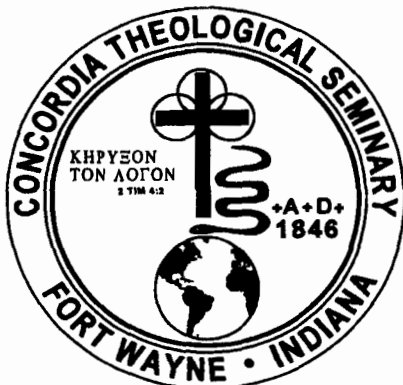


# CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL QUARTERLY



Volume 66:4

October 2002

## *Table of Contents*

---

<b>The Theological Symposia of Concordia Theological Seminary</b> .....	291
<b>Religious Pluralism and Knowledge of the True God: Fraternal Reflection and Discussion</b>	
Faculty of Concordia Theological Seminary .....	295
<b>Doctrine and Practice: Setting the Boundaries</b>	
David P. Scaer .....	307
<b>Confessing in the Public Square</b>	
Lawrence R. Rast Jr. ....	315
<b>Death and Martyrdom: An Important Aspect of Early Christian Eschatology</b>	
William C. Weinrich .....	327
<b>Divine Providence, History, and Progress in Augustine's <i>City of God</i></b>	
John A. Maxfield .....	339

<b>Theological Observer</b> .....	361
Lithuanian Aspirations and LWF Ambitions: In Honor of Bishop Jonas Kalvanas (1949-2003)	
Revisiting the <i>Missio Dei</i> Concept	
Looking Behind the Veil	
<b>Book Reviews</b> .....	370
<i>The Character of God in the Book of Genesis: A Narrative         Appraisal.</i> By W. Lee Humphreys. ....	Chad L. Bird
<i>New Testament Greek Manuscripts: Variant Readings Arranged         in Horizontal Lines Against Codex Vaticanus. Matthew.</i> Edited by Reuben Swanson. ....	Charles A. Gieschen
<i>The Archaeology of Early Christianity: A History.</i> By William H. C. Frend. ....	Charles A. Gieschen
<i>Figured Out: Typology and Providence in Christian Scripture.</i> By Christopher R. Seitz. ....	Chad L. Bird
<i>Love Taking Shape: Sermons on the Christian Life.</i> By Gilbert Meilaender. ....	Harold L. Senkbeil
<i>Shepherd the Church: Essays in Pastoral Theology Honoring         Bishop Roger D. Pittelko.</i> Edited by Frederic W. Baue, John W. Fenton, