

Book Reviews

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Your Word Is Truth: A Project of Evangelicals and Catholics Together, edited by Charles Colson and Richard John Neuhaus, (reviewed by Mark E. Mast)

America's Worship Wars, by Terry W. York, Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 2003. xviii, 138pp., \$16.95.

Terry York is associate professor of Christian ministry at Truett Theological Seminary, Baylor University. He writes out of his extensive experience in ministry in Baptist churches and as a seminary professor, offering his observations of American worship since the 1960s. Reluctantly choosing the word "war," he observes how the defenders of the fort (the worshipping community) have been in conflict with the fighters of the front (evangelistic outreach).

In the first section of the book, York describes how the seeds of the worship wars were sown in the 1960s with the blurring of the distinction between worship and evangelism.

In the second section of the book, York writes about trends in the church that have contributed to conflict in worship style. Those who were veterans of the "front" of evangelistic outreach favored new music, often projected on a screen. Those who were veterans of the "fort" of the worshipping community favored music of the hymnal in the pew. York notes the danger of the music becoming entertainment rather than worship and reminds readers "that each new technological advance brings with it a cost to be counted. . . . When technology becomes the master, molding our theology into the shape of technology's capabilities it changes how we think, act, and respond." As examples, he notes vocabulary changes such as the shifts from "congregation" to "audience" and from "mission field" to "marketplace."

The last section of the book suggests a negotiated peace. In the chapter, "Champions of Peace," several people are cited, including Marva Dawn and Sally Morgenthaler, who want worship to "truly praise God" and, in so doing, to "form us and the community to reach out to the world."

This book will be of interest to worship leaders, especially those who wonder how we got into the current conflicts over worship styles and music. It ends on a note of hope, based in the gospel, and Jesus' call that we be one.

J. David Muyskens

An Absolute Sort of Certainty: The Holy Spirit and the Apologetics of Jonathan Edwards, by Stephen J. Nichols, Phillipsburg, N.J.: Presbyterian & Reformed, 2003, x, 202pp., \$14.99 paper.

His revised dissertation from Westminster Theological Seminary, Stephen J. Nichols's *An Absolute Sort of Certainty* offers fresh insight into the important realm of Jonathan Edwards's apologetics. Nichols traverses the detailed space between philosophy and theology in order to highlight the role of the Holy Spirit in Edwards's preaching and in his apologetics. Put another way, Edwards "wrestled with epistemology as he worked out his theology of the Holy Spirit; he developed his theology, as it were, in full view of philosophy and vice versa" (2). According to Nichols, Edwards fashioned an apologetic program (as it related to inspiration, assurance, illumination, and regeneration) rooted in Scripture, dependent on the Holy Spirit, yet conversant with and sensitive to eighteenth-century philosophical trends.

In the opening chapter, Nichols helpfully navigates the currents of Edwards studies by dividing images of Edwards into those of philosopher (e.g., Perry Miller, Peter Gay), pastor-theologian (e.g., Iain Murray, Patricia Tracy), philosopher-theologian (e.g., H. Richard Niebuhr, Sang Lee), and apologist (e.g., Michael McClymond, Gerald McDermott). Nichols's work builds on each of these schools in varying degrees, yet unlike most of the previous scholarship, he looks specifically at how Edwards understood the role of the Holy Spirit in making a defense for the Christian faith.

The bulk of Nichols's book contains chapters on revelation, perception, assurance, and verification. For Edwards, Nichols perceptively points out, revelation came as the Holy Spirit imparted Trinitarian knowledge to the regenerate mind. Such knowledge, for Edwards—shaped by Augustine, Calvin, and Locke, among others—is not a haven of the intellect only, but is also displayed in loving affection because "knowledge entail[s] experience" (45).

Finally, after pages of deft and erudite theological reflection and interpretation, Nichols effectively presents Edwards's apologetic program through two unpublished sermons. "Seeing the Glory of Christ" and "The Work of the Spirit of Christ" both demonstrate that Edwards crafted his sermons with an apologetic flavor. In the former sermon, Edwards argued that one is able to sense the glory of Christ through the Spirit's illuminating authentication; this operation is further articulated in the latter sermon as Edwards showed how the Spirit "communicates" God's grace to humanity. Because Edwards labored primarily in parish ministry, Nichols rightly concludes, "[h]is sermons are the gateway to

his thoughts, his theology, and his philosophy, which come together in his apologetics” (174).

The cutting edge of Nichols’s illuminating study is his assertion that Edwards’s apologetics take center stage if one wishes to understand the theocentric nature of his theologically informed philosophy and philosophically rooted theology. Such thinking was publicly displayed from the pulpit at which Edwards effectively labored for many years.

Though a handful of sermons hardly demonstrates a trend, Nichols has opened up an important angle from which one might understand Jonathan Edwards; readers might hope to hear more from Nichols on the apologetic thrust of Edwards’s sermons. This disappointment, however, does not diminish the clarity of Nichols’s thought or the readability of his prose. *An Absolute Sort of Certainty* demands a keen knowledge of philosophy and presumes familiarity with Reformed theology. Readers wishing to improve their grasp of the nuances of *An Absolute Sort of Certainty* might first consult Nichols’s highly accessible *Jonathan Edwards: A Guided Tour of the Life and Thought* (Presbyterian & Reformed, 2001).

Phillip Luke Sinitiere

Appealing to Scripture in Moral Debate: Five Hermeneutical Rules, by Charles H. Cosgrove, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002. 240pp., \$22.

Cosgrove has identified five interpretive assumptions Christians commonly, but often unwittingly, use to justify their appeal to the Bible in public moral argument. He formulates each of these as a hermeneutical rule, describes the ways in which the rules are used, and examines the warrants offered for them. He then illustrates the manner in which each rule is used by examining particular moral cases in which appeal has been made to the rule to justify ethical conclusions drawn from Scripture.

The five hermeneutical assumptions or rules Cosgrove examines are (1) the rule of purpose (the purpose or justification behind a biblical moral rule carries greater weight than the rule itself); (2) the rule of analogy (analogical reasoning is an appropriate and necessary method for applying Scripture to contemporary moral issues); (3) the rule of countercultural witness (greater weight is given to countercultural tendencies in Scripture that express the voice of the powerless and the marginalized than to those that echo the dominant culture of their time); (4) the rule of nonscientific scope of Scripture (scientific knowledge is outside the scope of Scripture); and (5) the rule of moral-theological adjudication (moral-

theological considerations guide us in choosing between conflicting plausible interpretations).

This is a very readable and valuable study. It will assist readers to be more aware of their own interpretive methodologies and it will enable Christians to work toward shared assumptions within their communities, so that moral conclusions can be reached together. Cosgrove's aim is not so much to recommend the rules as to examine them, and readers are likely to find themselves more at ease with some of the rules and their applications than with others. Yet, it is hard to imagine anyone who would not benefit from the stimulus this book provides toward serious examination of the hermeneutic we use to reach and to justify moral positions. It may be particularly helpful to Christians involved in the disagreements that so frequently arise within and between Christian communities. Although it will not guarantee resolution of these differences, it should assist in analyzing the different hermeneutical rules at work in the development of conflicting positions.

Terrance L. Tiessen

Baptism in the Reformed Tradition: An Historical and Practical Theology, by John W. Riggs, Columbia Series in Reformed Theology, Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002. 187pp., \$22.95.

After centuries of debate, baptism today remains a controversial doctrine in the modern Christian church. Baptism is not only an issue between the Reformed and the Baptists, but it has become a debate within Reformed churches as the Reformed tradition encounters new members from non-Reformed backgrounds. Church planting pastors are now receiving requests for infant dedication. In 1981, the Reformed Church in America Theological Commission concluded that infant dedication was not a legitimate alternative to infant baptism. However, many church planting pastors, after presenting the Reformed instruction on infant baptism, are nevertheless consenting to perform infant dedications. How does the Reformed Church again address the theological doctrine of Reformed baptism and the practical concerns of our church-planting pastors?

