
Book Reviews

The Belgic Confession: Its History and Sources, by Nicolaas H. Gootjes, Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007. 229pp., \$29.99.

Calvin, Participation, and the Gift: The Activity of Believers in Union With Christ, by J. Todd Billings, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007. 197pp. \$108.00.

Calvin's Theology of the Psalms, by Herman J. Selderhuis, Grand Rapids: Baker Academic. 2007, 304 pp. \$29.95.

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History of Christianity in Asia, Vol. II, 1500-1900, by Samuel Hugh Moffett, American Society of Missiology Series 36, Mary Knoll: Orbis Books, 2005. xxvi, 740pp., \$ 65.00.

An Introduction to the Heidelberg Catechism: Sources, History and Theology, by Lyle D. Bierma, et al., Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005. 223pp., \$30.00.

New Testament Theology: Magnifying God in Christ, by Thomas R. Schreiner, Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008. 990pp., \$44.99.

Taking the Jesus Road, by LeRoy Koopman, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005. 512 pp. \$49.00.

The Belgic Confession: Its History and Sources, by Nicolaas H. Gootjes, Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007. 229pp., \$29.99.

The Belgic Confession (BC) is the most important confession to emerge from the Reformation in the The Netherlands and continues to serve as a confessional standard in those churches that trace their origins from that Reformation. That is why it is puzzling that until now no monograph on this important statement of faith has appeared in the English language. Nicolaas H. Gootjes has admirably made up for this lack in offering this extensively researched study of the BC, which is included in the series *Texts and Studies in Reformation and Post-Reformation Thought*, whose general editor is Richard A. Muller.

In this study Gootjes identifies and carefully analyzes the documentary sources by which he establishes the provenance and authorship of the BC. He then compares this confession with Calvin's Gallican Confession and Beza's Confession (which Beza intended for his father as a personal statement of faith) to demonstrate literary dependency of the BC on these confessions. The comparative analyses of these texts are accompanied throughout by instructive commentary that will help readers locate the BC in the broader ecclesiastical and theological currents of the Reformation era. In this connection, I found especially illuminating the chapter on the role that the BC played at the international Synod of Dort, which the Estates General called in 1618 to settle the controversy between the Calvinists (Gomarists) and their opponents the Remonstrants. Gootjes succeeds here in clarifying the theological issues at stake by narrating how each side in the debate imposed its own distinct interpretation on various articles of the BC (133-147).

The historical narrative is supplemented by a chapter devoted to an overview of the reception and transmission of the BC into those churches which have received, translated, and adopted it as an authoritative statement of the Reformed faith. The study concludes with a series of appendices containing source documents reproduced in their original languages. These no doubt will be helpful to Reformation scholars who will want to consult them for the purpose of evaluating how the author uses them in arguing for the positions he adopts. Those scholars, or anyone else for that matter who wishes to know more about the history, theology, and continuing influence of the Belgic Confession in the life of the Reformed churches today, will be grateful to Gootjes in providing to English readers the rich harvest of his scholarly research.

–Christopher Dorn

Calvin, Participation, and the Gift: The Activity of Believers in Union With Christ, by J. Todd Billings, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007. 197pp. \$108.00.

In response to the claim of “gift theologians” that Calvin’s view of God’s relationship to humanity is founded upon an understanding of salvation as a unilateral gift which negates any human activity in this event, J. Todd Billings argues an account of Calvin’s theology of participation that acknowledges human agency enabled by the work of the Spirit while maintaining God’s sovereignty and prevenient grace.

Billings begins his work with a discussion of “gift economies” and “gift theologians” who fit into a group known as “Radical Orthodoxy.” These theologians share a common concern regarding the passive reception of divine gifts which are viewed as unilateral gifts, preferring instead the notion of active reception and reciprocity in gift giving. In their theological discourse, gift theologians have been critical of Calvin’s theology, especially with regard to accounts of God’s grace which involve imputation because this is seen as undermining human activity in salvation. In their view, Calvin’s understanding of justification by imputation allows only for a passive human response, thus diminishing human involvement in actively receiving the divine gift of salvation.

