Book Reviews

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Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs (The Story of God Bible Commentary). By George Athas. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2020. 400 pp. Hardcover $39.99.

The Story of God Bible Commentary series "hopes to help people, particularly clergy but also laypeople, read the Bible with understanding not only of its ancient meaning but also of its continuing significance for us today in the 21st century" (13). In this volume, Athas tackles the most difficult books of Wisdom Literature: Ecclesiastes and the Song of Songs.

For Ecclesiastes, Athas rejects Solomonic authorship, but holds to a son of David identity somewhere after the 586 BC exile (23) probably during the reign of Ptolemy III Euergetes (246–222 BC) (28). Although he sees Solomonic allusions in the first few chapters of the books, these merely represent "numerous kings of Judah and even some of the more opulent gentile kings of history" (22). Since, in Athas' view, the author is looking back at the 586 BC exile, Solomon cannot be the author: "if the author were actually trying to pass himself off as the real Solomon, … he does a terrible job" (22).

For Athas, the historical context is the key to understanding the book. The author of Ecclesiastes "is not just contemplating life in general, but life in a specific circumstance. This circumstance was, broadly, the era 'Before Christ' and, more narrowly, the error of Ptolemaic sway over Judea in the late 3rd century BC. We need to understand the circumstance in order to listen properly to what he (and the Epilogist) have to say" (36). Athas is certainly correct when commenting on 1:1 that, "Ecclesiastes is essentially the monologue of one man's search for the meaning of life in a particular historical circumstance" (50). However, it seems that if Athens' historical premise is incorrect, then his exposition of the text will be skewed as well.

Athas sees a different voice in chapter 12. While "the Epilogist agrees with Qohelet's grim assessment of life in Ptolemaic Jerusalem,…the Epilogist does not believe this will somehow rescue the nation, for, as Qohelet has shown, traditional wisdom does not have the power to achieve this. Instead, the Epilogist outlook is shaped by apocalyptic eschatology which looked to God for direct intervention in human affairs to rescue the Jewish nation from the cultural and historical abyss" (39). From here, Athas sees Israel

better prepared for the coming of Jesus. "When we see Qohelet's place in history and his bleak evaluation of life and hopes for the Jewish nation, we are in a far better position to appreciate the coming of Jesus…. And, as we will see, this gives us a far better appreciation of how Jesus' death and resurrection opens the gates of salvation to people from all nations" (39).

In dealing with the Song, Athas, once again, disregards the clearest and easiest reading of the text and rejects Solomonic authorship of the Song. Instead, he argues unconvincingly for an anonymous work (250). Interestingly, while Athas would disregard Solomon's authorship based on 1:1; he correctly sees the Song as a unity based on the singular use of "song" in the same verse (253).

Concerning dating, according to Athas, "If, as is likely, the Song is more than just an exploration of erotic love and conveys something of the relationship between Israel and her God, that it has the great resonance with the Antiochene persecution and the subsequent Maccabean Revolt (167–164 BC)" (252). Both his dating and allegorical reading are suspect and without textual support.

While recognizing the problem of classifying the Song as a narrative (254), Athas espouses an older and much abandoned 3-character view, the "Hollywood Love Triangle" of the female lover, her rustic shepherd lover and the scoundrel king Solomon. Expounding the white spaces of the Song, Athas observes that "[B]efore her time runs out, the woman decides to take the dramatic action of sleeping with her beloved shepherd as a means of dealing with the supreme injustice of being forced into Solomon's bed" by her conniving brothers (258). Thus, for Athas, "Sex,…, is potentially a subversive tool for the young couple—a means by which they can outflank Solomon before he has a chance to take the woman" (308). Readers recognize that this flies in the face of Torah and wouldn't be heralded as a legitimate strategy in Israel or be part of the story of life with God in the covenant community.

Not to give the ending away as to who wins the fair maiden, Athas surmises, "At the climax of the Song, Solomon arrives to claim the woman, but the shepherd also appears. The Song ends with the woman urging her beloved shepherd to flee. It implies a tragic end, but the abrupt finish means we never 'see' what happens to the woman or the shepherd. This provides enough ambiguity for

the reader to imagine various postscripts that might provide the woman and her shepherd some justice" (258).

Sadly, this volume falls short of reaching its intended goal of helping our present culture understand or apply the meaning or significance of Ecclesiastes and the Song to our lives today. This is unfortunate for the message of these books is much needed today.

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John 13–21 (Reformation Commentary on Scripture). Edited by Christopher Boyd Brown. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2021. 384 pp. Hardcover $60.00; Digital (Kindle) $59.99.

A number of years ago, InterVarsity Press published a commentary series titled *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture*. One of the aims of that series was to make accessible what various leaders and teachers of the early church taught on various books of the Bible. Similarly, the *Reformation Commentary Series* attempts to make accessible what the many and varied voices of the Reformation era had to say on the books of the Bible. The volume at hand is Volume 5 in the series covering *John 13–21* (the second of two volumes treating the Fourth Gospel). The author and editor of this volume is Christopher Boyd Brown (Associate Professor of Church History at Boston University School of Theology). He has published numerous articles and books on subject matters pertaining to the Reformation era with special interest and expertise on Martin Luther, thus making this subject matter right within his wheelhouse.

The commentary series expressly states its fourfold goal: 1) Renewing contemporary biblical interpretation, 2) Strengthening contemporary preaching, 3) Deepening understanding of the Reformation, and 4) Advancing Christian scholarship. After having read it, I am confident that the series will achieve each of these goals. On a personal level, I have made multiple notations that I intend to use in my own teaching and preaching. In addition, it has

given me a better grasp of various issues as well as a greater appreciation for the complexities involved during those times.

The Table of Contents gives a snapshot of fourteen distinct sections, but the reader can easily discern that these naturally fall into three main parts: 1) Frontmatter, 2) Commentary proper, and 3) Backmatter. The Frontmatter consists of four pages of *Acknowledgements, Abbreviations,* and *A Guide to Using This Commentary,* plus a 24-page *General Introduction.* The Backmatter, which is 106 pages (nearly one-third of the book), offers several useful reference tools, which one could argue is worth the price of the book itself. First, there is a one-page map of how cartographers would have viewed the way Europe was partitioned at that time. Second, there is 12-page *Timeline of the Reformation*. On the y-axis are the years beginning with 1309–1377 (on the top left entry on first page) with approximately fifteen rows of year-markers per page until the very last entry of 1691 (on the last page). Across the x-axis are the names of countries where various events occurred (viz., *German Territories, France, Spain, Italy, Switzerland, Netherlands,* and *British Isles*). The next section—which I found to be highly valuable and helpful—is the *Biographical Sketches of Reformation-Era Figures and Works*. Although it is 73-pages in length, I consider it to be a master of brevity yet amazing in detail and coverage. By my count there are over 400 different biographical sketches (probably closer to 420). The remaining material that finishes out the backmatter are two bibliographies (i.e., *Sources for the Biographical Sketches*, and a general *Bibliography* of the Reformer's source material), and three Scripture Indices (*Author and Writing Index, Subject Index,* and *Scripture Index*).

The Commentary proper consists of an *Introduction to John 13–21* (11 pages) and then 225 pages of commentary from the works of carefully selected Reformers covering progressive passages throughout the second half of the Fourth Gospel. Each chapter of the biblical text is treated somewhere between two to four pericopes in a two-columns-per-page layout. For example, the 38 verses of John 13 are divided as follows: verses 1–11, 12–20, and 21–38. At the beginning of each of these subdivisions, the editor provides a brief overview of the sometimes-differing perspectives of the Reformers selected for comment for that pericope. The commentary selections vary in length. Perhaps it would be safe to say that the

customary length of commentary would be a paragraph, or about half a one column. But there are more than a few occasions where the comments span more than a column (Johann Wild, Wolfgang Musculus, Martin Luther, John Calvin, et al.).

Since the selections for this commentary are drawn from the Reformation era, it is to be expected that one would find many references to such things as the Catholic Church, papal authority, conformity and non-conformity, church councils, etc. There is also an uneven attention to interpretive method as evidenced by the Reformers, if one judges only by the selections provided. To be sure, the Reformers, as a whole, demonstrate a commitment to the grammatical-historical method, but there are nonetheless examples of allegory and spiritualization as well. The widest diversity of commentary treatment occurs in the Upper Room Discourse section (i.e., chapters 14–17) more so than in the passion narrative (chapters 18–19).

There are many reasons to recommend this commentary. Besides the four goals identified at the beginning of this review, I believe it also encourages humility among today's exegetes. After reading this volume, a phrase from Hebrews 12:1 resonates in my mind: We are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses. Name after name after name, followed by one earned degree after another, urges one to step back and take note of such great intellectual minds and even greater spiritual fervor for our Lord and his Word. While this *Reformation Commentary on Scripture* in no way competes with modern commentaries on the Gospel of John, I view it as a splendid complement to the rich resources available to the serious student of Scripture.

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Signs of the Messiah: An Introduction to John's Gospel. By Andreas J. Köstenberger. Bellingham, WA: Lexham, 2021. 200 pp. Hardcover $27.99.

The respected evangelical scholar Andreas Köstenberger has given us in *Signs of the Messiah* an extremely helpful introduction to the Gospel of John. Köstenberger serves as research professor of New Testament and biblical theology and director of the Center for Biblical Studies at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. Throughout the book, he cites his other works in Johannine theology where the reader can dive deeper into questions they may have as they study the issues of John's Gospel. This also shows that he is eminently qualified to write such an introductory work on this important presentation of the life and work of Jesus.

The overall purpose of the book is to walk the reader "step by step through John's unfolding narrative of Jesus the Messiah and Son of God" (3). As a by-product, it is Köstenberger's desire that readers will come to believe in Jesus and have abundant life. After the short introductory section, he divides his discussion of the Gospel into three parts:

- Part 1 – Authorship, Prologue, and Cana Cycle (John 1–4)
- Part 2 – The Festival Cycle (John 5–10)
- Part 3 – Conclusion to the Book of Signs (John 11–12) and Book of Exaltation (John 13–21)

In presenting this material, he follows the often-used approach of a two-section understanding of John's Gospel: First, the Book of Signs composed of the Cana Cycle, the Festival Cycle, and the Raising of Lazarus; and second, the Book of Exaltation given in chapters 13–21 with Jesus' preparation of his disciples, the Passion narrative and epilogue. The Cana Cycle derives its name from the fact that the first and last of three signs occurs in Cana. The Festival Cycle derives its name from the fact that there is a focus on Jewish festivals during this part of the Gospel. According to the author, the seven signs are the following:

1	Turning water into wine at the Cana wedding (2:1–12)	Three Signs in the Cana Cycle
2	Clearing the temple in Jerusalem (2:13–22)	
3	Healing the gentile centurion's son (4:46–54)	
4	Healing the lame man in Jerusalem (5:1–15)	Three Signs in the Festival Cycle
5	Feeding the five thousand in Galilee (6:1–15)	
6	Healing the man born blind (9)	
7	Raising of Lazarus (11)	

While presenting this material, Köstenberger does not fail to address other elements within the text such as Jesus' conversations with Nicodemus and the Samaritan woman (3–4). In addition, before he gets to the actual details of the Cana Cycle, he reviews the authorship of John's Gospel and gives an overview of the prologue. As a solid conservative he deftly defends the truth that the Apostle John, the disciple whom Jesus loved, authored the Gospel that bears his name. Köstenberger relies mostly upon internal evidence although he also deals with external evidence from later church history. One telling comment in a footnote reveals his desire to distance himself from those scholars who call the author the "Fourth Evangelist" due to their rejection of Johannine authorship (68).

