

## Book Reviews

*Christology in Cultural Perspective: Marking Out the Horizons*, by Colin J. D. Greene  
(reviewed by John Kleinheksel)

*Living on the Borders: What the Church Can Learn from Ethnic Immigrant Cultures*, by  
Mark Griffin and Theron Walker (reviewed by Robert Hoeksema)

*The Rise of Evangelicalism: The Age of Edwards, Whitefield, and the Wesleys, A  
History of Evangelicalism: People, Movements and Ideas in the English Speaking  
World, vol. 1*, by Mark A. Noll (reviewed by Earl Wm. Kennedy)

*Treasure in Clay Jars: Patterns in Missional Faithfulness*, by Lois Y. Barrett, et al.  
(reviewed by Robert Hoeksema)

*Christology in Cultural Perspective: Marking Out the Horizons*, Colin J. D. Greene. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004. xvii, 434pp., \$35.00.

Professor Greene seeks to find the “real” Jesus through three “horizons of interpretation” that inform one another, namely: (1) the Bible; (2) doctrinal traditions of the church; and (3) how these two are mediated (and challenged) through successive historical and cultural contexts (p. 345).

Greene begins with a brief overview of the recent search for “the historical Jesus,” in the context of the Bible’s story, the church’s traditions, and the cultural history (chapter 1).

In chapter 2, he describes three “Christological trajectories”: (1) the cosmic Christ from above (Chalcedon and Jesus as the eternal Logos); (2) the political Christ (how Christ rules the spiritual world and how the “holy” Roman emperor ruled the temporal world as the vice-regent of Christ); and (3) the “anthropological” Christ from below, the representative of the new humanity.

The author then deals with the effect of the Enlightenment and the dissolution of Christendom. Chapter 4 critiques the efforts of Schleiermacher and Tillich to replace the Jesus of history with the Jesus who mediates to us the experience of God-dependency or New Being (pp. 96-128).

In chapters 5 to 8, Greene debunks the “modernist-Enlightenment” myths of progress, self-transcendence, and human liberation. Modernism starts with humanity as the measure of all things. That “rational subject” supposedly gains accurate access to the natural, external world (through the scientific method) and creates a “mirror image of itself” (p. 275). When Christology is approached within this framework, “salvation is nothing more than a carbon copy of the rhetoric of socio-political emancipation” (p. 276).

In chapter 10, Greene discusses post modernity with its social disintegration, widespread antirationalism, relativism, pluralism, and global economic domination by conglomerates. He sees Barth and Jurgen Moltman as best suited to meet this challenge.

The remainder of the study attempts to relocate the origins of Christology in the apocalyptic and messianic expectations of Second Temple Judaism (p. 351). Here Greene is in greater sympathy with N. T. Wright than with John Dominic Crossan and the Jesus Seminar.

The book as a whole is a comprehensive, historical, philosophical and theological review of how Jesus has been encountered in pre-modern, modern, and post modern cultures.

John Kleinheksel

*Living on the Borders: What the Church Can Learn from Ethnic Immigrant Cultures*, Mark Griffin and Theron Walker. Grand Rapids: Baker/Brazos, 2004. 207 pp.

This book was an interesting read for a third-generation American who remembers his grandfather praying in Dutch and attending a Dutch language service in Holland, Michigan, sixty years ago, and who has been involved with first- and second-generation Korean-Americans attending New Brunswick Seminary. Griffin and Walker refer to those who transfer their allegiance from one country to another, learn a new language, and negotiate their way through an alien environment as “living on the hyphen.”

The authors ask the reader to accept five working assumptions:

1. Christians now find themselves in the melting pot, like many an ethnic immigrant.
2. The melting pot is much less benign than it appears to be, and it is not a good thing for the church or for ethnic minorities.
3. The ghetto or barrio is much more complex than it appears to be, but it is not a suitable alternative to McWorld.
4. Christians and ethnic immigrants face the same challenge. Both must navigate between the twin perils of ghettoization and absorption into McWorld via the melting pot.
5. The church should seek a role that is vigorous and public, and not one that is official or hegemonic. Our citizenship is in heaven.