Billings counters this argument by giving his readers a detailed account and thoughtful analysis of Calvin’s theology of participation which is rooted in the double grace of justification and sanctification. For Calvin, participation in Christ involves the incorporation of believers into the life of the Triune God such that as believers are made one with Christ through the Spirit, God is revealed as a loving and gracious Father who freely pardons our sin. Believers are empowered by the Spirit to respond to this gift of grace by a life of gratitude and voluntary, joyful obedience to God’s law. Thus, Billings claims, human activity in sanctification as lived out in a life of gratitude actually follows from and is enabled by Calvin’s strong emphasis of divine agency in justification by imputation.

According to Billings, Calvin has a wide ranging theology of participation that cannot be reduced to the categories of “gift,” “exchange,” and “reciprocity.” In his book, Billings seeks to clarify the meaning of participation and demonstrate its importance in Calvin’s theology. He chooses to focus his discussion primarily on “participation in Christ” rather than the closely related category of “union with Christ” because, in the context of the concern among gift theologians regarding unilateral gifts, Billings seeks to lift up Calvin’s emphasis on the active role of believers in receiving salvation and living a life in Christ. This is accomplished by highlighting the theme of participation within Calvin’s theology of prayer, the sacraments, and the law.

The theme of participation emerges in connection to a wide variety of doctrinal topics in Calvin's theology. *Calvin, Participation, and the Gift* explores Calvin's theology of participation throughout a broad scope of Calvin's writings including the *Institutes*, Biblical commentaries, sermons, letters, and a lesser known but significant work of Calvin's, *The Bondage and Liberation of the Will*. Attention to this wide range of works provides an expansive and comprehensive account of Calvin's theology. In addition, Billings gives a very helpful and insightful account of the history of the development of Calvin's theology and the way in which the development of his thought is reflected in the successive editions of the *Institutes*.

I would highly recommend this book for those interested in Calvin's theology who may have been confused by some common misunderstandings and misperceptions about Calvin. *Calvin, Participation, and the Gift* provides a clear account of Calvin's theology of participation and the way in which it can hold in tension divine agency in salvation with the active response of the believer in receiving salvation by faith and living obediently in God's grace.

–Ann Conklin

Calvin's Theology of the Psalms, by Herman J. Selderhuis, Grand Rapids: Baker Academic. 2007, 304 pp. \$29.95.

The book of the Psalms was especially meaningful to Calvin. He not only wrote a lengthy commentary on the Psalms (five volumes in English) but preached on the Psalms almost every Sunday afternoon during a three year period. He preached 25 sermons on Psalm 119 alone! (also now available in English). He frequently identified with David, the psalmist, and also saw here a mirror of his own situation and that of the city of Geneva. Accordingly, he calls his commentary "an anatomy of all the parts of the soul." Also, everything we need to know about prayer is taught us in the Psalms.

Hence, this comprehensive study of Calvin's Theology of the Psalms by an eminent Calvin scholar is an invaluable contribution to Calvin studies. The author, Herman Selderhuis, is professor of church history and church polity at the Theologische Universiteit Apeldoorn in the Netherlands. He is well known in Calvin academic circles as an author and as the General Secretary of the International Calvin Congress. He recognizes that one does not have the whole of Calvin's theology in this commentary on the Psalms but it does enable us to look into "both the heart of Calvin the man and the heart of his theology" (43).

According to Selderhuis, the heart of Calvin theology in the Psalms is that “God is at the Center. . . .In every matter Calvin places God at the center” (18, 19). This at first glance sounds obvious, but in emphasizing so much “God being God” (38-9) and the “deity of God” (284). Selderhuis underestimates the christocentric character of Calvin’s theology. At one point Selderhuis does note that “Calvin’s accent on God being God leads him. . .to a wholly personal theology of the cross.” Elsewhere Selderhuis even refers to “Calvin’s Christological reading of the Psalms” (148). In Calvin’s exposition of the Psalms there are countless references to Christ and his kingdom (the index cites many of them). This should have been given greater attention.

