

Book Reviews

A Reader's Greek New Testament. Compiled by Richard J. Goodrich and Albert L. Lukaszewski. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003, 585 pp., \$29.99.

Richard Goodrich and Albert Lukaszewski have put together for readers the Greek text that formed the basis for the NIV translation of the New Testament. The main purpose of the book is to enable students to read the Greek New Testament with greater facility. Hence, definitions are provided at the bottom of the page for any word that occurs thirty times or less in the NT. The definitions are taken from Trenchard's *Complete Guide to the Greek New Testament*, though the compilers checked the context and revised the definition if they were convinced that Trenchard's definitions did not adequately convey the meaning in a particular verse.

The aim of the book, then, is not to provide a critical text of the New Testament with an apparatus. It functions as a practical tool to assist students who are constantly turning to a lexicon when attempting to read larger sections of the New Testament. By listing all the words that occur thirty times or less, students are spared having to search through a lexicon with the result that they lose the train of thought in a passage.

In my judgment the book serves as a helpful tool for learning how to read the Greek New Testament more quickly. If students become proficient at reading larger sections of the New

Testament, they will have a better feel for interpreting smaller texts in which they do intense exegesis.

On the other hand, there is the danger that students would rely on this tool and fail to use lexicons like BDAG (*A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed.). A wealth of information is contained in BDAG, and I learned much about Greek searching through BDAG trying to find out the meaning of words! If students restrict themselves to *A Reader's Greek New Testament*, their knowledge of Greek will be rather superficial. Nevertheless, I am essentially positive about the book because one of the keys to learning how to read the New Testament is reading, reading, and reading.

Another benefit of the book is that it contains a Greek text that differs from UBS⁴ and NA²⁷. As I mentioned earlier, a sophisticated critical apparatus is not contained in the book, though the compilers do provide a footnote at every place where they differ from UBS⁴ and NA²⁷. The Greek text standing behind the NIV differs from these standard Greek editions in 231 places. It is not my purpose to defend or criticize the Greek text used for the NIV. It is salutary for readers, however, to own a Greek text that differs from UBS⁴ and NA²⁷, for readers may gain the mistaken impression from UBS⁴ and NA²⁷ that we have a "received text"! The Greek text underlying the NIV reminds us that the task of textual criticism must

continue.

The book is beautifully bound and the size is convenient for traveling. I found the italic font pleasing to read, though some students have complained to me that they found it difficult. OT citations are put in a bold font and the OT reference is noted at the bottom of the page. In my opinion, this is a very helpful tool, and I suspect that it will sell very well because it will meet a felt need among students.

Thomas R. Schreiner

Communities of the Last Days: The Dead Sea Scrolls, the New Testament & the Story of Israel. By C. Marvin Pate. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2000, pp., \$22.00 paper.

Marvin Pate investigates the relationship between the Dead Sea Scrolls and the NT in this stimulating work. Pate draws considerably throughout the book on the work of N. T. Wright in comparing and contrasting the worldview of the Essene community and the NT writers. He begins by rehearsing the story of Israel, in which the focus is on sin, exile, and restoration. Israel was sent into exile because of her sin, but looks forward to the promise that she will be liberated from her exile. Pate argues, the by now well-known view, that Israel was considered to be in exile by both the Qumran community and by NT writers. Before exploring in more detail the relationship

between the Dead Sea Scrolls and the NT, Pate sketches in the history of the discovery and publication of the documents. He also summarizes in another chapter the state of scholarship on the Dead Sea Scrolls, concluding, rightly in my judgment, that the Essenes inhabited the Qumran community and were responsible for the documents discovered near the Dead Sea.

The remaining chapters, apart from the conclusion, compare and contrast the Dead Sea Scrolls with the NT. The pesher hermeneutic in the Dead Sea Writings and in Matthew's Gospel are compared. Another chapter explores the messianic hope in Qumran and the NT. Luke-Acts and the Dead Sea Scrolls are investigated by considering story, symbol, and praxis—terms that derive from the work of N. T. Wright. The theology of justification in the Pauline literature and at Qumran is examined at some length. Scholars generally agree now that devotion to Torah and mysticism could flourish together. The focus on angels in the Qumran writings and the opponents in Colossae are probed from the standpoint of mysticism. The final two chapters of the book examine the epistle to the Hebrews and the Gospel of John relative to the Dead Sea Scrolls.

Pate rightly remarks that both the NT writers and Dead Sea Scrolls share the same general story about Israel. God has made glorious promises about Israel's future, and yet these promises have not been fulfilled. The reason they have not come to pass is Israel's sin. Pate argues that both the Dead Sea Community and the

NT writers believed that Israel was still in exile. Other scholars question, however, whether the term "exile" is fitting, especially since many in Israel lived in the land. It is remarkable that Paul, for instance, never uses the word "exile" when he speaks of Israel's sin. I think all would agree, however, that the promises found in the OT were not yet fulfilled, and that they also believed that the promises were not realized because of Israel's sin. Hence, during the Second Temple era all Israel looked forward to the day when the promises made to Abraham would come to fruition. In a broad sense, therefore, both the Qumran Community and NT writers shared a similar worldview. It seems to me that Pate is on target in this respect.

Pate does not merely argue that the Dead Sea Scrolls and the NT adopted the same story of Israel. He points out both similarities and differences. For example, in the chapter on justification he argues that Paul's stance toward the law was quite different from the view promulgated at Qumran. Interestingly (and rightly in my opinion), Pate agrees that Paul engages in a polemic against meritorious works in Rom 9:30-10:8, something many NT scholars now doubt. On the other hand, he says that most Jews during the Second Temple period were not "consciously legalistic" but were covenantal nomists (28). Probably most legalists are not conscious of their legalism, so this statement is not particularly helpful. It is also unclear that the phrase "covenantal nomism" exempts one from legalism, for some forms of legalism could exist under

the umbrella of covenantal nomism. In some instances Pate exaggerates the extent of agreement between the Dead Sea Scrolls and the NT. For instance, he does not emphasize sufficiently that the one-time baptism of John is quite different from the repeated lustrations practiced at Qumran. Nor is it clear that eating at Qumran provided "true forgiveness of sins" (142) and is comparable to the Lord's Supper. The rigor of the Dead Sea Community should make us cautious about saying that repentance and self-denial were required in both Luke-Acts and at Qumran. The differences between the communities are not clearly acknowledged at this point. At the very least, more detailed interpretation is needed to vindicate such views.

The danger in this book, and in Wright's work as well, is the domestication of the text in the service of the larger thesis. I realize the book surveys the literature and hence cannot cover all of the issues in detail. Nevertheless, many of the conclusions require more detailed exegetical support. I wondered often in reading the book whether the grand thesis is actually vindicated by detailed exegesis of the biblical text. In this respect the work of Wright, and hence Pate, deserves further scrutiny. And yet Pate has done a service to scholarship by illustrating some of the differences and similarities between Qumran and the NT. He is also correct in arguing that they share a larger story, and hence his work drives us all back to the biblical text afresh.

