no beginning in shared biblical conviction and no conclusion in shared worship.

For the one who sees the need for a particular congregational response to a pressing community need, this book is the ideal planning manual.

Peter M. Paulsen

Professing the Faith, Douglas John Hall, Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993. 566p.

This volume is the second of a trilogy dealing with professing the faith in the context of twentieth-century North America. In developing his position, Hall is critical of both conservative and liberal theology. In this volume, he deals with theology (doctrine of God), anthropology, and Christology. Under each of these headings, Hall deals first with historical theology, then with critical theology, and finally with constructive theology.

Under theology, Hall begins with a positive answer to the question of the knowability of God. Regarding the Trinity, he believes that the focus on the doctrinal distinctions caused the church to lose touch with the living God. Criticizing the historical position of the church, Hall believes that we fail as the result of too great an emphasis on the power of God, and that the corrective is to focus on Jesus as the revealer of a suffering God.

In the area of anthropology, Hall feels that there has been too much emphasis on humanity to the neglect of the rest of creation and that in our context today, people have responded to the loss of meaning in human life with a covert nihilism. He believes the answer is to affirm the world while resisting the evil in it.

Dealing with Christology, Hall criticizes both the "Christology from above" and the "Christology from below" because he believes they reduce the mystery of the person of Christ to a caricature. Regarding the work of Christ, Hall finds the division into the threefold offices helpful, although they are incomprehensible apart from each other. He believes that the best way of viewing the atonement theories is to see them as responses to the different anxieties characteristic of succeeding periods of history. He thinks that the way in which the church has responded to the kingship of Christ has led to unhealthy triumphalism. He is concerned that the church has neglected the full humanity of Christ and its implications.

Hall concludes his examination of Christology by considering the valuable implications of the name Emmanuel, "God with us." He believes that the emphasis has been on "God" when it should be on the "with us" part. He thinks that previous descriptions of the work of Christ have little meaning for today. Hall views Jesus as God's representative to man and man's representative to God. His statement that "we do not say that he 'is' divine" (p.513) seems to place Hall in an Arian position.

While I disagree with Hall at many points, I found his work to be challenging and thought-provoking. We learn more from

authors with whom we disagree than from those with whom we agree.

Harry Buis

The Protestant Wedding Sourcebook: A Complete Guide for Developing Your Own Service, by Sidney F. Batts, Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1993. 192p., \$21.99 (paper).

Sidney Batts, minister and head of staff at Mt. Vernon Presbyterian Church in Atlanta, divides wedding ceremonies into eleven categories and provides numerous options of wording, style, and traditions to allow an engaged couple to personally design their own wedding ceremony. Eighty-five pages of sample wedding services from twelve Protestant churches, along with sample work sheets, are also included. This is a welcome resource, especially for the pastor with numerous weddings, and provides enough variety to be personal yet traditional.

Batts provides some good ideas for including the entire family in the ceremony. It is refreshing to look at the many options that address the leave-taking part of the service, where the father traditionally "gives the bride away." At this part of the service Batts provides options that address the family members and friends of the engaged couple.

The sourcebook is intended to be given to engaged couples so that they could design everything from the opening statement to the benediction of their wedding ceremony. I would suggest that a pastor develop several ceremonies from the many options provided by Batts and allow the engaged couple to choose from those. I feel having fewer options allows the minister to be creative, while also becoming familiar enough with the service so that every part of the service is not read to the couple. It also allows ministers to retain integrity as they remain faithful to their denominations, traditions, and convictions.

Juno Smalley

Revival and Revivalism: The Making and Marring of American Evangelicalism, 1750-1858, by Iain H. Murray, Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1994. 455p.

Iain Murray draws important distinctions between "revival," the action of the Holy Spirit in bringing a community or church to repentance and faith, and "revivalism," the attempt on the part of preachers, orators, and evangelists to produce in their listeners a renewed, strengthened, or new commitment to Jesus Christ. Studying the history of the church in America during his chosen time frame, he notes how the church changed from accepting and looking for the Spirit's work in people's lives to attempting, through revivals, to get people to choose for God.

At heart, says Murray, there is a difference in the theology at work. At the beginning of the period, the dominant theology was Calvinistic, with its dependance upon the work of God in the calling and saving of people. However, at the leading of influential evangelists, the focus shifted to an Arminian outlook, highlighting the choice people have between heaven and hell and encouraging them to choose God. Murray laments this change, and thus places himself in the Calvinist, "revival" camp.