There are many commendations that could be mentioned for this work of which only a few can be given here. First, there is a writing style that possesses great readability. Explanatory value exists not just for other scholars and pastors but also for the well-read layperson who has never been to seminary. The addition of many outline charts scattered throughout the book assist in bringing clarity to the reader. Second, *Signs of the Messiah* customarily yields accurate analysis. The writer is text-driven in his approach. Even where this reviewer disagrees, it can be acknowledged that Köstenberger is honestly trying to present the text as God gave it through John the Apostle. One specific example is the clear handling of the central question of John's Gospel, the very purpose of the writing of it, that men would believe (John 20:30–31). He does not just state this early on but

comes back to it throughout the work faithfully unfolding its significance (e.g., 127). In addition, the author shows accuracy when he lets the nature of the time markers in John's Gospel prevent him from adopting other scholars' understanding that there was only one cleansing of the temple in Jesus' life. Instead, he sees John describing an event where Jesus clears the temple (John 2:13–22) that was earlier in time than a similar event described in the Synoptics (37). The ability to avoid conflation and reduction by just following the text is refreshing.

Along this line, the author from time to time points out differences with the Synoptics (69, 91, 128) without overpowering his main thrust within John's Gospel. Of particular interest is the focus of John on life in contrast to the emphasis on kingdom found in the Synoptics. Finally, with respect to accuracy, Köstenberger occasionally shows breadth of theological integration when he rebuts the New Perspective on Paul with its refusal to accept first-century Jews as legalistic. That some Jewish people were legalistic is surely established by passages such as John 6:28–30 and others as the author points out. However, he does so in a footnote. Readers must read the notes, because they list good resources for further study and also due to the fact that explanatory information can be found that is theologically valuable.

A couple of other positive qualities must be pointed out. *Signs of the Messiah* regularly makes practical application to everyday life. A couple of examples will suffice. First, Köstenberger takes the delay of Jesus is going to heal Lazarus as an indication that delay for believers in getting their prayers answered is not a sign that God does not care (124–25). A second example is the application he makes upon reviewing the footwashing by Jesus in John 13: "Leadership is not about self-promotion. It's not about building our own platform, peddling our own wares, or recruiting others to serve our own agenda. It's about seizing upon existing, real needs and rising to meet them even if it is inconvenient or causes us to get our hands dirty" (147). He also occasionally makes application to preaching as he does when he makes a couple of suggestions on how to divide up the preaching texts from 2:23 to the end of chapter 4 (48).

In spite of the many positive qualities there are a few areas that cause concern. First, a traditional dispensationalist like this reviewer will naturally not follow the inaugurated eschatology that crops up

sometimes throughout the work. I do not find this, however, to distract from the overall contribution that is made. Second, there are some minor exegetical differences. In John 3:5, the author understands "born of water" based more on the cross reference to Ezekiel 36:25–27 rather than the more proximate statement in John 3:6 which promotes a natural birth understanding (50). In 3:14, in the analogy from Numbers in which Jesus is lifted up like the snake in the wilderness, Köstenberger takes the snake as a positive image (53). Certainly, the entire episode in Numbers and the cross work of Jesus, had an overall positive effect. However, that is a different matter than saying the serpent is a positive image. The serpent represented all that was wrong or evil. When on the cross, Jesus became sin for us. That sin was not a positive thing. What is positive, and Köstenberger does give us this, is that the way God used the serpent was the best thing that could happen—deliverance from sin. In another example, readers, depending on their view of textual criticism, might balk at the author's view that John 7:53–8:11, the pericope about the woman caught in adultery, is not in the text, a view held by most NT scholars (101–02). Perceptive readers might also ask why the temple clearing is one of the signs (29ff.). Perhaps more significant is the trifocal lens of history, literature and theology that is part of his stated hermeneutical practice (9–10). While a potential concern exists that the Bible text will be diminished in this scenario, that conclusion does not seem to work itself out in Köstenberger's commentary. Even when he invokes extra-biblical literature like the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* to help understand the forms of farewell addresses (140–41), there does not seem to be a reading into the text of such extra-biblical forms.

One other issue is perhaps one of style. The book ends rather abruptly in the estimation of this reviewer. I was asking for more when I made it to the last page. Perhaps that was because of the positive quality of the rest of the book. Disagreements aside, I recommend this book to pastors. It is a resource that helps to unlock the structure of the wonderful Gospel of John.

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Theology is for Preaching: Biblical Foundations, Method, and Practice. Edited by Chase R. Kuhn and Paul Grimmond. Bellingham, WA: Lexham, 2021. 416 pp. Softcover $29.99.

A theologically rich sermon disconnected from the biblical text runs the risk of highlighting only the preacher's hobby horse interests. Sadly, we have all heard and perhaps preached sermons that divert our listeners away from the Scripture text into the theological weeds of our personal preferences. Chase Kuhn and Paul Grimmond gather a collection of essays that strengthen the connection between theology and preaching. They encourage preachers to dive deep into theology in their preparation, to let theology rightly shape the interpretation of the biblical text, and to allow theology to shine in the explanation and application of the text in the sermon. The essays share a "reformed evangelical ministry" context with the majority of contributors writing from Australia (186). The essays reflect the biblical and missional commitments of Moore Theological College. The book will be most helpful to the preacher who shares the reformed, Christ-centered approach of the contributors but will help all preachers eager to strengthen their preaching.

Kuhn and Grimmond arrange the book into four main sections with a fifth section containing two brief sermon samples. Part 1 provides the Foundations with Methodology in Part 2, the longest section. Parts 3 and 4 are organized as Theology for Preaching and Preaching for Theology, overlapping categories that connect systematic theology with the practice of preaching. Kuhn's opening chapter provides guardrails for the essays. He argues "that preaching in its most biblically faithful form is deliberately theological" and places an emphasis on expositional preaching (1). The goal of a sermon is not the same as a theological lecture. The relationship of theology to preaching is summarized by Kuhn: "Theology does not hijack the sermon, but the sermon must be theologically informed" (13). The remainder of Part 1 continues with the theological underpinnings for preaching. Mark Thompson identifies the "word-saturated" ministry of Jesus (29). Sermons are not merely a pragmatic strategy for communication; "preaching reflects the character of God" (31). Claire Smith develops Peter Adam's classification of the New Testament terms for the ministry of the word. Timothy Ward uses the Second Helvetic Confession's language that "the preaching

of the word of God is the word of God" to show the submission of preaching to the Scriptures (54). Peter Ash identifies ordained ministers as the primary preachers in local church contexts.

Part 2 begins with David Starling's application of the hermeneutical circle to preaching. "We always, inescapably, approach the text from somewhere" (85). Paul House traces Paul's use of Scripture in 1 and 2 Corinthians to show Paul's "whole-canon approach" with application to the present-day church (98). A highlight of the book is Daniel Wu's combination of Christocentric and Christotelic interpretive methods. Rather than adopt an either-or juxtaposition, Wu develops Christocentric and Christotelic methods as "corresponding, but deeply connected aspects of the hermeneutical spiral" (119). The Christotelic wrestles with the text in its original context while the Christocentric reminds readers that every text is "*ultimately* Christological" (117). Even if Wu's arguments leave the reader unconvinced, his tone is a model for hermeneutical debate.

Part 2 also offers Peter Orr's reminder that Christ is active in the preaching of the word as the Spirit applies the gospel to the lives of listeners. Will Timmins identifies the dangers of "worldly wise speech" from 1 Corinthians so that the preacher remembers that it is "God's agency, not the preacher's, which is decisive in persuading the audience of the gospel message" (149). Peter Adam's brief historical review focuses on Augustine and Calvin, and his "Twenty Features of Expository Preaching" are alone worth the price of the volume. He begins with the exhortation that "Expository preaching is sequential preaching, based on sequential reading, the obvious way to read a book!" (156). Graham Beynon warns against artifice as he encourages preachers to allow God to use their strengths and weaknesses.

Part 3 connects specific categories of systematic theology to preaching. Edward Loane identifies the importance of preaching as "an instrumental cause of salvation" (208). Andrew Leslie strengthens the preacher's understanding of a reformed perspective on sanctification. He maintains each Christian's responsibility while emphasizing God's grace. We must remember "the active role of the individual is entirely contained within and energized by a sovereign work of divine grace" (219). Peter Jensen sets preaching within the now/not yet framework of eschatology. David Peterson's liturgical recommendations are most applicable for Anglicans but will serve to

center the sermon in the worship service of any denominational tradition.

Part 4 offers three essays to tie the collection together. Simon Gillham entwines knowledge and transformation as mutually dependent. Jane Tooher turns the focus on listeners and offers practical suggestions for developing "ideal hearers" (277). Grimmond draws the theological threads together. He exhorts submission to the text and preaching to the heart. Part 5 offers sample sermons from Simon Manchester and Phillip Jensen along with their own reflections on the theological intentions within each sermon.

Theology is for Preaching does not highlight theology for theology's sake, but to draw "people into the Bible" (161). While some of the essays are theologically dense and require a careful reading, none of the essays are merely abstract. The goal is always to strengthen preaching so that it leads to transformation. The preacher with a reformed soteriology and expositional methodology will be the most fertile soil for the essays, but even a non-reformed preacher will glean meaningful lessons and the topical preacher will strengthen his preaching. The authors strengthen a Christ-centered ministry without ostracizing those who do not already share the same hermeneutical commitment. The essays flow with the pastoral warmth and the wisdom of seasoned preachers. We are not left in the ivory towers of academia but are drawn into the Scriptures themselves so that we can proclaim the gospel in the pulpits of our local churches. Kurn and Grimmond offer rich theological reflection that remains anchored in the local church. *Theology is for Preaching* is not a breezy how-to manual for preachers but offers something much more valuable in its deep theological reflections. Allow God to use the community of preachers, writing primarily from their Australian context, to strengthen your preaching ministry as you recommit to the authority of Scripture and the transformation of your hearers.

