

***The Pleasures of Marriage: An Exposition of the Song of Solomon.*** By Steven A. Kreloff. Arlington Heights, IL: Regular Baptist Press, 2017. 152 pp. \$10.99.

The Song of Solomon does not get much exposure in churches on a typical Sunday morning. If the Song is heard, it is generally heard as a love story between Jesus and his church in either exposition or application. Kreloff is to be commended for tackling the Song in a series of expositional messages from which this book is birthed eschewing the allegorical strategy. The book is composed of fifteen chapters that walks the reader through the book. Each chapter ends with discussion helpful questions for couples and singles.

Kreloff rightly sees Solomon as the author of the Song that bears his name. He recognizes part of its divine purpose when he writes, “Solomon composed a divinely inspired song about God’s perspective on the way sexual love should be experienced by a husband and wife” (16). Kreloff understands that the message of the Song is much needed in today’s generation of Christian homes (17). He bravely admonishes “the modern Bible teacher” to explain the “symbols” in the Song “so people can understand what God means by what He says” (71).

Although Kreloff attempts to read the Song in a literal fashion, he maintains an older narrative understanding of its flow from which most contemporary Song scholarship has moved away. He sees the Song in a typical courtship narrative of (1) courtship, (2) marriage, and (3) and sexual adjustment of the couple (14) although not in strict chronological sequence. He has Solomon as the male lover (in his younger days) and the Shulamite as the female lover. He recognizes the Shulamite’s brothers as players in the narrative as well. Each are real, historical characters. However, the daughters of Jerusalem for Kreloff are an “imaginary group” (p. 14).

Because of his interpretive lens, Kreloff is forced to fill in the “white spaces” to make his narrative work. This leads to conjecture in several places. For instance, speaking of chapter 1, he speculates, “Or perhaps, when Solomon first visits the Shulamite in her country home, he found it relaxing to care for his sheep during the day” (37). Also, in chapter 1:8, he surmises,

“In essence, these words convey an ultimatum to Shulamite: If you are going to marry Solomon, you have to recognize that he’s not always going to be available to spend time with you. He has a lot of work to do ...” (p. 37). Later, this “not having enough time to be with her” comes to play as the reason for her rejection of his advances in chapter 5 (p. 97). The difficulty with these inferences is that there is no evidence in the biblical text of any of these suggestions.

Kerloff’s storyline read is also evidenced in how he transforms the poetic lines of the Song into paragraphs for exposition (e.g., pp. 34, 36, 42, etc). This flattening of the poetry into prose robs the Song of its poetic cohesion and violates the parallelism that is the heart of biblical Hebrew poetry. If the Song’s parallelism is forced to be clothed with the garments of the ill-fitting narrative, the beauty of this poetic verse is lost, and the meaning and purpose of this divine love poem are obscured.

If readers agree with Kerloff’s narrative reading, they will appreciate his exposition and application (which many times are helpful). Others who value the poetry of the Song will need to look elsewhere for an exposition that follows the Song’s natural poetic contours and deals with its major motif of absence and presence on which this song is composed.

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***The Hermeneutics of the Biblical Writers: Learning to Interpret Scripture from the Prophets and Apostles.*** By Abner Chou. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2018. 251 pp. \$23.99.

In *The Hermeneutics of the Biblical Writers*, Abner Chou provides the latest and most up-to-date discussion on biblical intertextuality available. Through this book, Chou provides an enormous service to conservative evangelicals by focusing not merely on how the NT authors interpreted the OT, but on why we

should follow their example. Having written commentaries on several OT books (Lamentations, 2011; and Deuteronomy, forthcoming), the author is well qualified to write a book on the NT use of the OT. Chou currently serves as the John F. MacArthur Endowed Fellow at The Master's University.

Those familiar with intertextual studies will quickly recognize that the value of this book rests not in its assertion that the NT authors used the OT contextually. As Chou acknowledges in his first chapter, "Those versed in the New Testament's Use of the Old will see that my thesis resonates with Beale, Kaiser, Carson, Hamilton, Caneday, and Bock" (23). Rather, the value of Chou's book rests in its demonstration of the validity of the apostle's approach to interpreting the OT, and why this hermeneutic should be emulated today. That is, Chou largely builds upon the conclusions of the aforementioned individuals to "demonstrate that the way we read Scripture is thoroughly justified" (23).

*The Hermeneutics of the Biblical Writers* is divided into eight chapters and progresses logically. The first two chapters focus on presuppositions and the quest for authorial logic. Chou argues, "The hermeneutic of the Old Testament leads us to the New Testament" (43). In other words, the interpretive method by which the OT authors understood earlier revelation became the method by which the NT authors understood the OT. Chou provides the sweeping assertion that the apostolic hermeneutic was not new, but simply followed the prophetic hermeneutic. This assertion is advanced through most of the book: Chapters three and four focus on "The Prophetic Hermeneutic," and chapters five and six develop "The Apostolic Hermeneutic."

Chou culminates his discussion in chapter seven, "The Christian Hermeneutic," which develops the practical implications of his study. Chou summarizes his argument up to this point, "The apostles were also theologians who knew the big picture of Scripture; knew the interconnectedness of the Old Testament; and via new revelation fleshed out the themes, ideas, and ramifications earlier highlighted by their predecessors" (200). His point is that the apostles developed not only the teachings, but also the hermeneutic of the prophets. In turn, we are to develop both the teachings as well as the hermeneutic of

the prophets and the apostles. As Chou summarizes, “Our job, as the prophets and apostles before us, is to read the text to gain the author’s intent” (229). Finally, coming in at only two pages (231-32), chapter eight, offers several concluding thoughts and practical exhortations.

Areas for improvement relate primarily to formatting. I found myself quite disappointed at the notable absence of a Scripture index. A book as valuable as this deserves to be referenced frequently—a task rendered nearly impossible without some sort of index. Likewise, it would have been helpful to have a more expansive table of contents. As it is, if one desires to reference a particular section of the book, they must sift through the entirety of the book to locate it.

I found very few disagreements with Chou’s conclusions, though I did find myself questioning a few interpretations of various passages. For example, his understanding of Hosea 11:1 (cited in Matthew 2:15) as “look[ing] forward to a new Exodus led by a new David” (110) was unconvincing and appeared forced (105-110). Given Chou’s conclusions regarding the “fulfillment formulas” (132-33), this view on Hosea was unnecessary. Since, as Chou argues, *pleroo* can denote more than “prediction-actualization” (132), it was surprising that he devoted such effort to asserting the predictivity of this passage. By and large though, Chou exegetes both OT and NT passages with clarity and precision.

