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The Andean Highlands: An Encounter With Two Forms of Christianity, Gospel and Cultures Pamphlet 17, by Juan Sepulveda, Geneva: WCC, 1997. x, 44p., \$4.25 (paper).

This booklet, like others in this series exploring gospel and bridging culture, is packaged as a pamphlet but is, in fact, a cogent reflection on a far-ranging missiological discussion. Gustav Warnek and Hendrik Kramer are presented as two missiologists who broach mission methodology with a concern to build a bridge or point of contact with a culture without compromising the gospel. As a contribution to this discussion, Sepulveda presents, "two forms of Christianity." The first is the Spanish attempt to present the gospel to the sixteenth and seventeenth century pre-Christian Andean world after Francisco Pizarro's conquest of the Incas. The second is the growth of Pentecostalism among Aymara communities in the Andean highlands of northern Chile.

The beauty of this publication is its ability to state succinctly central issues appropriate to the discussion. Among these issues are: (1) cultural unity of the Inca empire, which allowed religious practices and identity to remain intact; (2) Spanish Catholic policy of extirpating idolatry, which did not destroy the rituals of the non-Christian religion hiding beneath the new practices of Christianity; and converted Christianity into acculturated paganism; (3) the introduction of Pentecostalism in the 1960s by Braulio Momani Amaro, which was later seen either as a destruction of culture or as a positive response to a cultural disintegration already in progress.

Sepulveda's conclusions are: (1) "Once bridges are built, no one can prevent the traffic from running in both directions"; (2) "Perhaps the only 'point of contact' is our common limited and unfinished human condition."

Peter Van Elderen

Biblical Interpretation in the Era of the Reformation, edited by Richard A. Muller and John L. Thompson, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996. 351p.

Editors Richard Muller and John Thompson have assembled fourteen essays on

the theme of Reformation era biblical interpretation in honor of the sixtieth birthday of David C. Steinmetz, written by colleagues and former students. The essays are clearly and expertly written and provide the reader with a broad understanding of the major exegetes of the sixteenth century. Among those covered are Erasmus, Zwingli, Bullinger, Luther, Melancthon, Bucer, Calvin, Vermigli, Ursinus, and Zanchi. The emphasis in each essay is the continuity of exegesis between Reformation era writers and those who preceded them. The stress is also placed on the interpretive conversation among Reformation era exegetes.

In an excellent summary essay, the editors describe four ways in which pre-critical biblical interpretation is different from later historical critical interpretation, and, in fact, is superior to it. Pre-critical exegesis holds that the history of the text is found "in the text and not under it or behind it." The older exegesis is governed not by an isolated text but by the "entire scope and goal of the biblical book in the context of the scope and goal of the canonical revelation of God." Exegetes before the Enlightenment viewed the primary reference for the literal and grammatical sense of the text to be in the believing community. Finally, earlier exegetes viewed their task to be part of a larger community of scholars and believers who were in conversation with each other. The editors state that rather than viewing prior generations of exegetes as irrelevant to our present day work of interpretation, we must view their concerns to be vital for the exegesis of those who wish to write for the living rather than the dead.

These essays are highly recommended for those who desire to learn more about the history of biblical interpretation and in the Reformation. Some background in these areas is required for reading these essays.

Michael Van Hamersveld

Calvin and the Rhetoric of Piety, by Serene Jones, Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1995. 238p.

Serene Jones explores how Calvin intentionally employs rhetoric or persuasive language in the *Institutes* not simply to articulate a clear theology but also to

communicate a message to audiences who would then further the cause of the sixteenth century Reformation movement.

Jones describes four primary audiences that Calvin sought to influence: (1) students being educated to carry out the Reformed movement under hostile conditions in France and elsewhere; (2) humanist thinkers and leaders of influence who were sympathetic with the Reformed movement; (3) the faithful who suffered under persecution; and (4) enemies of the Reformed movement. To each of these Calvin carefully crafted his writings to communicate a specific message. Students were carefully and systematically taught Christian doctrine by their learned teacher. Humanists and others of influence were given sound reasons to support the Reformed movement based on experience and human insight. Persecuted believers were offered encouragement and strength based on Scripture. Enemies of the Evangelical movement were placed under divine judgment.

In the main body of the book the author describes how Calvin in the first three chapters of Book One of the *Institutes* carefully communicates to students, humanist scholars and other persons of influence, and faithful believers so that they would be drawn expectantly and sympathetically into the larger work. Calvin in these opening chapters communicates to each group through a worldview it understands. However, he also turns many of these values upside down as he sets forth his own biblical theology. Jones believes that unless we view the *Institutes* as rhetorical literature designed to convince not only the mind but also the affections and will, his writings will be misunderstood.

This reviewer found Jones' study of Calvin's rhetoric to provide useful tools for understanding how Calvin's teachings are set within specific historic settings, shaped by them, and designed to mold them. This book is recommended for those with a good grasp of Calvin's writings, the Renaissance movement, and modern literary theories.

Michael Van Hamersveld

A Case Against Accident and Self-Organization, by Dean L. Overman, Lanham, Maryland: Roman and Littlefield Publishers, 1997. xx, 244p.

The answers to two questions are presented in this book. First, is it mathematically possible that the first living matter and the universe itself were formed by chance processes? Second, are the current scientific self-organization scenarios for the forming of the first living matter plausible? To arrive at the answers the author uses logic and mathematical calculations to weigh evidence from molecular biology and particle astrophysics.

Having just read the preceding paragraph, the average pastor or lay person might be forgiven for thinking, "That book is too technical for me." Overman certainly deals with technical matters and his argument is closely reasoned, but he has in mind the non-specialist reader. He provides analogies from everyday life, charts, diagrams, and a supplementary sixteen-and-a-half-page summary of his "case." Most mathematical formulae are left to the endnotes. Both large and small numbers are converted to powers of ten, for which a chart is included, so that very large or very small numbers may be compared. Altogether, the author has provided an eminently readable and interesting book.

It is impossible to summarize adequately such a closely reasoned presentation in a short review. But perhaps one summary example will help the reader understand the book's flavor:

The main difference between living and non-living matter centers on the need for sufficient "information," or instructions, to govern genetic and biochemical processes in living matter. DNA, for example, contains among other things, information on the enzymes in a living cell's chemical reactions. This "information content" is highly complex. (Overman emphasizes that it is complexity of "information content," not order that is his concern.)

It is believed that the earth began to form some 4.6 billion years ago. Before 3.98 billion years ago it was too hot for life to form. Fossil records show that the first life emerged at least 3.85 billion years ago, or, over a period of less than 130 million years. But that 130 million years is too short a time for chance processes to produce life, given the needed complexity of "information content" in living matter.

Glenn Wyper

The Catholicity of the Reformation, edited by Carl E. Braaten and Robert W. Jensen, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996. x, 107p., \$12.00.

Despite creedal statements about "one holy, catholic, and apostolic" church, in Protestant circles the term "catholic" usually carries with it the connotation of Roman Catholic. The essays in this work, written from a Lutheran perspective, seek to recover the creedal sense of catholicity that has been lost in the centuries following the Reformation.

Among the contributors, David Yeago sees the "hinge" of Luther's confidence in God's grace and forgiveness to be sacramental theology, a hinge that turned him not away from the catholic tradition but toward it. The sixteenth century schism in Western Christianity, then, was not the inevitable result of Luther's theological thought, but the outcome of tragic accidents.

Robert Wilken opens his essay with reference to Bach's *St. Matthew's Passion and Christmas Oratorio* because the type of expressions used by Bach echo those in the literature of the pietists. Pietist links are shown to earlier Lutheran authors such as Johann Arndt and John Gerhard, and to ancient writers such as Augustine of Hippo, Gregory of Nyssa, and Maximus the Confessor. According to Wilken, "there can be no question that [Lutheran spirituality] grew out of a genuinely biblical and hence authentically Catholic impulse."

Carl Braaten surveys the problem of authority in the church. He understands that the Reformation agreed with the catholic tradition on "the definitive interpretation of Scripture on certain doctrines contested by heresies," and with its great ecumenical creeds in regard to dogmas and confessions. Dogmas and confessions, along with Scripture, are seen to be the most powerful weapons of the church against "heresies, sects, and cults." But the structure of authority in the church falters at its weakest point: the failure of the teaching office of the church. Braaten sees that weakness as the main barrier to the ecumenical reconciliation of the ministries of the "separated churches."