Riggs begins with an evaluation of the liturgical movement in many mainline congregations. The evaluation commences with the Roman Catholic Church's liturgical renewal movement "rite of Christian Initiation of Adults." The study then briefly focuses on the liturgy presented in the *Lutheran Book of Worship*, especially on baptism.

Following this introduction, Riggs traces the foundations of Reformed baptismal theology" through the first generation of Zwingli, Luther, and Bucer to the

second generation of Bullinger and Calvin. He then finishes his assessment of the reformers by a detailed study of Calvin's "Baptism and Divine Power."

The second part of Riggs's book concentrates on post-Reformation baptismal theology from the Heidelberg Catechism and the Belgic Confession, through the Reformed orthodoxy of Heinrich Heppe, to the father of liberalism, Friedrich Schleiermacher, and on to the twentieth-century debates. The primary focus of the twentieth-century debate is Barth's rejection of infant baptism and the response from such quarters as Frantz Leenhardt, Pierre Marcel, and the Dutch Reformed Church. At the end of his book, Riggs provides a critical and constructive analysis of the Presbyterian *Book of Common Worship*.

As Riggs demonstrates in his book, even the Reformers did not reach a consensus on the doctrine of baptism. However, just as theologians continued to study, pray, discern the leading of the Holy Spirit, and debate the doctrine, so we are encouraged to continue our dialogue.

I found this book, *Baptism in the Reformed Tradition*, an important contribution to the debate of the sacrament in the Reformed churches. I hope more pastors will too.

Barry L. Wynveen

A Better Way: Rediscovering the Drama of God-Centered Worship, by Michael Horton, Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002. 249pp., \$19.99.

Horton is president of the Alliance of Confessing Evangelicals, editor of *Modern Reformation* magazine, an associate professor at Westminster Theological Seminary in California, and a minister in the United Reformed Church in North America. In the first part of his book, he makes five suggestions for Christ-centered reading and preaching: (1) in the reading of Scripture, whether privately or in public worship, consider including an Old Testament and New Testament reading, with the former related to the latter as promise to its fulfillment; (2) ask yourself what stage of redemptive history is reflected in this passage; (3) ask how you find yourself in Christ (and therefore with his church) in this story; (4) read and hear the Bible with the church; and (5) read and hear prayerfully.

Horton stresses that it is dangerous to separate how we worship (style) from whom we worship (substance). Examining contemporary culture, the author asks, "Where will we find that 'narrative structure' that makes our lives more meaningful than mere consumption and stimulation?" Due to his deep desire for

God-centered worship, Horton deplores the following of the latest fashion, fad, or “buzz,” which may entertain, but does not nourish.

Horton concludes with a few good ideas. He asks for the daily instruction of youth at home. At worship he seeks Word-centered innovation. He desires a distinction between the covenant renewal ceremony and outreach. He wants a new attitude toward the believing community that nurtures the baptized who wish to mature as disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ. There’s an abundance of material for reflection here and ample suggestions for further reading in the notes. The book is instructive and provocative.

Robert J. Hoeksema

Beyond Belief: The Secret Gospel of Thomas, by Elaine Pagels, New York: Random House, 2003. 257pp., \$24.95 (Canadian \$37.95).

Pagels’s study covers an impressive range of topics. At one level it is a review of the formation of the Nicene Creed and the New Testament canon in relation to heterodox forms of Christianity like the Gnostic schools and Arianism. Pagels finds liberating insights in Nag Hammadi texts like the Gospel of Thomas, particularly in contrast to the Gospel of John. The Gospel of John, she argues, disparages Thomas’s quest for a personal experience of Christ and teaches that passive faith is enough for salvation (based on John 20:29 and context). Pagels goes on to argue that the formulation of Christian orthodoxy that began with Justin and Irenaeus and concluded with Athanasius and Augustine has unnecessarily restricted conversation in the church about spiritual matters.

In Pagels’s judgment, Christian orthodoxy does not allow enough room for personal experience, self-cultivation, or intuition. This assessment appears to be based on Pagels’s own experience of an orthodox, evangelical church that condemned to eternal hell all those who do not believe that Jesus is God (30-31, 151). In order to promote spiritual growth that goes beyond mere faith and baptism, Pagels implies that the canon and creeds must be reinterpreted to allow heterodox beliefs like Gnosticism and Arianism.

Pagels’s reading of Christian tradition is a very personal one, and she is not afraid to stretch the evidence to make her case. Readers who are interested in more careful readings of John and the Thomas tradition, might want to read Gregory Riley’s *Resurrection Reconsidered: Thomas and John in Controversy* (1995) or April DeConick’s *Voices of the Mystics* (2001). Pagels herself is reacting strongly against the church experience of her teenaged years. Readers of the *Reformed Review* will probably respond to her book based upon their own experiences of

the church. Those who have grown up in the more doctrinal, orthodox wing of the church may reject Pagels's ideas completely, or they may sympathize with her ideas as a way of developing their own need for spiritual intuition and individual perspective. The real question here is whether "orthodoxy" is a narrow definition of truth, as Pagels seems to assume, or a more inclusive set of complementary truths (the humanity and deity of Christ, regeneration and sanctification, etc.).

Readers in the more pietistic wing of the church, on the other hand, may wonder why Pagels has a problem with the tradition. Ever since the time of Francis of Assisi, there have been a variety of pietistic reactions against an over-intellectualized dogma. However, Pagels is convinced that all the innovators in the church from St. Francis to John Wesley have been forced to disguise their innovations by claiming that they are only clarifying what Jesus taught (183). In other words, Pietists are just Gnostics in disguise!

Pagels's book is just one of a number of recently published works that appeal to extracanonical sources like the Gospel of Thomas for their arguments. The December 22, 2003, issue of *Time* highlighted several of these books in a feature article on "lost (extracanonical) gospels." This new challenge raises an interesting problem for churches that have traditionally relied on the sufficiency of canonical Scripture (Belgic Confession, article 7). We are used to books that discuss theology on the basis of the teachings of Scripture. Many of our parishioners are able to evaluate such books simply by looking up the biblical texts that the authors cite. But, when arguments are based on less familiar texts like the Nag Hammadi codices, parishioners are more likely to accept arguments from reputable scholars at face value. Worse yet, they may simply ignore such arguments altogether and reinforce the impression that orthodoxy does not encourage any such inquiry.

Christopher B. Kaiser

Communion with Non-Catholic Christians: Risks, Challenges, and Opportunities, by Jeffrey VanderWilt, Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 2003. ix, 229pp., \$18.95.

Writing especially for Roman Catholics, VanderWilt provides an analysis of the present norms for eucharistic sharing in the Roman Catholic Church. He limits eucharistic sharing to the practice of receiving Holy Communion by baptized Christians.

Each chapter begins with an event that created media coverage. President Clinton's receiving Communion during Sunday Mass at a Roman Catholic

Church in Soweto, South Africa, is one. Each chapter ends with suggestions for further reading and questions for reflection and dialogue offered as a way for readers to explore the chapter's ideas and themes in the light of their own experience and knowledge.

Chapter one asks, What is eucharistic sharing? VanderWilt explains that at present Roman Catholics may only request and receive sacraments from ministers ordained in valid apostolic succession.

Chapter two explains reasons for caution in eucharistic sharing. The author suggests five such reasons: (1) failing to agree on eucharistic doctrine; (2) failing to unite in the church of Christ; (3) failing to maintain the apostolic succession; (4) expressing a nonexistent unity; (5) indiscriminate reception of Holy Communion.

Chapter three gives reasons for a more open eucharistic sharing (1) to share Communion because of Christian baptism; (2) to serve the pastoral needs of all Christians; (3) to signify the grace of unity; (4) to discern the body of Christ in one another; (5) to share genuine Christian hospitality; (6) to avoid further hurts and injuries (to those refused the sacrament).

Chapter four notes the opportunities and reasons for sharing the Eucharist in the hope of full Communion.