After an introductory chapter, the author treats the following themes in Calvin’s Theology of the Psalms: God the Triune; God the Creator; God the Caring; God the Speaking; God the King; God the Judge; God the Hidden; God the Holy One; God the God of the Covenant; and God the Father. In a concluding chapel Selderhuis discusses the spirituality of Calvin and Calvinism. Unfortunately, according to Selderhuis, “certain aspects of Calvin’s theology and spirituality have obviously disappeared in Calvinism; e.g., Calvin’s emphasis on the assurance of faith, the joy of faith, and his “defining belief in terms of love” (290).

This book is not only a valuable contribution to Calvin studies, but is also a rich resource for appreciating more fully the riches of the Psalms.

–I. John Hesselink

Conversations with the Confessions: Dialogue in the Reformed Tradition, edited by Joseph D. Small, Louisville: Geneva Press, 2005. xiv, 248pp., \$24.95.

A distinguishing feature of the Presbyterian Church (USA) is that it does not possess a single confession of faith, but rather a number of confessions. In addition to the Apostles’ and Nicene Creeds, it has adopted six confessions and catechisms from the Reformation era (Scots Confession, Heidelberg Catechism, Second Helvetic Confession, Westminster Confession of Faith, Westminster Larger Catechism, and Westminster Shorter Catechism). To these it has added three other confessions (Barmen Declaration, Confession of 1967, and Brief Statement of Faith) that were forged in the fires of political and ecclesiastical conflicts in the twentieth century.

In this volume readers will find a series of essays addressing these faith documents from a variety of angles. They will learn about their original contexts, themes, as well as what their continuing role has been (and should be) in the life of the Presbyterian Church. The quality of the essays is uniformly high. Each of

the authors has brought to the theme assigned to him or her an impressive amount of theological scholarship as well as a sensitivity to the challenges of persuading Christians in our current context to listen to what these faith documents have to teach concerning the faith, worship, and mission of the churches that have designated themselves as “reformed, and always being reformed according to the word of God.” Most of the authors see these challenges to have arisen from the clash between the affirmations of the Christian faith as taught in those documents on the one hand, and the ideals and values of contemporary Western culture on the other. Community and catholicity stand in contrast to individualism, privatism, and localism; subordination to the sovereign lordship of Christ and self-giving service to neighbor are opposed to radical autonomy and achievement-oriented competitiveness; the wisdom of the tradition is often neglected in favor of the prejudicial privileging of the present. The authors convincingly show that the confessions offer a needed corrective to our assumptions and attitudes: hence the need for ongoing conversations with them.

I would recommend this book as a useful resource for adult discussion groups in Presbyterian/Reformed congregations. Even better, it could serve as a supplementary text in a class devoted to the study of the *Book of Confessions* itself.

–Christopher Dorn

A Faith That Is Never Alone: A Response to Westminster Seminary California, edited by P. Andrew Sandlin, La Grange, California: Kerygma Press, 2007. xix, 397pp., \$24.95.

Stands Westminster where it did? The Escondido, California, Westminster Theological Seminary is the namesake and younger sister of Westminster Theological Seminary of Philadelphia. Both were founded to continue the tradition of the Old Princeton (before the modernist debates) as the gold standard of Presbyterian confessional orthodoxy. Now Westminster West is embroiled in a heated controversy, backed by allies such as the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, Mid-America Reformed Seminary, John Piper, and R. C. Sproul. Westminster West’s latest contribution to this debate appeared in 2007 as *Covenant, Justification, and Pastoral Ministry: Essays by the Faculty of Westminster Seminary California*, edited by R. Scott Clark, with chapters by him, Michael Horton, S. M. Baugh, Robert Godfrey, and others. The volume now under review is a direct rebuttal by adherents of the “Federal Vision” and/or of the “New Perspective on Paul,” a somewhat diverse group of conservative Reformed critics (including a Reformed Baptist or two) united in opposing the seminary’s interpretation of the Reformation’s *sola fide*. Three of the present book’s seven

contributors wrote two chapters each: Norman Shepherd, Rich Lusk, and Don Garlington.