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The Logic of the Body: Retrieving Theological Psychology (Studies in Historical and Systematic Theology). By Matthew A. Lapine. Bellingham: Lexham, 2020. 416 pp. Softcover $19.69.

Matthew A. Lapine (Ph.D., Trinity Evangelical Divinity School) seek to reconcile the competing answers to negative human emotions that are offered from contemporary psychology and Christian theology (16). In seeking to forge a new path under the assumption that "any approach to psychology that does not account for how the body qualifies human emotions is inadequate" (19), he attempts to revise Reformed psychology which he believes "can gain empirical consistency and pastoral nuance by endorsing a genuinely holistic and tiered model of emotion, which is sensitive to how the body qualifies emotion" (19). He seeks to do this through examining the contributions of the theological psychology presented in the Middle Ages by Thomas Aquinas, of which he endorses as a plausible answer. Lapine's method seeks to reduce psychology, in the Latin sense of "to bring home" (20), into Christian theology, by descriptive and prescriptive means.

The first half of the book treats the psychology of Aquinas and Calvin while noting significant developments between the two. During these chapters the author seeks to introduce conceptual categories, compare and contrast the psychologies of Thomistic and Calvinistic thought, and provide an explanation of virtues disappearance from Calvin's psychology. The second half of the book moves to the contemporary scene since Calvin and then seeks to show how Thomistic-like dualism (like that of J. P. Moreland) can best account for embodied plasticity, showing the biblical warrant for holism and biblical agency with the assumed "possibility of conflict between body and mind as psychological principles, rather than body and souls as metaphysical ones" (27). He concludes with a Thomistic model of emotion influenced by neuroscience "to make sense of the relationship between body and cognition" regarding emotion (27).

This book was thoroughly researched but was highly technical. Terms such as moral valence, emotional voluntarism, SSRIs, and plasticity abound on the psychological side of the argument. From the theological side, a person lacking a background in Thomistic thought will struggle to make sense of much of the work, as it prefers to use terms such as "hylomorphic" instead of the more approachable terms

like "composite" (50) and refers to Galenic medicine throughout. The Thomistic-like dualism, which Lapine believes is a reasonable solution to the psychological situation that now exists, is a minority cosmological view among theologians since Augustine. Platonic dualism and/or substance dualism (like that espoused by Richard Swinburne) has tended to carry the conviction of contemporary evangelical philosophers and theologians and is even present in the thought of Catholicism's leading theologian of this century, Joseph Ratzinger, though this is changing.[1] It seems that, for Lapine's argument to gain traction, there must multiple preliminary discussions that are offered in an accessible format.

Lapine's work has a legitimate and worthy goal. Psychology and Theology must be reconciled. His six theses on therapy and embodiment can be wholeheartedly endorsed by any evangelical theologian. These six theses include God's grace throughout the entirety of Christian therapy, the limitations of agency from physicality, the agency of God in renewal despite physical limitations, God given capacities as preparatory for the receipt of the Gospel, the results of the curse on the human body, and the ability to form habits as a God-given grace which has been corrupted but can be redeemed. Though some may caution limiting agency due to biology, mental illness, and correction through medication, in some cases it does seem to be warranted. These six theses are helpful and gospel driven. It is questionable whether much of the discussion of Aquinas cosmology was necessary to arrive at these conclusions, or if they were distracting to well-meaning readers.

As a person with an undergraduate psychology minor, a graduate degree in pastoral counseling, and currently in post-graduate studies in theology, I still found this work to be largely inaccessible. To the person with the proper background, this work could be extremely

[1] Richard Swinburne, *The Evolution of the Soul*, rev. ed. (New York, NY: Oxford Univ. Press, 1997), 145; Abraham P. Bos, "'Aristotelian' and 'Platonic' Dualism in Hellenistic and Early Christian Philosophy and in Gnosticism," *Vigiliae Christianae* 56, no. 3 (2002): 273–91; Patrick James Fletcher, "Resurrection and Platonic Dualism: Joseph Ratzinger's Augustinianism" (PhD diss., The Catholic University of America, 2011); Jonathan J. Loose, Angus J. L. Menuge, and J. P. Moreland, *The Blackwell Companion to Substance Dualism* (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley Blackwell, 2018).

useful and is highly praised in the publisher's solicited recommendations. However, the model reader for this work will need to have familiarity with Calvin, Aquinas, psychology, and the debate between Aristotelian and Platonic cosmology to gain the most profit from the time spent reading this work. If one lacks such a broad foundation, they will probably be frustrated reading the work. However, for those willing to study the concepts and debate surrounding J. P. Moreland's view of cosmology they may find great reward from this ongoing debate.

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Changed into His Likeness: A Biblical Theology of Personal Transformation (New Studies in Biblical Theology). By J. Gary Millar. Downers Grove: Apollos, an Imprint of IVP Academic, 2021. 273 pp. Softcover $23.49.

J. Gary Millar (D.Phil., Oxford) is Principal of Queensland Theological College of Australia and the co-founder and chair of the Gospel Coalition Australia. His recent work *Changed into His Likeness: A Biblical Theology of Personal Transformation* is part of the NSBT series edited by D. A. Carson which seeks to assist Christians in understanding their bibles in creative ways. Millar accomplishes this task in 6 brief chapters by humbly acknowledging the fact that it is "much easier to write about transformation than embody it" (ix) and then seeks to show how the Bible depicts the power of the gospel to change Christians in a holistic manner.

The first chapter seeks to establish the process, definition, and evaluation of change in human behavior by building on the work of Jeffrey Kottler– modifying his definition through theological shaping (4). Millar shows how people are prone to think that change is unnecessary and must be motivated through some type of trigger in a "complex (and unpredictable) process" (6) but states that this change is both promised and demanded in the Gospel (8). These principles, that believers already have been, and yet will still be, changed,

establishes the pillars of sanctification but still leaves life in the middle to be addressed.

The second chapter develops biblical anthropology and personal transformation reflecting on psychology, neuroscience and quantum physics before referencing the *imago dei* and the discussion of dualism versus "(w)holism" (36–39). After a series of word studies, Millar lands on a stance of holistic dualism (53).

The third chapter of the book begins with Jeremiah 13:23 and poses the famous question of whether a leopard can change its spots. It then offers character studies to show how Old Testament characters nearly always showed a "discernible downward spiral" in key individuals while other minor characters showed "little sign of change or growth" (93), though this is consistently promised in the preaching of Moses and the prophets. The author concludes chapter 3 by asserting that the Old Testament shows change as needed and desirable but unobtainable until the New Covenant.

The fourth chapter of shows the difference Jesus made by contrasting law and gospel showing that the gospel leads to stories of change beginning with the demands of Jesus and the power that Jesus promised to his followers. Millar then goes on to show the biblical theology of Paul concerning personal transformation through heart filled obedience which bears fruit in a broken world while the believer learns to discern the will of God as believers increasingly reflect Jesus' own character through Spirit empowerment (154). Chapter four ends with a brief discussion on Peter, John, and James' theology of change.

The fifth chapter discusses how the believer is to pursue change referencing the works of many historical theologians showing "both the need for and willingness of God to change us at the level of our instincts, aspirations and choices" (192). Halfway through the chapter Millar discusses how Christology (particularly that of Calvin) and piety influences change before discussing the biblical counseling movement. Millar concludes the chapter by reminding the reader that biblical change is complex because change is viewed as being God's work within a trinitarian framework which is derived from the believer's union with Christ and driven by the word of God. This type of change requires biblical piety and Millar believe is comprehensive if it is to be the biblical change he has found in the New Testament.

The sixth chapter is Millar's conclusion of his findings where he articulates his biblical theology of personal transformation. Millar finds change transformation to be a New Testament reality which is completely the work of God through His transformation of believer's relationship to Himself through transforming their knowledge and desire for God which leads to character transformation and thereby transforms the experience of life's situations for the believer which can only be found in and through the gospel through a life of human responses of repentance and faith. This process changes believers inside of the church and inside of the world which are the two primary relationships of the believer so that they can persevere and be changed into the likeness of Christ.

This book is a worthy addition to any library for a variety of reasons. The character studies of the Old Testament characters and the assessment of the downward spiral is worth reading by every reader of the Old Testament. Where many Old Testament sermons have devolved into character studies where these characters are put up as exemplary, Millar rightly challenges this concept in light of the consistent narrative trajectory which instead places the emphasis on God's grace in spite of the character's human limitations. The second greatest benefit of Millar's work was his insight that a biblical theology of change has been hindered by both over and under realized eschatology (9–12). The danger of an over-realized eschatology is that there is too much change promised. Though the gospel does undoubtedly radically change the believer, the complex process of gospel change and its holistic affects can be dangerous. Though movements which Millar notes were contrary to scriptural teaching in certain ways, the idea that such over statements can be "pastorally damaging" (11) still holds true for any over-realized, or over emphasized, eschatology, even within more biblical views. Likewise, the dangers of an under-realized eschatology can lull believers to sleep so that they fail to pursue any meaningful sanctification which is clearly antithetical to the scriptural teaching on the subject. Perhaps none of the conclusions reached by Millar were so appealing than was the emphasis on God's role in sanctification as the one who initiates, sustains, and facilitates transformation through His Son, His Spirit, and His Word.

There were some hesitations in work, though they were methodological and do not detract from the views. Since Biblical

Theology as a field has been deemed by the book series editor D.A. Carson as a wasteland where every man does what is write in his own eyes, it is not surprising that Millar has no problem discussing the philosophical, psychological, biological, and historical aspects of personal transformation.[1] However, a biblical theology is strengthened by its lack of distractions from extra-biblical sources. This collation of extra-biblical evidence and assessment is more likely the realm of systematic theology.

In conclusion, this book is heartily recommended to every reader. There is no greater need for the believer than to bear fruit and be conformed to the image of Christ, being "changed into His likeness." The character studies from the Old Testament should be consulted by every preacher, and the concluding chapter should be referenced by all believers frequently as a tool for self-reflection. This book maintains the excellence that has become expected of this prestigious series.

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Theological Ethics: The Moral Life of the Gospel in Contemporary Context. By W. Ross Hastings. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2021. 244 pp. Hardcover $29.99.

W. Ross Hastings is Sangwoo Youtong Chee Professor of Theology at Regent College, Vancouver, BC. He earned both a Ph.D. in Chemistry (Queen's University, Kingston) and a Ph.D. in Theology (University of St. Andrews, Scotland). In this book, he applied his obviously brilliant mind to the question of what theological ethics should look like.