Overall, Chou is to be commended for providing such a valuable resource. There are very few books that one can recommend without reservation. This is undoubtedly one of them. I highly recommend this book to anyone who desires to better understand how the Testaments connect, as well as those who are curious as to the rationale for their hermeneutic.

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***Surveying the New Testament: Gospels and Acts (vol. 1), Pauline Epistles (vol. 2), and Hebrews through Revelation (vol. 3).*** By Paul D. Weaver. Word of Life: 2017. 653 pp. \$31.97.

Paul Weaver has provided a valuable resource in his new Surveying the New Testament series. This collection of three books (*Gospels and Acts*, *Pauline Epistles*, and *Hebrews through Revelation*) introduces and exegetically examines each of the twenty-seven NT books in an easy-to-understand manner. Edited by Weaver, this book was written by nineteen contributors, all of whom are on faculty (residential or adjunct) at the Word of Life Bible Institute. Among these contributors are well-known scholars such as Thomas Constable (Luke, Acts) and Stanley Toussaint (Matthew). In each case, the contributors bring pastoral and academic expertise specifically related to their assigned portions.

Although there are numerous first-year introductions to the NT, this series stands out as unique in several regards. Discussing the purpose of this series, Weaver asserts that his goal was “to accomplish one lofty task: to provide a user friendly, theologically conservative, and financially affordable resource” (*Gospels and Acts*, p. 9). He has succeeded on each of these counts. The series is quite affordable, coming in at less than forty dollars for all the books in paperback form (less than twenty dollars for a complete digital copy). Additionally, regarding theological perspective, this series does not disappoint. Each section is reliably conservative in approach, dealing with alternative views when necessary in the footnotes.

Furthermore, this series is undoubtedly user friendly. For each NT book, an overview is provided, including a discussion of authorship, recipients, date and place, purpose, message, and outline. From there, every NT book receives a “survey,” (essentially a commentary), each of which are relatively brief. For example, the survey of Matthew consists of fifty-four pages (*Gospels and Acts*, pp. 16–69), and the survey of Jude, a shorter letter, receives just four pages (*Hebrews through Revelation*, pp. 107–110). Perhaps the most helpful aspects of each chapter are the purpose and message sections. The purpose section provides a summary of the author’s communication to the original

audience, and the message section offers a succinct overview of the implications for modern readers. I found myself often consulting these two sections in preparation for my NT survey courses, as I searched for clear and concise explanations suitable for undergraduate students.

One minor critique is that due to the diversity of contributors, some sections received more attention than others. For example, at over a page, the outline of James is double the length of the outlines of either 1 or 2 Corinthians (each of which are half a page). Additionally, I was curious about the rationale for including Acts in the volume on the Gospels. Certainly, these books are similar regarding their narrative genre, yet perhaps Acts could have fit better in the volume on the Pauline Epistles. However, these are both minor and relatively inconsequential critiques.

It is always easy to criticize a book for not accomplishing something it was never intended to accomplish. For example, one could criticize this series for not dealing significantly with secondary literature, for not interacting with every opposing view, or for its notable brevity. However, given the intended purpose, these potential weaknesses serve as this series' strengths. The contributors do not get bogged down with details, but rather, clearly and effectively introduce the text of Scripture. As such, I cannot think of a better series to recommend as a resource for the undergraduate classroom, academically minded church class, or the interested layperson's study.

Overall, Weaver and the contributors of the Surveying the New Testament series are to be highly commended for providing such a unique and valuable resource for the church. I highly recommend.

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***Best Bible Books: New Testament Resources.*** Ed. John Glynn and Michael H. Burer. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2018. 336 pp. Paperback, \$27.99.

Pastors and serious Bible students need a reliable guide to help them navigate the burgeoning field of New Testament studies. There is a need not only for guidance with regard to the quality of the published resources, but also simply to help them keep abreast of the more recent works in this prolific field of research. It is with great delight that I can recommend *Best Bible Books: New Testament Resources*.

As the subtitle indicates, this is the first volume with a forthcoming companion volume (on OT resources). The work builds on John Glynn's *Commentary and Reference Survey*. The stated goal is to "recommend useful, practical resources that enable better understanding of God's Word" (p.15), thereby allowing for optimum stewardship of time and money.

The layout of the book is logical and useful. Its central core is the canonical book-by-book survey (49–240). However, users of this book will find the material that precedes the book-by-book survey to be quite useful. Aside from the eighteen pages of front matter (Abbreviations, Introduction), the volume opens with "Building a 'Must-Have' Personal Reference Library" (7 pages) with specific suggestions first for the layperson, then for the Bible college and seminary student, and finally for the pastor with recommendations based upon the level of training. Then comes a brief section with guidelines "On Commentary Series" as a whole. A helpful feature included here is their categorization according to the following divisions: (1) Evangelical, Technical, Semitechnical; (2) Mixed, Technical and Semitechnical; (3) Liberal, Technical; (4) Exposition; and (5) Preaching and Application. The last two sections provide lists for (a) New Testament Introductions, Surveys, and Theology, and for (b) Jesus and the Gospels, respectively (both compiled by Darrell L. Bock).

The material that follows the canonical book-by-book survey includes thirteen pages of back matter (Name Index) and another 65 pages separated into eight sections of focused topics. Two of these are focused areas of NT studies (viz., New Testament

Background and Jewish Background). Another two list resources identified as “Popular References” (e.g., Concise Bible Commentaries, Word Studies) and “General References” (e.g., Geography, Encyclopedias, Charts). Two more focus on “Greek Resources” (e.g., grammars, lexicons, textual criticism) and “Exegesis, Interpretation, and Hermeneutics” (e.g., literary approaches, canon, genre-specific studies, exegetical method) and another two give attention to “Scholarly One-Volume Commentaries” and the author’s “The Ultimate New Testament Commentary Collection.” A brief comment on this latter inclusion is appropriate. In this brief 3-page listing, Michael Burer lists his top two commentaries for every NT book. While I personally may swap out a few choices here or there as my top two, each title he includes on his list would nonetheless be a worthy starting point to all who are interested in outfitting their library.

