
Book Reviews

Culture Matters: A Call for Consensus on Christian Cultural Engagement, by T.M. Moore, Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2007. 176pp., \$16.99.

Gandhi and Jesus: The Saving Power of Nonviolence, by Terrence J. Rynne, Maryknoll: Orbis, 2008. 228pp., \$20.00 (paper).

Luther and Calvin on Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, by Juha Mikkonen, ABO, Finland: Abo Academi University Press, 2007. 308pp., n.p.

The Music of Praise: Meditations on Great Hymns of the Church, by Gordon Giles, Peabody, Mass: Hendrikson, 2004. 266pp., \$29.95.

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Culture Matters: A Call for Consensus on Christian Cultural Engagement, by T.M. Moore, Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2007. 176pp., \$16.99.

The title of this book betrays its ambition. Defining culture is in itself a monumental task since culture is an environment born unintentionally (humanly speaking) out of political, social, economic, and religious dynamics that cannot be traced to a particular person, institution or other social entity. Hence it is difficult to engage the driving forces of a culture in a discussion. Having said this, the author uses an antithetical approach (“Lines of battle drawn” “Take up a position on the walls of God’s city”) to courageously explore some potential intersections of faith and culture. Moore cites Augustine, John Calvin, Abraham Kuyper, and Czelaw Milosz and explores their responses to the culture in which they found themselves in order to find an avenue for our engaging the present culture.

Because this is a brief attempt to address a monumental topic, there is some fraying of the thesis as it progresses. The deeper questions as to why Christianity in its traditional forms finds itself hardly a player in the culture in which it finds itself is not explored in any depth. “The barbarians are threatening to overwhelm the once-glorious culture bequeathed to us in the West by our Christian forbearers and those who fell under their wise and gracious sway” (91). Sweeping statements like this assume more than this reviewer can embrace. The “call for consensus” seems a bit presumptuous when postmodern eclectic culture is a chaotic blend of relativity in religion, ethnicity and other dynamics, including the Christian option.

It is noteworthy that the very arguments that classic spiritual leaders used to address their culture are now the arguments that our culture uses to denigrate Christianity. For instance, Augustine’s response to the accusation that Christianity was a factor in the waning of Roman culture was that the gods upon whom the Romans were relying seemed to have failed them. Today, Christian culture seems to have waned and the argument can be turned back on people of faith that their God and their faith have not been able to effect positive changes in culture. Western culture often seems to see Christianity as a force of separation, judgmentalism, and small-minded faith that seldom resonate with humanity or with the Jesus it claims to embrace.

On the positive side, the book moves us into new places of thought, whether through agreement with or reaction against the thoughts of our culture. Every nation’s culture reflects life lived without God as the center of that life. There are wise words of direction: “Make certain of your message.” “Pursue culture for the glory of God.” “...parameters can be articulated and a variety of forums created to enable significant numbers of believers from all communions of the

faithful to realize a common voice and stance toward the making and use of culture in all its forms” (146). It would seem that this brief book of reflections could be the jumping-off point for a more extensive discussion and writing exploring “Consensus on Christian Cultural Engagement.”

—Peter Van Elderen

Gandhi and Jesus: The Saving Power of Nonviolence, by Terrence J. Rynne, Maryknoll: Orbis, 2008. 228pp., \$20.00 (paper).

Terrence Rynne founded and developed a health care marketing firm but always had a passion for peace. He went back to school and received a PhD from Marquette University. This book is an expansion of his PhD dissertation.

I highly recommend this book, especially for those seeking to understand and apply Jesus’ ethic of “love for enemies” in an age where enemies are routinely isolated and destroyed.

The first two chapters trace the life, teachings and maturation of the Indian freedom fighter, Gandhi, with special emphasis on his concept of “Satyagraha.” This Sanskrit term is based on two words: “satya” means truth, reality, the source of moral law in the universe; and “graha” means holding firm, acting nonviolently.

In chapter three, Rynne reviews four Christian theologians who have been significantly influenced by Gandhi and have discovered “for themselves, the centrality of nonviolence in the life and death of Jesus” (84).