Although it may appear to some that the Westminster West dispute is a tempest in an orthodox Presbyterian teapot, the issue has a long pedigree, with significant implications for preaching and ministry, not to mention theology (the relationship of justification and sanctification). Luther's Pauline "faith alone" was opposed to Rome's "faith plus works" (James 2). The Lutherans soon had their Majoristic and Antinomian controversies, echoed by British Reformed arguments about Neonomianism. Bonhoeffer criticized "cheap grace" in the 1930s. Dallas Seminary dispensationalists argued in the 1980s against John McArthur's teaching of "Lordship Salvation," i.e., that it is impossible to have Jesus as Savior without having him as Lord. About this same time, Norman Shepherd lost his position at Westminster East because he seemed to deny salvation by faith alone, by insisting that faith includes obedience. Currently Westminster West, imitating its older sister, is defending "faith alone," with Shepherd once again as opponent and as the contributor of two meaty chapters to the present volume, which is also dedicated to him. His views provide the book's basic orientation, but they are buttressed exegetically, theologically, and historically by the contributions of others, most notably Garlington's two scholarly chapters, reflecting the New Perspective on Paul of E. P. Sanders, James D. G. Dunn (Garlington's Ph.D. mentor), and N. T. Wright.

Shepherd advocates the "living, active, penitent, and obedient" "faithful faith" taught by the Westminster Standards, over against what he believes to be the anemic view of faith as mere assent of Westminster West, espoused, e.g., by Robert Godfrey, a former colleague of Shepherd at Philadelphia (the Shepherd-Godfrey exchange has personal overtones). He affirms that, through the gracious operation of the Holy Spirit and by faith alone, we are united with Christ in his death and resurrection and are thereby reckoned righteous on the basis of Christ's "passive obedience." For Shepherd there is no transfer of the merits of Christ's "active obedience" to our account, as though he had fulfilled the (presupposed) covenant of works for that reason. To remain saved, therefore, we must persevere to the end with an active faith, and not merely passively rely on God's preservation of his elect. Shepherd's opponents call his view a "toxic cocktail" of faith and works, reminiscent of Romanism.

Lusk contributes a chapter on "double justification": our justification when we first believe, and the justification of our works at the Final Judgment. Sandlin, following Daniel Fuller, attacks the law-gospel antithesis that he sees at Westminster West. Sandlin's view correlates with the "covenantal nomism" theme of the New Perspective on Paul.

Some of this controversy may be related to whether legalism or license is seen as the greater danger, while some of it may be semantic. I cannot imagine that Westminster West denies the standard Calvinist view that faith consists not only of knowledge (*notitia*) and assent (*assensus*) but also of active trust (*fiducia*), or that it denies the indissoluble link between justification and sanctification, without confusing the two. Westminster West can claim to be more “conservative” (disinclined to change) than its “Shepherdite” critics and – being thoroughly “Reformed” in the sense of being committed to its understanding of the confessions and the Reformed tradition. On the other side, the critics (none of whom are its alumni or in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church) aim at “reforming according to the Word of God,” although some also claim to be returning to an earlier, more biblical version of the Reformed faith. The seminary appears to be rather more oriented to systematic theology, and its critics to biblical theology and exegesis.

The entire “discussion” is conducted within the parameters of the Westminster Standards orthodox and a traditional view of Scripture (as the only infallible - if not inerrant - rule of faith and practice), the unity of the Bible (which cannot contradict itself), the historicity of Adam and of the fall, and the reality of future divine judgment. Each of the two sides tries to bring together all the relevant strands of the Bible, which has a lot to say both about God’s grace and about human works. The Dutch Reformed (including the CRC and the RCA) have no confessional commitment to Westminster’s idea of a double covenant. However the idea of a covenant of works exercised considerable influence on the theology of the Dutch-American clergy, especially in the Midwest, so the current discussion is of interest to us all.