Thomas R. Schreiner

Who Rules the Church? Examining Congregational Leadership and Church Government. By Gerald P. Cowen, with foreword by Jerry Vines and appendices by Emir E. Caner and Stephen Prescott. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2003, 152 pp., \$19.99 paper.

The question of who rules the church is a crucial issue that has brought disagreement and painful rupture to a number of Baptist churches in recent years. Gerald Cowen, Senior Professor of New Testament and Greek and Dean of Southeastern College at Wake Forest, brings a wealth of biblical expertise and pastoral wisdom to answering this question. In short, Cowen articulates a convincing defense of the traditional Baptist interpretation that the New Testament authorizes two ministerial offices (pastor/elder, and deacon) under the framework of congregational polity.

The chapters of the book address the key issues relating to the pastor-elder role: defining the pastor-elder, the call of the pastor-elder, the role of the pastor-elder, the qualifications for pastor-elders, the authority of the pastor-elder, and the pastor-elder and the deacon. After a helpful survey of all the relevant New Testament passages, Cowen concludes that the terms “pastor,” “elder,” and “bishop” all refer to the same office (most commonly called “pastor” in our time).

The chapter on the call to service would be especially helpful to someone struggling to discern God’s will about a call to Christian ministry. Cowen gives specific guidance about

how to discern the inward call experienced by a person feeling led into a ministerial calling, and how to evaluate the outward call by which this inward call is confirmed and verified by other believers.

Carefully tracing the duties of the pastor-elder outlined in Scripture, Cowen categorizes these responsibilities according to instructional, pastoral, and administrative duties. He also describes the spiritual gifts that should be evidenced in a pastor’s life. Cowen emphasizes that teaching is the primary responsibility of the pastoral office, so much so that Paul literally put this responsibility in the name of the office “pastor-teacher” (Eph 4:2). The role of deacon/server was established by the church specifically for the purpose of allowing the apostles to focus on the ministry of the Word (Acts 6:2), and one of the distinguishing characteristics of a pastor-elder is that he should be “apt to teach” (1 Tim 3:2, Titus 1:9). Cowen thus denies the division of pastor-elders into “teaching elders” and “ruling elders,” since teaching is the primary responsibility for all elders. Even 1 Timothy 5:17, the primary text used to justify ruling elders because it mentions “elders who rule well,” emphasizes that these elders are “those who labor in word and doctrine.” Being an effective teacher is simply one aspect of a pastor-teacher-elder ruling (or leading) the congregation well.

Cowen’s survey of the New Testament qualifications for pastor-elder would be extremely helpful to any pastor search committee. Cowen groups the qualifications listed in

1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1 under the categories of general qualifications, moral qualifications, mental qualifications, personal qualifications, domestic qualifications, Christian experience, and reputation. In discussing the moral qualifications, Cowen offers a concise overview of the six main interpretations that have been offered regarding the meaning of “husband of one wife.” Cowen favors the interpretation that a divorced man would be disqualified from the pastoral role.

The chapter on “The Authority of the Pastor-Elder” is must reading for any church in our day. Cowen surveys the three main approaches to church governance—bishop-rule, elder-rule, and congregational-rule. Carefully examining the pattern of the New Testament church, Cowen offers a strong biblical defense of why Baptists and many other evangelical Christians believe in congregational church polity. Cowen cites six biblical reasons that suggest that the New Testament pattern is congregational rule, including the church being the final court of appeal in matters of church discipline (Matt. 18:15-17), the election of officers by all church members (Acts 1:15-26), the approval of representatives and missionaries sent out by the church (Acts 13:1-3; 14:27; 18:22-23; 1 Cor 16:4), the complementarity of spiritual gifts within the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12), the settlement of disputes within the church by the church (1 Cor 6:2-4), and the priesthood of all believers (1 Pet 2:5).

Cowen grounds his discussion of pastoral authority in congregational

polity, offering a balanced approach that empowers divinely appointed leaders to lead, but in which the final authority still resides with the congregation as a whole. In a helpful complementary chapter on the relation of the pastor to deacons, Cowen outlines the scriptural qualifications and roles of deacons, and outlines a pattern for pastors and deacons to work together constructively to accomplish the work of the church.

Throughout his discussion, Cowen grounds his description of congregational leadership in the New Testament. He never resorts to following Baptist tradition simply because we have always done it that way. We have that tradition because that is what we understand a New Testament church to be. However, in two very informative and interesting appendices, Emir Caner and Stephen Prescott establish the fact that congregational rule as led by two scriptural offices of pastor and deacon is indeed a longstanding Baptist tradition. In "Ecclesiology in the Free Churches of the Reformation (1525-1608)," Emir Caner recounts how early Anabaptists such as Conrad Grebel, Balthasar Hubmaier, Michael Sattler, and Menno Simons sought to restore the pattern of New Testament church governance in contradistinction to the Roman Catholic and Magisterial Reformation models. In fact, Caner argues, the reason that the magisterial reformers martyred the early Anabaptists was precisely because of the reformers' rejection of the Anabaptists' different ecclesiology.

Stephen Prescott extends this argument in "Ecclesiology among

Baptists in Great Britain and America (1609-Present)." Surveying all the major Baptist confessions, Prescott argues that Baptists historically have not differed significantly from other evangelicals on key doctrinal affirmations such as the sufficiency of Scripture, salvation by grace through faith, Christ as the only way of salvation, and so on. Baptist ecclesiology has been our most distinctive doctrine. However, Prescott expresses the concern that this Baptist doctrine is endangered in our day. Addressing what he calls our "current ecclesiological confusion," Prescott bemoans the fact that some churches with the name "Baptist" now refuse to require believer's baptism as a basis of church membership, while some other churches have "adopted Presbyterian polity" (143) by adding ruling elders to the two New Testament offices and giving authority to lead the church to these ruling elders. According to Prescott, holding ecclesiological views so divergent from Baptist beliefs does not make one a heterodox or carnal Christian, but it does "make one not a Baptist" (144).

Who Rules the Church? is an important work that should be read by every Baptist, but it should be required reading for church leaders, deacons, search committees, and young ministers. It is refreshing to read such a clearly articulated biblical explanation of what a New Testament church is and how it should be governed.

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Theological Aesthetics: A Reader. By Gesa Elsbeth Thiessen. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005, xvi + 400 pp., \$35.00 paper.

In the past twenty years or so there has been a tremendous increase of discussion in an attribute of God that for some reason had been sadly neglected for far too long, namely, God's beauty. This, in turn, has inspired or been linked to a recent upswing of interest in the topic of theological aesthetics as it relates to Christian worship, the fine arts, and beauty in general. In the mind of this reviewer, all of this is very positive. But for anyone wishing to do some reading in this area without spending significant amounts of time ferreting out the primary sources, there really was no tool available. This new reader by Gesa Thiessen, who is a Reader in Theology at Milltown Institute of Theology and Philosophy in Dublin, S. Ireland, ably fills this lacuna.

She has gathered together a wide variety of sources from the early church through to the modern day that deal with a host of topics related to this subject—from ancient authors like Hilary of Poitiers and Augustine through medieval thinkers like Anselm and Richard of St Victor and Protestant authors such as Luther and Edwards to modern-day figures like Van Balthasar and Patrick Sherry. I believe it will become a standard in this area of study and reflection.