I find this to be a clear and refreshing look at what took place in this era and an enlightening look at the issue of human choice and divine sovereignty. It also brings up other interesting bits of information, such as examining the great preachers of the day and the theological development of denominations. The influence of American society as a whole is touched upon. This clear, easy to read, and enlightening book covers a topic where the Reformed Church has a rich, though often neglected, history.

Matt Draffen

Sacraments and Struggle: Signs and Instruments of Grace from the Downtrodden, by Kenith A. David, Geneva: WCC Publications, 1994. xi, 126p.

Kenith A. David revisits the notion of sacrament, reinterpreting it in connection with the struggles of the poor. But in order to do this, David takes us on a concise historical trip through the "Signs of the Times." There are two parts to this work. Part one describes the state of the world and how the West usurped tremendous wealth at the expense of nations and people they made poor through programs of colonization. It also refreshes us with the notions of sign, symbol, and sacrament. Part two delves into the critical exposition of the reality of sacrament and struggle.

Whereas sacrament has been doctrinally interpreted as a religious phenomenon, David finds concrete social connections. The reality of struggle in which the downtrodden are engaged introduces the radical conception of sacrament now seen as the sacrament of life, land, name/identity, community and the sacrament of a new era, the hope of the downtrodden.

No doubt David has introduced an important agenda for the first part of the twenty-first century. Churches, seminaries, and Christians everywhere must deal with this refreshing interpretation in order to reignite the original conception of the church as an institution of social justice. This means that the current definitions of sacrament need reworking and must necessarily accommodate the new understandings of David and several others.

T.Y. Okosun

Sex for Christians, by Lewis B. Smedes, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994. 244p., \$9.99.

This book was originally published in 1976, when the question of sexuality, especially as it affected Christians, was critical in terms of emergent new patterns and the need for responsible guidance. Then, Smedes was decisive and daringly caring as he dealt with several aspects of the question. The 1970s, with their yearning for sexual creativity and counter-culture, introduced much misunderstanding about sexuality. A few

scholars during that decade, noticeably Andre Guindon in Canada and Smedes in the United States, dared to look the problem in the eye and posit several notices reminding us of the importance of ethical comportment. For Smedes, however far Christians wandered in sexual experimentation or creativity, they were always to remain close to creative biblical guidance.

With the disarray of the sexual scene in 1994, his revisiting the question by reissuing *Sex for Christians* remains equally pertinent for Christians and human beings who seek sexual holism. In this issue, Smedes ruminates about several new questions, including those of AIDS and homosexuality. He endorses compassion and understanding. Since he is speaking from the Judeo-Christian perspective, he naturally finds it to be the best guidance "for humane and happy sex." Within this tradition, I find him to be a gentle as well as a firm teacher who espouses sexual responsibility beyond everything else. Safe sex is not just using a condom, but morally disciplined sexuality that guides Christians toward well-being. This document cannot be overlooked by anyone who truly seeks to unravel the implications of sexuality in the 1990s and thereafter.

T.Y. Okosun

Sharing Faith With Children: Rethinking the Children's Sermon, by Sara Covin Juengst, Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1994. 116p.

No person who currently gives children's messages should be without this book. It has and will certainly improve my children's sermons. I strongly encourage the others in my church who also give children's messages to read it.

The titles of some of the chapters are: The Worship Setting, How Children Think, How Children Grow in Faith, The Spiritual Needs of Children, Language and Symbolism, and The Shape of the Sermon. The early chapters helped me to better understand why children's sermons are difficult, and the later

chapters gave me some tools to make it an easier job to come up with a children's message. The suggestions at the end of the last chapter are probably the most practical and useful part of the book.

Rick Christy

The Soul of Science: Christian Faith and Natural Philosophy, by Nancy R. Pearcey and Charles B. Thaxton, Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1994. xiii, 298p., \$10.99 (paper).

This book is intended for persons disposed to imagine a conflict between Christian faith and science. Its authors—Thaxton, a chemist, and Pearcey, a science writer—aim to disabuse them of this notion and to introduce them to Christianity's central role in the origin, development, and ongoing life of natural science.