Have these and the other contributors made their case for the retrieval of the creedal sense of catholicity? Undoubtedly, readers

will answer that based on their own ecclesiastical traditions.

Glenn Wyper

Clergy Killers: Guidance for Pastors and Congregations Under Attack, by G. Lloyd Rediger, Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1997. 193p.

The first three chapters of the book describe what the author calls the "clergy killer" phenomenon. The chapters that follow discuss the differences between the common conflicts that occur in any human organization, and the abuse and evil destructiveness now occurring in many congregations. Specific methods for managing them are suggested.

A chapter is included which describes the "congregation-killer"—the pastor who abuses congregations. The remaining chapters include a systematic design for human needs and motivations and a model of what pastors must do not only for self-defense, but also to lead congregations toward healing and health. The strength of clergy support systems and the personal responsibility of pastors for their own spiritual, mental, and physical fitness is discussed. Rediger states, "Pastoral ministry is no longer a safe place for weak or incompetent pastors." The final section offers a description of healthy congregations, and an answer to the question, "What is health in the spiritual and mental sense, and how can it be achieved?"

The author suggests that a crucial element of conflict has arisen because the church has succumbed to a business model of operation. The pastor becomes an employee, the parishioners the stockholders/customers. Thus, the pastor is "hired" to manage a small business which used to be called a congregation. This means his or her primary task is to keep the stockholders happy; the secondary task being to produce and market an attractive product. When this mindset infects the church, it is no longer a mission, but has become a business. When the church functions as a mission, the pastor is "called" rather than "hired."

Donald A. McCabe

The Complete Book of Everyday Christianity: An A-to-Z Guide to Following Christ in Every Aspect of Life, edited by Robert Banks and R. Paul Stevens, Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1997. xiv, 116p., \$29.99.

The editors developed this book out of their desire to help people connect their faith with the entire range of life's activities and concerns. They intentionally sought to bring the accumulated wisdom of Christians throughout the ages to bear on the complex problems of the late twentieth-century. The resulting work provides a thorough overview of many situations and challenges contemporary Christians face.

How might this volume be of use to a pastor or interested layperson? One can go directly to a topic of personal concern (maybe "Stress, Workplace") and discover there biblical perspectives, social analysis, and suggestions for one's personal life. One can also use the "Life Activities, . . . Index" and "Life Experience Index" to find topics related to different areas or stages of life (e.g., "Leisure" or "Senior Years"). The individual articles could easily provide starting points for Bible studies or sermons related to that topic.

As useful as it might be for this purpose, I have two caveats. First, no book like this can be "complete." I would have been interested in an article on the theological implications of golf, but had to settle for the broad category of Sports instead. Second, many topics will discuss areas of rapid change and will soon be out of date. The article on computers, for example, while not strong as it is, will probably appear irrelevant three years from now. Despite the drawbacks, the CBEC will provide its readers with a wealth of wisdom and subjects for discussions with others.

Paul M. Smith

Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Developments, edited by Ralph P. Martin and Peter H. Davids, Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1997. xxx, 1289p., \$39.99.

The *Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Developments* (hereafter DLNT) is the latest in InterVarsity's series of dictionaries covering the New Testament era. The earlier two—*Dictionary of Jesus and the*

Gospels (1992) and *Dictionary of Paul and his Letters* (1993)—are exemplary biblical reference works. The DLNT continues in the line of its predecessors.

The DLNT originates in the editors' perception that the latter books of the New Testament are *terra incognita*, writings often neglected by pastors and lay people alike. The focus in this third dictionary, therefore, falls on the church at the end of the first century AD and its development to 150 AD. The editors have assembled an impressive corps of scholars to contribute their expertise.

The articles in the DLNT range widely over the themes and concerns expressed in writings from that time period. They are well written, balanced, and offer the reader excellent summaries of the scholarship on particular themes. Most articles include a bibliography for further reading. A Scripture Index and Subject Index enhance the DLNT's usefulness.

InterVarsity is to be commended for this series of dictionaries. The DLNT and its predecessors deserve a place in any pastor's library and will be consulted frequently for sermon preparation and teaching.

Paul M. Smith

A Different Death: Euthanasia and the Christian Tradition, by Edward J. Larson and Darrel W. Amundsen, Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998. 252p.

" . . . We are confident that, in the entirety of Patristic literature, there is not a single example of a Christian committing suicide, asking others' assistance in doing so, or requesting others to kill them directly to escape from the grinding tedium of chronic, or the severe suffering of terminal illness." In a very well documented and researched work, the authors lay out the act of suicide in human history, juxtaposing secular and Christian societies.

The Pulitzer Prize-winning author Edward Larson and noted history/ethics expert Darrel Amundsen have collaborated to bring the pastor, the counselor, the medical caregiver, and the Christian layperson one of the most useful resources available for formulating a rebuttal to the claims of assisted suicide and euthanasia.

The ten chapters expertly review suicide in the ancient Greek, Roman, and Jewish societies; the attitudes of the early Christian church; the Middle Ages and Protestant Reformation; the philosophical thinking of modernity and post-modernity; the use of suicide in modern medicine; and a critique of recent legal rulings including those for Jack Kevorkian.

The final chapter is worth the price of the book and should be read first. In just a few pages, filled with Christian compassion and medical expertise, the writers give us the tools the Christian community desperately needs in caring for the terminally ill. Study after study has shown, they claim, that the cry that patients in deep distress make for suicide is really a cry for help, for love, and for care. With the use of modern pain management, anti-depressants, and loving support, the authors write, these needs can now be effectively met.

As many in our society march to the battle cry of "autonomy for all," any Christian medical caregiver wanting to pack their quiver with a fresh supply of ethical, moral, and biblical arrows should keep this informative book front-and-center.

Elden Stielstra

Downsizing the U.S.A., by Thomas H. Naylor and William H. Willimon, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997. 289p., \$25.00.

Thomas H. Naylor and William H. Willimon offer a critical sociological/political recommendation for the United States. This recommendation is born largely out of a deep concern for the "bigness" of the economic, political, social structure which the authors deem to be a failure. This is a call for radical downsizing with recommendations that include buying local products, subsidizing small family farms, downsizing schools, de-emphasizing computers, and the most radical suggestion, encouraging states and even large cities to secede from the United States so that a patchwork of nation states would function with more localized control.

The concerns of Naylor and Willimon are neither new nor unwarranted. The problems inherent in big government, massive school systems, sprawling cities, and mega-corporations are shared by most citizens. The

authors argue that this "bigness" has destroyed and continues to destroy the sense of community—a force, which if properly empowered, would significantly improve the present state of affairs. The models used for this extraordinary upheaval are Switzerland with its twenty-six canton (tiny states) and Vermont, a small state whose predominance of small family farms is combined with an independence of spirit and a character that fosters hard work. We would do well, say the authors, to set aside visions of a global village, of international treaties, a unified economy and technology and devolve into smaller, safe, more responsive communities where relationship and self-enterprise are fostered. Thus, large complex regional and global concerns would diminish with the major world player, the present United States, no longer involved.

The authors' argument is weakened by vehement disdain for large government structure, name calling (Wal-Mart – "The Great Satan"), sweeping statements ("Far from defending our population, our government has drafted Americans and sent them to die in . . . battlefields"), and arguments drawn directly from books such as *Out! The Vermont Secession Group*. The notion of separate but equal education is suggested with support from Louis Farrakan and Clarence Thomas. While glossing over the implications of the fact that Vermont has the lowest percentage of black population, one of the authors asserts that it is a home for producers of essential goods and services like "Ben and Jerry's Ice Cream," "Green Mountain Coffee," and Vermont Teddy Bear." The lack of nuancing of complex issues, recommendations that appear to be, in spite of statements to the contrary, suspiciously similar to those of the religious far right, and a seeming lack of considered thought for the poor or for international consequences, leaves this reviewer saddened that William Willimon, an author whose previous writings reflect a depth of thought, would allow his name to be connected to the assertions presented in this book.