I was thrilled to see the inclusion of a number of readings by Jonathan Edwards and even one by John Owen. More could have been included from

the Puritans, who did some fine thinking on this subject as it relates to God, and by their theological mentor, John Calvin. I was a bit surprised not to find “God’s Grandeur” by Gerard Manly Hopkins, a classic poetic treatment of God’s beauty, or anything by Simone Weil (1909-1943), the French philosopher and social activist, who can describe the beauty of the world as the appearance of divine beauty. But not everything can be included—it is after all a selection—and every reader is bound to miss some of his or her favorites.

One other quibble has to do with selections relating to two early church fathers—Tertullian and Clement of Alexandria—on the subject of “senses, dress codes, and negative views of women” (49-58). The selections were very one-sided in emphasizing their negative views of female beauty and, in Tertullian’s case, his misogyny. M. Eleanor Irwin, in a study of Clement of Alexandria’s perspective on how women should live, has shown how Clement avoided misogyny and sought to give women a dignity not always found in early Christian circles (see “Clement of Alexandria: Instructions on How Women Should Live” in *Hellenization Revisited: Shaping a Christian Response with the Greco-Roman World*, ed. Wendy E. Helleman [New York: University Press of America, 1994], 395-407). Tertullian’s misogynous statements cannot be ignored, but, as Barbara Finlay has recently argued, they need to be placed in tandem with much warmer views as found, for example, in his *To His Wife*. Finlay convincingly argues that Tertullian

believed “women could lead model lives of great holiness and influence through prayerful and disciplined service to God and to others” (see “Was Tertullian a Misogynist? A Reconsideration,” *The Journal of the Historical Society* 22, no.3-4 [2003]: 524).

Such quibbles aside, this is a really fine selection of sources that will hopefully inform, broaden, and deepen thinking about this vital area.

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Literary Lessons from The Lord of the Rings. By Amelia Harper. Nashville, NC: Homescholar Books, 2004, 622 pp., \$50.00 paper.

Many Christian pastors and educators have the desire to incorporate the classics of English Literature into their reading regimens, but they fear that they are ill equipped to understand and to think critically about those works. My first observation is that the difficulty of understanding the classics has, in my opinion, been greatly exaggerated. But having said that, I understand that it is entirely possible to receive what will pass as a fairly decent education without having read a single literary classic, and a person who finds himself in such a condition may feel intimidated by the prospect of plunging into the great books. Perhaps their perceived incompetence could be remedied by taking an introduction to literature course at a local university,

but besides being time consuming and expensive, it is possible that the professor would spend more time emphasizing his particular critical approach to literature than he would spend on the literature itself.

In *Literary Lessons from The Lord of the Rings*, Amelia Harper has written a delightful introduction to literary studies, which, as the title implies, focuses on understanding one great book, J. R. R. Tolkien’s *Lord of the Rings*. The same tools necessary to enjoy and critically evaluate this one classic may easily be applied to enjoying and evaluating other great books. Choosing Tolkien’s work as a paradigm of great literature was a wise choice. Harper observes in the introduction, “The Lord of the Rings differs from most novels in many ways: it incorporates the use of poetry; it involves invented languages; it contains reference resources such as maps, genealogies, and chronologies; and it was written by an Oxford English professor who used his knowledge of ancient literature to create his own novel” (9).

Harper’s method of instruction starts with assuming the reader has just finished reading a particular chapter from *Lord of the Rings*. She then leads the student through a brief review of the chapter, and then, in a vocabulary section, she teaches the meaning of unfamiliar words by pointing them out in their context—perhaps the most effective way of augmenting one’s vocabulary. Throughout the book she introduces over 600 vocabulary words, all of which are gleaned from the pages of *The Lord of the Rings*. My favorite

feature is the additional notes, in which Harper gives the reader juicy tidbits of information about Tolkien, his writing, and lots of interesting facts about Middle Earth. Perhaps more significantly, in the additional notes she introduces a wealth of literary ideas and motifs, all illustrated from the chapter under consideration. Each chapter concludes with discussion questions that require interaction with the text. There are also thirteen unit studies scattered throughout the book and two more in the appendices. These unit studies explore a wide variety of subjects that inform and enhance the study of the great books as well as *The Lord of the Rings* itself.

Literary Lessons from the Lord of the Rings was written to serve as a secondary school textbook, but it is more than suitable for anyone who would like to brush up on his literary skills or acquire those skills for the first time.

Jim Scott Orrick

Faithfulness and Fortitude: In Conversation with the Ethics of Stanley Hauerwas. Edited by Mark Thiessen Nation and Samuel Wells. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 2000, 335 pages, \$32.95 paper.

This volume is a festschrift for Stanley Hauerwas, Professor of Theological Ethics at Duke University, on the occasion of his sixtieth birthday. Edited by two of his former students, the contributors seek to engage Hauerwas's thought and apply it in a variety of diverse ethical issues. Although Hauerwas's written works

almost exclusively address the situation of American Christianity, all but one of the contributors to this volume reside in Great Britain.

The book is divided into three sections. The first four essays extend and apply Hauerwas's thought to specific ethical issues, the second group of essays address three challenges to Hauerwas's thought, and the final four essays engage Hauerwas's ideas from diverse perspectives. Functionally, however, all eleven essays provide an extended conversation with Hauerwas's thought. In a concluding article, Hauerwas provides his response and perspective to each of the articles.

The first four articles apply Hauerwas's thought to the university setting, the British mental health system, the Peace Movement, and British urban renewal. Mark Thiessen Nation, a Mennonite who served as co-editor of this volume, affirms Hauerwas's belief that pacifism and peacemaking should be a major focus of the life of the church. The article by the other co-editor, Samuel Wells, recounts how he applied Hauerwas's principles in attempting to accomplish urban renewal through his Anglican parish.

The next three articles address challenges and criticisms that have been voiced about Hauerwas's thought. Nigel Biggar of the Theology faculty of the University of Leeds addresses the issue "Is Stanley Hauerwas a Sectarian?" Biggar defends Hauerwas against Max Stackhouse's criticism that the Hauerwasian concept of the Christian community as aliens in the secular world inevitably results

in a sectarian withdrawal from the world. Hauerwas rejects the kind of apologetics practiced by liberal theologians such as Niebuhr and Tillich in which the Christian gospel is made credible to an unbelieving world by sacrificing distinctive Christian doctrines. Despite Hauerwas's insistence on not allowing the world to set the agenda for the church, Biggar argues effectively that Hauerwas saw the true church as actively engaged in trying to impact the world. Linda Woodhead of Lancaster University encourages Hauerwas (despite his identification of feminism as an unprofitable aspect of the liberal Enlightenment project) to go further with some of his own insights toward a more robust gendered perspective and embodied theology. Duncan Forrester of the University of Edinburgh addresses the applicability of Hauerwas's strong emphasis on the church as an alternative community from the world to the issue of how a Christian church could stand just outside the gates of the Dachau concentration camp.