Everything mentioned above adds great value to this book. But even without that, the heart of the book would still carry the day as a worthwhile tool. Each canonical book is treated separately with a good, better, best ranking. For every inclusion, the authors provide the bibliographic information, followed by a description of the Approach, Format, and Usability. In addition to this, they categorize each entry as either (1) Technical, or Semitechnical, (2) Exposition, or (3) Special Studies. Throughout the book—regardless of how an entry is categorized—the authors employ a “highlight” feature where they use a shaded gray highlight to emphasize those titles they deem to be more significant and “worthy of special consideration” (16).

A few examples will help the reader appreciate how helpful the above listed features are for those contemplating a purchase or perhaps selecting commentaries for sermon preparation. Consider a commentary entry for the Gospel of Matthew. They list, for instance, David Harrington’s, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 2nd ed. (Liturgical, 2007), which they list under the “Exposition” category with a ranking of “good” (57). Under Approach, they write: “Strong focus upon Jewish background, both in terms of exegesis and application (in light of the Second Vatican Council).” Under Format, they write (in part), “Traditional

introduction, although his short discussion on whether Matthew was anti-Semitic is helpful.” Under Usability, they write: “Interpretation is helpful, but application is thin” (57).

For the Gospel of Matthew, they rank 26 different commentaries (10 as good; 8 as better; 8 as best) in a span of nine pages. Then they provide another 2–3 pages listing commentaries that provide more focused studies, viz., “Matthew as Story,” “Sermon on the Mount,” followed by listings on “Special Studies,” such as the history of interpretation, social history, Olivet Discourse, etc. And the Gospel of Matthew is fairly representative of the equal treatment throughout. For those who take the time to read every assessment the authors provide will find one useful nugget after another.

For those who want to build a quality library, using the best stewardship of both time and money, John Glynn’s 11th edition of *Best Bible Books: New Testament Resources* (Michael H. Burer, ed.), will certainly steer them right. For those with established libraries, this would serve as a handy “double-check” tool enabling one to first identify and then fill out the “lighter” or “thinner” parts, thus making for a more well-rounded library.

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*‘Twas the Evening before Christmas.* By Glenys Nellist. Illustrated by Elena Selivanova. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2017. Ages 4-8. \$21.00.

The best way to review a children’s book is to read it to kids and report their reaction. Since my own five are now 26 to 36 years old and way too big to sit on my lap, I enlisted the help of two of my three grandkids: Kenna (6) and Jesse (4). Before we turn to the reaction of the “expert” reviewers, let’s look at the book itself.

*‘Twas the Evening before Christmas* is written in the poetic and rhyming style of Clement Moore’s famous 1823 “‘Twas the Night Before Christmas.” While the rhyme may not be as

thematically tight as the original and sometimes forced, Nellist's vision of Christmas is filled with stable animals (even mice and doves), angels, shepherds, three kings, and of course Joseph, Mary, and baby, Jesus. The book is illustrated well. Kenna noted the pictures were "true to life." Each four-lines stanza has a full color two-page spread. The font size is easy for grandparents and beginning readers.

Nellist's purpose for her book is "to share the real Christmas story—the story of Jesus' birth" (inside front cover). There are some biblical miscues that as Kenna and Jesse and I want to quibble over such as the missing Bethlehem star, the three wise men at the stable, the skin color of the family (although Jesus has brown eyes) and the book ending with Mary wishing Jesus a "Merry Christmas." Even Kenna (6) quipped at the end of the book, "Mary did not say Merry Christmas to Jesus!" Jesse (4) was quick to note that Nellist's book was good but the angels did not say what she wrote. He then recited from memory the biblically correct angel announcement from Luke 2.

While Nellist can be commended for her effort, her poem does not replace (as the grandkids noted) the simplicity and grandeur of the biblical record of the birth of Jesus. While Kenna and Jesse said they would read the book again, it was left untouched for the rest of their time with us.

The book would be a good gift idea for those who only know Moore's poem as the reason for the season.

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***Resourcing Theological Anthropology: A Constructive Account of Humanity in the Light of Christ.*** By Marc Cortez. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2018. 301 pp. \$29.99.

In January of 2018, Marc Cortez, Associate Professor of Theology at Wheaton College, released his work *Resourcing Theological Anthropology: A Constructive Account of Humanity in the Light of Christ*. Serving as a sequel of sorts to

*Christological Anthropology in Human Perspective*, published by Zondervan in 2016, *Resourcing Theological Anthropology* seeks to contribute a text devoted to defending a comprehensively Christological anthropology, defined by Cortez as “one in which (a) Christology warrants ultimate claims about true humanity such that (b) the scope of those claims applies to all anthropological data” (21). However, while Cortez wishes to defend a comprehensively Christological anthropology, his primary desire is to provide a reference text for the key issues involved in Christological anthropology. He writes, “My real focus in this volume is on providing resources for developing comprehensively christological anthropologies today” (21).

To accomplish these objectives, Cortez writes four chapters (chapters 1-4) “establishing why we should affirm that human persons need to be understood Christologically” (25). This is done through an evaluation of “four key biblical and theological issues that any Christological anthropology should be able to address” (18). These issues are (1) The distinction between the natural (what is intrinsic to man) and supernatural (what is given by God’s grace) (36); (2) The incarnation and its relationship to human sin (would the incarnation take place without the reality of human sin?) (84); (3) Jesus as central in understanding the image of God (100); and (4) The nature of Jesus’ humanity (fallen or unfallen?) (131). Following a list of eleven theses defining Christological anthropology (chapter 5), Cortez examines three significant issues in contemporary Christology using his previous conclusions as a reference point: Jesus and his maleness (chapter 6), Jesus and his Jewish identity (chapter 7), and the normality of death as reflected in Jesus’ incarnate life (chapter 8).

Does *Resourcing Theological Anthropology* defend a robust Christological anthropology? This question is debatable. As Cortez admits himself, “Some will certainly disagree with the conclusions that I draw over the course of [these] discussions” (p.18), and with the complexity of issues involved in formulating a Christological anthropology, some readers are bound to push back at Cortez’s conclusions. For example, Cortez argues that Pilate’s reference to Jesus as “the man” (John. 19:5) was an unintended reference to “Jesus as the true human who comes to

inaugurate the reality of the new creation” (36), comparable to that of Caiaphas and his statement regarding the importance of Christ’s death. However, while Cortez provides adequate support for the renewed creation motif in John, many readers will not be convinced that his support proves a direct connection between Adam and Christ in the way Cortez needs to defend a Christological anthropology. Does Christ’s breathing upon the apostles in John 20:22 and its supposed allusion to the creation of Adam in Genesis 2:7 truly imply that Jesus is a new Adam (p.47)? The reader will have to decide for himself.