VanderWilt concludes that the present position of the Roman Catholic Church jeopardizes ecumenical relationships. It implies "unsubstantiated, sweeping, and negative judgments on the worth of non-Catholics, their ministries, and their faith. In a word, Catholic authorities ought to help us recover the gracious immensity of Christian communion. God has given us the opportunity to heal the wounds of a millennium. We must not let the opportunity pass."

This book offers the reader insight into the variety of opinions present in the Roman Catholic Church today regarding the Eucharist and ecumenical relationships.

Robert J. Hoeksema

Engaging God's World: A Christian Vision of Faith, Learning, and Living, by Cornelius Plantinga, Jr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002. xix, 150pp., \$15.00 (paper).

Plantinga has succeeded in fulfilling the aim of his book: “to lay out some main themes of the Christian faith and to show how Christian higher education fits inside a view of the world and of human life that is formed by these themes” (xvi). This book is intended to challenge the first-year college student to a higher level of thinking. Plantinga explores the ideas of hope, creation, the Fall, and redemption in order to ground the young reader in many of the Christian basics and provide a depth most Christian students have not experienced. With a rich mix of Scripture, ancient texts, the confessions, and contemporary theologians, he provides a tool for young Christians much as C. S. Lewis did through his book, *Mere Christianity*.

I especially appreciated the final chapter on Christian vocation in the kingdom of God. In this chapter Plantinga challenges the reader to see life as much more than “what we will be when we grow up.” “Successful living depends especially on fitting our small kingdom inside God’s big kingdom, always recalling where we got our dominion from in the first place” (106).

I must take some exception to Plantinga’s view of higher learning outside of Christian liberal arts colleges and universities. He states that “for most Christian students mainstream higher education simply won’t be adequate to help them understand the kingdom of God and their own vocation within it” (123). I understand that the focus of this book is for Christians attending a Christian school, but such language has the potential of taking a rich resource out of the hands of other Christian students.

That said, *Engaging God's World* is a gift every Christian student heading for higher education should receive upon graduation from high school.

Mark E. Mast

The First Christian: Universal Truth in the Teachings of Jesus, by Paul F. M. Zahl, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans and Cambridge, U. K., 2003. x, 138 pp.

The author is dean of the Cathedral Church of the Advent, Episcopal, in Birmingham, Alabama. He has also authored *A Short Systematic Theology* and *Five Women of the English Reformation*, both published by Eerdmans. He studied at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Harvard College, the University of Nottingham, and much later under Jürgen Moltmann at the University of Tübingen. There he discussed with Ernst Kasemann the Pauline doctrine of justification, which was Zahl's thesis topic, and Christianity's continuity and discontinuity with first-century Judaism. He also writes of the influence upon his views of the book *Jesus* by David Flusser, who is of the Jewish faith and a scholar of the New Testament who taught for many years at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. Zahl studied the historical Jesus for thirty-five years and parallel to his academic study has been in parish ministry for thirty years.

The title arises out of the author's evangelical concern for how Jesus is discontinuous with Second Temple Judaism. This concern flows against the tide of much of present-day historical Jesus studies, which emphasize Jesus' continuity with the Judaism of his day. Zahl accepts Jesus' continuity with Judaism as an obvious given but believes that his discontinuity has been neglected, the very aspect of his life and teachings which brought him into conflict with the Jewish religious leaders and resulted in his crucifixion by the Romans and the rise of Christianity. He sees the holocaust as determining the thrust of New Testament theology since World War II—a theology that has changed extensively with regard to Judaism and its relation to Christianity, St. Paul, and Jesus.

The book has a preface, introduction and five chapters: "The Historical Jesus Problem," "Jesus the Jew," "Jesus and John the Baptist," "Jesus the Christian," and "The Centrifugal Force of Jesus the Christian." It also has an epilogue: "A Meditation at Christmas." The influence of Zahl's pastoral ministry at times is seen in contemporary illustrations he gives from life experience, books, music, and theater or cinema, but academic pursuits are also obvious. The main thrusts of the book are repeated several times so that they will not be missed. The major portion of the book should not be difficult for students and earnest readers, but this writer found himself rereading sentences and sections a number of times to be satisfied with his understanding.

A great deal of attention is given to the contrast between the message of John the Baptist and that of Jesus. John is seen as the end of the age of the prophets, with his message emphasizing the time of judgment being at hand, the ax laid to the

root of the tree, and God's reign about to begin. Jesus is seen as preaching a present time for renewal, a time in which he teaches and practices God's grace to sinners. Jesus' antitheses regarding the law of Moses in the Sermon on the Mount also illustrate the depravity of all people and their need for God's grace. Here is Jesus, the first Christian and evangelist, teaching total depravity and salvation by grace and living it by eating with and calling sinners to repentance.

Many present studies of the historical Jesus stand in sharp contrast to Zahl's position, which can be seen as a corrective to those positions. This reviewer would recommend the book to serious students and those concerned with the origins of the Christian church and its core message.

David W. Jurgens

Five Women of the English Reformation, by Paul F. M. Zahl, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001. viii, 120pp., \$18.00.

This is a unique and readable book about five remarkable women of the English Reformation who exhibited the very faith and heroism that marks the names of the (male) figures we most frequently think of in association with English reform in the sixteenth century.

Zahl, dean of the Cathedral Church (Episcopal) in Birmingham, Alabama, focuses on Anne Boleyn (1507-1536), Anne Askew (1521-1546), Katharine Parr (1514-1548), Jane Grey (1537-1554), and Catherine Willoughby (1520-1580). In each case, he presents a brief biography, the texts the woman has left behind, and the interpretation of her faith and life. Zahl notes,

All of these women thought theologically. They were lay theologians. They read theological books, most especially the Bible, and anything to which they could gain access from the continental Protestant Reformers. They talked theology. Their inner circles of court ladies were twenty-four-hours-a-day Bible studies. They saw everything that happened to them through two lenses: the lens of the providence of God and the lens of the furtherance of the Reformed Religion (5).

The stories of these zealous Christian women make fascinating reading. Anne Boleyn helped introduce the Reformation to England, while Katharine Parr helped save it at crucial points. "Justification by faith" was a life-giving theme to them both. King Henry VIII's second wife, Anne, was beheaded; Katharine, Henry's sixth queen, nearly suffered the same fate.

Anne Askew and Jane Grey focused on the Eucharist and what happened in the Mass, particularly the Roman Catholic view of transubstantiation. Both denied the “real presence” of Christ in the sacrament with Anne proclaiming at Newgate prison shortly before she was burned at the stake: “For my God will not be eaten with teeth, neither yet dieth he again. And upon these words, that I have now spoken, will I suffer death” (33). Jane Grey, a child prodigy, died at sixteen and had a correspondence with Heinrich Bullinger. She was charged with treason and executed but witnessed forcefully to her Reformed faith at her interrogation. Catherine Willoughby anticipated later Puritan views on election and predestination. She was forced to flee into exile with her husband and nursing baby, giving up everything she had as duchess of Suffolk.

Beside the intriguing nature of these lives, Zahl says: “I am pleading for the universality of these women’s lives, transcending gender, or rather unifying the genders within what the German Protestant world calls *theologische Existenz*. These women existed theologically. They said it and we know it. Yet I still experience their stories as unbearably moving” (96). For “theirs was the pilgrim’s progress of life beneath the shadow of the cross, the quintessence of human suffering interpreted by story” (97). This book helps capture the essence of the faith that led these five women to risk their lives for their beliefs.

Donald K. McKim

Glimpsing the Face of God, by Alister McGrath, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002. 124pp., \$18.

In his latest book, Alister McGrath, professor of historical theology at Oxford University and principal of Wycliffe Hall, Oxford, invites his readers to search for “meaning in the universe,” to explore the secrets of the vast, mysterious stellar world, which beckons us to explore what lies beyond it and what accounts for its existence. There are two clues: that the universe displays order and that it exhibits “a series of fundamental constants” (12) that invite the possibility of a divine creation (ch. 8).