The last four articles offer a conversation with Hauerwas on four diverse issues—personal virtue, abortion, the cinema, and politics. The article on the aesthetics of the cinema by Gerard Loughlin of the University of Newcastle is particularly insightful. In a profound and thoughtful essay, Loughlin utilizes the Platonic allegory of the cave to suggest how the church can learn from the cinema about the use of imagery.

Hauerwas is a major point of reference in contemporary ethical thought. Although evangelicals have

many points of difference with him, especially regarding the inspiration and interpretation of Scripture, he is closer to evangelical perspectives than some other contemporary Christian approaches such as liberalism, liberation theology, feminist theology, process theology, or postmodernism. His writing is provocative and sometimes insightful. Evangelical Christian ethicists would do well to enter into a thoughtful and constructive dialogue with Hauerwas.

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Romans: An Exposition of Chapter 14:1-17: Liberty and Conscience. By D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones. Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 2003, xiv + 271 pp., \$26.99.

This volume brings to a conclusion Lloyd-Jones's remarkable Expositions of the Epistle to the Romans. The first volume published, the one on Romans 3:20-4:25, appeared in print in 1970, two years after The Doctor's retirement from ministry at Westminster Chapel. The final message, the last one in the volume under consideration here, was preached Friday evening, March 1, 1968; it was Lloyd-Jones's 372nd sermon from Paul's magisterial epistle. Before he could return to the pulpit the following Sunday he was diagnosed with a condition that led to surgery and then to retirement, which was why the series ended here.

Students and pastors who have never read this man's expositions

ought to start here. As Paul deals with the great theoretical and practical issues of life in this age, Lloyd-Jones does an excellent job of showing the applicability of these concerns to modern life. The third, fourth, and fifth sermons in the volume (none of the sermons has an actual title) deals with issues of legalism, asceticism and liberty. Admitting that he grew up in a legalistic atmosphere, the preacher makes very clear distinctions between a genuine concern to obey God and submission to a legalistic spirit. The advice he gives in these messages is sound and clear and will help anyone seeking to find a solution to the problem of legalism.

Sermon thirteen deals with the issue of perseverance. Here is one of the finest example of doctrinal preaching on a difficult topic, as he deals with the statement by Paul, "Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died" (Rom 14:16, KJV). Lloyd-Jones shows how ministry, theology, and exposition can come together in the event of preaching to make a difference in the thinking and experience of those who hear the preached word.

Probably no one today should follow all of Lloyd-Jones's philosophy of exposition. But the careful reader can learn much of what ought to be done by studying this man's sermons.

Chad Owen Brand

Becoming Conversant with the Emerging Church: Understanding a Movement and Its Implications. By D. A. Carson. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005, 250pp., \$14.99 paper.

If you were wondering whether D. A. Carson had an opinion on the so-called "emergent church" movement, wonder no more. In his new book, *Becoming Conversant with the Emerging Church: Understanding a Movement and Its Implications*, Carson delivers a biblical and theological wallop against a movement that he argues has been animated by the values of postmodernity. Carson saves what is perhaps his severest denunciation for the very last page of the book, and it packs quite a rhetorical punch against emergent thought: "Damn all the false antitheses to hell, for they generate false gods, they perpetuate idols, they twist and distort our souls, they launch the church into violent pendulum swings whose oscillations succeed only in dividing brothers and sisters in Christ" (234).

The book does not begin with the same stark censure with which it ends, but rather builds to its acerbic conclusion. The early chapters of the book are largely taken up with a description of the emergent church movement, while the latter chapters build into a crescendo of rather pointed critiques of the same. In chapter one, Carson gives a brief profile of the emergent movement. In chapter two, he outlines the emergent church's "strengths in reading the times" (45). In chapter three, Carson discusses what he sees as weaknesses in the emerging church's analysis of contemporary culture. In chapter four, he evaluates "postmodernism's contributions and challenges" (87) in what is principally a rehashing of material from his earlier work *The Gagging of God*. In chapter five,

Carson argues that the emergent church has not adequately critiqued postmodernism. In chapter six, he points out weaknesses in the movement by critiquing two significant books, one written by a prominent American leader in the movement (Brian McLaren) and one by a British leader (Steve Chalke). In chapter seven, Carson evaluates the emergent movement in light of the scriptures (188). In chapter eight, the concluding chapter, he offers a “meditation” on the relationship of objective truth and subjective experience in the life of the Christian.

If *The Gagging of God* is Carson’s critique of the ideology of postmodernism, then *Becoming Conversant with the Emergent Church* is his critique of the practice of postmodernism as it is being carried out in the emergent church. Thus, those who disliked Carson’s earlier analysis of postmodernity in *The Gagging of God* might still be dissatisfied with *Becoming Conversant* inasmuch as it builds upon the former work.

That being said, there is much more to commend in this little book than there is to critique. First, Carson tackles the difficult task of describing a movement that is far from monolithic. Yet he is able to capture some characteristics which appear to be common among those in the movement. One characteristic that reoccurs in the writings of emergent authors is a “manipulative antithesis” (104) that is often used to force modernists into the epistemological mold of postmodernity: “This antithesis is rarely argued in the literature, but it is almost everywhere assumed by

postmodern writers. . . . In effect, the antithesis demands that we be God, with all of God’s omniscience, or else be forever condemned to knowing nothing objective for sure” (105). In other words, postmodern theologians and their emergent offspring often allege that if we cannot know anything omnisciently, then it is not possible to know objective truth at all. Carson shows throughout this book that this is in fact a false antithesis that is not born out by reason or scripture. He counters that “critical realism” offers a way for us to acknowledge that while we cannot know anything omnisciently, we can know some things adequately (110).

Carson’s training is that of a New Testament scholar, and more than anything else he brings the Scripture to bear upon the ideology of the emergent church (and make no mistake, there is an ideology to postmodernism!). Though he provides scriptural reflections throughout, chapters six and seven in particular contain important material on what the Bible claims about the nature of truth-claims which often stand in stark contrast to that painted by emergent writers. The contrast is often so pronounced that Carson concludes that two of the most significant emergent ministers, “both [Steve] Chalke and [Brian] McLaren have largely abandoned the Gospel” (186).

This book is short, but its length should not be mistaken for a lack of biblical depth and theological insight. It is not only a handy primer on the emergent church, its leaders, and its literature; but it is also a faithful

critique of a movement that, taken to seed, undermines evangelical faith.

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The Advancement: Keeping the Faith in an Evolutionary Age. By L. Russ Bush. Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2003, 148 pp., \$19.99 paper.

How can believers maintain their faith in the scriptural account of creation when they are bombarded by evolutionary beliefs in schools, in books, and in the media? Russ Bush, Vice President for Academic Affairs, Dean of the Faculty, and Senior Professor of Philosophy of Religion at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, takes up this challenge in *The Advancement*. The “Advancement,” as Bush coins the word, references the merging perspectives of evolution and inevitable progress that frame the secular modern worldview.

In each chapter of the book, Bush addresses a key aspect of the evolutionary worldview. His contrast of the modern worldview with the classical worldview in chapter one is particularly helpful. In the classical Christian worldview, the universe is a divine creation characterized by rationality and stability. Animals do develop within species lines over time, but the various species stay essentially constant. Humans are created in the image of God but have suffered spiritual failure in the Fall. History is marked by spiritual warfare, divine intervention, and “survival of the faithful” (15). The

modern evolutionary worldview views the universe as the product of naturalistic evolution, which crosses species lines to create new species. Humans are at the pinnacle of evolution, but relate exclusively to the animals (not God). History is marked by struggle and change toward inevitable progress through the “survival of the fittest.”