Another example where potential push-back is expected is the defense of the Incarnation Anyways position, or the concept that the Son would become incarnate regardless of humanity’s sin. While the Incarnation Anyways position has its proponents and arguments, Cortez does not reference passages such as 1 Peter 1:20 and Revelation 13:8, both of which correlate the incarnation with God’s eternal saving purposes. Would the incarnation happen without sin for man to be saved from? Furthermore, Romans 8:29-30 suggests that the conformance of man into the image of the Son is related to justification. Cortez does address Romans 8, stating that, “Although Paul introduces justification in the next verse, the basic idea of being conformed to the image of the Son does not seem to require the fall” (91), yet a biblical soteriology argues that man is justified by faith through redemption (redemption requires a fall) that came by Jesus Christ as defined in Romans 3:21-26, and this justification is inseparable from predestination as stated by Romans 8:30.

These contentions aside, *Resourcing Theological Anthropology* succeeds as a good reference text on the subject. Cortez documents and defends his views of the key issues regarding Christological anthropology, and having a discussion of these issues in one place will certainly benefit the student of theology. Readers will likely take special interest in the final three chapters, as they address some of the most important issues in modern American culture today, including race and gender. While conservative evangelicals will be uneasy with Cortez’s argument that “gender essentialism is not required for maintaining either a traditional sexual ethic or a complementarian view of church governance” (209), one can

appreciate Cortez's position regarding Jesus and race. Cortez concludes that Jesus "does not come to destroy Israel's identity but to reestablish it as an identity firmly grounded in God's covenant with them, and through them with the other peoples of the world" (233), a valuable reminder of Jesus as the Savior of all nations. On the other hand, this reviewer would have appreciated a greater discussion on the biblical and theological importance of Jesus' Jewishness in relation to prophecy and fulfillment.

Does Jesus reveal what it means to be truly human? While not every reader will answer "yes," every reader will certainly enjoy working through *Resourcing Theological Anthropology* and its address of the numerous issues involved in the difficult theological subset of Christological anthropology. The text would make an excellent text to serve as an introduction to and conversation-starter for discussion in a graduate class in theology.

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***The Making of a Battle Royal: The Rise of Liberalism in Northern Baptist Life 1870-1920.*** By Jeffery Paul Straub. Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications. 414 pp. \$48.00.

This work by Jeff Straub, originally written as his doctoral dissertation, has finally been published as part of the "Monographs in Baptist History" series under the Pickwick Publications imprint. Written in a clear and compelling style, this book traces the rise of theological liberalism in Northern Baptist life, focusing especially on the seminaries. Straub's main thesis is that liberalism was able to achieve such a "theological hegemony" in Northern Baptist life that "conscientious conservatives" had no choice but to separate if they wished to preserve an orthodox Baptist witness.

The book begins with a brief survey of American Unitarianism, which was the precursor to American liberalism.

Unitarianism sought a synthesis between Christian theology and Enlightenment philosophy, and was a very attractive option to religious intellectuals. Unitarian ideas infiltrated the Baptist denomination in the nineteenth century through men like Thomas Curtis, Crawford Toy, and Ezra Gould. However, their unorthodox views eventually cost each of these men their teaching posts. At this point Straub offers an insightful, if tragic, commentary on these early dismissals: “Though there were those who opposed their views for theological reasons, in the final analysis, financial considerations played a key factor in the departure of both Toy and Gould. However attractive the new views might have been, the fragile financial stability of Baptist education meant that the new views could prevail only when the constituency would not penalize the institutions by withholding financial resources” (p.89).

A new era of tolerance toward liberalism came between the years 1885–1900, when Northern Baptists showed a desire to replace their “specter of ignorance” with “intellectual respectability.” This led many Baptist intellectuals of the era to make their way to Europe, especially Germany, to receive advanced theological training from the leading thinkers of their age—men who also happened to be antisupernaturalists and higher critics. These Baptists then returned to America where they accepted teaching posts in Northern Baptist schools. Having learned from the mistakes of their predecessors, this new generation of Baptist liberals employed a more subtle strategy which allowed them to disseminate their views to sympathetic students while still managing to keep their schools’ all-important constituencies solidly behind them.

In the fourth chapter, Straub recounts another milestone in the rise of Baptist liberalism, which was the founding of the overtly liberal University of Chicago. Backed by the financial resources of John D. Rockefeller and led by the brilliant scholar William Rainey Harper, the University of Chicago Divinity School soon became the hub of liberal scholarship in Northern Baptist circles, and its graduates began populating the faculties of virtually every other Baptist seminary in the North.

By the early 1900s, liberalism had come to dominate Northern Baptist life. Liberals took control of the

denominational machinery through the newly formed Northern Baptist Convention and solidified their control of the seminaries through a new and bold generation of enthusiastic liberal seminary presidents and professors.

Straub's gift for storytelling keeps the reader engaged throughout the work as he offers both panoramic views of Northern Baptist life, as well as individual biographical sketches of key Northern Baptist leaders. His book also provides some important lessons for conservative Baptists today. First, Baptists who wish to maintain orthodoxy in their associations must be attentive to the direction of their training institutions. As the seminaries go, so go the churches. Second, being vigilant means paying attention to the *actual meaning* of a professor's lectures and writings, not just to the vocabulary he employs. Many early liberals were able to spread their views by assigning new definitions to old terms. They were especially adept at protecting themselves through revised definitions of "freedom" and "soul liberty." Third, orthodox Baptists must beware of the power of money to turn an institution. Concerns about donations, tuition from enrollment, etc., can provide impetus for a school to maintain its orthodoxy, as it did when liberalism first began infiltrating the Baptist denomination; under different circumstances. However, financial considerations can actually hasten a school's theological drift, as seen in the years following the formation of the Northern Baptist Convention.

In conclusion, Jeff Straub's latest project is both a gift to the church and essential reading for any orthodox Baptist in the North who wants to understand his denomination's history, and who wants to avoid seeing that history repeated.

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***The Devil's Redemption. A New History and Interpretation of Christian Universalism.*** By Michael J. McClymond. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2018. 2 volumes, 1,325 pp. \$90.00.

The author of this important, massive research project, Michael J. McClymond, is Professor of Modern Christianity at Saint Louis University, St. Louis, Missouri. He has held several teaching and research appointments in the past. McClymond has written award-winning books on Jesus and on the theology of Jonathan Edwards and has co-edited and co-authored two other books.