McGrath engages the thought of those who argue against God’s existence, like biologist Darwin, psychologist Freud, and sociologist Marx (11-12), and admits the presence of an anomaly, namely, evil (ch. 9). Nevertheless, he keeps his focus on the Christian vision: the problem of evil, believers trust, will eventually vanish.

The reader receives more than just glimpses of the face of God, as the title suggests. She will be confronted by God's heart—God's love shown in his Son, Jesus Christ, very God and very man, who arose from the dead. For it is Jesus who through his teaching and especially his healing ministry gives humans the ultimate meaning they seek. *Glimpsing the Face of God* is a captivating book, whose appeal is enhanced by the many excellent color pictures, such as Botticelli's *St. Augustine*, Raphael's *St. Paul Preaching in Athens*, and Cranach the Elder's *Adam and Eve*.

Ralph W. Vunderink

Growing Old in Christ, edited by Stanley Hauerwas, Carole Bailey Stoneking, Keith G. Meador, and David Cloutier, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003. x, 310pp., \$24.

This book challenges the church to examine the ways in which it has become a reflector of contemporary thought, rather than a proclaimer of biblical views about human personhood.

The chapter on generational conflict points out that the small-group strategy for church growth isolates the elderly and that the market model diminishes the social character of the church. "Rather than a market strategy, the church is God's jubilee. The church is an invitation to the ineffective and the infirm, a banquet for the sinner and outcast, who are enlivened by new possibilities for life together with God" (242-43).

I was pleased to read quotes from Merold Westphal and Elizabeth Johnson and happy to be reminded that it is not the accuracy of our memory that counts, but God remembering us. This book offers insights for retired clergy and others who struggle with the meaning of their life in Christ as they slowly, or swiftly, move from the active playing field to the sidelines of life. The eighteen contributors inform, encourage, challenge, and warm the heart of the reader.

Robert J. Hoeksema

In God's Time: The Bible and the Future, by Craig C. Hill, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002. 229pp., \$16.

Here is a book that provides a challenge to the eschatology presented in the Tim LaHaye and Jerry B. Jenkin's *Left Behind* series and other popular books. The author of *In God's Time*, Craig C. Hill, professor of New Testament at Wesley Theological Seminary, Washington, D. C., endeavors "to show that the idea of God's triumph is central to the Christian faith and that a working knowledge of the concept is essential to an informed reading of the Bible, particularly the New Testament" (vii). In this highly readable paperback, the author appeals successfully both to academic and lay readers by relating personal stories and anecdotes from his own Christian pilgrimage, by clearly explaining complicated theological doctrines, and by the use of charts.

In his chapter, "First Things First: The Bible," Hill proposes a "reasonable and faithful alternative to inerrancy, on the one hand, and skepticism, on the other" (14). The author's hermeneutic is an inductive, modeling interpretation of Scripture over against a deductive, conforming approach.

The remaining chapters of the book guide the reader through the eschatology of Old Testament biblical prophesy, the pseudepigraphal documents, the ever popular Daniel and Revelation through Jesus and the New Testament's approach to eschatology, especially that of Paul. The author concludes his survey on biblical eschatology by an appeal to the church "to pass on to our descendants a faith that is both coherent, that is rooted in the past and oriented to the future" (195).

In his conclusion, Hill encourages Christians to live with hope, because God has acted preeminently in Jesus Christ, since "to live Christianly is to live hopefully" (198). In the appendix, "Not Left Behind," he provides a critical analysis of the history of the premillennial dispensational movement.

Teachers may find this book a useful tool for teaching about the biblical doctrine of last things. Preachers may find this book a helpful source for developing a doctrinal series of sermons on the subject of eschatology.

Barry L. Wynveen

Kingdom Ethics: Following Jesus in Contemporary Context, by Glen H. Stassen and David P. Gushee, Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2003. xvi, 538pp., \$30.

Stassen and Gushee have attempted “to write an introduction to Christian ethics that focuses unremittingly on Jesus Christ, the inaugurator of the kingdom of God” (xii), and the fruit of their effort is very rewarding. In particular, they want to let the Sermon on the Mount set the agenda for Christian ethics, within the framework of an ethic aimed at character formation, with the realization of God’s dynamic rule as our goal.

In this process, the authors put forward once more the distinctive reading of the sermon for which Stassen has previously argued, identifying fourteen triads, in each of which Jesus describes traditional righteousness, the vicious cycle into which sin leads us and a transforming initiative which will break that vicious cycle.

I find their approach very helpful. Unlike some traditions, whose emphasis on the teaching of Jesus has been put in contrast to the teaching of the Old Testament, here the roots of Jesus’ teaching are expertly traced from the Old Testament and confirmation of his teaching is noted elsewhere in the New Testament. The central norms of Christian ethics are identified as love and justice.

Roughly two-thirds of the book addresses thirteen contemporary situations in which Christians need great moral discernment. These are grouped under three main categories: issues regarding life, topics related to maleness and femaleness, and issues where relationships of justice and love are particularly difficult to ascertain and to implement. Given the desire to identify ways in which we can follow Jesus in transforming initiatives, the discussions include both moral analysis of the issues and identification of Christian practices. As ways by which we can seek the kingdom of God, prayer, politics, and practices are each discussed in closing.

This book will serve well as a textbook in ethics courses. It will also provide a valuable resource for Christians who are serious about living as faithful disciples of Jesus and who are seeking moral guidance in the midst of often confusing situations.

Terrance Tiessen

The Legacy of Jonathan Edwards: American Religion and the Evangelical Tradition, ed. D. G. Hart, Sean Michael Lucas, and Stephen J. Michols, Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003. 225pp., \$21.99 (paper).

This book is a compilation of essays much in the model of a *festschrift*. The authors of these essays are Harry S. Stout, Stephen J. Nichols, Richard A. Bailey, Charles Hambrick-Stowe, George M. Marsden, C. Samuel Storms, K. Scott Oliphint, Gerald R. McDermott, Douglas A. Sweeney, Michael Lucas, and George S. Claghorn.

Richard A. Bailey writes about Jonathan Edwards as a preacher. He points out that the picture of Jonathan Edwards as a dry academician in the pulpit, reading from a manuscript is a very wrong picture. Edwards strove for liveliness and spontaneity in the pulpit, making use of sermon notes but not being bound to them.

Charles Hambrick Stowe writes about Jonathan Edwards's inner life, of his "inward sweet sense of Christ." Jonathan Edwards had his mystical side, although he always submitted his experience to the written Word of God. He also believed that the old scholastic theology was passé and concentrated much more on salvation history. He felt that reason was important but that the Christian's reason should be guided by revelation.

K. Scot Oliphint writes about Jonathan Edwards's apologetics in his opposition to Deism. He opposed Deism's rejection of everything that is mysterious in religion, pointing out that the heavenly source of Christianity makes it inevitable that it should contain some mysteries and that in rejecting all that is mysterious in Christianity, Deism has rejected Christianity itself.

D. G. Hart writes about Jonathan Edwards's own conscious conversion experience and examines his *Treatise on the Religious Affections* in some detail. He says, "Edwards stands at the font of modern day experimental [experiential] Calvinism" (170). I have to disagree with D. G. Hart. What Jonathan Edwards did do is submit the Puritan "experientiology," and that which had arisen around the events of the First Great Awakening, to a searching examination based on Scripture and concentrated on the "affections" of the persons involved. In his *Treatise on the Christian Affections*, J. Edwards addresses both the attitudes and allegations of the promoters of the Great Awakening and those of its detractors and submits them to a thorough discussion, not based so much on the emotional phenomena presented as on the state of the person's affections and attitudes toward sin, God, Christ, and holiness.

Parts three and four of the book deal with the effects of Jonathan Edwards on American religious life. In general, the Old School Presbyterians were quite

negative towards Edwards. Some later theologians such as Robert Lewis Dabney saw Edwards's thought as contributing to the decline of Puritan religion in New England. Archibald Alexander considered Jonathan Edwards's *Religious Affections* as being too detailed and too hard to read and comprehend.