According to the authors, historical conflicts between science and religion have been exaggerated, and sometimes invented, by secularizing propagandists. The growth of science cannot be understood in terms of empirical evidence and reasoning alone; it is necessary to consider other factors, particularly scientists' religious motivations. Many scientific theories were originally unsupported by the evidence. Resistance to them was not stupidity or religious bigotry but reasonable at the time. Granting the authors' avowed aim to write for a "semi-popular audience" and to "paint with broad strokes" (xiii), they succeed admirably in making a credible case for these facts in two historical sections that make up about two-thirds of the book.

The remainder of the volume is less successful. It consists of examinations of important twentieth-century developments in science, viz., special and general relativity, quantum theory, and the discovery of the role of DNA in living cells. Here, a "creation science" perspective lurks in the background, only coming into view distinctly in the final chapter on biochemistry. In fact, there is an odd incongruity between the historical account and the analysis of the contemporary scene. In

the former, Pearcey and Thaxton nicely illustrate the foibles of Christian scientists led astray by a misguided motive to avoid the appearance of deism by positing a place for divine action in the interstices of scientific explanation, e.g., Newton's infamous theory that God episodically intervenes to stabilize planetary orbits. But later they conclude their survey of the difficulties in biochemical theories of life's origin with the claim that only divine intervention can possibly explain the existence of the genetic code. Here they seem not to have profited from the lessons of their historical account.

Donald H. Wacombe

St. Paul versus St. Peter: A Tale of Two Missions, by Michael Goulder, Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1994. xii, 196p., \$15.99 (paper).

Michael Goulder was one of the contributors to *The Myth of God Incarnate*, originally published in 1977 (second ed., 1993). There he argued that the most we can say of the historical Jesus is that he was an agent of God who viewed himself as Messiah and Son of Man.

In the present work, Goulder gives an account of the varieties of faith that developed after Jesus. He divides the early church into two groups or missions: a Pauline mission, which was responsible for writing most of the New Testament; and a Jerusalem-based mission (which Goulder mistakenly labels "Petrine"), reflected primarily in the opponents whom Paul and John addressed in their epistles, the special Matthean material (including Q), and a hypothetical early gospel used as a source by Mark. He then uses categories derived from second-century sources to interpret all of the debated issues of the New Testament (circumcision, the Law, eschatology, Christology, resurrection body, etc.) in terms of the two opposing missions.

The primary value of Goulder's study is its emphasis on christological issues in the early church. The Jerusalem mission, Goulder

argues, viewed Jesus as a normal man who was possessed by the Spirit of the Lord (an angel, according to Goulder) at his baptism, empowered by the Spirit in his healing miracles, and then deserted by the Spirit when he died on the cross. In other words, its Christology was a cross between Gnosticism and Arianism.

Goulder could be right about the Christology of the opponents of Paul and John (see 2 Cor. 11:2-4; 1 John 2:22; 5:6-8). In fact, the opposition of proto-Gnostics might help to account for Paul's stress on the crucifixion of Christ in 1 Corinthians (e.g., 1 Cor. 1:23; 2:8). However, Goulder ignores the evidence for a high Christology in "Petrine" sources like the special Matthean material. He also fails to connect evidence for a sacrificial view of the cross in early Christian traditions (1 Cor. 11:23-26; 15:3) with the Jerusalem church (pp. 140-41). Moreover, Goulder never considers the possibility that groups other than the Jerusalem church may have trained the opponents of Paul and John. In short, while Goulder is quite right to find diversity in early Christian Christology, he forces everything into a Procrustean bed having just two sides. The interested reader would be far better served by Raymond E. Brown and John P. Meier, *Antioch and Rome* (Paulist, 1983), which discerns four parties in the early church rather than just two.

Christopher B. Kaiser

Systematic Theology, by Wayne Grudem, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994. 1264p., \$39.99.

In a very well-written and insightful but lengthy book, Wayne Grudem has given the church a comprehensive theology text. Clearly in the mainstream of evangelical thought, Grudem may nevertheless find it difficult to find a home for his eclectic theology that is Reformed in soteriology, Baptist in ecclesiology, and charismatic in regard to the spiritual gifts.