Any attempt to review this well-written book by skimming through its contents will be thwarted at the start. Even staying away from the footnotes is difficult. McClymond has painted a picture of the concept of Christian universalism with one brush that is so broad that it draws in an abundance of non-Christian sources and influences, but also another fine brush that details both positive and negative analyses of every highlighted individual in the picture. One of the reasons for the length of the book is that he analyzes in such great detail the positions of each character.

As McClymond demonstrates, the subject of his book is not so much Christian universalism, but rather Christian universalisms. Consequently, research in this subject requires more than omnivorous reading. It also requires knowledge of over two thousand years of history, patristics, exegesis, theology, and the intricacies of textual analysis. Some critics have complained that McClymond is a specialist in Edwardian theology, and that he relied on too many secondary sources in the writing of this book. A careful reading of the book, especially the footnotes, will reveal that, although McClymond may not have read all the sources in their original languages, his reading of the writings of the characters he introduces was extensive.

The variety of Christian universalism McClymond investigates claims that all intelligent creatures – including, in many cases, demons and Satan - will ultimately believe, repent and turn back to God. In addition to examining the writings of familiar and little-known theologians, he traces these ideas through gnostic, Kabbalistic, and esoteric traditions,

demonstrating how these traditions were influential in the development of various universalistic trends in the development of Christianity.

An amazing array of “sources” of universalist thinking is paraded across the pages of this carefully reasoned book. Platonic concepts of body and soul; theories of human separation from the divine and eventual reintegration visions, dreams, angelic encounters, and out-of-body experiences; selective use – and abuse - of Scripture, philosophical and emotional antipathy toward the concept of eternal punishment, and fixation upon one aspect of God: His love; all of these have served to justify a “hope” of universal salvation.

Another book with which this one could be compared is that of Ilaria L. E. Ramelli entitled *The Christian Doctrine of Apokatastasis* (Brill, 2013). Both authors began their research with a careful analysis of the extant writings of the earliest Christian commentators and theologians. That is the area of research in which Ramelli has been celebrated. Ramelli apparently plans to explore areas already included in McClymond’s book in additional publications.

*Apokatastasis* is the Greek word occurring in Acts 3:21 that describes a restoration of all things. It was sometimes used to describe a future time or state in which all those who had been separated from God would be returned to him. This doctrine was built upon several ancient philosophies and belief systems antedating Origen, but it was Origen’s championing of this universalist doctrine, among other things, that led to the condemnation of his doctrine, and the interesting thought that he should be read for his exegesis but not his theology.

McClymond’s review of Ramelli’s work and her response were both published in the journal *Theological Studies*, in 2015, and they are well worth reading. McClymond expressed concern that Ramelli put too positive a spin on the writings of Origen and the reception of his theology in the early church. Her response is that hers is a work “of historical theology and patristic philosophy” not aimed at “defending or refuting apokatastasis.” What she did accomplish, from her perspective, was to demonstrate “how the apokatastasis doctrine is biblically, philosophically, and especially christologically grounded in its

patristic supporters” (“Reply to Professor Michael McClymond,” *Theological Studies*, 76, no. 4 [2015]: 833).

While Ramelli’s work has been criticized because she apparently found the universalism in the early church she was looking for, McClymond states clearly at the beginning of his work that his book is “not an argument for universalism.” Rather, through his study he acknowledges that most Christian believers since the beginning of Christianity have been particularists; that is, those who believe that those who have believed in Jesus Christ as their Savior will be saved to live with God forever, and that others will be lost and not restored to God.

McClymond sees universalism as an “eclipse” of the reality of God’s grace. As Christian universalism developed, its proponents in their “eschatology” corrupted the biblical pictures of the persons of the Trinity. By claiming that God is less than the God of the Bible, or that man is more than the sinner he is, the honor of the sovereign Creator God, the sinfulness of sin, and the gracious act of God in the sacrifice of his Son becomes meaningless. There would have been no need for Christ to have come to die for human’s sins if everyone will ultimately be saved and restored to God by fiat, or if through suffering in the afterlife “they expiate their own sins.” At a time when pastors and teachers are preaching and writing books banishing hell and punishment in the name, but in defiance of the character, of God, teachers and students of the Word of God must be aware of these perversions.

Although McClymond has carefully explained what the influences were, care should be taken on the part of the reader to evaluate the degree to which the cultural milieu of each theologian mentioned influenced the development of that individual’s form of universalism. Also, the reader should be prepared to see some key individuals such as Origen, Böhme, von Balthasar, and Barth frequently referred to in the introduction, the historical development, and the conclusion of the work. At times this seems excessive, but often the repetition is based upon McClymond’s later expansion of his early overview of the history of Christian universalism, and his comparisons of the teachings of later characters with their predecessors.

The book ends with a helpful summary of his conclusions, and twelve interesting appendices. Among the most useful of these are essays on universal salvation in Islamic teaching; words and concepts for time and eternity [dealing with Ramelli and David Konstan's view of the words *aionios* and *aidios*]; McClymond's review of Ramelli's book; types of Christian universalism; and Mormon teachings on God, cosmos, and salvation. Dispensationalists will want to critically examine Appendix I dealing with Zender's "Ultra-dispensational universalism." There is a bibliography of nearly 100 pages, and several useful indices.

Because of the breadth and depth of McClymond's research, his careful analysis of the teachings of those who have championed the multitude of universalisms since the beginning of the church, his own biblical position on the issues involved, and the relevance of his study to the trends in Christian and non-Christian circles today, this book is a valuable reference work. It is recommended reading for professors of theology, especially historical theology; for graduate students of religion, philosophy, and apologetics; and for any intelligent Christian who would like to understand why so many writers of the past and present have chosen to promote a form of universalism.

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***Christianity Considered: A Guide For Skeptics And Seekers.*** By John M. Frame. Bellingham, WA: Lexham, 2018. 140 pages.

John Frame is the retired J. D. Trimble Chair of Systematic Theology and Philosophy at Reformed Theological Seminary. His book *Christianity Considered* is a short delightful work on the basics of the Christian faith. Frame writes with the ultimate aim of seeing people come to Christ. He writes in the preface, "And so I begin this venture in the prayer that the Spirit will accompany this book to plant the truth of the gospel deep in the hearts of my readers" (xvi). Frame aims to do this by using the

methodology of the “Van Tillian presuppositional school” (xiii), which Frame argues has little evangelistic material in print.