The position of this reviewer is that Jonathan Edwards's legacy has been influential but that much of his influence has disappeared with time. His fame has endured longer and been greater than his influence.

Arie Blok

The NIV Reconsidered: A Fresh Look at a Popular Translation, by Earl Radmacher and Zane C. Hodges, Rendicion Viva, 1990.

The reader is presented with a ten-chapter survey and review of the NIV which, in turn, examines and evaluates the accuracy and adequacy of previous book reviews and studies, and among them the review of Oudersluys in the *Reformed Review* 34 (Autumn 1980), 39, 67-68, etc.

The authors are negative in their appraisal of the NIV, and are always pleased to encounter new additional reviews and studies that reinforce their negativity. It is not surprising that they find objectionable my praise of the NIV's use of "dynamic equivalence" as a translating technique, because the meaning of the term itself is in some dispute (29). On the other hand, they approve my criticism of the new version's handling of *hilasterion* (67), and on the same page where I question the handling of the phrase *in his blood* (Rom. 3:25), they are quick to approve. It does not take long for a reader to sense that the authors approve of my negative comments but are dismayed if in any shape or manner I approve or defend the NIV version. Their negativity goes so far as to question whether or not the NIV is translated from the best available Greek New Testament text (144).

To ensure that the latter will be the case for all future readers of the Greek text, the authors have provided the now everywhere accepted critical edition of the Greek New Testament with what they hope will be a formidable competitor – a new edition of the old, long-dead *textus receptus*, *The Greek New Testament According to the Majority Text*, 2nd ed., edited by Zane C. Hodges and Arthur L. Farstad, assistant editor William C. Dunkin (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1985). If the authors are not already doing so, I hope they will take steps to fortify themselves against the disappointment that is bound to be ensuing and inevitable.

Richard C. Oudersluys

No Place for Abuse: Biblical and Practical Resources to Counteract Domestic Violence, by Catherine Clark Kroeger and Nancy Nason-Clark, Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2001. 200pp., \$12.

Nason-Clark is professor of sociology at the University of New Brunswick, Canada. Kroeger is adjunct associate professor of classical and ministry studies at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. Together they challenge the evangelical Christian community to listen to women talk about the violence they have suffered. They illustrate how the church denies the abuse in its midst. They include arresting statistics: "Over 60 percent of murderers between the ages of fifteen and twenty-one are incarcerated for having killed their mother's abuser." They offer superb resources.

I begin with the resources. In the appendixes the authors present scripture passages and principles in illustration of the word God speaks against abuse; scriptures that provide comfort for the victim and condemn the abuse; intervention resources for pastors; education and congregational resources. These include specific questions that a pastor or a friend might ask a person suspected of being the victim of abuse. Internet and bibliographical references are also supplied.

Is dating violence discussed in your youth group? Are you aware of the nearest safe women's shelter to your church and what its needs are? Have you preached a sermon condemning abuse in the home? Do you believe the suffering of an abused woman can bring salvation to her husband?

The book calls the church to recognize the extent of abuse in Christian families, confronts the church in its self-deception, and demonstrates deception's consequences. The authors include the church's global responsibility for women who face dowry death (6,917 deaths in India in 1996), sex trafficking, enforced prostitution, and genital mutilation.

For the pastor or the church leader who seeks to understand the nature of abuse and what may be done on a very practical level, this volume provides a splendid resource. If you are an evangelical pastor and you don't have a book in your library on the subject of abuse, buy this one. It's an excellent starting point.

Robert J. Hoeksema

The Presbyterian Doctrine of Children in the Covenant: An Historical Study of the Significance of Infant Baptism in the Presbyterian Church, by Lewis Bevens Schenck, introduction by Frank A. James III, Phillipsburg, N. J.: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1940, Introduction 2003. 188pp., \$15.99.

Originally published in 1940, *The Presbyterian Doctrine of Children in the Covenant* augments the current debate over the practice of infant baptism. The author, the late Lewis Bevens Schenck, taught Bible and religion at Davidson College for almost forty years. His biographer described the professor as a “compassionate Calvinist (Frank A. James III, introduction). This book was a publication of Schenck’s doctoral dissertation at Yale University.

Schenck’s doctrine on infant baptism agrees with Horace Bushnell’s *Christian Nurture*, which states that a child of the covenant should “grow up as a Christian and never know himself otherwise (p. 2).”

Although not explicitly stated, the author’s purpose attempts to answer the question of a Dr. Gerhart. Describing the Presbyterian minister as a “workman in the garden of the Lord, Gerhart posed the question, “Are these little ones (i.e. children of believing parents) living plants, or are they poisonous weeds?” (156). Schenck adds, “Do baptized children belong to the Devil or to the Lord? Are they in a state of condemnation or in a state of grace?”

Schenck answers the question through a historical study of the Presbyterian Church’s doctrine on infant baptism. Then the author criticizes the Great Awakening and the development of revivalism for threatening the doctrine of children in the covenant. The book concludes by clarifying the confusion about the doctrine of infant baptism and the role of children in the covenant. An underlying theme in Schenck’s book is promoting a strong Christian education program in the church, especially the covenant children.

Although the book primarily addresses the tension in the Presbyterian Church U.S. (Southern Presbyterian Church) of the 1940s, I believe that Schenck’s defense of infant baptism equally applies to the debate in the Reformed Church and other historic reformed churches. Let us heed Schenck’s call to return to our Reformed, historic roots on the doctrine of infant baptism and the Christian education of these covenant children.

Barry L. Wynveen

The Promise and Perils of Postmodernism, by Millard J. Erickson, Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2001. 335pp.

Erickson probes the elusive nature of postmodernism by viewing the teachings of four of its diverse representatives. Two are Frenchmen: Derrida, who deals with the relationship between words and reality; and Foucault, who captures the notion of power, notably political power. Two are Americans: the pragmatist, Richard Rorty; and Stanley Fish, who is a member of the “Yale School” of literary criticism (ch. 6-9). While each of these has an individual agenda, they all concur that human knowledge is historically conditioned, not metaphysically ascertainable.

The author traces the roots of this contemporary movement back to its twentieth-century predecessors (Heidegger, Gadamer, and Wittgenstein) and nineteenth-century figures like Kierkegaard and Nietzsche (ch. 4-5). Most fascinating to this reviewer is the historical context of postmodernism. It is a rejection of modernism: Descartes’s mathematical approach to reality, Newton’s clockwork universe, Locke’s empiricism, and Kant’s notion of autonomy (ch. 3).

Concurring with the postmodernists that human knowledge is limited, Erickson regrets that the movement at times is intolerant of other alternatives, demanding as it does a measure of conformity (ch. 10-11). In other words, he detects promises as well as perils in postmodernism. Erickson accepts a kind of correspondence view of truth (ch. 13, 15), taking over parts of the objective view of reality as described by premodernists like Plato, Augustine, and Aquinas.

Author of a three-volume *Christian Theology*, Erickson is eminently qualified to guide the reader through the postmodernistic maze to a new appreciation of the Christian faith. An in-depth treatment would do greater justice to this rich work – a description of four pivotal stages in Western intellectual thought, with a steadfast focus on the Christian faith.

Ralph W. Vunderink

Repentance: The First Word of the Gospel, by Richard O. Roberts, Wheaton: Crossway, 2003. 368pp., \$19.99.

Richard O. Roberts lists several reasons why repentance has faded from much public worship. He cites the avoidance of doctrinal preaching, lack of awareness that repentance is mandatory, confusion of repentance with “works” (we are not saved by works, but by faith alone), a distorted focus on the positive, the

substitution of a strong emphasis on success, and the lack of moral earnestness among church leaders (16-20).

Roberts focuses on repentance as the “first word of the gospel.” This is a reference to John the Baptist’s and Jesus’ own earliest preaching. A cursory scan through the Bible will uncover regular, persistent references to repentance as the precursor of all renewal. The history of the Christian church is similarly the story of the rediscovery of the need to begin at this point. Roberts reminds us that repentance is the “first word of the twelve,” “the focus of Peter’s preaching,” “heart of Paul’s preaching,” and “the last call to the churches in the Revelation” (32-39).