Peter Van Elderen

Emerging Voices in Global Christian Theology, edited by William A. Dyrness, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994. 255p.

The Christian Church is growing rapidly outside of the Euro-American Western world, but many Christians in the West know nothing of their theological work. This fine collection of essays by evangelicals doing theological work in those areas aims to address that lack.

Croatian theologian, Miroslav Volf, probes the issues of otherness, sin, and reconciliation from the perspective of the ethnic conflict in the Balkans. He proposes a Christian way to move from exclusion toward embrace, through repentance and forgiveness, which will be relevant wherever differences cause suspicion and hatred.

Tony Balcomb tells three stories from South Africa which depict the complexities of that situation and the challenges for believers who wish to live the gospel in that context. In his study of the meaning of salvation in African perspective, Cyril Okorocha identifies "viable life" as the goal of African concepts of salvation and argues that Africans' allegiance to Christianity will depend upon their being convinced that Christianity satisfies this quest. From a Ghanaian perspective, Kwame Bediako proposes a Christology focusing particularly on the central importance of the ancestors and emphasizing the value of the book of Hebrews for doing Christology in that context.

From Asia, Ken Gnanakan constructs a doctrine of creation and the new creation that fosters healthy eco-relationships in the world. A Christian reflection on the political situation in the Philippines arises out of Evelyn Miranda-Feliciano's participation in the "people power revolution" that toppled Marcos and analyzes the more difficult challenge of "building structures that are truly democratic and responsive to the needs of the country" (161). With the valuable perspective that an "outsider" can offer, David Lim suggests "some directions on how U.S. evangelicalism can survive its success" (165) and offers reasons for being hopeful that another "Awakening" can occur.

A helpful overview of the Latin American situation is provided by Samuel Escobar and Antônio Carlos Barro. Escobar traces the developments in the "search for a missiological Christology in Latin America" and Barro describes the identity of the Protestant church in Latin America.

These are essays which will educate readers concerning the Christian thought of brothers and sisters around the world and

challenge them to creative theological reflection in their own contexts.

Terrance Tiessen

For Our Salvation: Two Approaches to the Work of Christ, by Geoffrey Wainwright, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997. XI, 186p.

The preface states that "the chapters aim to set out two approaches to the saving work of Christ that are firmly grounded in the Scriptures and in the thought, imagination, and practice of the church catholic and evangelical." While Wainwright prefers an Alexandrian Christology rather than an Antiochene perspective, he nevertheless wants his readers to be able to use their empirical senses to experience the Christ-event in our day. Since human life of the incarnate Word of God was "utterly corporeal," it is appropriate that the Christ "should choose to keep coming to his church by material means for the sake of our salvation." This coming is also congruous with our own human embodiment and therefore quite natural that the "Creator should address us by way of our physical senses."

Professor Wainwright's primary interests are ecclesiological and liturgical. The emphasis on the empirical is for the gathering of God's people in Sunday worship. How may the eternal message be put in a more "hands on" manner? Part of the task is simply to remind us how significant the physical senses are for our grasping the transcendent and eternal realities. Thus we not only listen to the Scripture read, but also respond to the sermon whose purpose is to provide access again and again to the event of Christ, inviting us to join him in his death and resurrection. Similarly, we join him in the Eucharist by both tasting and envisioning the glory of the invisible God who transforms us into his glorious image as we were always meant to be. Lastly, we are to "scent and touch," knowing, as Wainwright (himself a Methodist) states, that nothing "is so certain to raise Protestant hackles as the burning of incense." Since Jesus healed by touch, we similarly need touch if we are to handle the Word of life. Imitation in daily life of what is done in the liturgy is not to be confined only to the clergy.

Part II is a rather traditional treatment of the messianic offices of Prophet, Priest, and King. Wainwright is very conscious of the history of Christian thought and thus emphasizes each of these offices in their Christological and baptismal uses of the Patristic era, the soteriological concerns of the Reformation, and the ministerial and ecclesiological uses of the 19th century. The *minus triplex* is Christocentric, but not Christomonist as it is set within a fully Trinitarian framework. Wainwright is particularly concerned with the contemporary and ecumenical relevance of these offices of Christ for present-day believers. He shows how the prophetic office addresses our questions of knowledge and meaning; the priestly office deals with our alienation and estrangement by providing reconciliation and atonement; and the royal office addresses the questions of power and authority. He also contrasts these ways of comprehending Christ with the Johannine manner of "the way, the truth, and the life" and with the Pauline orientation of "faith, love, and hope" in a rewarding manner.

This book was originally lectures, and it shows. At times the book was laborious with little new ground being broken (particularly in Part II). However, it does give some insights into making the liturgy live in the midst of our lives that is not only needed, but is indispensable!

Ronald B. Mayers

The Genesis of Doctrine, by Alister E. McGrath, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997. 266p.

McGrath begins by providing an exposition of Lindbeck's three theories as to the origin of doctrine: cognitive-propositionalist, experiential-expressive, and cultural-linguistic. The text then elucidates masterfully four theses of the genesis of doctrine: social demarcation, interpretation of narrative, interpretation of experience, and doctrine as truth claim. Doctrine is a defining statement of the original New Testament community of discourse, but it also concerns an historical event that contains "an ineradicable cognitive element" (75). Doctrine is not only concerned with the internal

consistency of Christian truth claims, but is always oriented towards faith as it demands personal response and involvement and not simply passive assent.

McGrath spends considerable time with the problems of historicism and the insights of the sociology of knowledge in regard to the issues of relativity versus truth of the doctrines of Christianity. Modernity begins during the Renaissance with the realization that the past impinges on the present. However, the Enlightenment, beginning with Spinoza and perhaps ending with Lessing's famous quote that "the accidental truths of history can never become the proof of the necessary truths of reason," devalued history as the Cartesian individual and autonomous use of universal reason became the sole criteria of truth. However, no one begins "speculation *de novo*, but is obliged to enter into dialogue—however critical—with a received tradition" (181).

Therefore, Christian doctrine, obviously historically based on Jesus of Nazareth, and embedded in a tradition of reflection on this event, is no different from any other field of inquiry. Scientists like Polanyi and Kuhn demonstrate that science also works within a tradition in which corporate and individual knowledge is understood to interact much like Christian believers within the thought forms of the church. Tradition is thus "not something which supplements the kerygma contained in scripture, but is the handing down of the kerygma within the community of faith" (173). Because the manner in which we know about Jesus greatly determines what we know about him, the strangeness of Jesus to many in Western culture is "due to the fact that they do not stand within a community tradition oriented towards him" in light of the secularization of our culture (188). The growing tendency of postmodernism to question the notion of universal frameworks of rationality bodes well for a Christian doctrinal narrative for the 21st century. "Christian doctrine is not merely a public description of what Christianity is," however, "but represents an invitation to enter a new community and its associated conceptual and experiential world" (199).

Ronald Mayers

Indigenous Australia: A Dialogue about the Word Becoming Flesh in Aboriginal Churches, Gospel and Cultures Pamphlet 18, edited by Anne Pattel-Gray and John P. Brown, Geneva: WCC, 1997. x, 74p., \$4.95 (paper).

This pamphlet is one in a series published by the World Council of Churches which identifies and explores issues surrounding the gospel of Jesus Christ, bridging the cultures of missionary and recipient. The workshop in which these eleven Australian church leaders participated convened in Sidney in July 1996 as part of a gospel and culture study process sponsored by the WCC.

The four areas of discussion in this conversation arose out of the question, "How did the Word become flesh in the Aboriginal culture?" The discussion areas included, (1) How was "God with us" visible in the laws and ceremonies of the Aboriginal culture prior to missionary influence? (2) What is the nature of the missionary impact and the imposition of European ecclesiastical structure on Aboriginal society and religion? (3) How is Christ understood by the Aboriginal people? And (4) Through what rituals, ceremonies, and ancestral narratives is the Word seen and understood?

The insights which arise from this dialogue, though of particular relevance to Aboriginal Christians, has implications which touch all cross-cultural ministry. The concern and outrage over the destruction of much of the center of a culture by missionaries preaching love and forgiveness but at the same time imposing a structure steeped in their own culture is clearly and passionately stated. What is remarkable in this conversation is that all participants do not begin there. They exemplify how they have gone beyond outrage and anger to affirm that the Aboriginal culture needed the gospel message. It is then that they clearly and with great emotion state that the life-giving message of the gospel could have been more effectively presented if the missionaries and the denominations they represented would have taken the time to learn and understand the Aboriginal people, vocabulary, and culture. Aboriginal participants note that the Old Testament concept of law combined with its transcendent, creating God was firmly in place in Aboriginal society before the gospel of Jesus Christ was presented 200 years ago. This could have been

the point of contact, the bridge by which Jesus Christ, his love, forgiveness, and life-giving death could have been more effectively connected to the culture and presented to the people. Here "there were some aspects of all the (culture) stories that the biblical story could transform and other aspects that it could illumine and fulfill."

As each of the areas of discussion are exposed, they reveal a character of faith of the participants by their very style of presentation. Each conversant begins, not by casting an eye toward culture or history, but by simply testifying in personal profession of faith how Jesus Christ is the non-negotiable center of their lives and faith and how the gospel is more resilient, more life-giving, and fundamental than any culture or ecclesiastical structure.

This is a pamphlet and as such has a richness and fullness which many books have failed to capture. Yet there is a vacancy, an unexplored issue which I wished were included in this discussion. With all the conversation about gospel and culture and the oppression of the Aboriginal people, there was no clear emphasis on Jesus Christ as sharing this oppression, being rejected by organized religion, transcending all cultures, physically dying for the brokenness and sinfulness of people of all cultures.

This concern notwithstanding, the pamphlet and others in this series recommend themselves to all Christians serious about opening their hearts so that the gospel of Jesus Christ can connect with the heart of other people and other cultures transforming all cultures involved without a loss of identity of any culture.

Peter Van Elderen

Jesus Christ: Savior and Lord, by Donald G. Bloesch, Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1997. 304p.

Jesus Christ: Savior and Lord is the thirtieth book by evangelical theologian Donald Bloesch and the fourth in a projected series of seven volumes on "Christian Foundations." He covers everything from historic heresies and the Council of Chalcedon to "the pre-existent humanity of Jesus" and the modern-day "Jesus Seminar." As a bonus, he also deals with the looming controversy over

the role of Mary in Catholic and Orthodox piety, and how that role affects ongoing relations within the ecumenical dialogue in the church.

Besides being a reliable guide to biblical doctrine, our author stands out as an able commentator on “what the ‘fathers’ (and mothers!) say” about these issues, sometimes explaining their viewpoints more clearly than they explain themselves!

My own favorite portion of the book was the chapter on Christ’s pre-existence. Building on Chalcedon, the biblical teaching on election, and some seminal concepts in Barth’s *Church Dogmatics*, Bloesch shows that the person incarnate and named “Jesus” circa 3 BC did not “become human” just in the assumption of a body through the Virgin Mary, but had already embraced “our” humanity from the very foundations of creation. In other words, it was *his* “humanity” *before* it became *our* humanity! Bloesch confesses that much of this is still shrouded in mystery; nevertheless, the “humanity of God” establishes a foundation for piety, prayer, and obedience that makes God “accessible” to us—not only as God, but as forever one of us—in a way that no other doctrine is able to do.

However, the book leaves one or two concerns omitted, that hopefully will be covered in later volumes. There is no chapter on the resurrection of Christ, or the nature of the resurrection body. Just as significant is the omission of a chapter on the “post-existence” of Jesus—i.e., the eternality of his humanity, and even resurrected-physicality, since the ascension. I would expect that Bloesch will deal with these topics in his volume on *The Last Things*—but perhaps a future edition of this fourth volume would serve its audience well by addressing these issues in at least an initial way.

All in all, this book was one of Bloesch’s best, steering the church away from the death traps of the Jesus Seminar and re-engaging us in a theologically fresh, yet viably orthodox, return to the biblical Jesus Christ. It is my hope that the book receives a wide reading, especially by pastors, and that the kind of theology it represents will yet win out over post-modern liberalism on the one hand and an anti-cultural fundamentalism on the other.

Truly, Bloesch has shown us a better way to go.

Lance A.M. Wonders

Jesus in the Power of the Spirit, C.S. Song, Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994. 335p.

C.S. Song is professor of theology and Asian culture at the Pacific School of Religion, Berkeley, regional professor of theology at the South East Asia Graduate School of Theology in Singapore and Hong Kong, and a Reformed Church in America ordained minister. This is the third book of his trilogy, “The Cross in the Lotus World.”

The author brings a unique background to his work. He is an Asian theologian, who confessionally subscribes to the Reformed tradition, utilizing the hermeneutics of Liberation Theology.

The present volume explores Jesus in the power of the Spirit, crossing religious and cultural barriers by his experience of God’s truth and grace. The reader is urged to cross Christian frontiers to experience God’s living truth and saving grace in our multi-social-historical and multi-cultural-religious world (x-xi).

The author develops his theology in the matrix of sermonic narratives. Utilizing the insights of biblical scholars, the author retells the biblical stories in an engaging and provocative manner. These stories are then illustrated by Asian philosophy, religion, and folk tales.

Song’s goal is unmistakable. He calls for a radical shift from Western domination of the non-Western world culturally, religiously, and theologically. The author demonstrates his opposition to present political struggles to dominate the world and God’s witness to the truth. Even Christianity is guilty of using power instead of truth.

Song, in light of the world’s post-Christian context calls for a dialogue between Christianity and other religions. This dialogue should consider the whole of creation: mutual respect for differences, community of friendship and understanding, and the goal of working toward peace, love, and justice in the world. True to his Reformed tradition, Song claims that such a dialogue calls Christianity to the source of its faith: Jesus Christ.

Although this reviewer was captivated by the stories and the illustrations from Asian culture, I have concerns with the author's application of his interpretation. Yes, Western interpretation has created certain excesses. Is Western Christian theology guilty for these abuses? Or is Western civilization misusing theology for its own political purposes? Western theology was also developed in the crucible of suffering. Can we so easily abandon this tradition?

Barry Wynveen

Jewish Wisdom in the Hellenistic Age, by John J. Collins, Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1997. 275p.

Collins is among the current leading scholars of the biblical, Jewish wisdom, and apocalyptic literatures, and of the relations among them.

Several components of the present volume make it a remarkable contribution to the subjects at hand. First of all, Collins expertly demonstrates the richness of Hebrew wisdom as he begins with a twenty-page introductory chapter on biblical wisdom in the Proverbs. Collins gives special attention to the setting of Proverbs in a context of Egyptian wisdom, the worldview of Proverbs, and the figure of wisdom personified. He closes the introduction with attention to the rise and development of the skeptical books of Job and Qoheleth and finally the convergence of wisdom instruction and the Torah.

Attention is then turned to the Wisdom of Ben Sira, the Sentences of Pseudo-Phocylides, the Wisdom of Solomon, and the relation of Jewish wisdom to Hellenistic philosophy and apocalypticism.

Reformed Review readers might not immediately be familiar with Pseudo-Phocylides. The original Phocylides was a Greek poet from Miletus who wrote in the 6th century B.C.E. Writing under the names of famous people of the past was fairly common in the Hellenistic period. Pseudo-Phocylides wrote his 230-verse poem probably about the first century B.C.E. The poem deals with traditional moral themes and was widely used, even in the Middle Ages, for educational purposes. Collins' contribution is to discuss

the themes in relation to Proverbs and to the moral instruction of Ben Sira.

Collins' presentation of the *Qumran Sapiential A* demonstrates how both wisdom and eschatological perspectives can be brought together. The ethics taught in this collection of fragments "are grounded in a comprehensive view of the purpose of creation, summed up in the enigmatic phrase *raz nihyeh* . . . translated as "the mystery that is to come. . . ." One is reminded of Ephesians 1:9, "The mystery of his (God's) will . . ." on which the remainder of the epistle rests, including its ethical instruction in chapters 4-6.

The wisdom traditions of Scripture and beyond have always addressed the twin foci of the moral life *and* a worldview leading toward a philosophy of life. In this extremely learned and readable volume Collins places us in his scholarly debt.