The book consists of nine chapters; a helpful Conclusion; and Scripture, Subject, and Author indexes. The nine chapters reveal the same number of characteristic features of theological ethics:

[1] D. A. Carson, "Systematic Theology and Biblical Theology," in *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, ed. T. Desmond Alexander and Brian S. Rosner, electronic ed. (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 91.

theological; Trinitarian; biblical; eschatological (ethics of creation) and (ethics of reconciliation); evangelical; resurrectional; sexual; and public. The last two chapters, "Theological Ethics are Sexual," and "Theological Ethics are Public," serve as applications of the previous chapters to two major areas of ethical concern today.

Hastings' work is truly theological in several senses. The author interacts with theologians and the Scriptures in developing his arguments. He carefully weaves together theological explanations of the connections between the deep things of the Trinity, revelation, creation, the gospel, the Word of God, Christians, the Church, missions, and the relationship between God and the world. Ethics functions as it should only in relation to all of these.

Some of the insights the author gives in the earlier chapters on the biblical, theological, and Trinitarian (including Christological and Pneumatological) nature of theological ethics are thoughtfully applied in the final chapters on the sexual and public nature of theological ethics. Those chapters are his Trinitarian, biblical, and theological insights applied to two very practical realms in which Christians should be understanding and applying ethics in the same way. The first two and last two chapters are worth the price of the book. Chapter 8 on theological ethics and sexuality is exceptionally helpful to the student who needs a biblical/theological foundation for dealing with the sexual issues of today. In many places throughout the book, Dr. Hastings takes a very strong, biblical, traditional, evangelical position.

However, in some ways the book is disappointing. It is intended to be a textbook, but the level of opacity of much of the explanation reduces its effectiveness as a textbook. At points the explanation is unnecessarily verbose and vague. The repetition of terms, such as gospel, creation, evangelical, election, eschatological, and even ethics (!), for example, in multiple contexts with different referents and meanings in each is confusing. The interactions of Hastings with Oliver O'Donovan and Karl Barth demonstrate the author's knowledge of their theological and ethical positions, but they also draw the reader into an atmosphere that is more dense, more theoretical, and less accessible than the parts of his argument outside of those discussions. They assume a knowledge and appreciation of the ethical and theological writings of these theologians which many students will not have. The chapters on the eschatological nature of

theological ethics, especially the ethics of reconciliation, and the chapter on theological ethics as evangelical, are not impossible, but unnecessarily difficult to follow.

Nothing in the last paragraph should be construed as a dismissal of the value of the book. It has flashes of brilliance, and it effectively demonstrates the necessity of a Trinitarian, theological, biblical, "resurrectional" mindset and purpose in the moral and ethical action of Christians and churches in culture. It identifies flaws in the Church's representation of our God to the world, cultures, and the individuals that make it up. God as the ground and power of ethics is beautifully demonstrated in a solid presentation of the Trinity. Scriptural issues are not neglected, nor are questions concerning the image of God and the ethical relationship/ responsibility of believers and unbelievers.

The question I am raising is the accessibility of Dr. Hastings' book as a textbook. For a graduate program, in a class on the theological imperatives in ethics with adequate discussion, or in a class on the Trinity, this would be a stimulating textbook to be used with care.

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Understanding the Jewish Roots of Christianity: Biblical, Theological & Historical Essays on the Relationship between Christianity & Judaism (Studies in Scripture and Biblical Theology). Edited by Gerald R. McDermott. Bellingham, WA: Lexham, 2021. 271 pp. Softcover $29.99.

Gerald McDermott and his essayists have provided a thought-provoking glimpse of several of the facets of the jewel of the concept that there always should be a consciousness of the strong relationship between Judaism and Christianity. The book takes on the "radical discontinuity" between Judaism and Christianity that resulted in the catastrophic extermination of Jewish people in various countries through the centuries. In the Introduction and final chapter McDermott provides both the introductory and concluding

summaries of the various arguments presented by the contributors to the book and an answer to the question, "What difference does this make?" Before looking at his answer, a quick summary of each essay would be helpful.

Mark Gignilliat responds to the question: "How did the New Testament Authors use Tanak?" He argues that the hearers of the New Testament recognized its authority based upon its having been shaped by the Scriptures [Old Testament]. He also explores an illustration founded upon the Chalcedonian formula (concerning Jesus Christ). He states that, though the two Testaments retain their distinct voices and integrity, neither Testament "subsists apart from its relation to the other, and each Testament shares in the same divine subject matter" (16). "New Testament Christians" have been and always will continue to be "Old Testament Christians."

Matthew Thiessen endeavors to answer the question, "Did Jesus Plan to Start a New Religion?" His answer is that the evidence of Jesus' teaching is that He was ministering to the lost sheep of Israel, and he was teaching to observe the things they had learned in the spirit in which they were originally given—to strengthen, correct, and revive Judaism.

David Rudolph's task is to tackle the tough question of whether Paul was championing a new freedom from, or an end to, Jewish Law. Paul is often thought of as the apostle who clarified the difference between Judaism and Christianity. Using especially Acts 15:22–29; 21:17–26; and 1 Corinthians 7:17–24, Rudolph argues that Paul was an observant Jew whose point for other Jewish Christians was that they should faithfully live out the laws and customs they had received while following Christ.

David Moffitt writes a chapter on "Jesus' Sacrifice and the Mosaic Logic of Hebrews' New-Covenant Theology." In opposition to the opinion that the idea of the new covenant in Hebrews is expressive of an obvious break with Judaism, Moffitt argues that the process of sacrifice (not just the slaughter of the sacrifice), the necessity of sacrifice for reestablishing relationship, and the appropriateness of sacrifice within the covenant, are all assumed by the author of Hebrews. He sees the sacrifice of Jesus as more than His death on the cross and demonstrates how the author of Hebrews does the same. The whole process, including Jesus' drawing near to the Father to offer His blood in the heavenly holy of holies is necessary

for a full sacrifice. Jesus' death is seen in Hebrews as the means of establishing the New Covenant, and His ongoing high-priestly ministry, including intercession which Moffitt describes as being vital for the continuing spiritual lives of believers.

Matthew S. C. Olver's subject is missed and misunderstood Jewish roots of Christian worship. Olver, who has been a member of the Anglican-Roman Catholic Consultation of the U.S., approaches his subject from the perspective that both Christianity and Judaism were both religions of sacrifice. Though the sacrifice of Christianity is bloodless, the celebration of the Lord's Supper/Eucharist has been, from the time of the writing of the New Testament, seen to be a sacrifice "directly tied to the Old Testament cult" (92). He attempts to prove that the Eucharist was from the beginning the central act of worship for Christians, and that it was called a sacrifice. This, then, demonstrates the Jewish roots from which Christianity came.

"The Parting of the Ways. When and how did the *Ekklēsia* split from the Synagogue?" is the subject of Isaac Oliver's essay. His purpose is to demonstrate that the conception that the time of the split of the *Ekklēsia* and the Synagogue was later than the second century, and that Torah-observant followers of Christ continued beyond the time when theological differences brought about exclusion of Christ-followers from the synagogues and questioning of whether Jewish Christians could continue to keep the Torah. Since Jewish followers of Jesus were at the center of Christianity from the first, it is a mistake to place the parting of the ways too early. The decisive parting was after the majority of Christians were gentiles. Then Jewish followers of Christ were welcome neither in the synagogue nor in the Church.

Eugene Korn tackles the problem of the relationship of the Church and the Jews in a chapter entitled "From Constantine to the Holocaust." From the time of Constantine through the Holocaust, the theology regarding Jews and Judaism that dominated the Church "was known in Christian scholarly circles as the *Adversus Iudaeos* ('against the Jews')" (129). Though the Messiah was a Jewish idea, the Jews refused to accept that Christ was the Messiah. Also, many Church Fathers and those who followed the through Church history, wrote and taught anti-Jewish statements based upon the Jews being "Christ-killers." Theologically, supersessionism supported the concept that God had abandoned the Jews. Korn also includes an interesting discussion of the attitudes of Jewish and Rabbinic thinkers

concerning Christianity and Christians, demonstrating how several phases can be seen from denouncing Christians as heretics to a greater appreciation of Christianity as a "positive phenomenon for gentiles that helped spread fundamental belies of Judaism" (143). He concludes with positive thought about improvement in relations.

Continuing the historical summary started by Korn, Jennifer Rosner deals with post-holocaust Jewish- Christian relations. The subtitle of the chapter is significant: "Challenging boundaries and rethinking theology." She highlights what she calls the "new Jewish-Christian encounter" (149). She provides four distinctives of this encounter, including theological and doctrinal rigor, an attempt to understand each other's religious tradition "in terms and categories of their own religion," perception of a "deep commonality" between Christianity and Judaism, and a reconceptualization of their "own religious identity" (150), on the part of those engaged in this encounter. She highlights Barth, Franz Rosenzweig, and other post-Holocaust voices including, and especially, Mark Kinzer, who connects Israel and Jesus in his concept of Messianic Judaism.

In Chapter 10, Sarah Hall tells the (largely) untold story of the relationships between many Anglicans and Israel. Her description of the efforts made in missions, in Britain, in the Holy Land, and in facilitation of Zionism, is fascinating.

Mark Kinzer's concern in the 11th chapter, "Messianic Judaism" is "the recovery of the Jewish character of the *ekklēsia* in the present and the future" (184). He emphasizes that while the *ekklēsia* should see herself as rooted in the story of Israel, various forces brought about the mutual exclusivity of their identities as communities. He relates the truth that three groups are actually in the conflict: "the wider Jewish community," the Jewish members of the Church, and the gentile Christian church (190). He goes on to describe the growth of the Messianic Jewish movement, and other movements in the Catholic and Russian Orthodox churches.

In a chapter entitled "Christian Churches. What difference does the Jewishness of Jesus make?", Archbishop Foley Beach reviews the facts concerning the Jewishness of Jesus, and then suggests the implications of these facts for contemporary followers of Jesus. Those implications are as follows: "Because Jesus was Jewish," there should be no anti-Semitism among Jesus followers; … modern followers of Jesus should desire to understand the Hebrew roots of

their faith; … followers of Jesus should value the Jewish Bible; … modern followers of Jesus should seek to understand His teachings in light of His Hebrew background; …we should seek to share Jesus with our Jewish friends; …we followers of Jesus owe a great debt to the Jewish people" (206–212).

Editor McDermott's anticipated answer to the question "What difference does it make" summarizes the above and challenges us at the point of our theology. He writes: "We Christians should keep wrestling, especially if we discover that the particular stream of Christian tradition in which we have been raised is supersessionist. … By exploring the history and faith of the people whom God loves, we will learn more about God Himself" (222).