The author traces this repentance theme through both the Old and New Testaments. He deals appealingly with such themes as, “Seven Myths of Repentance,” “Seven Maxims of Repentance,” “Seven Marks of Repentance,” “Seven Fruits of Repentance,” and “Seven Models of Repentance.” These are so structured that they may be used in sermon series or taught in classes. The chapter, “Myths of Repentance,” for instance, deals helpfully with the distinction between “self-improvement,” and repentance. The centrality of calling directly upon God in the midst of our own helplessness is a refreshing emphasis, especially for those of us who have tried repeatedly to weed out bad habits in our own strength. The focus upon repentance as the proper “handle” by which we experience a constant partnership between the Holy Spirit and our own actions is well worth the effort of reading through this well-written book.

As pastors and church leaders, we may well ask ourselves whether we are giving sufficient time and emphasis to the need for repentance. If this was a hallmark of the ministries of John the Baptist and Jesus, and has been at the core of virtually every movement of renewal in the history of the Christian church, may we not profit by taking the risk of making this emphasis central to our own church activities? Thanks to Richard Roberts we have helpful tools for making the necessary adjustments in a way relevant to our own time.

Carl J. Schroeder

A Scientific Theology, Volume 2: Reality by Alister E. McGrath, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002. 343pp., \$50.

McGrath suggests that the epistemological integrity of theological science in the twenty-first century can be aided through the philosophy of critical realism. With reference to Karl Barth's concern that the task of theology not become dependent upon philosophy or other methodologies outside that of the Word of God revealed in Jesus Christ, McGrath stresses the ancillary posture that any tool of philosophy, such as critical realism, must take with respect to theological pronouncement. That said, McGrath argues basically that, as an epistemological option, critical realism helps create intellectual space for the adoption of a worldview that seeks the unity of knowledge yet without insisting on the uniformity of knowledge.

McGrath begins by identifying and then discrediting one of the main epistemological assertions that grew out of the Enlightenment, that of foundationalism. Attention is also given to those epistemologies aimed at dismantling and discrediting the claims of Enlightenment foundationalism. One of McGrath's main points is that the fragmentary status of knowledge with which many theologians now struggle is a result of the overcorrection of foundationalist claims. These theologians would have us believe that none of us can ever know all the truth of reality and that truth does not exist beyond the bounds of human construction.

In response to this urge to overcorrect as well as to a few who today still hold out hope for the viability of foundationalism, McGrath makes his case for critical realism over against two other schools of thought: naïve realism, and postmodern anti-realism. The main characteristic that distinguishes critical realism from both of these is its acknowledgment of the impact that the knower has on the pursuit of knowledge. McGrath offers the work in critical realist philosophy done by Roy Baskher as the grounds on which a possible reintegration of Christian spirituality and theology could take place.

The undercurrent running through McGrath's work is his concern for the intellectual credibility of Christianity within the sphere of public discourse about a world that is inhabited by both theologians and natural scientists. The specific point of intersection between theology and natural science for McGrath is the Christian belief that the natural world is God's creation. Those who subscribe to the doctrinal articulations of orthodox Christianity have a stake in the work done by natural scientists since, "The basic theme of 'encountering reality' runs throughout both these natural sciences and a scientific theology, and is rooted in the Christian doctrine of creation" (245).

A Scientific Theology is the result of a decades-long yearning McGrath has had to “explore the relation between Christian theology and the natural sciences, using philosophy and history as dialogue partners,” (*A Scientific Theology*, vol. 1, xi). Volumes one and two have been devoted largely to the definition of terms. Volume three is entitled, *Theory*, and in it McGrath will articulate a scientific theology for the life of the church as well as its employment in the service of the gospel message that the church proclaims.

Derek DeJager

Sermons on the Book of Micah, by John Calvin, trans. and ed. by Benjamin Wirt Farley, Phillipsburg, N.J.: Presbyterian & Reformed, 2003. 433pp., \$19.99.

John Calvin’s sermons on the Book of Micah demonstrate these words from Ecclesiastes: Times have changed but human nature has not. In his time, Micah proclaimed God’s ethical word to the rebellious people of Judah. Over 450 years ago, Calvin preached against the Genevan civic leaders, merchants and the judicial system; the Sixteenth Century Roman Catholic Church; the Anabaptists; and the Libertines or the Spiritualists. Although Calvin preached these twenty-eight sermons on the Book of Micah from November 12, 1550, to January 10, 1551, they are equally relevant today.

The sermons demonstrate Calvin’s wit as a communicator, his erudition as an interpreter of Scripture and theologian, and his righteous passion as a pastor. At times, Calvin attacked his opponents with a biting criticism, which was always concealed in the glove of a loving pastor. With one hand the Genevan preacher presented the cold, hard reality of judgment for unrepentant. With the other hand, Calvin offered God’s loving grace to the contrite.

Micah’s prophecy and Calvin’s preaching needs to be heard in our own time. Both servants attacked the materialism and the idolatry of their time. For instance, Calvin would disparage our commercialization of Christmas. On December 25, 1551, preaching on Micah 5:7-14, Calvin began his sermon with his usual form. Then he observed the disproportionate attendance in the service for Christmas Day (what’s new?). The preacher accuses them of being poor beasts who have come to honor Noel. (Calvin preached on incarnation on the Sunday after December 25). He then added, “But if you think that Jesus Christ was born today, you are as crazed as wild beasts. For when you elevate one day alone for the purpose of worshiping God, you have just turned it into an idol.” He further adds that while they claim to celebrate Christmas to honor God, they have turned the holiday into an honor of the devil (303). Do we make our holidays into celebrations of idolatry?

Benjamin Wirt Farley has rendered a readable translation of Calvin's sermons. Preachers should read these sermons. Calvin is the master preacher and teacher of preachers.

Barry L. Wynveen

Spirituality and Social Ethics in John Calvin. A Pneumatological Perspective, (Sueng Hoon) Paul Chung. Lanham, M.D.: University Press of America, 2000. viii, 217pp., \$37.

The title of this book immediately arouses one's interest, for what does spirituality have to do with social ethics? If one is familiar with Calvin's life and theology, however, it will soon become apparent that this linkage is not farfetched. For Calvin is distinguished by his profound sense of piety or godliness, on the one hand, and his social concern, on the other. Moreover, Calvin, "the theologian of the Holy Spirit" (B.B. Warfield and others), did not limit the work of the Spirit to one's salvation, but also saw the Spirit at work in the church and in the world.

Hence, after a brief introduction to Calvin's pneumatology, Chung discusses the Spirit in relation to the cosmos, the Trinity, soteriology, the Law, the church, and the much-debated question about Calvin's contribution to democracy and capitalism. The book concludes with an appendix, "The Lord's Supper Among Lutherans and Reformed Protestants from an Ecumenical Perspective." Here his concern is to demonstrate that the differences between Luther and Calvin on the nature of the real presence of Christ in the Supper have been overemphasized. Perhaps, but I question one word in Chung's statement that in the recent "Mutual Affirmation and Admonition" neither Lutherans nor Reformed have hesitation in confessing the presence of Christ in the Supper really, *physically*, and spiritually" (172, emphasis mine). Have Reformed believers ever agreed that Christ is *physically* present in the Supper?

Apart from that, and a few other minor quibbles, I find this to be a balanced and perceptive treatment of Calvin's doctrine of the Holy Spirit, viewed from a variety of perspectives. Chung, a Korean-American, who is an adjunct faculty member at San Francisco Theological Seminary, wrote this as a post-doctoral dissertation, with Martin Anton Schmidt of the University of Basel as his principal advisor. However, he also received help from William Bouwsma of the University of California in Berkeley and Timothy Lull of the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Berkeley.