*Christianity Considered* contains several notable strengths. One of the most attractive aspects of the book, especially given its purpose, is its simplicity and brevity. Frame has certainly done extensive philosophical and theological work, most notably with his four-volume *A Theology of Lordship* series, his *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Christian Belief* (2013), and his *A History of Western Philosophy and Theology* (2015). However, in *Christianity Considered* he uses his experience to put together a basic, but comprehensive survey of the Christian faith as an apologetic. The book consists of twenty-nine chapters, most of which are only two to four pages. Following his Van Tillian approach, the initial five chapters “discuss the nature of knowledge” (xiv). The following chapters survey the basics of the Christian faith and its relationship to other disciplines, including a study of the gospel message but also moral theory, politics, science, and many more. This, along with Frame’s deliberate avoidance of jargon (xiv) results in a work where unbelievers can understand the basics of the Christian faith presented in a compelling way.

A second strength is the book’s emphasis on the biblical text. Frame uses many philosophical arguments (his primary vocation being a philosopher, [xiv]), but he saturates them with Scripture. The unbeliever cannot walk away from the book without exposure to the life-transforming message of the word of God.

A third strength is the book’s evangelistic objective. While the arguments of the book are primarily “thinking” arguments, Frame uses his perspectival framework and points out that decisions are made using thinking, the will, and feeling (27). Such arguments are never written apart from Frame’s desire for his unbelieving readers to turn to Christ (114).

A final strength is the book’s usefulness as a resource to help believers understand the doctrines of the Christian faith. The simple and brief chapters allow quick review for the Christian who wants to brush up on the basics of a particular doctrine. These chapters also serve to remind the believer what is essential to the faith instead of being caught up with tertiary issues.

*Christianity Considered* does not have many weaknesses. However, there are two things to keep in mind, especially as one considers giving the book to an unbeliever. First, while the core content of the book was very accessible for the unbeliever, the preface was less so. An unbeliever would likely be confused by the discussion of the “Van Tillian presuppositional school,” as well as Frame’s reasons for needing to start his discussion of apologetics with presuppositions (xiv). I found the Preface helpful but wonder about its value for the unbeliever. Second, Baptists using this book as an evangelistic tool will need to talk with unbelievers about baptism because of Frame’s position on infant baptism (90). This should not keep Baptists from using the book but should simply be noted as a topic of discussion with unbelievers.

*Christianity Considered* was a true pleasure to read and others should take the time to read it and to give it to those inquiring into Christianity, with the hope that it will help them to see their need for Christ. Christians can also benefit from the clear Christian perspective on the central doctrines of the faith.

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***Apologetics at the Cross: An Introduction for Christian Witness.***

By Joshua D. Chatraw and Mark D. Allen. Grand Rapids:  
Zondervan, 2018. 329 pp. Hardback \$34.99.

Dr. Joshua Chartraw (executive director of the Center for Apologetics and Cultural Engagement, an associate professor of apologetics and theology at Liberty University) and Dr. Mark Allen (Professor and Chair of Biblical Studies in the Rawlings School of Divinity at Liberty University) have recently released their work, *Apologetics at the Cross: An Introduction for Christian Witness*. The book is exclusive writing about apologetics and consists of three main parts that which deals with the three different facets of apologetics. The first part of the book is the part that talks or builds the foundation for the Christian

Apologetics, and the authors build the foundation on biblical data and historical data. The second part of the book is about the methodology or theological structure of apologetics. The authors primarily have introduced the biblical attitudes of apologetical methodology. The third part of the book is the practical aspect of the apologetics, which deals practically provides an answer to the various questions and issues.

The book is a strong representative of presenting the gospel in the practice and work of apologetics. The practice of apologetics in the church today has shifted its emphasis from the prime focus of the gospel towards other things to target various other dimensions, like defending the belief and answering the critique, rather than focusing on the central theme of Christian apologetics, which is the gospel message. Therefore, having the foundation built on the basis of biblical data and historical data, the book moves into the structure of the apologetics, and further the practice of apologetics. And as the structure and practice of apologetics are dealt with in the book, the authors are more focused on the gospel-centered attitude of the apologetics than the mere arguments. They are not strictly advocating any certain particular discipline of apologetics, but instead militant about the higher cause of the apologetics. Therefore, the purpose of the book is to address the core purpose of the apologetics which it to be the channel for witnessing Christ.

The book is very appreciable and rich in the perspective that it holds. It does not propose any particular methodology of the apologetics; instead, it has opened itself to be integrated to the various disciplines or methodologies. Another important aspect to really appreciate in the book is the concept of the church in the practice of apologetics. Today people and the church tend to assume that the work of apologetics belongs to institutions and individuals while ignoring that the church has the primary and greater responsibility in doing apologetics.

This book is definitely written for the people who have started their interest or are practicing the Christian apologetics. This is obviously not written for a new mind in apologetics but it is for the ones who have knowledge about the apologetics and naturally find it hard to decide over certain issues while struggling to decide in making a noble choice in apologetics.

The book has a great value of the contribution to the apologetical study. And this should be a must pick for the pastors and serious students of apologetics. To understand the greater purpose behind the practice of apologetics and to educate our minds in not being too narrow or closed with a certain particular methodology.

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***Prayer: How Praying Together Shapes the Church.*** By John Onwuchekwa. Wheaton: Crossway, 2018. 137 pp. Hardback \$14.99.

In his book *Prayer: How Praying Together Shapes the Church*, author John Onwuchekwa calls the church back to simple and powerful prayer, addressing both the importance of individual prayer and corporate prayer. Onwuchekwa argues that many churches simply do not know how to pray together. However, by God's grace, private prayer can be more powerful and so can corporate prayers. Though the book is brief at just 8 chapters, it is biblically and theologically rich. It is hope-giving, inspiring, specific, and practical.

The first five chapters deal with the defining of prayer and the problem of prayerlessness (17). The author uses the elementary approach in explaining what prayer is. When prayer is present, it teaches the church that we really need the Lord (19). The actual thought in this book is about prayer in the life of the church; when it comes to corporate prayer, what do the churches need (24)? He says that praying should be like breathing: Breathing regularly is what keeps the human life alive and going. When we do not breathe at all, we are dead. Therefore, we must follow the constant life of prayer: "Pray without ceasing" (1 Thessalonians 5:17) (27). Just like daily breathing keeps the body alive, praying without ceasing, or being in a daily habit of prayer, keeps the believer alive. No prayer, no contact with the Lord. No breathing, humans are not alive.