This systematic theology is different from almost all other theology texts. It treats at length such topics as Christ's descent into hell (which is denied), church government, the intermediate state between death and resurrection, and spiritual gifts. More importantly, Grudem makes theology *speak to the heart* as well as to the mind of the Christian. Each chapter concludes with pertinent personal questions to make the subject matter applicable in the midst of one's life. Devotional thoughts and appropriate hymns are provided to make this more than an academic enterprise, but a spiritual experience. Also provided with each chapter is a bibliography that provides page references to the systematic works of leading Anglican, Arminian, Baptist, Dispensational, Lutheran, Reformed, Pentecostal, and Roman Catholic theologians on the doctrine just covered. This is very useful to pastors, classroom professors, and the inquiring layperson.

While basically Reformed in doctrine and thus most appropriate for this journal, Grudem demonstrates an appreciation for the diversity of theological traditions within the Christian community. He wishes to major on the majors within the evangelical tradition while not denying differences in regard to baptism, the Lord's Supper, church government, and the eschatological expectations of the future. Though not timid to state his understanding on these doctrines (believer's baptism, real presence, congregational plurality of elders, historic premillennialism), Grudem hopes that "a fresh look at Scripture may provoke a new examination of these doctrines and may perhaps prompt some movement not just toward greater understanding and tolerance of other viewpoints, but even toward great doctrinal consensus in the church" (p. 18).

Ronald B. Mayers

Systematic Theology, Vol. 2, by Wolfhart Pannenberg (trans. by Geoffrey W. Bromiley), Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994. xvi, 499p., \$39.99.

The English translation of Pannenberg's second volume is a welcome installment in his three-volume systematics. His topics here include the creation of the world, the dignity and misery of humanity, anthropology and Christology, the deity of Jesus Christ, and the reconciliation of the world. The kind of careful, detailed scholarship we expect from Pannenberg is clearly demonstrated in this work, which presupposes the event of God's revelation and our knowledge of God in the doctrines of God and the Trinity (Vol. 1). Now Pannenberg considers the knowledge derived from "experience of the world and humanity from the standpoint of the Christian understanding of God."

This is the God who acts freely in creation and to whom all creation owes its existence. Creation is a trinitarian act of God in which the Father acts as Creator through the Son and gives creatures life by the power of the Spirit. Always in dialogue with contemporary science, Pannenberg considers a host of scientific claims about the universe and relates these to the Christian view of God the Creator. For Pannenberg, for example, "our revolutionary derivation does not rule out the immediacy of our relation to God."

Humans are created to have a destiny of fellowship with God which finds its "supreme and final realization in humanity" only in "the light of the incarnation of the eternal Son as a man." Human misery and alienation take place "when we live our lives in antithesis to our destiny." Humans are a living whole, an "ensouled body" created in God's image in "openness to the world" (cf. Pannenberg's *Anthropology in Theological Perspective*).

Pannenberg's christological work continues, corrects (at points), and elucidates his former writings, particularly in *Jesus—God and Man* (1968). Jesus Christ is understood in light of the Easter event and his deity in terms of his unity with God. For "only the Easter event determines what the meaning was of the pre-Easter history of Jesus and who he was in his relation to God." From the resurrection, Jesus' followers began to develop the views that Jesus was God's divine Son and was pre-existent with the Father. "Son of God" is a

central image for Pannenberg and the clearest expression of Jesus' relationship with God.

Pannenberg's views of salvation and reconciliation revolve around the death on the cross of Jesus and the overcoming of death by his resurrection. This message became the Christian "gospel." The proclamation of this gospel, says Pannenberg, "is not merely one thing among others in the church's life. It is the basis of the church's life. The church is a creature of the Word."

This work is full of biblical insights, important perspectives from the history of the Christian tradition, and engagement with contemporary thought in philosophy and science. Its study will richly repay all those who wish to plumb the depths of the central issues of the Christian faith.

Donald K. McKim

A Theology of the New Testament, Revised Edition, by George Eldon Ladd (edited by Donald A. Hagner), Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993. 740p., \$34.99.

This revised edition of George Eldon Ladd's *A Theology of the New Testament*, will be welcomed as an old friend for those who cut their New Testament theological "teeth" on Ladd's 1974 edition. Originally intended to introduce students to the discipline of New Testament theology, this extensive volume provided a survey of the New Testament, its problems, and possible solutions. For the last two decades this magisterial work has served that goal for scores of seminary students.