Chapter four gives an overview of the multiple versions of salvation theologies, biblically and historically. Given the development and proliferation of nuclear weapons, our author asserts humankind has the capability of “destroying itself completely” (133). This assumption provides the urgency for this book. The fifth and last chapter attempts to “rethink Christian salvation in the light of Gandhi’s “Satyagraha model” (153-177). Rynne makes a strong case for Gandhi’s radical application of the nonviolent life and action of Jesus as the most appropriate view of “salvation” for our day and time.

The author concludes by declaring that Jesus gave the Spirit to his disciples at Pentecost in order to enable them to live as he lived, dealing with enemies the way he did, taking Jesus’ mission forward into history. The overview of the history of atonement theory is sketchy, but Rynne’s expansion of the *Christus*

Victor view is a much needed antidote to the current addiction to and obsession with physical violence as the ultimate weapon against evil.

The book convincingly argues the case for grounding a view of salvation on Jesus' living out the "love for enemy" teaching, as further illustrated by Gandhi.

—John R. Kleinheksel Sr.

Luther and Calvin on Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, by Juha Mikkonen, Finland, Abo Academi University Press, 2007. 308pp. n.p.

Twenty-four years ago I published an article in the *Reformed Review* on "Luther and Calvin on Law and Gospel in Their Galatians Commentaries." The purpose of this study was to see if there are any substantial differences in their exegetical approach to a theme which often divides Lutheran and Reformed theologians. The result was that the two reformers exegete the key passages in a remarkably similar fashion. This discovery unfortunately did not evoke much of a response from Lutherans.

Now, a quarter of a century later a Finnish Luther scholar has done a similar study but of a more comprehensive nature and in greater depth. The subtitle of this doctoral dissertation reads "An Analysis and Comparison of Substantial concepts in Luther's 1531/35 and Calvin's 1546/48 Commentaries of Galatians." Accordingly he investigates not only the question of law and gospel but also the reformers' views of justification, good works, the ministry, the work of the Holy Spirit, etc. It is difficult at times to make apt comparisons because Luther's commentary on Galatians is much larger and more detailed than Calvin's. "Luther is more existential, profound, creative and verbose. Calvin is systematic and brief" (244). It also appears that Calvin did not have access to Luther's commentary when he wrote his over 10 years later.

Mikkonen points out in his introduction that there are generally two approaches in comparing the theologies of Luther and Calvin. An older approach taken by Reinhold Seeberg, Max Weber, Ernest Troeltsch *et al.* regards Luther's and Calvin's differences as decisive, despite common core convictions. Calvin is portrayed as cold and legalistic, Luther as the theologian of grace and God's love in Christ. The other approach is to see more similarity in the Reformers' views of key issues and here the author points to my article and the 1967 doctoral dissertation by Wolfgang Engels on Calvin's Understanding of the law in his Galatians commentary (in German), a study of which I was unaware. Mikkonen comes to the conclusion in the study that the latter approach is more true to Luther and Calvin.

There are differences, but they are mostly a matter of style and emphasis. For example, in Galatians 3:19 Calvin identifies the mediator of the law as Christ, Luther (more correctly) as Moses. More importantly, Calvin teaches a third use of the law – as a guide for believers – whereas Luther in this commentary only identifies two uses of the law. However, Mikkonen astutely observes that “despite the fact that Luther does not explicitly identify a third use of the law, it needs to be borne in mind that his second use of the law partly overlaps Calvin’s third use” (235). The only place where I question Mikkonen’s interpretation in regard to the law is his conclusion that for Luther the convicting function of the law (*usus elencticus*) is continually necessary for the believer whereas for Calvin this function of the law is temporary and ceases for the regenerate (235-6).

In the final chapter Mikkonen compares Luther and Calvin on a variety of issues and distinguishes three kinds of variance: 1) where the difference is largely one of emphasis; 2) where the differences are more significant; and 3) where there are “clear disagreements.” However, he adds that “there are only a few subjects which fall into the second category, and even fewer which fall into the third” (217). Finally, it is significant that “a far reaching agreement emerges on key notions of Galatians” (216 cf. 217). There is also one theme that is prominent in Luther’s commentary and largely missing in Calvin, suffering as a Christian and the scandal of the cross.

How refreshing it is to find a Lutheran scholar who treats Calvin with such great appreciation and understanding. This is a model of critical scholarship and a major contribution to an important subject.

– I. John Hesselink

The Music of Praise: Meditations on Great Hymns of the Church, by Gordon Giles, Peabody, Mass, Hendrikson, 2004. 266pp., \$29.95.