Praying is having a daily conversation with God (33). It has been said that prayer is two people entering a meaningful discussion. Prayer is not demanding something from God; prayer

is aligning our will with God's will. True prayer is some combination of all these things (30-31). Like a prescription, prayer eases our concerns before repairing our circumstances (36). As Jesus teaches us to pray, he does not begin by teaching us how to ask. He teaches us what to ask for. He gives us our priorities before he gives the process (40). The author then uses the Lord's Prayer in his discussion on how to pray (43-49). Our self-centeredness is like gravity; it pulls us down. Jesus is teaching the disciples and us to aim higher. He wants our prayers to soar (51). The Lord's Prayer also outlines our provision, our pardon, and protection (57-58). Prayer begins with a longing for God. Prayers are our roots. The author also says that prayer should be family led, using the Lord's Prayer as an example (39). In chapter five, the author deals with the root of prayer and that it is family initiated (65).

The final chapters (chapter 6-8) deal with corporate praying and prayers. The early church was powerful because they all prayed together. The author, as a pastor and writer, uses many illustrations from his own experience and the church's experience. For example, the author then states that the corporate prayer is usually given by one person or the pastor, but this should not be so, for corporate worship is not a spectator sport. It is where all of us worship; no one is a spectator. Here the author uses the acronym ACTS (79-87). He states that it is Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, and Intercession or Supplication. The author believes there should be not just one prayer in corporate worship, but at least four prayers following the acronym: four different people leading a prayer throughout the service. This way the worshipers would be guided to avoid at least five temptations and get the worshiper involved in the service and not a spectator only. Each one who prays needs to have their prayer written out (87). The author also stresses the importance of the prayer meeting. The author states that churches need the following steps: (1) Schedule a prayer meeting; (2) remove anything that would compete for people's time; (3) begin the work; and (4) populate the prayer list primarily with kingdom, whole body, and major life concerns (99-100).

I found this book to be easy to read and one that could not be put down. I found many facts that were a refreshment of prayer

for me. The book is easy to use. Anyone who is interested in prayer should get this book. I highly recommend this book to everyone.

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*Sing!* By Keith and Kristyn Getty. Nashville: B & H Publishing Group, 2017. 149 pages. \$12.99.

Over the last 15 years Keith and Kristyn Getty have risen to the forefront as leaders in the resurgence of congregational singing in churches around the world. Their commitment to writing songs that are theologically rich, singable and accessible to the average church attender resonates with many pastors and musicians.

*Sing!* is another important contribution from the Gettys. The accolades from 35 noted pastors, theologians and musicians support the value of the book. The timing of its release was in part in honor of the 500th anniversary of Martin Luther's contribution to the "reformation" of the church through the preaching and the singing of the Word (p. xxiii) as well as to coincide with their inaugural SING! conference.

For those who sincerely wonder why all this fuss about congregational singing, for those who love to sing in corporate worship in the church, for the ones who lead the musical worship in churches, and for the pastors who preach the Word each week, this book must be read. It is succinctly written, so the reader gets a lot of helpful information in a relatively short read. The authors recommend three ways on how to use the book: (1) A 6-week churchwide campaign, (2) in a book club or group, and (3) among leaders and among choirs and music groups (pp. xvii-xviii). Personally, I have gone through it in a one-on-one study with a music leader in our church, gave our pastor a copy to read, and distributed free copies to those interested in our church.

The Gettys identify five key aims for their book: (1) To discover why we sing and the overwhelming joy and holy privilege that comes with singing; (2) To consider how singing impacts our hearts and minds and all our lives; (3) To cultivate a

culture of family singing in our daily home life; (4) To equip our churches for wholeheartedly singing to the Lord and one another as an expression of unity; (5) To inspire us to see congregational singing as a radical witness to the world (xxiv).

The book has seven main chapters as well as a Prelude and Postlude (a great musical touch!). In the Prelude the authors make the point that churches need to be willing to talk more about this important question, “How did the congregation sing?” (xx). *Sing!* certainly gives direction in discussing this question. The authors are also clear in their Prelude that they intend to be practical, but not prescriptive in their writing (p. xxv).

Chapter 1 develops the truth that “we are a singing people because it is how God has created us” (p. 1). The Gettys encourage those who do not think they can sing by noting that God is “far less concerned with your tunefulness than your integrity” since “Christian singing begins with the heart, not on the lips” (3). In chapter 2, the Gettys establish that we are commanded to sing. The probing question is asked, “How could we ever think we can be passive about singing?” (20). In chapter 3, the Gettys argue that, because of the gospel, we are compelled to sing. The authors develop the important teaching that worship, and singing in worship, is a response to the revelation that we have been given by God (26). Therefore, just as God’s people in biblical times responded to God’s truth with singing, and just as God’s people for eternity will sing in response to God’s truth, so now “we are a people who, as we reflect on the gospel, cannot help but sing” (32).

In chapters 4-7, the Gettys seek to show how “Christ-filled, Spirit-prompted singing moves out in concentric circles changing your own heart and mind . . . changing your family . . . changing your church . . . and changing the world” (35). Chapter 4, “Sing! With Heart and Mind,” encourages individuals to consider how the music they listen to and sing shapes them. The authors encourage, “Give yourself good, deep, rich, gospel truth to feed on. You are what you sing” (52). Chapter 5 gives a practical application of Deuteronomy 6:5-7 by promoting singing with your family at home. Whether you have young children or teenagers in the home, help is given here for nurturing an appetite for singing (cf. p. 53). The ten practical ideas given for singing

in the home are a good resource (63-69). Following singing in the home, in chapter 6 the Gettys address what is really their main concern throughout the book: singing in local churches. Their perspective on singing and reclaiming the millennial generation will run counter to how many approach this issue, but I applaud their appeal to have a congregational approach to singing where we “sing together—across generations, standing side by side, putting community unity before personal preferences” (77-79). As we sing together, the authors challenge us in chapter 7 to consider the radical witness when congregations sing and how that should impact what we sing.

The Gettys conclude the main portion of their book with a Postlude that asks the question, “Will you sing? (97). I trust that our resounding answer is “Yes!”

Four excellent “Bonus Tracks” conclude end of their book to assist (1) pastors and elders, (2) worship and song leaders, (3) musicians, choirs, and production teams, and (4) songwriters and creatives with practical ideas regarding their role in encouraging and enabling congregational singing (103-142). I personally encourage pastors to give special thought to Bonus Track 1 related to your role in supporting the singing of the church.

As a music leader who has served in pastoral ministry for many years, I am grateful for *Sing!* and the contribution it makes to encouraging and informing our singing as believers in Christ.