Now this exhaustive, standard evangelical text has been carefully revised by Donald Hagner, who updated Ladd's survey of the history of the field of New Testament theology, augmented the numerous (English) bibliographies, oversaw the editing of the whole text for the sake of inclusive language, made minor clarifications and updating throughout, and added an entirely new subject index. Hagner has insured that this volume's reputation as a "superb, comprehensive introduction to New Testament theology" will

remain for the next generation of seminary students.

This revision also includes two completely new chapters on subjects that Ladd wanted to treat in a new edition: the theology of each of the synoptic Gospels, written by R.T. France, Principal of Wycliffe Hall in Oxford; and the issue of unity and diversity in the New Testament, written by David Wenham, lecturer in New Testament at Wycliffe Hall.

France's chapter on the synoptic Gospels examines the distinctive contribution that each Gospel "reporter" makes to the total theology of the New Testament. The reader will welcome this addition. It strengthens the canonical witness of Jesus and challenges the rather tired and traditional attempt to "harmonize," that is, to attempt to boil the Synoptics down into a single account. Instead, France argues that true harmony arises when the reader of the Gospels allows them to collectively unite their different "lines of music" into a beautiful ensemble. Such will be the experience of the reader of this chapter. Having examined the individual voices, a beautiful and stimulating blend will emerge.

The Wenham chapter stimulates the reader in another way. Here the challenge is unity versus diversity in the New Testament. Three points in particular are raised in this chapter: (1) It examines the "question of different parties in the early church. Were competing versions of Christianity seriously offered?" (2) It examines the "question of development in the early church. Was there a static Christian orthodoxy or a radically changing pattern of belief?" (3) Finally, it visits the "Jesus-Paul question asking whether or not there was a strong respect for tradition in the early church, comparable at least to the later church's concern for orthodoxy." The chapter also "briefly addresses the question [of] whether there is a center and coherent structure to New Testament theology."

The chapter makes for exciting and honest study. Any student of the Bible knows that these are the very kinds of probing questions that come from serious Christians and seekers in the local church classroom. Wenham concludes by affirming the place of both

diversity and unity. The reader should finish the chapter, found in the appendix to discover the "weight" he assigns to each.

This thoughtful revision remains a worthy companion to both student and pastor in the challenging world of New Testament theology.

Stephen W. Van Dop

Toward a Theology of Nature: Essays on Science and Faith, by Wolfhart Pannenberg (edited by Ted Peters), Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1993. x, 166p., \$19.99 (paper).

Theology in a secular scientific culture faces a trilemma. Theologians can regard theological truth and scientific truth as existing in separate compartments, thereby avoiding conflict, but at the cost of implicitly abandoning the claim that the God of human history and salvation is also the Lord and creator of the natural world. Or they can continually correct and modify theological truth in light of scientific discovery, thereby making theology subservient to science. Or they can make science the object of theological criticism, seeking to reveal the incompleteness and inadequacy of any scientific description of the world that is not shaped by an explicit conception of God as nature's creator and sustainer. Pannenberg ingeniously pursues this third strategy in the seven previously published essays collected in this volume.

This theologian is at his best exploring the historical routes by which mechanistic scientific theories undermined traditional conceptions of God's involvement in the creation, e.g., how the idea of inertia encouraged the belief that there is no need to invoke God's action to explain why moving objects stay in motion. He convincingly argues that salient themes in twentieth-century science, such as the uniqueness, historicity, and ordered contingency of the cosmos, point toward deeper theological explanations. Students of his systematic theology will find some interest in his attempt to relate the historical and eschatological character of God's soteriological

action in the world to the necessarily historical nature of the cosmos and the life it contains.

Pannenberg is less successful in the constructive project of integrating modern science into an overarching theological framework. Here, the most plausible solutions are dismissed as "deistic," while he pursues connections between scientific theories and theological beliefs (e.g., an alleged connection between field theory in physics and biblical conceptions of God's Spirit at work in the world) that lead him, as the editor suggests in his clear and helpful introduction, "to throw caution to the wind" (14).

Donald H. Wacome

The Veneration of Divine Justice: The Dead Sea Scrolls and Christianity, by Roy A. Rosenberg, Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1995. xii, 145p., \$45.00.