Bush offers a helpful survey of the development of modern science, especially with regard to materialism and uniformitarianism. He also identifies the crucial dangers of these doctrines: the loss of belief in humanity as a divine creation, and the loss of belief in objective ethics.

He then contrasts the epistemology of the Christian worldview and that of the modern worldview. The modern epistemology pictures humans as totally related to nature, and therefore humans can never know anything with certainty. All epistemological judgments are probabilistic or pragmatic judgments that may or may not be true. The problem with this view, of course, is that it is self-referentially incoherent. The modernist’s own epistemology is shaped by this evolutionary process of development, so one cannot know this view itself with certainty. Freedom is lost in mere random determinism, and truth is lost in relativism. In contrast, in the Christian worldview the universe is structured to be rational and knowable. While the Christian worldview certainly allows humans to relate to the world of nature, they can also receive truth through God’s revelation. Bush also surveys several theistic views that are

more consistent with the advancement perspective, notably process theology and open theism, and identifies their weaknesses.

Bush offers a very useful description and critique of modern evolutionary thought that is very helpful in understanding the scientific worldview and the challenge it presents to Christianity. He outlines seven assumptions of evolutionary biology, ten axioms of modern scientific thought, and four core beliefs of modern thinkers. He then describes five simple objections to naturalistic evolution. The Christian response that Bush offers to the hegemony of the modern worldview is summarized in three simple but profound affirmations: God exists, the world exists, and Jesus is Lord.

As the author laments, the book’s documentation is presented in endnotes rather than footnotes. However, these endnotes evidence thorough research, afford the scholarly reader deeper reflection, and point out helpful resources for those who desire to investigate a topic more thoroughly.

The Advancement should be read by individual Christians who interact with people who operate out of the modern scientific worldview, or with their own young people who are presented the scientific worldview in the education system. However, this book would also be an excellent resource for a discipleship group for collegians or educated professionals, or as a supplementary text for a college or seminary class.

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Educating for Shalom: Essays on Christian Education. By Nicholas Wolterstorff, ed. Clarence W. Joldersma and Gloria Goris Stronks. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004, 299 pp., \$24.00 paper.

Educating for Shalom is a development of the ideas found in Nicholas Wolterstorff’s other books, *Educating for Responsible Action* and *Reason within the Bounds of Religion*. Anyone who is serious about wrestling with the foundations of Christian education will find these essays thought provoking. They are the result of three decades of wrestling with the question, “What is Christian education?” Wolterstorff sees Christian education as that holistic education which enables Christians to live in God’s world for God’s glory by bringing about shalom. Shalom is more than educating for peace, it is also educating for justice.

As the title reveals, many of the essays focus on various applications of shalom in Christian education. Wolterstorff sees shalom, which includes love and justice, as connected aspects of social justice. Wolterstorff’s view of the Kingdom of God has a direct connection with social justice. His view is that there should be a continual “struggle to bring about shalom – to introduce one and another dimension of shalom into human existence” (143). For this reason Christians who are educated should express the reality of their

beliefs in socially constructive acts.

A notably helpful aspect of this work is its Introduction, which outlines Wolterstorff's main ideas, and an Afterward where Wolterstorff himself tries to address some of the challenging issues addressed in these essays. The book can be divided into four parts, with shalom and social justice running through each essay as a recurrent theme. The first section is on the nature of Christian education, the second, its struggles and purposes. The third section deals with Christian education in a pluralistic society, as in "Kuyper and Christian Learning." Kuyper viewed learning as "organic" in nature, and is considered pre-postmodern (205, 209). The final section addresses the implications of shalom in various Christian education contexts.

Other topic ideas which reflective readers will enjoy are how the West culturally interprets justice, the necessity of shalom based higher education, the importance of doing justice in academic freedom, as well as a call for Christians to be politically active in producing shalom. Isolationism is unknown in Wolterstorff's educational model; it is to be praxis oriented (255). He calls for Christian education to be more than evangelism, and to move beyond a cultural mandate. Wolterstorff calls for it to address the global community and its social problems. *Educating for Shalom* will cause thoughtful reflection concerning the purposes and place of Christian higher education.

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The Cambridge Companion to St. Paul.
By James D. G. Dunn. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003, xxi + 301 pp., \$ 65.00.

A number of *Cambridge Companions to Religion* have already appeared since 1997 prior to the present *Companion* on Paul. The introduction by the editor is a well-done and understandable summary of the major turns of the scholarly discussion of Paul up to the present. On the so-called "New Perspective" on Paul to which Dunn himself made significant contributions, Dunn notes that it met considerable resentment in German scholarship. The only critic mentioned in this context is F. Avemarie, who "observed that the rabbinic evidence is more mixed and argues that Sanders has pushed the covenant side of his 'covenantal nomism' too hard." No reference is made to other German critics (e.g., M. Hengel and P. Stuhlmacher in a variety of publications) or to the recent and extensive criticism by a number of British and American scholars, who should have been mentioned.

Dunn outlines the scope of this collection of essays: "Of more intrinsic interest are the larger questions regarding Paul's life and role as 'apostle to the Gentiles', the distinctive character of each of the letters, the themes of Christian teaching and practice which he addressed, and the heritage which he left behind him through these letters. Since these questions provide the principal subject matter for this *Companion*, and since most of the current thinking on these questions reflects in greater

or less degree the influence of earlier phases of thinking on them, it is important that readers of the *Companion* have some idea of that earlier thinking" (3).

The volume consists of four parts. Part one, "Paul's life and work," is devoted to Paul, the man and missionary. K. Haacker contributes a succinct summary of "Paul's life." Haacker's summary includes discussions of the following: sources and chronology, birth and education, early excellence in a militant religious tradition, conversion, the early years as a member of the church, Paul's profile as an apostle "at large," a survey of the in-house controversies during the ministry of Paul, local conflicts with Jewish or Gentile opponents, and a summary of the movement from Jerusalem to Rome. S. C. Barton examines "Paul as missionary and pastor," including a fine discussion of the metaphors employed by Paul to refer to his ministry, such as envoy, planter, builder, father/mother/nurse, and priest.

Part two covers the individual letters of Paul in their probable chronological order. This part is an interesting—in some cases exciting, in others odd—mixture of what one would expect to find in the introduction of a shorter, popular commentary on these books, in NT introductions, in one volume commentaries on the Bible, in Bible dictionary articles, or in textbooks for NT survey courses. M. M. Mitchell covers 1 and 2 Thessalonians, including historical context, background to both letters and summaries of content. B. Longenecker writes on

Galatians. J. Murphy-O'Connor deals with 1 and 2 Corinthians, including a survey of the content of both letters with occasional explanations. R. Jewett writes on Romans, including a brief discussion of the introductory questions (excellent on the occasion of the letter), followed by a description of the argument and special significance of Romans. M. Hooker is very helpful on Philippians. L. T. Stuckenbruck studies Colossians and Philemon. Ephesians is presented by A. T. Lincoln and the Pastoral Epistles by A. J. Hultgren. Hultgren starts with a survey of the Pastorals in the early church, discusses authorship and origins of the Pastorals, outlines their theology and discusses the issue of church order in the Pastorals and their portrait of Paul. A final section is entitled "The enduring message of the Pastoral Epistles—and enduring questions." Though Hultgren notes that there are some challenges to the majority assessment of the Pastorals as pseudonymous (143f.), neither his notes nor the select bibliography at the end of the volume point to any further reading on this issue.