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***Preaching with Cultural Intelligence: Understanding the People Who Hear Our Sermons.*** By Matthew D. Kim. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017. 269 pp. Paperback.

As a former pastor and presently associate professor of preaching and ministry at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, Matthew Kim is well qualified to author a book on how to more effectively engage a church audience. As a second generation Korean American, he is especially qualified to speak

to American preachers about cultural engagement. As he puts it, “preaching with cultural intelligence requires biblical exegesis and cultural exegesis” (xv). Though the idea of exegeting one’s audience is not new, Kim’s handling of the topic is filled with fresh insights and suggestions. For Kim, preaching with cultural intelligence is not only biblical (1 Cor 9:22), “it is vital to our proclamation lest we accept being dreadfully irrelevant” (9).

Kim’s purpose is “to offer a practical framework to help us become biblical as well as bridge-building preachers” (9). To this end, the book is divided into two main sections. The first, entitled “Cultural Intelligence in Theory,” lays out Kim’s homiletical approach in general but with a view to effective engagement. His “homiletical template” (chapter 2) consists of three “stages” (defined by three acronyms consisting of eighteen specific considerations) that deal sequentially with hermeneutics, “bridge-building,” and homiletics. However, only the hermeneutical step should be followed in its entirety, while the second and third steps “can be understood as a la carte practices” (13). As Kim explains, the approach he is advocating in no way distorts or otherwise modifies the biblical text (15). Indeed, he eschews the trend in modern culture toward individualistic, reader-response approaches that bypass original meaning for personal “relevance” (33).

Though much of the material presented in these introductory chapters is standard hermeneutical and homiletical fare from an evangelical inerrantist perspective, Kim proposes a “new hermeneutical paradigm” he terms “the authorial-cultural model of biblical interpretation” (37). This model “underscores the importance of the biblical author’s culture and then progresses toward understanding contemporary cultures in the pews.” This emphasis is incorporated into the hermeneutical stage of his homiletical template along with historical, grammatical and literary considerations (39–44). Finally, to enable greater effectiveness in enhancing one’s cultural intelligence he advocates the creation of a personal timeline to identify life-defining moments. He then exhorts us to journal more extensively about those moments as a means of ferreting out “the sinful, destructive attitudes that we internalize about others” as

well as personal pains that unconsciously prejudice our presentation of the word (54–60).

The second section, which is the bulk of the book, is entitled “Cultural Intelligence in Practice.” Here Kim devotes attention to considerations of the hearer’s denominational background, ethnicity, gender, geographical location, and religious affiliation. With each topic he works through his eighteen–point homiletical template by means of a text he has chosen for each cultural consideration. Depending upon the reader’s current situation, certain chapters will resonate more than others. For this reviewer, who lives among and ministers to a fairly homogenous Caucasian congregation, the chapter on “Preaching and Genders” was the most helpful. For those who minister in a more urban or cross-cultural environment the chapters on ethnicities, locations, and religions may provide greater usefulness.

Because of Kim’s desire to work through most if not all his eighteen considerations with each text and situation, the treatments contain a great deal of analysis and provocative questions, which are by and large very helpful. However, I wish he had provided a summary section at the end of each of these chapters to highlight the major points he has made as a means of facilitating the usefulness of the book. I also appreciate his citation of many and varied sources for specific points that serve as a sort of annotated bibliography for the reader who desires to investigate a area more thoroughly.

A relatively minor quibble I would have is his exhortation that to speak more effectively to both genders the preacher needs to find “a greater balance between male and female attributes of God,” especially for those females in our audience who have suffered abuse of some kind at the hands of a male figure (143). But this sort of appeal smacks of an egalitarianism that ignores the overwhelming emphasis of Scripture on the Fatherhood of God. Rather than seeking a virtually non-existent “balance,” I would advocate for a biblically and theologically robust presentation of what true male leadership should look like as a corrective to any flawed perceptions of God’s fatherliness.

In summary, I would highly recommend this book to any preacher or missionary. It could also serve admirably as a

primary or supplemental text for a homiletics class, especially for students who are Caucasian American males such as myself!

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*Treating Trauma in Christian Counseling.* Ed. H. D. Gingrich. & F. C. Gingrich. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic., 2017. 487 pages. \$55.00.

*Treating Trauma in Christian Counseling* is a graduate-level text ideal for primary use in a crisis counseling course or as a reference tool for the counseling practitioner. Researchers in the area of trauma counseling will also find this volume helpful in pointing to primary sources worthy of consideration.

While tempting to skip the introduction in a volume so thick, this valuable chapter lays out helpful definitions, the content of the book, and acknowledges what the editors are not trying to accomplish. There is a plethora of information available on trauma and counseling. What makes this volume unique is how the research and treatment presented is filtered through a Christian worldview. The authors are not afraid to acknowledge and wrestle with the Bible's unique theology of suffering while considering other philosophical and theoretical considerations.

For the Christian counselor, student, or professor interested in biblical counseling, perhaps a weakness of the book is the survey approach to each topic covered. In truth, it would be impossible to dig deeply into each verse and theological application without turning this resource into a multi-volume set. Rather, this volume dedicates a chapter to the main topics in trauma counseling and whets the appetite of the reader to pursue more information on their own while providing a list of resources from which to glean more information. Chapter and verse relevant to each topic should be pursued by the reader further.

*Treating Trauma* makes some assumptions about the basic knowledge of the reader. It is clear there is an expectation that basic counseling theories are to be known and understood by the reader if not tried in practice. It may be helpful for students to

read with a dictionary at the ready and if assigned for a class, for the professor to make sure students are tracking with the fundamental information and greater context of each chapter. This book is scholarly and meant to be digested a chapter at a time, not read on a Saturday afternoon at the beach. Also, because the topic is trauma, the reader may find it helpful to take an emotional break from the material and allow time for proper integration of information. Since each chapter is clearly titled by content, one may choose to focus on areas of interest rather than reading cover to cover. This reviewer does recommend that Part One: Foundational Perspectives on Trauma be read before moving on to specific areas of interest.

In some cases conclusions are reached by the authors but in most instances, considerations are presented for further thought and research. Highly qualified academics, who more often than not are also practitioners, collaborate to give a thorough overview of each topic. It is helpful that current hot topics such as clergy abuse and military trauma are included.

In conclusion, this volume is a highly accessible and valuable resource for those whose main focus is trauma counseling or for those who need to develop at least a basic understanding of the special issues involved in trauma counseling.

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