This fascinating study provides a good introduction to the Qumran Scrolls that bear on New Testament Christology. Among the many such studies now available, it is among the less cautious in its use of the evidence. Rosenberg challenges the scholarly dogma that a suffering Messiah was unthinkable in first-century Judaism.

The main contribution of Rosenberg's work is its elevation of the concept of justice as the unifying thread in the teachings of the Scrolls and in the ministry of Jesus. The divine attribute of *sedeq* (justice or righteousness) is a common attribute of the three major eschatological figures expected in the Qumran community: the "Teacher of Righteousness" (or "Correct Teacher," *moreh sedeq*), who is both a priest and a prophet like Elijah; the "Messiah of Righteousness" (or "True Messiah," *mesiah hassedeq*), who is the Son of David; and "the King of Righteousness," Melchizedek (*malki-sedeq*), who is also the Son of Man in the Similitudes of Enoch (1 Enoch 46:3; 71:14).

Various bits of evidence in the New Testament indicate that John the Baptist assumed the role of the Teacher of

Righteousness. According to Rosenberg, Jesus took over this role from John (hence the Elijah-like deeds of Matt. 11:5; cf. 4Q521), was invested as Messiah or Son of God at his baptism (Mark 1:11; cf. 2 Sam. 7:14), suffered as the Righteous One (*saddiq*) on the cross (Acts 3:14; 7:52; cf. Isa. 53:11), and was installed as divine *sedeq* at his resurrection (Heb. 5:8-10). Rosenberg thus nicely ties together the various messianic models of first-century Judaism (cf. John J. Collins, *The Scepter and the Star* [Doubleday, 1995], p. 195), and provides a plausible explanation for the emergence of New Testament Christology.

Although he does not mention it, Rosenberg also provides a platform for Jewish-Christian dialog as many hasidic Jews looked to their spiritual leader as a *saddiq*, one invested with the attribute of divine righteousness (Gershom Scholem, *On the Mystical Shape of the Godhead* [Shocken, 1991], ch. 3). Our quest for a deeper understanding of our faith has been furthered by this work.

Christopher B. Kaiser

The Visionary Leader: How Anyone Can Learn to Lead Better, by Joseph M. Champlin (with Charles D. Champlin), New York: Crossroad, 1993. 227p., \$12.95.

Father Champlin has put together a series of twelve interviews he did for the *Catholic Sun*, the diocesan paper for Syracuse, in 1991-92. He added a sixteen-page introduction to say that anyone, but especially parents, teachers, clergy, and employers, can be an effective leader.

Although he is himself a parish priest with some administrative experience, he chose people for his interviews from various levels of leadership from an orchestra conductor (Henry Mancini) to a mother who volunteers as a worship leader (Kathleen Bernardi).

He arranged the twelve interviews under the following characteristics of leadership: vision, reading and reflection, priorities, courage, being a "target," self-esteem,

listening, empowering, affirming, evaluating others and yourself, excellence, and being a servant.

At the close of each section he has added a "quote to ponder" and a "biblical role model" for that particular characteristic, including five women among the model leaders. He includes Jesus under "reading and reflection." A negative model is that of James and John, who elicited Jesus' teaching on servanthood by asking for places of honor in his kingdom.

The book is practical and easy to read, but somewhat even because of its origins. Limiting himself to an arbitrary twelve skills, he skips over such important leadership issues as setting an example, group skills, and public speaking.

Sylvio J. Scorza

Winds of the Spirit: A Constructive Christian Theology, by Peter C. Hodgson, Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1994. 421p., \$24.99.

Hodgson's purpose is to produce a theology relevant to post-modern deconstruction. However, what he calls his "revisioning" is so radical that, in my opinion, it is what the Apostle Paul would call "another gospel."

The persons most influential in Hodgson's thought are Tillich, Hegel, and process theologians like John Cobb. Hodgson accepts the relativism so characteristic of contemporary thought. He says, "everything is always and only a matter of interpretation" and "the only truth we know is the truth we create. . ." (p. 13).

At a number of points his process theology becomes evident. For example, "Apart from the world God is . . . rich in potential but not actual. In and through relationship with the world God becomes 'Spirit'" (p. 49).

It is in the crucial area of Christology that Hodgson departs most radically from the historic Christian faith. In his version of the trinity, the "World" is substituted for Christ! He explains, "I do indeed affirm that one of

the challenges of post-modernism to Christian theology is to give up its christocentrism, its potentially idolatrous fixation on Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, the incarnate Logos, the God-man" (p. 167).