Gordon Giles does Anglicans and all of us a fine service by picking 53 hymns from the New English Hymnal as suggestions for use during the liturgical year, following the common lectionary. Giles calls them “our greatest and most interesting hymns” (14).

The book comes with a CD of the Ludgate Singers (St. Paul’s Cathedral) singing 21 of the 53 hymns chosen. Only three texts are “contemporary” hymns (by Michael Saward, Timothy Dudley-Smith and W.J. Sparrow-Simpson). Most are from the nineteenth century and earlier, with well known tunes to match. There is little of texts that addresses the contemporary issues that many congregations in America and *The Hymn Society of the United States and Canada* find relevant

(war and peace, urban mission; global poverty and oppression; creation and science; environmental concerns, Alzheimer's, AIDS, terrorism).

Giles gives thorough commentary on the biblical roots and origins and historical contexts of the texts. Ample discussion is given to the tunes to which texts are set. Unfortunately, there are no "new" tunes which will be discouraging to composers who are trying to break into territory while people always want to sing "familiar" tunes! Each section ends with a prayer that picks up the major themes of the hymn chosen for the day.

Many of the hymns are familiar to American Christians ("Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah," "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross," "For All the Saints"). Others are known and sung only by the British ("Jerusalem," "I Vow to Thee My Country"). There are also some surprises: "Onward Christian Soldiers," "What a Friend We Have in Jesus," "Just as I Am," "Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory." Reading the book makes one realize just how indebted American Christians are to English hymnody.

Pastors who follow the common lectionary will get new ideas for hymns and much important and helpful background information on when, where and why these hymns were written.

—John R. Kleinheksel Sr.

Rewriting Scripture in Second Temple Times, by Sidnie White Crawford (Studies in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Related Literature), Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008. xii, 160pp., \$16.00 (paper).

This book will interest readers who know something about the textual criticism of the Hebrew Scriptures—the textual basis of the Christian "Old Testament." Crawford prefers to use the term "Scripture(s)" rather than "Bible," because there were several different text types and even different literary editions (proto-Rabbinic, pre-Samaritan [Old Palestinian], pre-Septuagint), and none of the faith communities "canonized" their respective versions until the second century CE and later (6-7).

A generation ago, we understood the work of Hebrew scribes to be a relatively simple twofold endeavor: copy received texts of specific books (whether directly from the base texts or from memorization), and compose entirely new versions or translations in order to accommodate changing culture and/or vernacular language (3-4). This picture has been considerably complicated by the publication of Qumran texts like the Reworked Pentateuch (4Q158, 4Q364-7), for which our author and Emanuel Tov were largely responsible. Based on this new

information, Crawford argues for a wide spectrum of scribal endeavors, ranging from the familiar literary editions through rewritten Scripture texts, like the Reworked Pentateuch, which include short apocryphal additions, to separate new compositions like Jubilees and the Temple Scroll (11QTemp), translations like the Genesis Apocryphon (1QapGen Aramaic), commentaries like the Qumran Commentary on Genesis (4QpeshGenGenesis), and pseudepigraphal works like 1 Enoch (12-15, 144-6). Crawford describes each of these cases and gives detailed examples in a series of six chapters. He concludes with a contrast between the priestly/levitical line of interpretation, which is widely represented at Qumran, and the proto-Pharisaic/Rabbinic line represented by the books of Tobit and Jesus ben Sira (146-7).

While Crawford's idea of a spectrum is helpful for purposes of organizing the material, it should not be taken too literally. For one thing, Crawford tends to assume without argument that the proto-Rabbinic or "received" version of Scripture was the base text and that any additional material in proto-Samaritan and reworked texts is necessarily the result of scribal harmonization or exegesis (43, 49, 52-4). A case could certainly be made in some instances by using a generalized principle of *lectio difficilior* (the more difficult, less harmonized reading is likely to be earlier), but one should allow for more uncertainty in placing texts along the spectrum than Crawford does (cf. Michael Wise et al., *Dead Sea Scrolls* [HarperSanFrancisco, 1996], 325).