In part three the contributors attempt a summary of major themes in Pauline theology. A. F. Segal outlines Paul's Jewish presuppositions. His treatment includes a number of methodological presuppositions, the primacy of Scripture interpretation in Paul's theology, the importance of resurrection and the Messiah, Paul's mysticism and the question of what kind of Pharisee Paul was. I missed a detailed discussion of Paul's encounter on the Damascus road (so vividly pictured on the volume's

front cover) and wonder whether this essay should have appeared in part one as part of Paul's life and work. Would Paul's use of the OT and his rootedness in its traditions not have justified a contribution of its own in view of the insights gained in the past two decades?

G. N. Stanton examines Paul's gospel, including a discussion of Paul and his predecessors, the gospel as God's initiative through his son, Christ crucified and raised for our salvation, justification, reconciliation and of the gospel's coming in power and in the Spirit. L. W. Hurtado treats Paul's christology (should the christology have come before the soteriology?). Paul's ecclesiology is outlined by L. T. Johnson, including discussions of Paul's ecclesial focus, Israel and the church, the mission of the church, the church in metaphor, organization of the local church, and the church in Colossians, Ephesians, and in the Pastorals. B. Rosner aptly summarises Paul's ethics. Rosner points to the biblical roots of Pauline ethics and its gospel orientation before providing case studies on Romans 12 and 1 Corinthians 5. Would Paul's anthropology, pneumatology, and eschatology also have deserved contributions of their own?

Part four, simply entitled "St Paul", is concerned with the legacy of Paul. C. J. Roetzel contributes "Paul in the second century," including discussions on Marcion and his teaching and praxis, Irenaeus versus Marcion, Tertullian, Valentinus and on *The Acts of Paul and Thecla*. R. Morgan provides a demanding summary on "Paul's enduring legacy" (I doubt that many

undergraduate students will be able to appreciate it). The last essay is by B. Witherington on "Contemporary Perspectives on Paul." Witherington begins with a discussion of Saul the Pharisee and Paul the Christian in Jewish perspective (with reference to Segal, Boyarin, and Nanos), moves on to feminist and liberationist approaches to the Pauline corpus (with reference to Schüssler-Fiorenza, A. C. Wire, E. Castelli, and N. Elliott) and to the rhetorical interpretation of Paul's letters (Paul's rhetorical background and Pauline rhetorical practice), and closes with "Paul's letters as holy writ" (on B. Childs and D. Trobisch). The volume ends with a select bibliography (subdivided under "general" and "on particular letters," listed for each), an index of references, and a general index.

If the series of *Cambridge Companions to Religion* will contain companions to, for example, Schleiermacher and von Balthasar, one wonders whether—in view of his impact on Christianity—Paul would have deserved a longer companion or even *three* companions (e.g., one on the life of Paul, one on his letters, and a third on his theology). The present volume is a good introduction to the mainstream of Pauline scholarship and could serve as a textbook for (undergraduate) students in courses on the Life and Letters of Paul, for NT survey courses, or as prolegomena to the theology of Paul. Yet as it attempts to cover too much, I feel that it is insufficient on its own in each of such courses. Good companion volumes would be M. A. Seifrid and R. K. J. Tan, *The Pauline Writings: An*

Annotated Bibliography (Baker, 2002); M. J. Gorman, *Apostle of the Crucified Lord: A Theological Introduction to Paul and His Letters* (Eerdmans, 2002), or T. R. Schreiner, *Paul, Apostle of God's Glory in Christ: A Pauline Theology* (InterVarsity, 2001). In German one would think of E. Lohse, *Paulus: Eine Biographie*, Beck'sche Reihe 1520 (C. H. Beck, 2003) or U. Schnelle, *Paulus: Leben und Denken*, GLB (W. de Gruyter, 2003).

Forthcoming *Cambridge Companions to Religion* include volumes devoted to the gospel, medieval Jewish thought, Islamic theology, Reformation theology, John Calvin, Friedrich Schleiermacher, Hans Urs von Balthasar, and Postmodern theology.

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Eerdmans Commentary on the Bible. Edited by James D. G. Dunn and J. Rogerson. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003, xx + 1560 pp., \$75.00.

The *Eerdmans Commentary on the Bible* is the second recent major one-volume commentary on the Bible. It was published only two years after John Barton's and John Muddiman's, *The Oxford Bible Commentary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001). The similarities between both volumes are great.

In the Preface the editors outline the scope of the *ECB*:

It is essential, then, that each new generation should have a guide enabling serious students of the Bible

to see the forest without getting lost in the trees. Since the Bible too easily becomes the province only of the technical expert, it is desirable that a single volume should sum up the best of modern scholarship and direct interested readers to appropriate further reading. And since the twentieth century witnessed huge strides in the way the Bible is read and heard, with many translations and ways of approaching the Bible under constant discussion, it is appropriate that students of the Bible should have a handbook which provides authoritative summing up of the best fruits of the last century's scholarship and clear guidance on into the twenty-first century (ix).

The editors highlight the following features of this commentary (ix):

- It draws on and encapsulates the best of modern and international scholarship on the books of the Bible.
- It is the only one-volume Bible commentary to cover all the texts (including the Apocrypha and *1 Enoch*) regarded by one or more Christian churches as canonical.
- It deals with the text in nontechnical language, and provides both reader-friendly treatments for beginning use of the Bible and succinct summaries for the essence and thrust of each section for those further along the way.
- It focuses on the principal unit of meaning—narrative, prophetic oracle, parable, section of argument, etc.—rather than attempting verse-by-verse analysis.
- The primary objective is to clarify the meaning (and possible meanings) of each unit and to bring out its interconnectedness with the rest of the text.
- It thus avoids the problems

(common in many commentaries) either of losing the reader in a mass of detail, or of simply rephrasing what the text itself says.

- It summarizes succinctly major issues unable to be discussed in full detail and refers the reader to fuller discussions.

The sixty-seven contributors from the English speaking world were selected "either for their fresh interpretation of the evidence, or for their way of asking new questions to the text, or for their new angles of approach or for taking what was once the province of the technical expert and making it manageable for the busy pastor, teacher, student, or lay person" (x).