Hodgson is also far from the historic Christian faith in his view of the Holy Spirit who, he says, "is not something that exists in advance as a supernatural person of the Godhead" (p. 282). He adds, "God's Spirit takes on the shape of *many* created spirits; not just the spirits of living persons but of ancestors and animals as well as the spirits of plants, trees. . ." (p. 284). He also says, "The Spirit proceeds not from the Father and the Son but from God and the world" (p. 290).

Certainly, we need to write theology which will meet the challenges of the post-modern world, but this is not the way to do it.

Harry Buis

The Work of Christ, by Robert Letham, Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1993. 284p.

Robert Letham describes the work of Christ as "all that Christ did when he came to this earth 'for us and our salvation,' all that he continues to do now that he is risen from the dead, and all that he will do when he returns in glory at the end of the age" (pp. 18-19). Although Letham acknowledges that this is a "vast area" and that a volume of 284 pages can only "scratch the surface," he must be commended for putting together an impressive work on what some have considered a "dry, ponderous expression" (p. 17).

The author approaches this important subject through the framework of Christ as prophet, priest, and king. Recently, Wolfhart Pannenberg and others have criticized this three-fold understanding of Christ because they maintain that there is no clear-cut evidence that Jesus claimed any of these offices for himself. Letham, however, feels that there are good reasons for using this approach. Summarizing, he states that "the three-fold office of Christ as prophet, priest, and king highlights his role in: (1) speaking and teaching the word of God

which ultimately focused on himself; (2) offering himself as a vicarious sacrifice to God; and (3) reigning over his church and the world as risen Lord" (p. 22).

Letham's own orthodox Reformed perspective is clearly evidenced in his preference to the penal substitution theory and vicarious atonement over against the moral influence theory. Thus he maintains that Christ's death "was a sacrifice, in which he took our place and suffered the just punishment that was ours for transgressing God's law." Consequently, our sins were expiated and, "with God's righteousness and holy wrath now appeased, he is reconciled to us so that we are his friends" (p. 153).

Letham also discusses a difference of emphasis between Lutheran and Reformed theology with regard to justification by faith. While for Lutheranism justification by faith was the heart of theology, the Reformed theologians subordinated justification to an overarching sense of the centrality of God and his covenant. The Reformed emphasis included both a reconstitution of civil and ecclesiastical affairs while Lutheranism "showed less developed intention in the application of the gospel to political life and focused more narrowly on soteriology" (p. 190).

This book contains good, solid orthodox theology. Its primary use will most likely be as a seminary textbook. However, there is excellent reference material here for pastors. It especially would be helpful as background reading for preaching on Heidelberg Catechism Lord's Day 3-6 and 12.

John C. Koedyker

World Religions in America: An Introduction, edited by Jacob Neusner, Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1994. 308p.

This book is an attempt to introduce the reader to the different religions which have come into America, ranging from the religions of the original inhabitants to those brought by the newest immigrants.

The book attempts to describe the religious experience of various ethnic, racial, and gender groups. The book is a compilation of articles written by various authors. Because of this, it is uneven in its focus and depth. Some of the articles are written on a level suitable for junior high or high school education, while others are more scholarly in their discussion. This seems inevitable in this type of work, but it can be jarring and at times limits the effectiveness of the book in instruction.

That being said, this book would be interesting for those who teach or study comparative religion, as well as those whose new next-door neighbors happen to be Buddhist or Hindu. In the attempt to inform, this book succeeds. If it concentrated on religious rather than ethnic groups, it would succeed even more.

Matt Draffen

The Writings of John Calvin: An Introductory Guide, by Wulfert de Greef (translated by Lyle D. Bierma), Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993. 254p.

This book stands in the tradition of the classical *accessus ad auctorem*, designed to give students of Calvin's work the basic tools they need in order to find their way around in Calvin's massive corpus. Beginning with an "Overview of Calvin's Life" (Chapter 1), de Greef proceeds to divide his works into various categories (early works; biblical studies; liturgy, catechesis and polity; polemical writings; the *Institutes*; miscellaneous writings; and letters). Within each category, he surveys and summarizes the extant writings. Finally, he provides bibliographies of primary and secondary sources, and a chronological list of Calvin's writings.