Chung explains that after writing his doctoral dissertation on Karl Barth at the University of Basel in 1992, he became interested in Calvin, “with special regard for the reception of Calvinism in my home country of South Korea” (vii). Having lectured in Korea at an Asian Calvin Studies Conference, I can vouch for the fact that the long-standing interest in Calvinism in Korea is now turning more and more to an interest in Calvin himself. This book, which is generally very readable, should also help toward that end in this country as well.

I. John Hesselink

The Starting Point of Calvin's Theology, by George H. Tavard, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000. ix, 199pp., \$20.

It will probably come as a surprise to non-Calvin specialists that some of the finest studies of Calvin's life and theology during the past forty years have been written by Roman Catholic scholars. One of them is the distinguished French-American theologian George Tavard. Although approximately half of his numerous publications are in French, most of his teaching career has been in the United States, not only at Roman Catholic colleges and seminaries, but also at Protestant seminaries.

The present study arises out of two special interests of Tavard: the ecumenical movement (he has been involved in Catholic dialogue with Anglicans, Lutherans, and Methodists), and his many years of teaching a course on Calvin at the Methodist Theological School in Ohio. (I asked him once how he happened to do this and his response was: “There were a number of Presbyterian students and others at the seminary who wanted to study Calvin's *Institutes*. No one else was willing to do this, so I taught the course most of my career there.”)

Tavard makes a singular contribution to Calvin studies in this book because he provides us with a thorough analysis of what he calls “the starting point” of Calvin's theology, viz., Calvin's little-known work, *Psychopannychia*. This is basically a polemic against the Anabaptist view of soul sleep after death. What makes this study particularly significant is that it was written in France in 1534, shortly after his conversion experience prior to the composition of the first edition of the *Institutes*. However, Calvin did not publish the work until 1542. The reasons for the delay are not although clear, but the point is that this work represents Calvin's first theological effort. (His earlier published work in 1531 re: Seneca on clemency was a humanist study.)

Tavard is not only interested in the content of this first theological writing of Calvin; he also sees here a link with the first chapter of the 1536 *Institutes* and

traces certain themes from the early work as they are developed in the *Institutes*. Moreover – here Tavad is on shaky ground – he contends that the first four chapters of the *Institutes*, which are more irenic, were written before Calvin’s open commitment to the Reformation, and the rest of the book after the episode of the Placards in November 1534 (123, 141). According to Tavad, this accounts for the more polemical tone in the latter part of the *Institutes*, especially the condemnation of the Mass as an abomination, polluted “by every kind of impiety, blasphemy, idolatry, sacrilege” (122).

What Tavad wants to do, in short, is to find a common ground for Catholic-Reformed dialogue on the basis of the less polemical portions of Calvin’s theology. Tavad’s motivation is laudable, but it is questionable whether one can separate the anti-papal, polemical parts of Calvin’s theology from the more positive ones, especially the mystical trends of late medieval theology that Tavad finds developed in Calvin’s theology. Tavad’s irenicism and goal, however, are admirable. He concedes, for example, that “Calvin’s Catholic adversaries were blinded to the fundamental catholicity of his thought” (191). And few would disagree that “there is an urgency to go beyond mutual understanding, beyond polite apologetics, in order to discover equivalencies or analogies between the traditions where this is at all possible” (192).

I. John Hesselink

To Know and Love God, by David K. Clark, Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2003. xxxii, 464pp., \$35.

This is a timely book, for *To Know and Love God* addresses several major issues facing the Christian faith today. Starting with Scripture as the principle of authority for theological reflection, embodying as it does God’s self-revelation to, and written down by, the Hebrew-Christian community, the author David Clark, at present professor of theology at Bethel Seminary, moves on to discuss theology’s cultural context, the communal (and personal) way Scripture’s message is being interpreted. He then treats theology in relation to modern science, which in recent years is being viewed by some to be less hostile, in fact, more favorably disposed to religious discourse. Theology may, further, receive valuable aid from, rather than be pitted against, philosophy by employing human wisdom’s careful definitions and clear distinctions as it maps out various sources of human knowledge and assesses non-Christian truth claims.

Especially pertinent, in the opinion of this reviewer, is chapter ten on Christianity’s message and the world religions, notably in light of current discussions about Islam’s militant or moderate nature. Clark tries to balance

between an exclusive disagreement with and an inclusive tolerance toward other religions, but he holds steady on the uniqueness of the Christian message, which transcends religious (and ethical) relativism. He can uphold this absolute claim because, for him, religious language refers to the triune God, the author of faith.

To Know and Love God is a fine tribute to the cause of evangelical faith, even more so when it is rendered, as the author himself acknowledges toward the end, *To Know and Love God the Creator and Christ the Redeemer*. Its irenic approach reflects Millard Erickson's conciliatory trilogy, *Christian Theology*, and its scholarship mirrors the stance of evangelicals like the late Baptist Carl Henry and occasionally cites contributions from Reformed thinkers (e.g., Alvin Plantinga). A possible follow-up volume may show how concretely a developed evangelical theology can meet the counterclaims of an equally articulated Islam theology; that is, whether or not both comprehensive religions affecting all aspects of life can co-exist as salvific options.

Ralph W. Vunderink

Touchdown Jesus: The Mixing of Sacred and Secular in American History, by R. Laurence Moore, Westminster John Knox, 2003. 195pp., \$24.95.

Moore believes that anyone wishing to understand America must pay attention to the interaction between religion and the public sphere. His purpose in this book "is to give historical perspective to the way religion operates in American culture at the beginning of the twenty-first century." The author is well qualified to achieve this goal. Moore is professor of American studies at Cornell University and the author of several books, including the well-received, *Religious Outsiders and the Making of Americans*. Two key ideas inform his study – the religious and the nonreligious may be distinguishable but are never separable in culture, and religious activity always includes nonreligious goals and consequences.

Following a brief introduction to religion in the United States, nine topics are examined historically, such as the public display of religion, Protestant and Catholic cultures, Protestant adoption of the free-market approach, and immigrant religion and the negotiation of identity. The chapter, "Science and the Battle for the Souls of Children," may serve as an example for Moore's approach. He introduces the controversy over the teaching of evolution by placing it in context: religious groups requesting exemption from certain laws; and, rights/responsibility conflict (in this case, the right of parents to teach their children versus the state's responsibility to educate citizens). Moore then tells the story of the Scopes Trial, suggesting that more was at stake than simply

scientific knowledge – religious beliefs help determine many other sorts of beliefs. He presents the history of the relationship between science and religion in America, with special attention to Darwin’s theory. His analysis leads him to conclude that the teaching of Darwinian evolution has been so explosively controversial because it challenges the assumption that there is a harmony between different areas of knowledge and because it has enabled atheism to become intellectually respectable by explaining the existence of human beings without reference to God.

This book is aimed at the general reader and provides a good introduction to the complex interaction of religion with American culture. Its lack of footnotes or endnotes would limit its use academically. Pastors could benefit from reading it.

Jeffrey W. Taylor

The Trustworthiness of God: Perspectives on the Nature of Scripture, ed. by Paul Helm and Carl R. Trueman. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002. xiii, 289pp., \$28.

This is a collection of fourteen essays and two responses by an international array of scholars. The essays are divided into Old Testament; New Testament; and historical, systematic, and philosophical perspectives. The theme of the book is God’s trustworthiness or faithfulness.

The writers approach their theme by looking at the way it is developed in various portions of Scripture. In the case of the Old Testament, the focus is on Deuteronomy, Jeremiah, the wisdom literature, and Micah’s prophecy. For the New Testament, essays discuss Jesus and Scripture, Paul’s view of Scripture and God’s faithfulness, God and Scripture in Hebrews, and Paul’s literal interpretation of “do not muzzle the ox.”

Just as it is central in the Scriptures to say that God can be trusted, so also, the writers argue, we must affirm that the medium through which this message comes – the Bible – is likewise trustworthy. Thus, there is a firm interrelatedness between the doctrines of God and Scripture. In the end, one of the most helpful summaries of what is at stake here is Carl Trueman’s comment in relation to Calvin and the Reformers: “To argue for a promising God is to argue for a trustworthy God, and to argue for a trustworthy God is to argue for a God whose words and deeds are basically consistent with each other and reveal one who is committed to being a certain kind of God for us” (191).