Robert A. Coughenour

Korea: The Encounter between the Gospel and Neo-Confucian Culture, by Chung Chai-Sik, WCC Publications, 1997. 54p., \$4.25.

This is a very informative and insightful book. It shows not only how Christianity was interpreted by Korean Neo-Confucians in the 18th century, but also the connection between the cultural background of Confucianism and the problems with which Korean conservative Christians are faced today.

In the first chapter, entitled *God and Salvation*, the author compresses the complex cultural contacts between Korean thought and Christianity in the 18th century into two major points: the translation of the name of God, and Confucian criticism of Christianity. Regarding the name of the Christian God, the early Christians in Korea had a very difficult challenge. Some Neo-Confucian Christians tried to adopt the Confucian term, *Sangje*, meaning "the Ruler Above" or "the Sovereign on High" which 17th century Jesuit missionaries in China used. Others preferred *Ch'onju*, used by Matteo Ricci, which means "The Lord of Heaven." Besides these terms, Koreans had always used the vernacular term *Hananim* (the Heavenly One) or *Hanunim* (Heavenly God). *Hananim* was associated with the shamanistic way to utilitarian, this-worldly ends and with the Buddhist quest for

the other-worldly salvation, as well as with the Confucian ideal of social justice. Eventually, Korean Catholics opted for the term *Ch'onju*, whereas the Protestant missionaries who came to Korea one century later chose the authentic vernacular term *Hanamim*.

Korean Neo-Confucianists criticized Christianity on the basis of their rich knowledge of comparative studies. The author explains their criticism in three ways. (1) The idea of reward for good and retribution for evil appeared to them quite similar to the Buddhist mandate to pursue human benefit without any selfish motive. (2) The Christian ideal of universal love seemed abstract and unnatural to them because they thought that love should begin with the nearest to them in terms of blood relations and then extend to others who were not related. (3) Since Confucianists believed that human beings should cultivate themselves and achieve ritual harmony with society and the world, they could not understand Christian concepts of sins, atonement, dualism between the mind and body, and invisible spirits.

In the remaining three chapters, the author deals with the social and political contributions of Christianity to Korean society and points out the problems which the mainstream of Korean Christianity has faced. On the one hand, he regards Christianity, with its liberating force, as a dynamic and convenient means to transform Korea into a modern nation and to eliminate political repression of women and oppressed people, or *mingjung* with low wages. On the other hand, he argues that the reason why Korean conservative Christians failed to follow the revolutionary message of the gospel is rooted in traditional social structure, in which the masses have usually been submissive to the existing authority occupied by the elite, *yangban*. Moreover, he argues that "Korean churches have unwittingly, and sometimes deliberately, adapted shamanistic practice" (34) in order to enhance numerical growth.

It cannot be denied that there has been a strong connection between the rapid growth of Korean Christianity and the traditional and shamanistic cultural background. However, problems such as submission to authority, the shamanistic character of the Pentecostal movement, and consumerism are part of our common humanity as can be seen from the fact that the church has often been submissive to

authority and if we realize the shamanistic character of the Pentecostal movement in Western churches.

Jaeseung Cha

Knowledge of the Self-Revealing God in the Thought of Thomas Forsyth Torrance, by John Douglas Morrison, New York: Peter Lang, 1997. xiv, 386p., \$58.95.

This text is a scholarly inquiry into the epistemology and method of the renowned Scottish Reformed theologian, T.F. Torrance, who taught Christian dogmatics at New College, Edinburgh (1952-79). It confirms Torrance's great contribution to the philosophy of theology as a scientific discipline. Morrison seeks to show how Torrance appealed to Athanasius, Calvin, Kierkegaard, Barth, Einstein, and Polanyi in opposing damaging dualisms in modern theology fed by Descartes and Kant. But he also finds in Torrance a "latent dualism," specifically between the transcendent realm of God's truth, Word, and self-disclosure and the created realm of history, humanity, and Scripture. I have trouble accepting this, given Torrance's radical emphasis on God's incarnational life, the humanity of Christ, and the contingency of creation with its space-time. The text fittingly describes at length Torrance's theological realism, both its roots and ramifications. Representative positive and negative responses to Torrance are included to further dialogue between theology and other sciences, and to show how Torrance may be misconstrued, especially where his language and logic are not adequately understood.

I have to say that Morrison does better in his exposition of Torrance than in his critique. For example, in labeling Torrance a "foundationalist" because of his ultimate beliefs, Morrison should also show how Torrance is certainly not an evidentialist in the classic sense. Also, granted that Torrance was surely indebted to Søren Kierkegaard in the true response to the "Paradox" of God in human form, this author overplays his role in Torrance's overall corpus. In fact, for Barth and Torrance, Kierkegaard is more a crucial stage to be passed through than a place to stay. In dealing with Torrance's hermeneutic, Morrison finds "almost no actual engagement

with the text of Scripture," but in hearing Torrance actually formulate and articulate his own dogmatic theology I saw a serious and extensive use of both Old and New Testament witnesses, though not using the old proof-text method.

Robert J. Palma

The Learning Congregation: A New Vision of Leadership, by Thomas R. Hawkins, Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1997. 142p.

Change is to be found everywhere, and it is most certainly present within the churches of our land. Many congregations facing immense challenges are trying to overcome them by simply holding on to past assumptions and practices, or by trying to avoid them altogether. The fact is that information-based technologies have erupted with break-taking speed. Shifting demographics have played havoc in many long-established churches. Changing values, altered life styles, and shifting priorities are the order of the day in many instances.

Hawkins reminds us that it is helpful in times such as these to remember that biblical faith was born amid similar times of transition and transformation. Population migrations were reshaping the social and demographic maps of the ancient Near East. Empires rose and fell. Israel began as a nomadic people made up of refugees. The early church also emerged during a time of tremendous transformation and change.

The thrust of this book comes to life in the affirmation that our congregations are heirs to this same heritage. For a relatively long period of time congregations have operated within an essentially stable environment. The speed of the change that has come upon us alters the situation drastically. Hawkins stresses new ways of organizing for ministry, as well as the placing of new priorities, and the analyzing of learning activities. The danger of treating the church as a machine, i.e., keeping it properly functioning and serviced, can subtly keep leaders focusing on manipulating the parts rather than growing the whole. "They become technicians who maintain programs rather than reflective leaders who equip the whole people of God."

This little book offers concepts and ideas that are fresh and fruitful models for incisive leadership. I commend it to those adventurers who still believe that God has great things to reveal to his church in what may seem to some to be discouraging and difficult days.

Donald J. McCabe

Losing Our Virtue: Why the Church Must Recover Its Moral Vision by David F. Wells, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998. 228p., \$25.00.

Here is an excellent critique of both postmodern culture and the response of the evangelical church. Wells presents the present situation under four headings: (1) the birth of a world civilization; (2) a civilization without religious foundations; (3) accompanied by a high level of anxiety; and (4) a mass experimentation with new values. He recognizes similarities and dissimilarities with Luther's world. He sees a large segment of the evangelical church responding by adopting the music of the Baby Boomers, building churches that look like shopping malls, emphasizing contemporary worship and casual dress, making seminary training optional, accepting diversity of lifestyles and stressing personal affirmation. Wells claims such church have accepted three main characteristics of the counterculture: the therapeutic, individualistic, and antiestablishment. Wells believes this trend produces a less biblical kind of spirituality than that of the Reformers and more recent theologians like John Stott and Carl Henry.

Wells then examines the postmodern world more closely. He considers how profoundly individualism has changed our culture. Concern has shifted from character to personality. Today people are not concerned about guilt but about shame.

As a result of the above, the church stands "in the midst of a culture whose moral fabric is rotting" (179). Wells believes that the church needs to present a biblical understanding of sin and itself become more "morally authentic" (180). Wells is convinced that the postmodern world is like Paul's self-description in Romans 7:15,19, troubled by its moral impotence. He then states: "It is this frustration, I believe, that gives Christian faith its best access to a postmodern culture. . ." (192). He adds, "The

most urgent need in the Church today . . . is the recovery of the Gospel as the Bible reveals it to us. This is often quite different from the ways in which we have reconstructed it through psychology" (204). May many read this book and allow it to convict them of the shortcoming of the evangelical church and the ways the church needs to change in its thinking and therefore in its strategy.