There is so much to agree with and appreciate in this book. The reader will struggle with Olver's treatment of the Eucharist, and it is important to chiliasts to know that the supersessionism mentioned in the book is based upon an eschatology that sees the restoration of Israel not in the millennium but at the coming of Christ to inaugurate the eternal state. Skarsaune and Havlik's collection of essays in *Jewish Believers in Jesus* (2007), and Feldman's *Jews and Gentiles in the Ancient World* (1993) are not mentioned in the bibliography. However, the very fact that the book seeks to set the record straight about the relationship of the Messiah and the *Ekklēsia* to Israel, God's continuing love and plan for Israel, and the importance of our valuing and understanding our heritage in the Hebrew Scriptures, makes this collection of essays a valuable read for every serious Christian and Jewish reader.

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T. F. Torrance as Missional Theologian: The Ascended Christ and the Ministry of the Church (New Explorations in Theology). By Joseph H. Sherrard. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2021. 256 pp. Softcover $40.00.

Joseph Sherrard (Ph.D., University of St. Andrews) serves as the Associate Pastor of Discipleship at Signal Mountain Presbyterian Church. He is a fellow of the Center for Pastoral Theologians and participates in the work of the Paideia Center for Theological Discipleship. Sherrard's vantage point—as one who writes from within the Church, rather than from within the Academy—is fitting, given the aim of this erudite volume.

Sherrard notes that there are three typical approaches to missional theology (2–5). First, some employ sociological analysis of western culture to demonstrate the need for a fresh missionary encounter with the gospel. Second, some utilize the field of biblical theology to demonstrate that the Bible is inherently a missional document that records the story of God's mission, and of our eventual participation in that mission. Third, some thinkers have plumbed the depths of systematic theology to articulate a rationale for our missional encounter with contemporary culture. In Sherrard's estimation, it is this final category that has been neglected, and he believes that Torrance can help us develop a theologically robust missional theology for the Church.

The chief strength of this volume lies in its introduction of Torrance to missionally-minded readers (both within the Academy and within the Church) who might not have previously engaged his body of work. For readers who are unfamiliar with Torrance, the biographical snippet in the forward (by Alan Torrance) is a helpful introduction. Torrance was born in China to missionary parents. One of six children, he joined with all his siblings in ministerial service (some became missionaries, some married pastors, and Torrance became a theologian). His upbringing in a missionary family would have a profound impact upon the course of his life. Before becoming an academic theologian, Torrance spent time on the front lines of the European front, serving as a chaplain during the horrors of World War II. Shaped by his missionary family, and by his mission to suffering (and in some cases, dying) soldiers, Torrance would develop a unique sense of vocation. He believed that his task as a

theologian was to follow an ancient pattern: "The theologian has to do what the ancient bishops often had to do in the early church. They had to be, among other things, evangelists. The theologian needs to help the church evangelize the entire culture" (5).

Sherrard believes that Torrance consistently theologized in a missional manner throughout the course of his career. Indeed, Sherrard's central argument is that "Torrance's theology is not only consistently informed by his own sense of theological vocation 'to help the church evangelize the entire culture,' but also that he provides a comprehensive and constructive theology of the missional church" (217). Sherrard successfully introduced his readers to Torrance, and he also successfully portrayed him as a genuinely missional systematic theologian, one whose primary contribution to the missional conversation was his emphasis upon the *munus triplex* (Christ's threefold office as prophet, priest, and king) and its connection to the life of the Church.

Thankfully, this was not a work of hagiography. Sherrard was clear and pointed when he believed that Torrance was exegetically or theologically suspect. For instance, he repeatedly challenged Torrance's description of the prophetic ministry of both Christ and of the Church (74–78).

The chief weakness of the book is its complexity. Torrance was a systematic theologian, and those who are active in the missional church conversation are frequently positioned as practical or applied theologians. Missional leaders within the Church (whether evangelistic pastors, church planters, or missionary network leaders) will probably struggle to connect with the dense, academic language and structure of this volume. From Sherrard's extensive descriptive work, it is clear that Torrance was a formidable theologian, one whose work was theologically sophisticated and intricate (much like the work of his Doktorvater, Karl Barth).

Although Torrance may, indeed, have made an important theological contribution to the missional conversation, this book will probably have a greater impact in the academy than within local churches. Perhaps a future book by Sherrard (or other interpreters of Torrance) could make his work even more accessible to missional leaders who are on the front lines of missional engagement with western culture.

Overall, this volume by Sherrard is a significant contribution to the *New Explorations in Theology* series. Although *T. F. Torrance as Missional Theologian* could have benefited from greater clarity, it still served to offer a fresh, missional lens through which to read the extensive Torrance corpus. As a theologian whose goal was to help the Church to evangelize entire cultures, Torrance would no doubt approve.

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Demonology for the Global Church: A Biblical Approach in a Multicultural Age. By Scott D. MacDonald. Carlisle, Cumbria, UK: Langham Global Library, 2021. 182 pp. Softcover $21.99.

Demonology is a uniquely challenging subset of theological studies. While nearly all cultures serve as witnesses to the activity of evil supernatural forces, skepticism and sensationalism frequently overrun conversations on the subject. Furthermore, while the Scriptures unashamedly testify to the reality of the demonic, cultural influence upon interpretation threatens to annul global church consensus on this important issue. With these challenges in mind, Scott MacDonald (Academic Dean and Instructor of Theology and New Testament studies at the Baptist Theological Seminary of Zambia) writes *Demonology for the Global Church: A Biblical Approach in a Multicultural Age*, aiming to present a biblically grounded resource for Demonology that is both accessible and unifying for believers from diverse cultural backgrounds. MacDonald's experience in both the Western and Majority Worlds (cf. 5) gives him a unique perspective on the issues and certainly qualifies him for such a task.

Demonology for the Global Church spans 10 chapters. Following an introduction explaining the necessity and challenges of crafting a Demonology in the global church (chapters 1–2), MacDonald crafts the criteria for constructing a Demonology for the global church, which he identifies as biblical centrality, hermeneutical consistency, historical faithfulness, and theological harmony (chapter 3). He then

follows with a survey of the biblical data, beginning with an evaluation of demonic activity (chapter 4) and the recorded speeches of demons (chapter 5). This survey is used as the foundation to address the biblical ontology of demons (chapter 6). From here, MacDonald addresses how demons impact important institutions, including the family, religion, church, and politics (chapter 7). Lastly, he concludes with an evaluation of both current and future issues facing the global church and its contextualization of Demonology (chapters 8–10).

Readers will appreciate the uncompromising emphasis of *Demonology for the Global Church* upon biblical authority. Noting that community approval, pragmatism, and autonomous reason are not qualified as final authorities on Demonology (26), MacDonald argues that, per God's ontological supremacy, "God and God's word can authoritatively proclaim who we are, what we are supposed to do and think, and why we exist" (28). Of course, asserting the authority of God's word is not simply good theology, but is also significantly constructive. From this vantage point, "The Bible alone avoids the excesses and dismissals of competing cultural positions on the demonic" (27), and, for this reason, the foundation of biblical authority provides for common ground and cooperation amongst the cultures of the world (20–21, 136, 151). MacDonald's words are timely. As the Majority World enters the academic conversation on theology in the Postmodern era, the temptation will be to conclude that the cultures of the world cannot come to a consensus on theological matters, and the differing opinions on the demonic will only forward this thesis. Beginning one's Demonology on the foundation of the authority of the word of God is a start in overcoming this challenge and, contrary to the ethos of Postmodernism, will create a unique opportunity to bring believers from all different cultures together on an issue that is universally impactful.

Readers will also appreciate the wisdom of *Demonology for the Global Church*. Due to Western skepticism of the supernatural, it is easy for Western Christians to subconsciously question the practicality of Demonology. Nevertheless, MacDonald does an outstanding job at explaining why Demonology is essential for the Christian life. For example, a biblically faithful Demonology places salvation in its proper context. Per the Scriptural data, evil spiritual forces have been given rule over the world (50–53, 119–120) and

operate through false religious systems (54–59; 111–114), thus creating a clear dichotomy between the Christian faith and other worldviews that oppose the truth. For this reason, soteriological exclusivism, rather than pluralism or inclusivism, is the only biblical option (128), and all forms of syncretism must be rejected (114, 130, 133). However, for the same reason, believers must compassionately witness to unbelievers, knowing that the demonic realm has incredible power and influence over the unbeliever's spiritual blindness (131, 133). As MacDonald concludes, "We have no right to send people on missions … without first giving them an understanding of demonology! Since demons are behind the religions of the world and confrontations with those spirits can occur in evangelism … we need people who are entering new contexts to have open eyes to the spiritual dimension of missions" (154). As another example, Demonology is partially responsible for the charge that elders be mature, as church leaders are vulnerable to spiritual attack (116). In short, no one can walk away from a biblical study of the demonic without it changing one's perspective on ministry.

While there are no outright criticisms of the text, there are two important disclaimers readers should keep in mind. First, *Demonology for the Global Church* does not attempt to offer extensive work in contextualization. MacDonald is aware of diverse global challenges facing different cultural contexts (e.g., 11–15) and addresses a few case studies, such as the practice of contacting so-called familial spirits (111) and the foundations of Enlightenment-esque skepticism of the supernatural (138–141). Nevertheless, the author admits that it is beyond his ability to offer contextualization for every possible scenario. Instead, *Demonology for the Global Church* intends "to present the biblical material with clarity … [so] that multicultural and monocultural communities can continue to face the contextualization challenges themselves" (138). This is fair as far as the purpose of the text is concerned. Nevertheless, readers should be aware that more resources may be needed depending upon one's present needs. Perhaps this is why, for example, MacDonald's discussion on demon possession is selective (64–67), a hot topic that readers might find too limited in a text of this nature.

Second, per MacDonald's emphasis on biblical priority, *Demonology for the Global Church* does not utilize ANE or Second Temple literature as primary dialogue partners in his exegesis of key

biblical texts (33, 137; cf. 48–49; 104–105). Contrarwise, he critiques Michael Heiser's recent work *Demons* (cf. 144–148), which draws extensively from such literature, noting that, "in some cases, Heisler's efforts to detach demonology from church traditions can lead to an extrabiblical attachment to ancient cultural traditions" (144), a common critique of Heiser's work. Even so, while the reader who holds to biblical authority will ultimately agree with MacDonald's decision, as the content of some ANE and Second Temple literature is significantly fanciful and lacks divine authority (cf. 148–149), those who desire greater research in extrabiblical Demonology will need to look elsewhere.

The final verdict? *Demonology for the Global Church* is a solid introduction to Demonology. It could serve as a great supplemental text for a theology course at the undergraduate level or for training through a missions organization, although it is accessible enough for any believer looking for a biblical grounded work on the demonic.