–Earl Wm. Kennedy

Forty Days to a Closer Walk With God, by J. David Muyskens, Nashville: Upper Room Books, 2006. 138 pp., \$10.40.

In outlining a forty-day “closer walk with God,” Muyskens shares his testimony to God’s great love and every person’s need for reassurance of that love. “[Centering Prayer] consents to the love God has for you” (9).

Muyskens reveals his personal history, his friendships, his mentors, his broken places, and his personal journey to find God and peace through the contemplative path. Each day of the forty days is assigned a verse or phrase from scripture that suggests quietness, waiting patiently, silence, and simplicity. Each day concludes with a “Prayer Practice” that directs the participant into a particular physical posture, a “Prayer Word,” a scripture passage, a direction for journaling, and occasionally the use of a symbol of God’s presence, such as a

candle. The strength of centering prayer is to set aside the distractions of life and focus on the love of God and God's person rather than "scurry through the regimen" of prayer. It brings guidance and reflection to what can stray into uncontrollable thought patterns.

The danger of many guides to prayer and spiritual discipline is their tendency to allow the participant to individualize her faith and lose a sense of community. Muyskens offers this book with a guide for groups who follow these practices together. Another common danger of a specific "way to pray" is the implication that one approach is the best or only avenue to deeper spirituality. Another danger is the tendency to substitute spirituality or a sense of God for a relationship of grace.

The greater danger, however, is to have little desire or behavioral discipline to meet God, spend time in God's presence, or explore God's love for our lives. Muyskens is aware of all these dangers. We can thank him for providing this thoughtful guide which, while especially suited for the contemplative personality, offers a clear direction for a season of prayer. It also encourages groups to participate and moves all beyond insight and a personal assurance to active love for others.

–Peter Van Elderen

Growing in the Life of Faith, Education, and Christian Practices, by Craig Dykstra, second edition, Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2005. xxv, 204pp., \$19.95.

This book is the fruit of Craig Dykstra's lifelong journey in the Reformed faith and in education and church leadership. It is an apologetic and a challenge to participate in fourteen communal practices that are derived from our tradition. These practices, when taught and intentionally lived with integrity, lead to an outward directed, other-person-focused life that addresses the needs of our world – an appropriate subject for all church leaders.

This book may be a reaction to the unhealthiness of contemporary spirituality as well as a response to the expressed desire, or to use Dykstra's term, the "hunger" on the part of many people for authenticity and for "re-formed" practices and behavior that offer grace in settings where the religious community has had little voice. Religious communities often lose their sense of call and their original character out of a desire for comfort within their own culture. Religious people lose their intensity as their discourse is distanced from the person of Jesus, opting instead to speak in more the general terms of "spirituality," "God," and "religious practices." There is often a sense that strength is derived from

spiritual practices rather than the realization that those practices only become effective through the Holy Spirit's making redemptive grace real.

Dykstra insists that "Thinking and doing cannot be separated, and neither can believing and living, education and its context, or theology and the means of sharing it with others" (Foreword). His emphasis on an outward focus of community and his ability to trigger fresh and nuanced thought about educating others for faith in action make this book well worth reading.

–Peter Van Elderen

History of Christianity in Asia, Vol. II, 1500-1900, by Samuel Hugh Moffett, American Society of Missiology Series 36, Mary Knoll: Orbis Books, 2005. xxvi, 740pp., \$ 65.00.

Moffett's second volume of *A History of Christianity in Asia* is an invaluable addition to the comprehensive textbooks written about the history of Christianity in the non-Western world. Moffett blends his gift as a storyteller, his firsthand experiences as a missionary, and his expertise on the subject in this narration. He guides the reader through different regions of the continent, providing a brief background of the beginnings of Christianity in each region and proceeding in a chronological narrative. These regions include the countries we now call China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Myanmar, Pakistan, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, Thailand, Turkey, and Vietnam. Each chapter ends with some illuminating statistics from David Barrett's *World Christian Encyclopedia*.