Harry Buis

Learning to Speak: The Church's Voice in Public Affairs, by Keith Clements, Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1995. 240p.

Remember when you were a child and your mother told you, "Before you speak, ask three questions: One, is it true? Two, is it kind? Three, is it necessary?" Clements suggests that before the church speaks, it ask five questions: (1) What is the church's primary responsibility in this situation, and does it necessarily involve speaking at all? (2) What are the drives and promptings urging us to speak out? (3) What is specifically Christian about what we say? (4) What is the church stating about itself in this utterance? (5) What steps will be taken by the Christian community to follow up the statement?

Is the church required to speak? Of course it is. Clements illustrates his point with two case studies: The Theological Declaration (or Confession) of Barmen of 1934 in which the Free Synod of the German Evangelical Church resisted the "nazification" of the church in the Third Reich, and the Kairos Document signed in 1985 by 120 signatories which condemned the South African state's invocation of God to justify its authority and the supportive theology of the white Dutch Reformed Church. The document spoke to the church, but does not the reader hear the voice of the true church in its words?

Clements saves the best for last. In his chapter on "Forms of Speech" he notes that there are three kinds of discourse: the indicative, the imperative, and the interrogative. Christians speaking in the indicative offer what can be said by all reasonable people of good will. Christians speaking in the imperative must venture to say what is really going on "*here and now*". Christians speaking in the interrogative use a

more sophisticated manner of speaking. "It is the question which challenges the responsible persons themselves to acknowledge how things are and what has to be done. "What does the Lord require of you?" for example. Clements notes that Jesus' speech was vibrant with questions.

He reminds me that I must once again read Dr. James Cook's book, *The Church Speaks*. I recommend this book to those who write for the church and those who care about what the church says.

Robert Hoeksema

The Making of the NIV, edited by Kenneth L. Barker, Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1991. 175p., \$12.99 (paper).

The New International Version of the Bible, published in 1978, has been adopted by many evangelical congregations and their members. Several of the scholars who worked on the NIV have collaborated to put out an explanation of their principles and procedures under the editorship of their former executive director, Ken Barker. He also included some previously issued material from three members of the team who are now deceased.

Most of the fourteen chapters deal with topics of general application to the work of translation, but four of them handle more specialized materials on Sheol, the names of God, *monogenes*, and Psalms 2 and 4. Some chapters have been redone from dictionary articles and other previous usages. In a few rare instances the authors show that they were not in agreement with the final NIV decision on the translation of particular word or passage.

Two of the writers defend the harmonization of Old Testament translations with New Testament meanings. It may be consistent with orthodoxy to do so, but to this reviewer it appears to do injustice to the context of the Old Testament books, which were written in their own time and for contemporary readers. Fortunately, the NIV did not do this very often.

For better understanding, some forms of the names of persons and places have been "leveled" in the NIV. For example, kings of Israel and Judah both had the alternative name Jehoram/Joram and they were contemporaries.

The NIV decided to use Jehoram for Judah's king and Joram for Israel's. It was also NIV policy to simplify other alternatives to a single name, as in Nebuchadnezzar, Aram, Silas, and Jehoiachin. But Jeshua in Ezra is the same as Joshua in Zechariah. Uzziah in 2 Kings is still called Azariah in 2 Chronicles.

The NIV may have been born in Palos Heights and have its theology in Grand Rapids, but it has certainly won the hearts of the Reformed and Christian Reformed churches in the Midwest.

Sylvio J. Scorza

Marriage Owner's Manual by Linda Hertel Dykstra, Grand Rapids: Mediation Center. 214p., \$14.95.

Pastors will welcome this resource, written by a western Michigan psychologist, who from the beginning of her private practice over two decades ago has specialized in marital therapy. In this reviewer's experience, we care more about maintaining our automobiles than we do about maintaining our marriages. Dr. Dykstra has taken the metaphor of an automobile manual and structured her manual around five major stages of relationships: Design (dating), Operation (marital enrichment), Repair (marital stress and resolution), Breakdown (divorce and divorce mediation), Rebuilding (adjustment and remarriage).

Special contributions of this book include a careful examination of value differences and their impact on a relationship. In an age when the whole society has experienced the enormous suffering of the children of divorce, it is helpful to have a resource which promotes the promise of negotiation and compromise. Of particular interest is the value that the author places on the importance of the giving and receiving of personal and interpersonal forgiveness as a rigorous and thorough process. There is also a helpful chapter on options short of divorce such as supplementing a less than ideal marriage with "positive fulfillment in activities outside of the marriage" (160); a "time-limited" separation while working on a possible reconciliation; and separate maintenance while living apart. One of the strengths of the book is the thoroughgoing description of the divorce mediation process

where a couple finds a humane and cooperative way to reduce conflict and to increase cooperation in all areas, including co-parenting.

Stanley A. Rock

No Condemnation: A New Theology of Assurance, by Michael Eaton, Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1995. 261p.

Eaton's contention is that there is no place for the Decalogue in the life of the Christian. He claims that "A Christian who walks by the Spirit deliberately fulfills the Mosaic law accidentally" (13). He examines what he calls "Developed Calvinism" (which he equates with scholastic Calvinism) Evangelical Arminianism, and his own view that "a Christian's being radically free from the Mosaic law" (31). He claims his own theology provides an assurance of salvation that neither of the two historic views of Christianity could provide. He claims to be a "more Developed Calvinist" and rejects limited atonement.

Eaton analyzes the Abraham story and concludes that "the narratives are conspicuous for the total absence of law-code" (66). He then considers the Sinai covenant and points out the contrast with that made with Abraham. For Eaton the law was holy but only an interim measure.

After examining Galatians, Eaton comes to the conclusion that "For Paul, Mosaism fails whether as a means of justification or of sanctification" (123). He terms his theology as a "non-legalistic theology" that avoids joining justification and sanctification too closely or too loosely as other theologies do.

Next Eaton studies the nature of inheritance as used in the Bible. He connects inheritance with reward but not with salvation. He then turns to the warnings in the New Testament. Next comes an examination of falling away in Hebrews. He believes that the problem of those to whom this epistle is addressed was not the loss of salvation but of inheritance and reward.

I do not agree with Eaton's major premises. Assurance has nothing to do with whether we believe that the Decalogue plays a role in the life of a Christian or not. Assurance comes from knowing we are sinners (and the Decalogue helps us there) and looking to

Christ and Christ alone for our salvation. There is nothing wrong with the traditional view that the Decalogue helps us understand how to show our gratitude for so gracious a salvation.

Harry Buis

Paul, the Law, and Justification, by Colin G. Kruse, Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996. 320p.

This book contains a number of helpful summaries. The first is the overview of the debate in Pauline studies beginning with Claude Montefiore, continuing through E.P. Sanders, and concluding with such recent studies as that of N.T. Wright. This overview itself will be of considerable help to those with limited time for scholarly reading. Six chapters are then devoted to Paul's letters. At the end of most of them Kruse reviews his discussion in a few paragraphs. The whole final chapter is a summary of the author's general conclusions about Paul's statements on law and justification.

In seeking to understand the seemingly contradictory statements of the apostle on the subject of the law and justification, Kruse engages in an inductive study of each of Paul's letters. The study begins with Galatians. The emphasis of that letter is seen to be "the radical freedom from the law." In contrast, 1 Corinthians presents the law as an ethical paradigm for the Christian. The apparent opposites of freedom from the law and the law as ethically normative are combined in 2 Corinthians. The synthesis is fully developed in the Letter to the Romans. At the end Kruse includes a short section on the implications of the apostle's teaching for Christians today.

Glenn Wyper

The Recovery of Mission: Beyond the Pluralist Paradigm, by Vinoth Ramachandra, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996. xiii, 293p.

The 1998 RCA General Synod received a paper from the Commission on Theology, "The Crucified One is Lord: Confessing the Uniqueness of Christ in a Pluralistic Society." Ramachandra, since 1987 the South Asian

regional secretary of the International Fellowship of Evangelical Students, addresses the same issue.