In chapter 4, the authors examine the Jewish-American experience as an example of how contemporary culture and the melting-pot mentality destroy culture. This book is for individuals who strive to understand others who participate in this democracy from a plethora of cultures and how our McWorld ways undermine their traditions.

Robert Hoeksema

*The Rise of Evangelicalism: The Age of Edwards, Whitefield, and the Wesleys*, A History of Evangelicalism: People, Movements and Ideas in the English Speaking

World, vol. 1, by Mark A. Noll. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2003. 330pp., \$23.00.

This book is the first in a projected five-volume series on the history of evangelicalism in the (former) British Empire and the USA, edited by Mark Noll of Wheaton College, Illinois, and David Bebbington of the University of Stirling, Scotland. Of the group of acclaimed American Calvinist church historians of the past several decades (including George Marsden, Nathan Hatch, and Harry Stout), Noll is probably the most prolific. Teaching, as he does, at the reputed flagship of evangelical colleges, it is fitting that he be involved in writing a comprehensive history of “evangelicalism.” In doing so, he is helping give shape to this somewhat elusive concept, which another Calvinist church historian, Darryl Hart, has recently sought to deconstruct. Noll uses as his broad, working definition of evangelicalism four main ingredients, suggested by Bebbington: conversion, the Bible, activism (in evangelism and mission), and the Atonement (p. 19).

Well written, with some fine turns of phrase, this labor of love provides a state-of-the-art, sympathetic but not uncritical, survey of evangelicalism. After providing the broad material and spiritual context and the antecedents of his subject, Noll tells the story largely chronologically, from the 1730s until about 1795, including many vignettes and quotations of major and lesser figures, sprinkled liberally with verses from contemporary hymns. He makes a special point to include women, blacks, and American Indians. He also discusses the degree to which a “scientific, objective” approach fits with attributing evangelicalism to the work of the Holy Spirit. Noll depends much on the *Blackwell Dictionary of Evangelical Biography, 1730-1860* for data on many of the people he delineates, but his footnoting and comprehensive, up-to-date bibliographies reveal the characteristic thoroughness of his own research. Apparently, the first volume of E. Brooks Holifield’s landmark *Theology in America* (2003) appeared too late to be included in the bibliography.

Little of significance has been omitted. One addition to Noll’s gallery of heroes might be Laurence Coughlan, perhaps the first Wesleyan preacher in British North America, and certainly the first in Newfoundland (1766-1773); he initiated a movement there that would spread Methodism around 1800, via the transatlantic fishery, to the Channel Islands of Jersey and Guernsey. Another possible omission was Guillian Bertholf, a pietist Dutch Reformed minister from 1694 to 1724 in northern New Jersey and the forerunner of Theodore Frelinghuysen.

Very few errors were caught by this reviewer, and most were inconsequential. Isaac Backus died in 1806, not 1804 (p. 181). The German “-hütten” should be translated “shelters,” not “a shelter” (pp. 225-226).

Since the soul of the Reformed Church in America has long been at least partly evangelical, Noll’s book is recommended for serious RCA readers. We can only hope that the next four volumes come soon and are half as informative and inspirational.

Earl Wm. Kennedy

*Treasure in Clay Jars: Patterns in Missional Faithfulness*, Lois Y. Barrett et al. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004. xiv, 172 pp.

Lois Barrett, George R. Hunsberger, professor of missiology at Western Theological Seminary, and four colleagues visited churches in Boulder, Colorado; Milwaukee, Wisconsin; Bellevue, Washington; Detroit, Michigan; Oakland, California; Toronto, Ontario; Brooklyn, New York; West Yellowstone, Montana; and seven churches of the Reformed Church in America in New Jersey. They organized this book around eight patterns of missional faithfulness they observed, with verses from 2 Corinthians 4 as scriptural references. These patterns provide the substance for eight chapters.

An appendix describes their method and offers with details a dozen indicators of a missional church. The missional church: proclaims the gospel; enables all members to learn to become disciples of Jesus; holds the Bible as normative; understands itself as different from the world; seeks to discern God’s specific missional vocation; is indicated by how members behave toward one another in love; practices hospitality; celebrates God’s presence and promised future in worship; has a vital public witness; recognizes that the church is an incomplete expression of the reign of God.

Robert Hoeksema