Moffett divides his twenty-eight chapters into three parts. The first part of the book deals with the activities of Eastern Orthodox Christians, Catholic missionary orders, and Dutch colonists between 1500 and 1800. The second part relates the Christianizing efforts of Protestant princes, European colonial companies, and missionary societies. The third part begins with the publication of Carey's *Enquiry*. Moffett characterizes the seventy-five years between 1784 and 1860 as the "great century" because of the growth of Christianity on the continent. He underlines the initiatives of native Christians and identifies the shadows of European colonialism in the later expansion of Christianity in Asia. Like any other grand narrative, this book has its limitations. While documenting the activities of missionaries from the North Atlantic world, this volume is silent about the activities of Canadian missionaries in Asia. The volume recognizes the role of women missionaries but says little about the role of native women. Moffett identifies the social identity of the native Christians. But instead of naming them, he adapts the categories that missionaries used to identify native Christian communities. Except for these minor and understandable flaws, this

volume is a very helpful guide to students of history and religion. With its detailed narratives, innovative interpretations, helpful bibliography, and revealing statistics, this volume will be a standard reference for historians, missiologists and scholars of religion for decades to come.

–James Elisha Taneti

An Introduction to the Heidelberg Catechism: Sources, History and Theology, by Lyle D. Bierma, et al., Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005. 223pp., \$30.00.

This detailed and comprehensive introduction to the Heidelberg Catechism (HC) is a collaborative effort resulting in several fine essays by Charles D. Gunnoe, Jr., Lyle D. Bierma, Karin Y. Maag, and Paul W. Fields. The compilation is included in the series *Texts and Studies in Reformation and Post-Reformation Thought*, under the general editorship of Richard A. Muller.

Gunnoe's opening chapter plots the points on the trajectory of the Reformation of the Palatinate, which is the birthplace of the HC. Gunnoe takes account of the complexity of the political and ecclesiastical developments in the territory, which began to separate itself from Roman Catholicism under the reigns of Ludwig V (r. 1508-1544) and Frederick II (r. 1544-1556), moved into Lutheranism under Ottheinrich (r. 1556-1559), and finally into the Reformed camp under Frederick III (r. 1559-1576). It was this last prince who sought to consolidate the reforms in his territory by commissioning the HC in early 1562.

Bierma contributes the next two chapters. In his first he surveys the scholarship on the issue of the purpose and authorship of the HC. I found his treatment of the debated question of the HC's authorship especially instructive. Bierma informs us that the traditional assumption that the HC is the product of Zacharias Ursinus and Caspar Olevianus is an oversimplification. Bierma meticulously presents the case that the HC was likely a "team project" (53) involving leading theologians and church officials, with Ursinus assuming primary responsibility for the composition of the final draft. To this discussion he adds a second, which concerns the sources and theological orientation of the HC. Here Bierma corrects the popular assumption that the HC is an irenic and ecumenical statement of faith. While the document represents a broad-based theological consensus among Philippists, Calvinists, and later Zwinglians (under Bullinger), the phraseology of select questions and answers reflects the rejection of several positions of the Roman Catholics and the Gnesio-Lutherans on the right, and the Anabaptists on the left.

Maag adds a chapter on the early editions and translations of the HC. Fields provides an extensive bibliography of secondary sources on the HC published since 1900. A final noteworthy feature of this volume is the first complete English translations of Ursinus' Smaller Catechism and Larger Catechism. Serious students will be interested in tracing the parallels between the HC and these two confessional documents, on which the HC bears a literary dependence.

–Christopher Dorn

New Testament Theology: Magnifying God in Christ, by Thomas R. Schreiner, Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008. 990pp., \$44.99.

Pastors and students who want to understand the New Testament thematically will find this book to be very helpful. Thomas R. Schreiner explores the entire New Testament using a thematic approach (rather than a book-by-book approach) to provide a coherent New Testament theology.