His work is divided into three parts. Book I engages and critiques the works and thought of three Asian authors, selected because they represent "three fairly typical approaches that are to be encountered on the modern theological scene." Stanley Samartha and Raimundo Panikkar are Indian, and Aloysius Pieris is Sri Lankan. They "are united by a common vision of a pluralistic world in which Christian claims to uniqueness and finality are rejected as false and obsolete.

In Book II Ramachandra engages modernity through the writings of Lesslie Newbigin. He concludes that Newbigin has shown how the "gospel may be proclaimed as universal truth in a spirit that is neither arrogant nor apologetic, neither authoritarian nor individualistic." He claims that Newbigin "has also shown how the painful and unnecessary divide between conservatives and liberals in the church may—and indeed must—be bridged if the church is to have any credibility in a fragmented world."

Book III highlights the scandal of Jesus, his life-style, self-understanding, resurrection, and incarnation as illustrations, with a section on Irenaeus' critique of the Gnostics. The author affirms that "It is this traditional claim—that in the human person of Jesus, God himself has come amongst us in a decisive and unrepeatable way—that constitutes an offense to a pluralistic society."

The final chapter defines how Christians may relate to those whose stories and beliefs vary from ours. It provides a framework for conversation in the RCA regarding human sexuality as well as evangelistic praxis toward people of other faiths.

All who desire "to find a way of living with those whose convictions differ from our own upon the most fundamental matters, without breaking charity or being disloyal to the truth" (C.H. Dodd) should read Book III. Those who seek clarity regarding Christian mission for today, read Book II. Those who wish to enlarge their horizons to include the world of other religions, read Book I. Ramachandra's progression rightly models listening to other's truth before expressing our own.

Robert J. Hocksema

Reminiscences of an Octogenarian, by Bruce Manning Metzger, Peabody, MA: Hendrikson, 1997. vii, 242p., \$24.95.

Most readers will be interested in the three core chapters: chapter 6 (The Bible Societies' *Greek New Testament*); chapter 7 (Translating the Bible: The Revised Standard Version); and chapter 8 (Translating the Bible: The New Revised Standard Version). The "inside story" of these projects is meticulously recorded by this leading participant in each. Where else could one find personal and authoritative accounts of their life, from inception to completion, coupled with humanizing anecdotes. The latter range from the North Carolina pastor who publicly burned with a blowtorch a copy of the RSV ("A heretical, communist-inspired Bible," he called it), and sent the ashes to the convener of the translators, to the evening when the New Testament section preparing the NRSV lost track of time, found themselves locked in the Princeton Seminary library for the night, and had to climb out of a workroom window, one-by-one!

Rounding out this core are two related chapters of more than passing interest. The first (chapter 10) deals with the sensitive issue of condensing the Bible. As the general editor of *The Reader's Digest Bible*, it was Metzger's responsibility not only to prepare brief, non-technical introductions to the Old and New Testaments and to each individual book, but also to advise the editors which block cuts could be made in biblical books! The other (chapter 15) recounts the story of *The Oxford Companion to the Bible*. The task of editing this comprehensive Bible dictionary stretched over nine years, and in England, its actual launching took place at a party held in the Jerusalem Chamber of Westminster Abbey.

Reminiscences of an Octogenarian is part autobiography, part historical record, and part source book. It is the engaging story of an outstanding teacher, lecturer, scholar, author, editor, translator, churchman, and Christian gentlemen, the days of whose years form a fascinating and informative introduction to the notable projects and persons of twentieth-century biblical studies.

James I. Cook

Rethinking Secularization: Reformed Reactions to Modernity, edited by Gerard Dekker, Donald A. Luidens, Rodger R. Rice, Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 1997. xv, 288p., \$34.50 (paper).

This volume consists of a foreword by Ronald Wells, an introduction and concluding reflection by the three editors, and sixteen well-researched essays on the theme of the impact of secularization in the Dutch Reformed world, including the Netherlands, the United States, Canada, Japan, and South Africa.

The essays range from in-depth studies of narrowly focused segments of society to more broadly based considerations such as a study of modernity within the Reformed churches of the Netherlands written by Gerard Dekker.

Most of the authors distinguish among the individual, institutional, and societal levels of secularization. In other words, while religion's influence on society may diminish, and the church, as an organization, may adapt in various ways to modernity, this does not necessarily imply a decline in individual religiosity. Most of the essays describe some variation of the three reactions to modernity set forth by Boston University sociologist, Peter Berger, viz., cognitive surrender (a complete surrender to modernity), retrenchment (reassertion of ones beliefs, often accompanied by ghettoization), or bargaining (endeavoring to find a middle ground between these two extremes).

The conclusion which unites most of the essays is that, while on both societal and institutional levels there has been a marked secularization in the countries considered, this has "not been accompanied by a parallel pattern of individual secularization." This raises at least two difficult and pressing problems. Can individual religiosity hold out long in the face of markedly increased secularization at societal and institutional levels? And how orthodox will such individual, unsupported, and untaught religious expression be? One looks forward to a promised future volume, which may provide answers.

The only criticism of this book is that the subtitle is misleading. It should in fairness be "*Dutch Reformed Reactions to Modernity*" rather than "Reformed Reactions to Modernity" since the book's focus is almost entirely on the Dutch Reformed heritage, but

there are many of the Reformed faith outside that ethnic origin who are also trying to deal with modernity!

Mark G. McKim

Should God Get Tenure? Essays on Religion and Higher Education, edited by David W. Gill, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997. xvi, 245p., \$24.00.

The purpose of this collection is to articulate the need for a change in the contemporary environment of many colleges and universities and their exclusion or, at best, marginalization of religious and theological perspectives. In the academy, this translates into a post-modern culture that insists on removing all religious (Christian) connections with the older culture of learning under the guise of advocating pluralism, toleration, objectivity, and neutrality. This insistence on the exclusion of religion, particularly Christian, from the academy reveals presuppositions of limited pluralism, selective toleration, a restricted objectivity, and neutrality that seems to fly in the face of academic freedom and creativity.

Gleanings of pearls of thought beneath the larger vision and treasure articulate what many Christian educators have argued or at least intuited as they reflected on this area of concern. A sampling of such pearls includes Bruce R. Reichenbach's statement that "Proper profession stands at the heart of the educational process" (26); Merold Westphal's postulation that "What is at issue is not simply better doctors or better managers or even better philosophers, but better human beings" (30); H. Newton Maloney's opinion that "If an institution of higher learning claims to provide education in the liberal arts tradition, it should require that as much attention be given to religion as to science and to the humanities in its curriculum" (42-2); and Paul A. Marshal's comment that "The genius of toleration . . . is not overcoming our differences but establishing our right to differ" (85).

This collection is recommended reading for Christian educators and other reflective persons as they seek to bring a considered and informed challenge to the exclusion of Christianity in colleges and universities which pretend to advocate pluralism, toleration,

objectivity, neutrality, and a respect for all those forces which influence culture and the acquisition of knowledge.

Peter Van Elderen

Theology in Rabbinic Stories, by Chaim Pearl, Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1997. 180p.

The Midrash and the Talmud contain many interesting and valuable stories, fifty of which Chaim Pearl has selected for brief theological and ethical commentary. A few of the stories feature biblical characters in an elaboration of a biblical narrative, but most of them record an incident in the life of rabbis who lived between the second century BCE and the fifth century CE.

The Talmud consists of *halakhah*, discussions and decisions about the Jewish laws, and *aggadah*, an accumulation of legends, parables, and stories. It is the latter that Pearl has used in this book.

A sample of an elaborated biblical narrative pits Satan against first Abraham and then Isaac in an attempt to prevent the sacrifice of Isaac. Satan's final ploy is to turn himself into a wide river between the two and their destination. Abraham and Isaac enter that river with a prayer that they might not drown, and God rebukes that river (56-57). The writer interprets the story as a symbol of many unsuccessful attempts in Jewish history to destroy their faith in God (58).

Fifteen of the stories are under the heading of ethics, where Pearl occasionally discusses differences among Jewish, pagan, and Christian ethics.

He finds in sensual pleasure the potential either to become sinful or to be sanctified in ritual as holy (90). Thus he classifies classical and Christian writers who sought a golden mean into one extreme or the other.