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Leadership in Christian Perspective: Biblical Foundations and Contemporary Practices for Servant Leaders. By Justin A. Irving and Mark L. Strauss. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2019. 224 pp. Softcover $24.00.

Leadership in Christian Perspective: Biblical Foundations and Contemporary Practices for Servant Leadership is not just another book on leadership, rather it is a foundational contribution to the field. Irving and Strauss pack a punch in providing a fresh perspective on servant leadership in which they write, "A better description might be *empowering* leadership. It is a leadership that is other-centered, the goal of which is to enable others to fulfill their calling before God, to be all that God wants them to be" (4). This book demonstrates that to be a truly effective leader is to be a servant. True servant leadership is best exemplified in our Lord Jesus Christ, as Mark 10:45 states, "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." By thoughtfully combining

their areas of expertise, Irving, having served as Professor of Ministry Leadership at Bethel Seminary and currently serving as Professor of Leadership at The Southern Baptist Theology Seminary, and Strauss, serving as University Professor of New Testament at Bethel University, provide an integrative perspective weaving together three focus areas: biblical foundations, leadership research and theory, as well as practical applications. In so doing, they provide a holistic perspective on leadership.

One of the strengths of the book is its organization. The book is divided into three parts 1) Beginning with Authentic and Purposeful Leaders; 2) Understanding the Priority of People; and 3) Navigating toward Effectiveness. Each part contains three chapters that highlight one core leadership practice. Along with an introduction, there is a total of nine chapters that emphasize four major themes: 1) Servant Leadership and Follower Focus; 2) Transformational Leadership and Organizational Transformation; 3) Team Leadership and Collaborative Orientation; and 4) Leader Purposefulness and Meaning-Based Work. One critique of the book is that it ends abruptly leaving the reader longing for a conclusion of some sort.

Irving and Strauss write as one voice in a clear, direct, and easy-to-read manner. In each chapter, the authors strike a fine balance of providing solid biblical foundations, contemporary/modern best practices, and practical next steps for real-life application. In addition, the authors offer next steps and additional resources for a deeper look and further study. Throughout the book, the authors break down the content into key leadership priorities, practices, and perspectives. Right up front, Irving and Strauss provide their definition of leadership and state, "Empowering leadership is a process by which leaders and followers partner together for the purpose of achieving common goals and shared vision" (1). Very early on, they define values and give a brief history of leadership theory which is helpful for those new to the field or for seasoned leaders who may need a brief overview. The authors establish key themes that they build upon based on biblical anthropology (the study of human beings). The authors assert that humans are created in the image of God (75, 82, 106), whole (47, 134), relational (53), spiritual (116–17) and creative beings (76, 117).

Irving and Strauss's book provides an alternative to traditional, authoritarian, hierarchal forms of leadership. The authors' approach

of empowering leadership stands in stark contrast to the traditional model because it does not use fear or control. Rather, this approach focuses on equipping people to be who God created them to be through humility and service. The authors state, "It is our hope that your journey through this book will provide a vision for leadership that empowers others and transforms the teams and organizations within which you serve and work" (14). This book is an asset for any Christian who desires to empower and equip others to lead in Christian perspective, whether they find themselves in a formal leadership capacity or not.

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God on Mute: Engaging the Silence of Unanswered Prayer. By Pete Greig. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2020. 352 pp. Softcover $19.99.

Pete Greig is both the founder of the *24–7 Prayer* movement and the senior pastor of a church in England. So, it should not be surprising that he has written (and recently revised) a work that reflects seriously on the commonly experienced phenomenon of unanswered payer. As Greig puts it in his introduction, "the brutal fact of the matter is that, while most of us pray, prayer does not always seem to work and it's not easy to be honest about this" (7). Even Jesus, he observes, suffered the silence of unanswered prayer. But this is no ivory tower dissertation. It is a thoughtful and very personal wrestling with a significant spiritual issue born at least in part out of the author's own experience with his wife's chronic and often debilitating illness.

The chapters of the book are divided thematically by the four days of the passion weekend: Maundy Thursday ("How am I going to get through this?"), Good Friday ("Why aren't my prayers being answered"), Holy Saturday ("Where is God when heaven is silent?"), and Easter Sunday ("When every prayer is answered"). Greig also provides a *Forty-Day Journal of Prayer* (227–318), based upon the same passion weekend format, and two brief but helpful appendices.

There is much to commend in this work. First, despite the profound subject matter, the book is accessible to a wide audience. Second, besides the many personal anecdotes and real life-based illustrations, Grieg consistently and pastorally grounds his propositions in the text of Scripture. The core of the book consists of fifteen explanations for unanswered prayer that are largely well-known and uncontroversial (90–161). But the way Greig packages his explanations both scripturally and anecdotally conveys his pastor's heart and provides a very practical, encouraging, and easy to grasp illumination of a theologically troubling and spiritually vexing issue.

On the other hand, while Greig's theology is principally evangelical, he obviously pursues broad ecumenical appeal as seen in the multitude of favorable citations from persons of virtually every stripe of Christendom (e.g., Karl Barth, Henri Nouwen, Soren Kierkegaard, Andrew Murray, C.S. Lewis, Hudson Taylor, Anatoly Emmanuilovich Letivin, Ignatius of Loyola, Thomas à Kempis, N. T. Wright, the Council of Trent, Rudolph Bultmann, and Mother Teresa). For this author, such a wide theological spectrum serves not only to legitimize heterodox beliefs it undermines a basic cause of unanswered prayer, namely, the absence of a genuinely regenerated heart.

More concerning is Greig's apparent embrace of Open Theism. For example, he asserts that Scripture depicts "the Almighty as one who continually chooses to limit His own power" and "not to override the free will that he has given to humanity." In fact, he states, "I believe that we will fail completely to understand the dynamics of prayer and the reasons for unanswered prayer unless we first understand God's determination to respect the free will of humanity" (121). For this reason, "There has never been a greater risk than the one God took in choosing to create humanity" (123). Indeed, "we believe that the almighty God does not always get His way on earth—even though He is the almighty God … Jesus taught us to pray to the Father, 'Your kingdom come, your will be done' (Matt. 6:10), precisely because it isn't a foregone conclusion" (136).

Whether Greig is a full-fledged Open Theist or just a theologically careless Arminian (he does not distinguish God's decretive will from his permissive will) is not clear. But, as many have observed, such beliefs tend to weaken faith in a God who truly can bring about his plan and purposes, including answering the

prayers of his people, who take great comfort in his omnipotence and omniscience.

Despite these caveats, I would recommend *God on Mute* for any mature believer who is struggling with apparent unanswered prayers. One of my favorite statements in the book is: "We cannot remove Gethsemane and Golgotha from the reality of life in Christ" (107). If more Christians clearly understood and embraced this down-to-earth truth, I believe less would truly struggle not only with unanswered prayer but with the painful vicissitudes of life in general.

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A Short History of Christian Zionism: From the Reformation to the Twenty-First Century. By Donald M. Lewis. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2021. 384 pp. Softcover $36.00; Kindle $26.32.

The late Donald M. Lewis (d. October 2021) has provided an impressive history of Christian Zionism. While the title accurately represents the contents of the book, one might falsely conclude that the author has little to say about the various other kinds of extant Zionism (viz., secular, religious, political, revisionist, etc.). Clearly, the author's focus is on *Christian* Zionism, but for anyone to have a good grasp of such a complicated subject, he must also have a keen awareness of the various other types of Zionism, since each one in some way affects all the others. And while Lewis' credentials indicate he is qualified to do so, his writing even more so demonstrates his mastery of the subject matter.

Lewis, a thoroughgoing Anglican since his early twenties, but raised in the tradition of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada (his father a pastor), served for over forty years as Professor of Church History at Regent College in Vancouver, British Columbia. He earned his doctorate at Oxford University specializing in the Victorian era of evangelicalism. He has many publications, including a prior one on the same subject published in 2014 titled *The Origins of Christian Zionism: Evangelical Support for a Jewish Homeland*, wherein the book traces the nineteenth-century background of

Christian Zionism. Thus, one might say that this current book (2021) is an enlargement of the former encompassing as far back as the sixteenth-century and extending to the present day. Although his 2021 work seeks to span six-hundred years of an intricate history, he sets it all up by devoting the first chapter (27 pages) to covering the first fifteen hundred years of church history with respect to the attitudes of both Jews and Gentiles toward the land of Israel and the Jews relationship to that land. Thus, the heart of his work begins with the second chapter.

While the book is 381 pages in length—with just 18 pages of frontmatter (Acknowledgments, Introduction) and 11 pages of backmatter (General Index, Scripture Index)—one would expect a much longer volume since it covers such a vast span of history that involves quite a convoluted development of Jewish history interfacing with many cultures and eras of time. We could view the fifteen chapters of the book as nicely falling into two unequal parts. The first part would be chapters 2–6, where Lewis systematically discusses developments in certain countries, but always in the light of a progressive timeline. He begins discussing events in Geneva, Switzerland (ch. 2, ca. 1500–1550s), then points out further developments in Britain with the English Puritans (ch. 3, ca. 1550s–1750s), followed by an explanation of developments in Germany among the German Pietists (ch. 4., ca. 1650s–1750s). Next, Lewis traces further refinements in the new world of America where the notion of "restorationism" becomes firmly established (ch. 5, ca. 1650s–1790s), even though it was a carry-over largely from the German Pietists. Next, he returns to discussing further developments in Britain with its British Evangelicalism (ch. 6, ca. 1790s–1850s).

As for the second part, I would characterize chapters 7–15 as primarily tracing disparate theological strands loosely grouped together as falling within the same dispensational tradition resulting in an ever-rising political force in various places in the world. In chapters 7–10, Lewis highlights the Balfour Declaration, which was first conceived in December 1917. He recounts the history leading up to, centering on, and flowing out of it. Then in chapters 11 and 12, he outlines how Israel achieved independence (ch. 11) as well as the internal changes within American Christian Zionism (ch. 12). In the final three chapters (chs. 13–15), he discloses how various organizations are motivated to get behind the idea of Zionism—with

many groups completely ambivalent to the political and social issues generated when the Jews reoccupied the land of Israel and displaced many Arabs (ch. 13). He shows how the Zionist movement essentially became overtaken by charismatic influences and Renewalist Theology (ch. 14). Finally, he assesses the status of today's Christian Zionism as seen by the title of his last chapter, "Christian Zionism Today: A 'New' Christian Zionism" (ch. 15).