The Old Testament sections opens with four more general essays: J. W. Rogerson, "The History of the Tradition: Old Testament and Apocrypha" (History and purpose of the OT and the Apocrypha and an overview of the methods employed in their study) and a survey of "Premodern, Modern, and Postmodern in Old Testament Study" by J. A. Goldingay. Both essays—like the other introductory essays, with the odd exception—would be of excellent use in first year courses in theological training or for interested lay people. D. A. Appler and J. Bidmead contribute an essay on "Syro-Palestinian and Biblical Archaeology" and D. N. Freedman an introduction to "The Pentateuch." Freedman devotes most of the space to issues of composition and different sources and only one column to forms and contents. There is close to nothing on the theology of the whole Pentateuch or its (canonical)

function at the beginning of both the Hebrew Bible and the OT. There is a corresponding introduction to the prophetic literature by P. L. Redditt (not available in *The Oxford Bible Commentary* [OBC]), but unfortunately none for the wisdom literature of the OT.

The Old Testament books are covered by the following scholars: Genesis by G. J. Wenham; Exodus by W. D. Johnstone; Leviticus by W. J. Houston; Numbers by P. J. Budd, Deuteronomy by J. W. Rogerson; Joshua by K. Lawson Younger; Judges by P. Deryn Guest; Ruth by G. West; 1 and 2 Samuel by G. Auld; 1 and 2 Kings by R. Tomes, 1 and 2 Chronicles by R. J. Coggins, Ezra and Nehemiah by L. L. Grabbe; Esther by S. W. Crawford; Job by K. J. Dell; Psalms by the late W. S. Prinsloo; Proverbs by R. E. Clements; Ecclesiastes by J. Jarick; Song of Songs by J. W. Rogerson; Isaiah by M. Barker; Jeremiah by A. R. P. Diamond; Lamentations by D. J. A. Clines; Ezekiel by J. A. Goldingay; Daniel by I. Provan; Hosea by G. I. Emmerson; Joel by A. Gelston; Amos by M. D. Carroll, Obadiah by A. Gelston; Jonah by D. Gunn; Micah and Nahum by J. W. Rogerson; Habakkuk and Zephaniah by A. Gelston; Haggai and Zechariah by J. W. Rogerson and Malachi by M. D. Carroll.

The books of the OT Apocrypha are treated as follows: Tobit by L. L. Grabbe; Judith by G. West; Greek Esther by J. Jarick, the Wisdom of Solomon by A. P. Hayman, Sirach by J. Snaith; Baruch by J. J. Schmitt; Additions to Daniel by J. W. Rogerson; 1 and 2 Maccabees by J. R. Bartlett; 1

Esdras by H. G. M. Williamson; the Prayer of Manasseh by P. R. Davies; Psalm 151 by A. Salvesen; 3 Maccabees by P. S. Alexander; 2 Esdras by J. J. Schmitt and 4 Maccabees by D. A. de Silva. There is no separate introduction to the Apocrypha—as in OBC—as they are included in the introduction to the OT.

This is followed by a brief introduction to the Pseudepigrapha by J. R. Mueller and a relatively long commentary on 1 Enoch by D. C. Olson. First Enoch belongs to the OT canon of the Ethiopian church and had to be included to warrant the editors' claim that all books are covered that are regarded by one or more Christian churches as canonical (ix). The OBC offers at this point a thirty-eight double column page "Essay with Commentary on Post-Biblical Jewish Literature" by P. S. Alexander, an option I much prefer for the general reader. The section ends with a discussion of "The Hebrew Bible in the Dead Sea Scrolls" by D. C. Harlow, containing a survey of the Hebrew Scriptures found at Qumran and their implications, including discussion of textual development, canonical formation, the enhanced value of the LXX, and superior readings in the Scrolls. This is followed by an overview of the Scriptural interpretation in the Scrolls, including Greek and Aramaic translations, plain-sense commentary, paraphrases and reworkings, harmonizations of legal passages, rewriting and expansion of narratives and pesher exegesis. Nothing similar is available in the OBC, which includes some Qumran texts in the above mentioned essay.

The New Testament section opens with an excellent corresponding introductory essay on "The History of the Tradition: New Testament" by J. D. G. Dunn, a survey of "Hermeneutical Approaches to the New Testament Tradition" by J. B. Green (a helpful overview of approaches used in current Bible study) and an introduction to the Gospels by C. M. Tuckett. V. P. Furnish provides a well-done introductory essay to the letters in the NT.

The NT books are covered by the following scholars: Matthew by A. J. Saldarini; Mark by C. A. Evans; Luke by D. L. Balch; John by J. M. C. Scott; Acts by J. T. Squires; Romans by J. Reumann; 1 Corinthians by S. C. Barton; 2 Corinthians by J. Barclay; Galatians by B. R. Gaventa; Ephesians by I. H. Marshall; Philippians by C. A. Wannamaker; Colossians by M. D. Hooker; 1 and 2 Thessalonians by R. K. Jewett, the Pastoral Epistles: 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus by P. Perkins; Philemon by M. D. Hooker; Hebrews by A. C. Thiselton; James by R. Bauckham; 1 Peter by G. N. Stanton; 2 Peter by S. McKnight; 1, 2, and 3 John by J. Painter, Jude by S. McKnight, and Revelation by L. T. Stuckenbruck.

The commentaries on the NT are followed by an essay entitled "The NT Apocrypha" by R. E. van Voorst (after an introduction section on the Gospel of Thomas and the Gospel of Peter). The contribution "Extra-canonical early Christian Literature" in the OBC by J. K. Elliott is preferable, as it gives better orientation. Last comes a corresponding discussion of "The Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament" by D. C. Harlow. A detailed

index is provided at the end.

The commentary on each biblical book opens with a short treatment of the introductory issues, which is followed by an outline, the actual commentary, and a substantial bibliography. All the other essays likewise contain a substantial bibliography.

As both the *Oxford Bible Commentary* and the *Eerdmans Commentary on the Bible* have about the same length (*OBC* is two hundred pages shorter but uses smaller print) and cost almost the same amount (a large amount for students, though worth the investment and inexpensive in comparison to some monographs), other criteria (scope of the introductory essays, selection of commentators, etc.) have to be employed in choosing between them. In my opinion, the *Eerdmans Commentary* is more conservative in its overall orientation, though there is by no means uniformity, and includes a number of evangelical contributors (Wenham's balanced introduction to Genesis is quite different from the essay on the Pentateuch).

The last section of the editors' preface is a suitable end to my review: "The project has been long in the making. The volume now goes forth with our heartfelt desire and prayer that it may open the window of many minds and may reward attentive hearing with many fresh insights and a new appreciation of the Bible's manifold riches" (x). May it be so. For readers in third world countries a modestly priced paperback study edition would be very desirable and help the volume to go forth beyond libraries.

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A Different Jesus? The Christ of the Latter-day Saints. By Robert L. Millet. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005, 226 pp., \$16.00.

Is the Christ worshiped and proclaimed by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (hereafter LDS) the same Christ of orthodox Christianity? Brigham Young University professor and Mormon scholar Robert L. Millet attempts to answer this question with this, the latest book in his growing body of publications. This book, as with much of Millet's work, attempts to define the LDS experience as the fullness of historical revelation begun in the Bible. Millet offers comparisons between the Mormon Christ and the Christ of the Scriptures. In his view, the LDS is the true Christianity of the age. Millet's purpose was to foster mutual understanding and to build bridges to the evangelical Christian community, a task of utmost importance (xv).