With respect to miraculous events in the Bible and supernatural occurrences in rabbinic stories, Pearl recognizes three kinds of interpretation, literal, ethical, and scientifically rationalized. His "ethical" is another way of saying allegorical, and the rationalized interpretation he appears to favor de-emphasizes the miraculous elements.

In general, the male biblical character or the rabbi is the hero of the story, but Miriam wins out over Amram, and Beruriah shows up

her husband, Rabbi Meir. The latter was famous for her wisdom and knowledge of the law.

Sylvio J. Scorza

Towards Viable Theological Education: Ecumenical Imperative, Catalyst of Renewal, edited by John Pobee, Geneva: WCC, 1997. 174p., \$13.95.

This paperback is a summary of the World Council of Churches gathering in Oslo, Norway, in August 1996. This is a well-organized summary of the goals, biblical studies, and major presentations, as well as the responses to those presentations. *Toward Viable Theological Education* offers perspectives on learning in theological institutions at a time when churches, students, and laity are questioning the viability of traditional theological education.

There is much in the substance of the material presented which merits commendation. An opening sermon by Gunner Stalest and a set of biblical studies by Samuel Rayan on the theological learning of Abraham, Jonah, the Servant of Yahweh, Jesus, and the early church provide an often overlooked foundation for the papers presented and the reflections on those papers. This is summarized in a fine article by the editor, John Pobee, who accents spirituality and worship as a context for theological education.

Some of the nuggets gleaned by this reviewer include the following: "Theological education and ministerial formation should include leadership competence, missionary competence, and ecumenical competence"; "Unity must be found in the power of the life-giving and communion restoring Holy Spirit and must focus on a costly eucharistic vision." "Knowledge of God . . . is not measured by the information one possesses, but by how one lives in response to God," and, "The fount of knowledge is not for a few who can achieve the critical distinctions, but those who can achieve the critical embrace of love."

The emphasis on confession, knowledge arising out of testimony, and a broadened view of the vistas of God's teaching style in imparting the gospel as recorded in the canon make this rather brief paperback a fine summary of themes and issues which should be

a part of any discussion in the reformation of theological education and ministerial preparation.

Peter Van Elderen

The Treasure of Earthen Vessels: Explorations in Theological Anthropology, edited by Brian H. Childs and David W. Waanders, Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1994. 276p.

This is a collection of essays in honor of James N. Lapsley, a long-time faculty member at Princeton Theological Seminary, whose work emphasized pastoral theology with special attention to its underlying theological anthropology. The material is broader than the title implies and the essays helpfully address very specific matters of pastoral care at least as often as the theological anthropology that informs it.

The essays range from efforts to grapple with the mysterious nature of human being to specific proposals for more effective pastoral care of people in particular circumstances. At the theoretical end are chapters that probe the nature of human being with particular attention to the meaning of the concepts of self, soul, and spirit as these relate to the body, as well as the relationship of the human spirit to the Holy Spirit.

At the practical theological end, essays define the nature of health and salvation toward which pastors are endeavoring to nurture those in their care. These contributions draw on the psychology of religion and the practice of medicine, while reflecting on the implications of theological concepts such as divine transcendence and immanence and the Incarnation for the practice of pastoral care. Articles discuss care for those in medical "boundary situations" (where understanding of human being is very important), the elderly and women. One essay examines the difficult issue of forgiveness on the part of those who have been victimized.

The theoretical theological analyses are thought provoking (if occasionally rather strange), and there is much practical wisdom about the Christian ministry of "soul care" which is helpful in a time when the psychological profession has often taken over

the church's role and pastors have let it happen.

Terrance Tiessen

The Universe Next Door: A Basic Worldview Catalog, by James W. Sire, Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1997, 3rd edition. 237p., \$13.99 (paper).

In this third edition of his book, James W. Sire provides an extremely competent and well-organized introduction to seven major worldviews which have been or continue to be prominent in modern Western thought: deism, naturalism, nihilism, existentialism, Eastern pantheistic monism, the New Age Movement, and postmodernism.

He begins the book with a short defense of the ancient proposition that "the unexamined life is not worth living" and then proceeds to a twenty-page outline of Christian theism, titled, interestingly, "A Universe Charged with the Grandeur of God." Then, chapter by chapter, each of the seven alternate worldviews is set out in detail. In each chapter the tenets of the particular worldview under consideration are carefully laid out in a series of short propositional statements, which answer certain basic questions about the nature of reality. These statements are then elaborated. An attractive feature of that elaboration is that Sire cites widely and knowledgeably not only from the writings of major representative thinkers of each movement but also, where appropriate, from more popular sources, including plays, film, television, and popular books and magazines. This not only helps explain the worldview being considered, but gives the reader some impression of its influence on the wider culture. Each of these chapters concludes with a balanced critique of logical weaknesses and problems of the worldview. The chapter on postmodernism is particularly well done, and helps the reader get a grasp on a term and viewpoint that is notoriously hard to define.

The book is so well done, one hesitates to raise any criticism whatever! Two minor points should be noted, though. First, the chapter on existentialism is rather hard on Christian existentialism, calling it "a parasite on theism." While it is true that some Christian thinkers, influenced by

existentialism, have concluded that it is quite possible for something to be objectively false but subjectively true, not all took that step. While Bultmann took that step, Brunner clearly rejected the possibility. Sire is also unhappy with the existential emphasis on paradox. Yet, are there not times when honesty compels us to acknowledge that Scripture affirms apparently contradictory statements without reconciling them? In such instances, are we not compelled to affirm both statements, without trying to reconcile them when Scripture does not? Second, the chapter on the New Age Movement does not make it as clear as one might wish that New Age thought is often not much more than a variation of Eastern pantheism.

These, however, are tiny flaws in an extremely well-organized, well-documented, and thoughtful work. Sire's book would prove an excellent textbook in any introductory college or seminary course, and could serve well in an advanced adult church study. Certainly if seminarians and lay people alike were equipped with the background this book supplies, they would not only have a much better grasp of their own worldview, but be able to intelligently discuss and critique some of the major alternatives.

Mark G. McKim

The Wisdom Series: A Bible Survey Curriculum for Adults, by Celia M. Hastings, Ellsworth, MI: Sheepfold, 1998.

Hastings' newly released curriculum consists of 52 one-hour sessions. Unlike other Bible survey courses like *The Bethel Series* or *Kerygma*, Hastings' curriculum consists of only one resource. This makes the material very affordable (\$49.95) to congregations or Bible study groups with limited budgets. This one resource is the teacher's guide but has an abundance of reproducible materials for class participants.

The Wisdom Series emphasizes interactive learning. Weekly assignments expect learners to do a significant amount of Bible reading in preparation for each lesson. These reading assignments are accompanied by a "Search Sheet," containing questions that become focal points for classroom interaction.

Hastings has created a number of exercises that lend fun and call forth class participation. Her "Wilderness Journey Game" (session 14), "Agenda for Elders' Meeting" (session 18), and "Matthew's Script" (session 29) are examples of interactive learning.

An additional attractive feature is that learners are encouraged to follow a year-long reading plan that takes them through the entire Bible. Combined with the weekly reading assignments, one of the strengths of *The Wisdom Series* is its use of the Bible. Learners become students of the Scriptures.

The manual does not provide a great deal of guidance for facilitating the 40-45 minutes teaching-learning time, "Encountering the Word." Usually only three or four brief suggestions are made for facilitating this segment of the session. These brief suggestions may be sufficient because the course is designed to be interactive, but more suggestions would be helpful for most teachers.

Consideration should also be given to Hastings' use of wisdom theology. Some may be uncomfortable with Hastings' emphasis on the personification and prominence of Wisdom in the Bible. Some examples are her sessions entitled, "Wisdom in Human Flesh" (session 33), "Wisdom's Secret Attitudes" (session 35), "Order for Celebrating Wisdom's New Birth" (session 29), "Living as Wisdom's People" (session 45).

The Bethel Series and *Kerygma* are Bible survey curriculums widely used among congregations and endorsed by the Reformed Church in America. *The Wisdom Series* could serve as a helpful supplement for anyone leading a Bible survey class. It is available directly from the author (9268 Main St., P.O. Box 72, Ellsworth, MI 49729-0072) or soon to be released by CSS Publishing and Outlook Book Service.

Bill Boersma