On the other hand, Crawford has not gone far enough in mapping out the different cases. His spectrum conflates several different issues and obscures important distinctions. Translations of the Hebrew Scriptures themselves range from exemplars of original literary types (e.g., the Greek Septuagint) to loose paraphrases like the Palestinian Targums and new compositions like the Genesis Apocryphon, with Targum Onqelos somewhere in between. So a distinction should be made between the scribal endeavor of translation and that of reworking the base text in accordance with "scribal exegesis" (49), even though these two endeavors are sometimes combined. Varying claims to authority and reception are also distinct issues. It would be interesting to develop a matrix in two or three dimensions in order to map out these various possibilities and show the relations more exactly. That way the difference between the proto-Rabbinic edition and the Nash Papyrus (32-33), on the one hand, and a deliberately harmonized edition like the pre-Samaritan could be more easily recognized.

Crawford's book is the most comprehensive treatment to date of the complexities of scribal activity in the late Second Temple period. Students of the New Testament and early Judaism will greatly benefit from his labors.

— Christopher B. Kaiser

Tradition, Scripture, and Interpretation: A Sourcebook of the Ancient Church, edited by D.H. Williams, Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006. 189pp., \$22.00.

This book is one in a series of volumes dedicated to biblical and theological interpretation of the patristic writings. Each of these books is arranged around a particular theological theme and uses portions of various patristic writings to discuss and interpret that particular theme. This volume centers on the subject of Christian tradition. Each chapter offers one or more passages of Scripture and gives several interpretations from the patristic authors. The writings included are short excerpts rather than entire works so that these important writings are accessible to all levels of theological scholarship without being overwhelming.

The purpose of the book is made clear in the Preface: modern day Christians need to read patristic authors so they will understand “from the source” what is the proper interpretation of doctrine. As Williams states: “Without knowing firsthand what the ancient fathers really taught, there can be no reliable application” (9).

The Introduction explains that while there are many differences between the authors’ perspectives, the basic premise for all of the patristic authors is the same: that Jesus was the fulfillment of the Law, and the Prophets and all of Scripture bears witness to that. It is this common perspective that unites the patristic writings and establishes them as the foundation of Christian theology.

Williams also offers explanations and synthesis throughout. The reader does not feel “lost” in the reading of St. Augustine, for example, nor does he or she require a full background in Augustinian theology to understand the passages and explanations offered. Because the texts are presented in their original forms, the book also invites readers who may, indeed, be more familiar with theological writing. It is especially helpful for understanding a variety of patristic perspectives around a particular area of interest. As a student of theology, I find this book very helpful for pointing me in the right direction for further study on individual authors or particular topics.

– Amy Nyland

What Language Shall I Borrow? The Bible and Christian Worship, by Ronald P Byars, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008. xviii, 202pp., \$18.00 (paper).

One of the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship Liturgical Studies Series, this volume takes the reader through the Presbyterian Book of Common Worship (BCW) with references to pertinent scriptural foundations, linking liturgical language to biblical language.

In the series preface, John Witvliet, series editor, refers to the divide between churches that see worship as primarily expressive and those who see it as primarily formative. He argues for the latter where the emphasis is on growth, discipleship, and sanctification. The language of worship must be biblical language with the focus on the Triune God. The author, Byars, laments the loss of traditional biblical words such as sin, grace, redemption and hope and opines that only believers are capable of worshiping God.

Byars divides the book into five sections: "The Recovery of Biblical Language in Christian Worship"; "Gathering"; "The Word"; "The Eucharist"; and "Sending." Each section follows the BCW's order. For example, under "The Word," we find the Prayer for Illumination, Scripture Readings, a Psalm, a Sermon, an Invitation, an Affirmation of Faith, Baptism or Pastoral Rite of the Church, and Prayers of the People.

Several aspects commend this book. Footnotes point to additional readings. At the conclusion of each section Byars provides suggestions for further study. An index of subjects and names is supplied at the end. The included list of books published as part of the Liturgical Studies Series indicates volumes for added study. The author's style makes for agreeable reading.

Byars frequently refers to Greek words behind our English words. An illustration: "The presumption behind the Prayer for Illumination is that we are merely human beings, we cannot know God or the things of God without God's help. The Greek word translated as "Advocate" (*parakletos*, or Paraclete) means "Helper." Without the help of the Spirit, "the words of Scripture may wash over us as only empty sounds or a source of confusion."

This book is an excellent resource for any pastor who wishes to educate her or his congregation in the relationship between the Bible and worship.

—Robert J. Hoeksema