The author offers two perspectives on the NT: first, "The NT is about God magnifying himself in Christ through the Spirit" (13); second, the New Testament can be explicated by the redemptive-historical view of God's promise and fulfillment, which is expressed in the NT characteristically by the "already-not-yet" scheme.

There are four parts. Part one (chapters 1-3) investigates key New Testament themes, such as the kingdom of God, eternal life, the two ages, and the new creation, in order to demonstrate the eschatological tension of God's fulfillment between the "already" and the "not yet." The focal point of part two (chapters 4-13) is the triune God who promises and fulfills the promise. The author researches the identity and works of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in the NT. The problem of sin and its solution are scrutinized in part three (chapters 14-16). Sin is the human plight from which God rescues his people. The New Testament solution for this plight is faith and obedience, which include repentance and discipleship. The final part (chapters 17-19) deals with mission, church, Christian life, and the anticipation of the consummation of God's promises.

Schreiner's primary concern is to find out what the New Testament text says. His thorough and faithful treatment of the text can be found at every turn of the page and his Scripture index alone is a full 34 pages in length. Footnotes additionally provide useful information on scholars' views on certain passages to help those wishing to do further research. Although some may not agree with the author in his rejection of the New Perspective on Paul (526-27) and his holding of a literal understanding of Jesus' miracles (65), this book will be of great value to everyone

who desires to better understand how God's promises made in the OT are fulfilled ("already-not-yet") in Christ through the Spirit in the NT.

-Hyun-Gwang Kim

Taking the Jesus Road, by LeRoy Koopman, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005. 512 pp. \$49.00.

Taking the Jesus Road is more than a history of the ministry of the RCA among Native Americans beginning in 1895, even though we celebrated its 100th anniversary in 1997. It is more than an interwoven historical sketch of the six existing Native American Congregations: Apache, Mescalero, Jicarilla Apache, Winnebago, Comanche, and Umonhon Reformed. It is more than a history of the RCA involvement in sharing Christ with the indigenous people of America. It is a truthful, thoughtful and thorough presentation of how God in his grace and wisdom touches the lives of his children.

Koopman does not does not glamorize the history or gloss over difficult facts. As accurately and lovingly as possible he tells the story of dedicated men and women (both Anglo and Native American) who have persisted with the battle cry of "no retreat!" in spite of natural disasters (tornadoes at Winnebago, floods at Apache, earthquakes at Dulce), buildings destroyed by fires, life threatening diseases, the challenge of the "peyote cult," mistakes and bad decisions, broken promises, difficulties of the modern world (194), hardships (311), severe testing by the Lord (414), discouragement (259, 317), and misunderstandings of cultural customs regarding time, congregational singing, four-part singing, importance of body language, interaction with mothers-in-law (334).

Taking the Jesus Road is about brothers in sisters in Christ who responded to the call of the Lord and carried the "banner of Christ from teepee to teepee." It is about Christians who have cut their ties with the Indian Road (oftentimes symbolized by the cutting of their hair, 288) and also with the White Man Road and have begun walking the Jesus Road (188). It is about people of passion who have invited others to come and walk with them on this road of hope that leads to heaven using whatever means were possible (camp meetings, cottage meetings, the Mohawk Lodge, traditional and non traditional Dutch worship services (p.209), overseeing boarding schools, dormitories, giving of gifts at Christmas, providing health care, visiting by foot, buggy, horseback or car scattered temporary and permanent settlements, working with and at times standing up to the government of the U.S., being interpreters and prayer warriors, 354).

Taking the Jesus Road has a message for all of us as we take seriously not only the goal of the RCA to plant new churches but the Great Commission itself. That message is – don't ever give up. No matter how dark things seem God, who is light, is at work and will dispel the darkness (431). *Taking the Jesus Road* is a call to reflect on our past, repent of our sins, be reconciled to one another, and rely on God for strength, courage and wisdom as we together reach out to the entire world for our God who is our Hope, our King, our Great Chief who will not break any of his promises to us, including the Promised Land of heaven.

–Carl E. Gearhart