The central tenet of Millet's argument is as follows: the LDS is a Christian church because of its focus on Jesus Christ. Millet offers as his evidence the name of Christ as found in the name of the Church, Christ as found in the Scriptures of the Church, and Christ as found on the lips of the people of the Church. He walks through the LDS standard works, LDS church history, and LDS doctrine to provide proof for his belief that the LDS is, without any doubt, Christian.

The book begins with a basic introduction to LDS Church history, the LDS standard works, and LDS dogma. In the first chapter Millet introduces the concept of the pre-existent spirit life of Christ. Before any humans, including Jesus, were born on Earth, they lived in a pre-existent spirit realm with God the Father. These beings are God the Father's literal spirit children and, according to Millet, this includes Christ. The second chapter of the book takes readers on a whirlwind tour of Millet's critique of modern biblical criticism and scientific criticism of the Scriptures. The third chapter moves succinctly through the LDS doctrine of the Restoration and offers a fascinating explanation of Joseph Smith's teaching that the LDS Church is the "only true church." Chapter four is solely devoted to the Christ of the LDS. Millet explains, "As a premortal spirit, [Christ] grew in knowledge and power to the point where he became 'like unto God' (Abraham 3:24)" (73). Chapter five deals with Millet's view of salvation, the atonement, justification, sanctification, grace and works, LDS temples, and the glorification / exaltation of humans. Chapter six examines the subject of those who have never heard, and will never hear, the name of Christ during their lifetimes. Millet affirms the traditional LDS belief in post-mortem evangelism. The author devotes the final chapter to answering frequently asked questions of LDS tradition and dogma.

Overall, Millet's work is very interesting and thought provoking, but is thoroughly dogmatic about the LDS

understanding of Christ. The most cogent aspect of the work is his call for civility in the dialogue between the LDS and Evangelical Christians.

Though helpful in understanding the LDS Christ, Millet offers many dubious assertions. Millet, for example, when referring to the Restoration, writes, "I have been a Latter-day Saint all my life, but I do not in any way believe the Almighty loves Latter-day Saints any more than he loves Anglicans, Jehovah's Witnesses, Unitarians, Jews, or Muslims. He loves us all and is pleased with any and every halting effort on our part to learn of him, serve him, and be true to the light within us" (63). While it is true that God is not the God of any particular denomination, he is the God of the Bible and not the God worshiped by Jehovah's Witnesses, Unitarians, or Muslims. If one seeking spiritual enlightenment is "true to the light within," then the atheist, naturalist, and pantheist can still find favor with the LDS God.

Second, the gospel according to Millet ends with man's happiness, not the glory of God. "The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints teaches that God our Father has a plan for his children, a program established, from before the foundations of the world, to maximize our growth and insure our happiness" (22). Is the gospel of Christ preached so that men will be happy or so that men will be saved? Is man's happiness the reason for which Christ came to die? The reason for the death of Christ was to save sinners, not to make men happy, though true joy is a result of that salvation.

Third, Millet denies scriptural inerrancy. "While the Latter-day Saints do not subscribe to a position of scriptural inerrancy, they do have a firm conviction that the scriptures mean what they say and say what they mean. They are to be trusted" (37). How can the scriptures be trusted if one does not consider them inerrant? A lack of belief in scriptural inerrancy can only lead to a lack of trust in the scriptures.

Finally, the answer to Millet's original question, "is the Christ of the Latter-day Saints a different Jesus" yields a single answer, an unequivocal "Yes, the Christ of the LDS is radically different from the Christ of the Bible." Millet notes that "over the ages in that premortal world Christ *grew in light and truth and knowledge and power until he had become 'like unto God'*" (20, emphasis added). This statement clearly contradicts the prologue to the Gospel of John and the Christology of Ephesians and Colossians. Millet also writes, "Jesus is the Son of God and as such *inherited power of Godhood and divinity from his Father*" (67, emphasis added), again contradicting the biblical witness. Both of these statements oppose the biblical revelation concerning the second person of the Trinity, the Lord Jesus Christ.

While Millet claims that the Jesus of the LDS is the same Jesus as found in the Bible and in orthodox Christianity, his arguments are unconvincing. The Bible does not present Jesus as *inheriting* God's knowledge, power, or divinity or his being our spirit brother. The Bible presents Jesus Christ as God himself, the God-man before whom "every knee shall bow

... and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Philippians 2:10-11, NASB).

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Operation Firebrand. By Jefferson Scott. Uhrichville, OH: Promise Press, 2002, 366 pp., \$8.97 paper; *Operation Firebrand: Crusade*. By Jefferson Scott. Uhrichville, OH: Promise Press, 2003, 363 pp., \$8.97 paper; *Operation Firebrand: Deliverance*. By Jefferson Scott. Uhrichville, OH: Promise Press, 2004, 367 pp., \$8.97 paper.

Operation Firebrand is a trilogy of novels in a newly emerging genre of literature-Christian suspense novels. This new genre employs many of the same techniques utilized in contemporary suspense fiction without the usual offensive language, sexuality, and violence. Scott's earlier Ethan Hamilton technothriller trilogy (*Virtually Eliminated*, *Terminal Logic*, and *Fatal Defect*), the thriller novels of James Scott Bell, and Terri Blackstock's Newpointe 911 series are just a few examples of this emerging genre. Among his other published works, Jefferson Scott (actually this is a *nom de plume* of a graduate of a Southern Baptist seminary) has also coauthored with Ryan Dobson *Be Intolerant*, a non-fiction book that points out the weaknesses of relativism to youth.

The premise of the *Operation Firebrand* series is the formation of a highly trained covert commando team of Christians with skills unlike a Navy SEAL team, but with a differ-

ent mission—rescuing persecuted Christians. A widowed CEO of a high-tech defense company funds the operation, providing the high-tech weapons and communication instruments used by the team. The series details three main rescue missions—Christian missionaries and the orphans under their care from embattled Kazakhstan, Sudanese Christians enslaved by Muslim raiders, and Christian refugees attempting to escape North Korea.

The stories are well written and the suspense is real. Scott continues the utilization of intriguing high-tech tools as a key element in his novels, such as the use of tranquilizer guns to allow the Christian commandos to avoid killing anyone. The plot development is not only good within each novel, but continues through the three novels. Scott tastefully includes a love interest in the story, a love triangle involving three members of the team. The character development is excellent, as each member of the team struggles with God's will for his or her life. Told from an "omniscient" literary perspective, the reader is given insights into the motives and thoughts of each character.

Suspense novels are written mainly for entertainment, so it is probably asking too much to ask for deeper theological reflection in this genre. The books do afford useful insights about discerning God's will for the difficult decisions of life that would be appreciated by the lay audience for which these books are written. However, given the horrible suffering involved in these three situations in Kazakhstan, Sudan, and North

Korea, some deeper conversation about why God allows such suffering might have strengthened the book. But again, it is probably not possible to write a *Brothers Karamazov* within the genre of suspense fiction.

Although each of these books is a good read taken alone, *Operation Firebrand* is an excellent trilogy. Unlike some other Christian suspense works, Scott's novels appeal to men. Highly recommended for recreational reading.

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