So how should we assess this work by Lewis? There are several ways to view it. First, there is a wealth of well-documented information which I found to be enlightening. Second, the tone is irenic and professional. All the way through the book I kept trying to discern his theological leanings. And there are places here and there where I thought I could discern it, but it was not obvious. Third, he masterfully untangles the many strands of theological movements and underpinnings of Zionism and shows the reader that the forces that converged for the Jews to have a homeland were disparate, often motivated by opposing philosophies and quite distinct eschatologies.

My final point is a negative one. While Lewis' tone is kind and seemingly neutral, in the final analysis, I believe his theological commitments prevail. We see this in his overall premise, namely, that history shows no evidence of Christian Zionism in the early church, but rather it began in the 1600s shortly after the Reformation. Moreover, he argues that it was fueled by a type of dispensational eschatology, which morphs itself with the winds of the times. Such a pliable eschatology, he argues, allows proponents to project themselves into biblical prophecy as activists in helping the Jews return to their land. This is because dispensational eschatology holds that the return of Messiah will not happen until "his people" (i.e., the Jews) are back in the land. This is a view, he argues, that simply didn't exist the first fifteen hundred years of the church, and when it did emerge, most of the Jews themselves opposed it.

My main criticism of Lewis is methodological. He only spent 27 pages tracing any evidence of Zionism in the first 1500 years of the Church. Admittedly, there is a paucity of evidence, but nevertheless, there is *some* evidence both within the early church (e.g., Irenaeus in A.D. 185) and within the medieval church (e.g., John of Rupescissa, ca. 1310–1366), as other dispensational scholars have argued. Beyond that, there are also compelling arguments for *why* there is a paucity of evidence, which engages one in his or her overall

eschatological ideology. Lewis does not wrestle with these important matters in any significant way. Granted, such is not the aim of the book, but he does build on the premise of it. Thus, in my estimation, his premise is largely untested, from which he proceeds to characterize dispensationalism (especially dispensational premillennialism) as ever-morphing according to the political developments of the day, rather than being grounded in a biblical hermeneutic.

Though my one criticism above is significant, I did learn much from reading it and commend it as a valuable historical reference work, albeit, with the caution noted above.

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Preaching the Word with John Chrysostom. By Gerald Bray. Bellingham, WA: Lexham, 2020. 132 pp. Softcover $12.99.

Lexham's "Lived Theology" series (edited by Michael Haykin, Professor of Church History at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary) thus far includes volumes on Samuel Pearce and Abraham Kuyper, as well as this entry on John Chrysostom. John of Antioch, the fourth-century bishop, was known as *Chrysostomos* or "Golden-Mouthed" because of his powerful pulpit ministry. Therefore, the book is aptly titled, *Preaching the Word with John Chrysostom*. Gerald Bray, who is a Research Professor of Divinity at Beeson Divinity School, has structured this study around "John the Man" (Chapter 1), "In the Beginning" (Chapter 2), "John's Portrait of Jesus" (Chapter 3), "In the Footsteps of Paul the Apostle" (Chapter 4), and "The Legacy" (Chapter 5).

Chapter 1 places John within the political, cultural, and ecclesiastical contexts of his day. One can only understand him fully by taking into account the rhetorical training of the period, the palace and imperial intrigues, and the tensions between major episcopal sees. Yet John himself rises as a summit above these surrounding ranges. "The simplicity of his life, the sincerity of his

faith, and the sufferings he was unjustly forced to endure all combined to enhance his reputation" (4). He composed several influential treatises on suffering, virginity, child-rearing, pastoral ministry, and monastic living.

The core of his legacy, however, is embodied in his preaching and homiletical works. Chrysostom has sometimes been portrayed as a moralist, constantly railing against the entertainment habits of his hearers. But he was primarily an expository preacher, and he famously sermonized his way through numerous biblical books, especially the epistles of Paul. Although a gifted intellectual, he was able to communicate to the masses. Such understandable speech was characterized by accommodation but also precision (20). As Bray notes, "… he had mastered the essence of the classical style, which was to present complex ideas in a simple way that spoke to educated and uneducated alike" (12). John also spoke boldly, as when he forthrightly rebuked the fashionable excesses of the Empress Eudoxia and her entourage. Like Athanasius before him, and like Calvin and Edwards after him, John was dismissed from his own church, although he was reinstated for a time before a second exile (and eventual death).

"In the Beginning," the second chapter, covers John's teaching on Creation and the Fall. According to Bray, "John knew that if he was to expound the gospel he had to start at the beginning" (32). Bray explains, "The most fundamental challenge to the Christian church in the ancient world was its need to convince a pagan culture that the biblical view of creation and the material universe was true" (29). John's rootedness in the doctrines of Creation and Fall applied directly to his interactions with his congregants as divine image bearers distorted by sin. "John obviously felt more comfortable in dealing with actual realities rather than with theoretical possibilities, and in this respect he showed a sure theological and pastoral instinct" (55).

Although Chrysostom may be most famous for his sermons on the Pauline Epistles, Bray initially focuses upon John's exposition of the Gospels (Chapter 3: "John's Portrait of Jesus"). John viewed Jesus' life and teaching through the prism of his own practical concerns as a preacher and pastor (85). He was "very quick to apply the pastoral practice of Jesus during his earthly ministry to the needs of the church in his own day" (92). For example, Chrysostom

emphasized the individualized touch of Jesus' personal encounters (79). He recognized, however, that the ultimate goal of the incarnation was not only instruction and discipleship but the cross (87).

The fourth chapter examines Chrysostom's following "In the Footsteps of Paul the Apostle." It would be difficult to overestimate the influence of the Apostle Paul upon the life and ministry of John Chrysostom. "John was obsessed with Paul and seldom passed up an opportunity to lean on the apostle's authority and example" (102). He addressed the apostle with no fewer than sixty-five "laudatory epithets," including "the mouth of Christ," "the lyre of the Spirit," and "the heavenly trumpet" (103–104). "Not only did he comment on all fourteen epistles that make up the Pauline corpus (including Hebrews, which John accepted as Paul's work), but throughout his writings he quotes Paul abundantly and the lessons he draws from his teaching and example are almost too numerous to count" (97). Chrysostom viewed the apostle as "a living presence" and as "a dialogue partner in his own pursuit of the gospel message" (101–102).

Bray summarizes Chrysostom's lasting legacy as follows: "Reading, studying, and applying the teaching of the Bible to our lives—this is the enduring message of John Chrysostom and his greatest legacy to the church" (118). Those from other theological frameworks would probably also mention the continuing influence of the *Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom*—the most celebrated divine liturgy in the Byzantine Rite, and one not only used "on particular feast days" as mistakenly claimed (9). However, although the liturgy is named after him, "how much of it goes back to John himself is uncertain" (9). The book ends with several helpful tools, including a short bibliography for "Further Reading" ("the best and most comprehensive recent works," 119), as well as both subject and scriptures indexes.

Bray walks somewhat of a tightrope in introducing John Chrysostom' legacy to a largely Evangelical audience. Bray asserts, "John was not a Protestant, of course, but his understanding of salvation, derived from the apostle Paul, was one that resonated with the Reformers …" (36). However, such a framing of the patristic bishop could be misleading. Certainly, we should not read Chrysostom anachronistically nor judge him by later standards (89).

Chrysostom naturally "had no idea of the later controversy that would emerge" (112). Nevertheless, the Reformers themselves noted that they differed from Chrysostom's perspectives on grace and human cooperation. Bray discusses Thomas Cranmer's appropriation of Chrysostom, but he does not mention John Calvin's mitigated appreciation for the bishop. The Genevan Reformer pinpointed areas of disagreement concerning the doctrines of grace, human cooperation, merit, election, predestination, and free will. Yet Calvin refused to dismiss Chrysostom in a wholesale manner, arguing that his sermons remain instructive regarding Christian living and worship.

John was not a perfect leader. He erred in some of his theological positions (7–8, 15), held some logically inconsistent views (53–54), and manifested anti-Jewish suppressionism (20). Nevertheless, his expositional and homiletical works remain treasures of church history. In particular, his exegetical decisions found within his New Testament studies are worthy of consideration. Readers may still gather rich ingots of insight from the Golden-Mouthed preacher from Antioch, as they mine deeply into *Preaching the Word with John Chrysostom*.

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The Integration of Psychology & Christianity: A Domain-Based Approach. By William L. Hathaway and Mark A. Yarhouse. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2021. 216 pp. Softcover $28.00.

Although certainly not a new concept but one that has generated significant interest and investigation in recent decades, the historical background and present-day application of the integration of psychology and Christianity is carefully considered in this book. Numerous examples are offered of writings by others that have sought to elucidate the examination of this concept. Throughout this book, this integration project, as the authors have labeled it, a good summary is provided of the journey that this project has had and the import that it could have for those who are believers in people-

helping work. Hathaway and Yarhouse unapologetically confess that they have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and share their journey both spiritually and professionally as psychologists who are earnest to not keep these two aspects of their lives separate.

The organizational structure of this book is appreciated. To aid the reader, the authors have divided their work into five domains: worldview integration, theoretical integration, applied integration, role integration, and personal integration. The exploration of the domains is not for casual reading, as the authors have carefully and deeply investigated but also summarized the various key concepts that have shaped these domains over the years.

Regarding "worldview integration," the reader is implored to grasp the foundational significance that a person's worldview has and the importance of being self-aware so that biases are avoided in one's professional work. Again, in this section of the book, the authors provide a historical overview of the philosophies that have affected the people-helping professions and contrast these philosophies with the claims of scripture.

The next domain that is discussed is "theoretical integration." Noting that theoretical integration logically follows worldview integration, Hathaway and Yarhouse note: "Theories can be thought of as what one sees when looking out from one's view of the world at specific aspects of that world" (67). It is a well-known understanding that people-helpers who are astute to their professional calling will approach the need of each person that is served with at least some basic theoretical structure. But how does one evaluate that structure to make sure that it agrees with scripture? The reader is offered helpful admonition and examples are also provided. Navigating this domain can be challenging considering present-day issues that people-helping professionals face.

The third domain that is discussed by the authors is "applied integration." If the reader is not tenacious to keep moving through the chapters and stops before reaching this point, it seems that much of the benefit of the book will be forfeited. As the authors state: "In this chapter we focus on the domain of application of the psychological disciplines to address practical tasks such as treating mental illness or providing data-based change consultation to individuals, groups, or societies" (95). An extremely valuable discussion in this chapter is on implicit, explicit, and intentional

integration. A people-helper who is a Christian can exercise wisdom and find encouragement as these concepts are explored.