The book is intended as a reference guide. The information provided is often of a technical historical nature—helpful enough for certain purposes, but not gripping reading. On occasion one wonders whether the author has chosen the most useful details for emphasis.

This is particularly true in the biographical sketch where the proportion of facts to insights is somewhat out of balance.

The decision to group Calvin's writings by genre has certain advantages, but also tends to make it difficult to follow the thread of a particular topic across the different categories. For instance, a reader interested in Calvin's view of the Lord's Supper would need to touch down in several different chapters since Calvin addressed the issue in a variety of genres. Fortunately, in this case the indexing seems thorough enough to allow for such use of the book.

The treatment accorded Calvin's ideas is not that of a critical historian. It is never hinted that Calvin may have been wrong about anything, or that his opponents may have had reasonable arguments or sincere motivations. Such uncritical adulation will seem old-fashioned to many, and the special pleading may be annoying. Appreciating Calvin's greatness certainly does not require such an approach. Nevertheless, within its limitations the book may usefully serve the student of Calvin's writings.

David E. Timmer

Written Also for Our Sake: Paul and the Art of Biblical Interpretation, by James W. Aageson, Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1993. xiii, 156p., \$10.99.

Writing for the nonspecialist, James Aageson likens the enterprise of interpreting Scripture to a conversation. One participant is Scripture itself. The other is the interpreter with all that he or she brings to the task by way of background and worldview.

Both participants are to be taken seriously. Each is to speak and listen to the other. Therefore, the biblical text is not merely an inanimate object to be acted upon. It not only contains meaning, it also "contribute[s] to the generation and formation of meaning" as the interpreter encounters that text. Aageson illustrates this model of interpretation by studying the conversation that

took place between the Apostle Paul and the Old Testament as recorded in the Pauline letters.

The first chapter briefly develops the author's interpretive model. The next two chapters focus on Paul's "conversation" with the Old Testament so that we may understand how that contributes to our conversation within the community of faith.

The last half of the book deals with specific issues that arose as Paul ministered as the apostle to the Gentiles: The Galatian letter's reinterpretation of Genesis passages about Abraham; Romans 9-11 and the relationship of the church to Judaism and the Jews; the dialectical relation of Adam and Christ; and Torah, Wisdom, and Christ.

The author has succeeded well in his goal of making his subject readable for the nonspecialist. Not everyone will agree with his conclusions, for example, regarding his understanding of Pentateuchal narratives as "legend" and "ancient religious drama." But pastors and others interested in hermeneutics should find the presentation thought provoking.

Glenn Wyper

Zephaniah: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary (The Anchor Bible, Vol. 25A), by Adele Berlin, New York: Doubleday, 1994. xxi, 165p., \$29.00.

This contribution to the Anchor Bible is a sensible study of the neglected minor prophet Zephaniah. Since Zephaniah is "credible but not known" (p. 31), Dr. Berlin sees the book as a unity, written in one sitting. She says, "Total fabrication of an otherwise unknown prophet is difficult to imagine" (p. 33). She also defends the validity of the Hebrew text of Zephaniah, calling scholarly correction of the Masoretic text "replacing one community's Bible by another" (p. 29).

Berlin posits three levels of composition. First, a collection of Zephaniah's prophecies was made, then an exilic edition appeared, and finally the editor of the Twelve Minor Prophets in post-exilic times accommodated it to the

other books in the Hosea-to-Malachi complex.

This means that Zephaniah is basically pre-exilic, but with some indeterminate portions rewritten or newly added.

The tone of the prophecy suggests that it arose during the reign of Josiah (640-609), but before the reformation of 621. Berlin identifies the "king's sons" of 1:8 as Josiah's older brothers (p. 79). She compares the picture of Josiah in Kings and Chronicles with that of Nahum, Jeremiah, and Zephaniah, noting especially that his expansionist vision in the historical books is toward the north, where Israel's land stood, whereas in Zephaniah he looks east and west for expansion of Judah's borders.

The translation is poetic and clear, although Berlin admits that all translators have found a few unintelligible phrases (p. ix). It is not presented as drama or dialogue, but it has an "elevated rhetorical style" like that of Jeremiah (p. 11).

Sylvio J. Scorza