Fortunately, this volume does not get bogged down in “labyrinthine debates about inerrancy and about the nature of the degrees of inspiration” (97). Francis Watson’s “An Evangelical Response” puts it well:

The “key issue” for evangelicals in their debates with others is not “the authority of Scripture” as such and in abstraction but the authority and trustworthiness of Scripture in its manifold, variegated, infinitely rich testimony to Jesus, as the fellow human who, for Christians, is constitutive of God’s own identity. If we could achieve clarity on *that* point and interpret Scripture accordingly, then the old, unevangelical, and therefore irrelevant anxieties about the historicity of Genesis or the date of Deuteronomy would disappear, and we might have a biblical scholarship focused on the gospel itself (288).

If this volume can contribute to that end, it will serve a significant purpose indeed.

Donald K. McKim

Whose Religion Is Christianity?: The Gospel Beyond the West, by Lamin Sanneh, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003, xii + 150pp., \$12 paper.

To adherents of secularization theses, religion (and Christianity in particular) has become irrelevant and has been marshaled into the margins of private oblivion. Yet a number of journalists, historians, and other scholars of religion, contrary to those who prophesied the triumph of secularization, contend that Christianity has witnessed sustained and significant growth in recent years. “The top-down culture of Christendom, with social pedigree ruling the roost,” observes Yale historian Lamin Sanneh, “has been replaced by the bottom-up shakedown that world Christianity has induced” (87-88). In *Whose Religion Is Christianity?* Sanneh engagingly seeks to account for, describe, and explain the recent “worldwide Christian resurgence” in Latin America, Africa, and Asia (among other areas) that “seems to proceed without Western organizational structures, including academic recognition, and is occurring amidst widespread political instability, and the collapse of public institutions” (3). To best observe such resurgence, Sanneh convincingly argues, Christianity should be seen as a *world* religion and in a *global* context.

Sanneh’s approach is as helpful as his thesis is challenging. After setting the global context in the introduction, he writes in a question-and-answer format for the remainder of the text, exploring first “Christianity as a World Religion,” and

second, "The Bible and Its Mother Tongue Variations." Sanneh adopts the "interactive interview style" because it opens the "personal dimension of religion" and because the differences that emerge in religious conversations (and notably discussions of Christianity and culture) can actually be "enriching and mutually instructive" rather than divisive or harmful. Furthermore, Sanneh keenly asserts, uncovering difference should not be a "barrier to dialogue" (5-6).

So why has Christianity witnessed explosive growth beyond the West? Sanneh suggests that the "political domestication" (75) of the Christian faith in Europe has resulted in a cold "melancholy" where the spirit is "wilting" (30). Other factors, like globalization, expand boundaries and redefine relationships and associations, whether political, social, economic, or religious. Also, the Western "guilt complex" (35) over the painful memories of slavery or the maddening prerogative of colonialism prompts reflection on the wider world. Either way, Sanneh concisely contends, western Christians *must* attempt to understand the dynamics behind this world Christian resurgence. Such an attempt must be informed because, as important as doctrine and exegesis are to the life of faith, lived religion according to scriptural injunction within a community of faith is equally important. Simply put, Western Christians must become conscious of the local indigenous factors (translation and agency) that shape global Christian faith and promote healthy spiritual growth, despite things like economic distress or severe persecution, things western Christians often *disassociate* with progress and expansion.

Sanneh highlights Africa (and to some extent China) to explain how the new Christian resurgence operates. He points out that this growth has occurred in a postcolonial context and is asked by his interlocutor if it is better to describe the process of cultural translation in Africa "[a]s the Christian discovery of indigenous societies or the indigenous discovery of Christianity?" (55). The differences, Sanneh carefully points out, lie in "external transmission" on the one hand, and "internal appropriation" (55) on the other.

Sanneh's large claim—and it is a claim western Christians must thoughtfully consider and sincerely give time to ingest—is that the new Christian resurgence has come about because of the process of (cultural) translation—a fact that is the church's "birthmark" and "its missionary benchmark" (97). Sanneh then observes that "Christianity is the religion of over two thousand different language groups in the world. More people pray and worship in more languages in Christianity than any other religion in the world" (69) and that "Christianity seems unique in being the only world religion that is transmitted without the language or originating culture of its founder" (98). As such, the storied history of "vernacular translation" produced a literacy that typically resulted in moments of cultural and social transformation and acted as a "shelter

for indigenous ideas and values” (109). Sanneh cites Yoruba Christian converts in Nigeria, for example, whose name for savior, *Olugbala*, is loaded with meanings of divine power and redemptive suffering, and the Maasai of East Africa, whose notions of faith and believing hinge not on individual appropriation but on communal participation. According to Sanneh, the process of translation leans against conquest and opens the way for “encounter” (123).

Sanneh is supremely qualified to bring his depth of insight into such a salient topic. Gambian-born and the son of a Muslim chieftain, Sanneh’s scholarly career has focused on, among other things, Christian-Muslim relations in West Africa (*Piety and Power: Muslims and Christians in West Africa* [Orbis, 1996]) and, perhaps most importantly, the thesis that translation of Christianity to indigenous, mother-tongue languages actually preserves rather than undermines the health of cultures (*Translating the Message: The Missionary Impact on Culture* [Orbis, 1989] and *Encountering the West: Christianity and the Global Cultural Process* [Orbis, 1993]). Those keen to hear Sanneh out on these issues might also consult the work of Andrew F. Walls (*The Missionary Movement in Christian History* [Orbis, 1996] and *The Cross-Cultural Process in Christian History* [Orbis, 2002]) and Philip Jenkins (*The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity* [Oxford University Press, 2002]), scholars whose work complements and enhances Sanneh’s observations. Above all, Sanneh’s *The Gospel Beyond the West* pushes those of faith to reevaluate and expand denominational and ecumenical boundaries and ultimately embrace the fact that “Christianity is a multicolored fabric where each new thread, chosen and refined at the Designer’s hand, adds luster and strength to the whole. In this pattern of faith affirmation we should stress the importance of interwoven solidarity with fellow believer, past, present, and future” (56).

Phillip Luke Sinitiere

Your Word Is Truth: A Project of Evangelicals and Catholics Together, ed. Charles Colson and Richard John Neuhaus, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002. x, 168pp., \$20 (paper).

The project, “Evangelicals and Catholics Together,” endeavors to find common ground and to explore those areas often thought to be stumbling blocks for ecumenical relations. *Your Word Is Truth* brings together distinguished evangelical and Catholic theologians to explore the role of Scripture and the authority of tradition. Evangelical scholars Timothy George, J. I. Packer, and John Woodbridge and Catholic scholars Avery Cardinal Dulles, J. J., Thomas G. Guarino, and Francis Martin explore the ideas of truth, *sola scriptura*, and tradition. Each is faithful to his own tradition, being both scholarly and personal and allowing his own passions to be read between the lines. The authors speak to

what they know and allow their words to stand on their own. It is up to the reader to connect the dots as the dividing wall between these groups begins to fade and understanding is discovered. It is not possible to read this book without having a greater understanding and appreciation of the Catholic tradition and a better understanding, and often ignored insights, into our own Reformed tradition.

This book is an obvious must for any Reformed person who is working in an ecumenical environment where Catholics and evangelicals are striving to work together in sharing with the world that Jesus is Lord. It is also a wonderful resource for ministers who find more and more of their parishioners exploring the other tradition. The general knowledge to help understand where they come from and to provide words to what the other might believe is well worth the price of the book. The value, however, does not end there. As reformers who often forget that our roots stem from the same church fathers that molded the tradition of the Catholic Church, we must be willing to enter into this conversation for our own wholeness. As Pope John Paul II said, "Dialogue is not simply an exchange of ideas. In some ways, it is always an exchange of gifts" (79). There are many gifts found in the pages of this book.

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