The fourth domain, "role integration," an area that can be fraught with questions and challenges, is the next area of the integration project that is addressed. The authors have said: "The need for professional role integration arises when Christians voluntarily enter a profession that requires fidelity to ethic codes, professional practice standards, relevant legal statues, or regulation" (125). This section of the book is helpful for those individuals who have been called to serve in secular people-helping vocations but struggle with navigating the tensions that frequently occur. However, giving to "Caesar" what is appropriately owed and having a dynamic witness for Christ's kingdom is achievable.

The last domain, "personal integration," was this reviewer's favorite part of the book. This is not because it is more important than all the other domains that have been discussed, but because the authors share at length their own personal journey from the time that they trusted Christ as Savior to the present place that they occupy in their professional work. Their stories are interesting and an encouragement to those who pursue a passion for Christ even though there are challenges. The reader is reminded in this chapter that if we are to be faithful in our personal integration, then we need to value cultural humility. The authors emphasize that cultural humility is fleshed out in the multicultural counseling literature and is a mindset that must pervade our professional and personal endeavors.

In summary, this book supplies an excellent historical overview of the integration project and supplies incentive for this exploration to continue. It is not a book that should be read hastily, expecting to obtain quick and easy answers but rather provides an opportunity for the Christian people-helping professional to explore more deeply how one can be faithful to their vocation and pleasing to God.

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Telling a Better Story: How to Talk About God in a Skeptical Age. By Joshua D. Chatraw. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Reflective, 2020. 228 pp. Softcover $18.99.

Chatraw's *Telling a Better Story: How to Talk About God in a Skeptical Age* convincingly calls readers to consider a new approach to the apologetic task for our post-Christian (and postmodern) age. The volume consists of three parts: part one lays out Chatraw's apologetic method, part two gives examples of the method in practice, and part three helps the reader to address obstacles the apologist may encounter when using this method to evangelize.

The key chapter of the book, chapter five, lays out the particulars of Chatraw's apologetic method. Chatraw calls his method "inside out apologetics," a name which points to the approach's two key tasks. First, inside out apologetics calls the believer to enter "inside" (i.e., come to understand) the "story" of the unsaved person he seeks to reach. By "story," Chatraw means the person's metanarrative framework (i.e., worldview) they are using to assign meaning to their life experiences. The basic assumption in this first task is that any metanarrative framework that excludes God will inevitably run into difficulties to fully and satisfactorily explain our experiences as human beings. The first job of the apologist, therefore, is to locate those difficulties through a careful analysis of the lost person's story.

This analysis of the unsaved person's story then gives way to the apologist's second task: to move from "inside" the lost person's metanarrative framework "outside" to the better story of the Gospel—the better metanarrative framework that more satisfactorily explains human experience. As Chatraw writes, "By working inside rival stories to show how their own narratives fail to adequately answer life's biggest questions we've created space for the other person to seriously consider how Christianity offers a more satisfying and rationally coherent story" (69–70).

In part two, Chatraw gives examples of the worldview analysis integral to his inside out approach. To do this, he takes five elements of the secular worldview, examines their insufficiencies, and explains how the gospel offers the better framework for understanding the human concerns embodied in these elements. For example, Chatraw explores society's longing for self-worth and how

the gospel offers a better framework for answering this longing than the framework offered by a secularist worldview. Chatraw's list of five elements is not meant to be exhaustive; rather, Chatraw is offering a model of going inside the secularists' stories in order to find opportunities to lead the lost person out to the better story offered in Scripture. Part three, the shortest of the three parts, concludes the volume by responding to common objections to the notion that the Bible's story is indeed the better story. Here, Chatraw hopes to answer objections from the lost that the gospel story is indeed the better story the apologist claims it is.

In an earlier publication by Chatraw, the strategy presented in *Telling a Better Story* is contextualized within the broader landscape of apologetic method. Chatraw sees the inside out method as sharing some of the DNA of presuppositionalism in that both methods "stress that all evidence and reasoning depends on a person's particular framework [i.e., that person's story or metanarrative]."[1] Additionally, within *Telling a Better Story*, Chatraw promotes the use of evidentialist arguments when the apologist is faced with certain objections to the better story (e.g., objections to the factual nature of the biblical story). In other words, Chatraw's method shares a similarity with presuppositionalism and is not against the incorporation of classical or evidentialist apologetics in certain situations. That said, Chatraw's inside out apologetic lays out a unique approach making its own contributions to Christian apologetics alongside classical, evidentialist, and presuppositionalist methods.

One such contribution of Chatraw's inside out apologetic is its offer of a more organic route to the gospel. Chatraw claims the key component of his apologetic, a critical reflection on the lost person's story (metanarrative), allows the apologist to build "a bridge" to the better story of the Gospel (7). What is uniquely helpful about the bridge inside-out apologetics builds is that the raw materials for the bridge—the connections that facilitate Christian witness—are located within the lost person himself. The inside-out apologetic "is about engaging the deepest aspirations of our secular friends and

[1] "A Way Forward for Pastor-Apologists: Navigating the Apologetic Method Debate," *Journal of Biblical and Theological Studies* 3, no. 1 (2018): 73.

asking them to consider how the story of the gospel … just may lead them to what their heart has been looking or all along" (7). In other words, the aspirations are already there—the raw materials necessary for building a bridge to the gospel are already present. Thus, the method provides an organic route to the Gospel making the method highly accessible to the lay person (human aspirations are something we are all intimately familiar with) while also making the method immediately relatable to the lost person.

While the approach itself is very accessible, Chatraw's decision to not include real-life examples of his apologetic in action feels like a missed opportunity in his attempt to provide a true "how to" as his title promises. Not only would such examples demonstrate the effectiveness of his method, but they would also serve as a guide to help readers visualize what real-life implementation of the inside-out apologetic might look like in regular conversation. Multiple times throughout the volume, Chatraw discusses his intentional avoidance of presenting his apologetic in any sort of formulaic way. When introducing part two, for example, Chatraw clarifies, "The goal in this section is not to give you a list of apologetic 'moves,' but instead to pass on a *way* to approach engaging others." He continues, "Rather than strict step-by-step instructions, the goal is for you to come away with trajectories for talking about God in a post-Christian landscape" (74). It is possible that the lack of real-world examples simply reflects his goal to not "offer a rigid system to be followed slavishly" (66). However, for the sake of demonstrating the method's effectiveness, and for the sake of equipping readers with a clear visualization of the method in real-world conversations, inclusion of examples from Chatraw's own experiences would have helped toward fully realizing his goal of providing a "how to."

This is not to say that the "how to" question is left unanswered. While his own experiences with his method are left out of the volume, Chatraw nonetheless includes many examples of how to think critically about secular metanarratives and identify those places within these stories where bridges to the gospel can be built. In fact, one of the greatest values of *Telling a Better Story* is the way in which it provides an excellent model of cultural analysis. Chatraw repeatedly demonstrates what it looks like for a believer to carefully analyze the worldviews of the lost—a critical skill

Chatraw correctly identifies as being key to successful Christian witness in a post-Christian world.

Overall, *Telling a Better Story* is a great read for pastors and interested laymen. Not only does it provide a compelling method for introducing the lost to the Gospel within this post-Christian and postmodern age, but the volume also offers ample encouragement to the believer as page after page confirms the "better story's" powerful and satisfying explanatory power for all human experience.

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Baptism: A Guide to Life from Death. By Peter J. Leithart. Bellingham, WA: Lexham, 2021. 128 pp. Softcover $15.99; Kindle $9.99.

With this book, Peter Leithart attempts to "reunite a church divided by baptism" by recovering "the baptismal imagination of earlier generations" (2). In other words, he hopes to bridge the credobaptist/paedobaptist divide, which is an admirable aspiration for sure, and he aims to do so in an imaginative way. It's this imaginative approach that will leave the reader disappointed who expects either a careful explanation of biblical texts pertaining to baptism or a methodical exploration of the development of this doctrine and practice throughout church history. The author follows neither of these strategies. Instead, he follows Martin Luther's "Great Flood Prayer" as a guide and template for his study, an approach which gives this book a distinctively Lutheran flavor. The author himself acknowledges that the book features "Lutheran overtones" (105). He prefaces each of his ten chapters with a sequential quotation from Luther's formulaic prayer, then he constructs each chapter around concepts that relate to each quotation some way or another.

Throughout the book, Leithart offers a variety of imaginative connections and interpretations of biblical and theological concepts which he believes will enhance our understanding of and appreciation for baptism. He states these proposed insights,

however, in ambiguous and imprecise ways. To reinforce his perspective, he cites a variety of sources and personalities from church history, turning most frequently to ancient figures like Tertullian, Gregory of Nyssa, John Chrysostom, Cyril of Jerusalem, and also to a contemporary figure in N.T. Wright. Among others, he cites the Shepherd of Hermas and even draws from John Paul II on one occasion, whom he names side-by-side with William Carey and Hudson Taylor and whom he claims spoke "prophetic words" which were "energized by the Spirit" (94). He draws from such ecumenical sources throughout the book.

Leithart follows a flexible and fluid hermeneutical method when citing or interpreting Bible passages that speak of baptism. Not only does he fail to distinguish between passages pertaining to water baptism and those pertaining to Spirit baptism, he also fails to distinguish between water baptism and regeneration, as when he makes unclear statements like "baptism makes the baptized a new creature" (31) and "Jesus' blood cleanses us through baptismal water" (63). Such theological ambiguity is confusing and unhelpful for both scholarly study and congregational ministry alike. The author also offers unmistakable admiration for infant baptism. In one place he makes an impassioned plea for credobaptist readers to acknowledge the spiritual value of infant baptism (41–44), claiming elsewhere that "in baptism, adults and infants are pledged to Jesus…" (55).

Leithart's fluid hermeneutical method emerges most prolifically, however, by how he draws baptismal significance from what seems to be any biblical mention of water whatsoever. For instance, when discussing the messianic king of Psalm 72:6, "who is like rain upon the mowing, like showers that water the earth," he suggests that "the just king baptized the land" and concludes that "baptism is the good news that Jesus' royal rain has fallen from heaven to earth" (85–86). Such imaginative interpretations permeate this book, from the waters of Creation and Eden to the waters of the Flood, to any water appearing in Moses' life, to mentions of water in the Old Testament prophets, and more. Leithart's fundamental hermeneutical principle here seems to be that whenever Scripture speaks of water it provides us with yet another insight into the significance of baptism.

Throughout this book, Leithart certainly applies a high degree of "baptismal imagination," and this highly imaginative approach is precisely what makes the book difficult to recommend. While it makes clear that Leithart thinks highly of baptism and desires for the reader to do the same, it fails to provide a clear biblical theology of baptism, leaning hard upon imaginative statements by ecumenical figures from church history and on loose creative and philosophical interpretations instead. As such, there is no compelling reason to add this book to your personal or ministerial curriculum, library, or reading list.

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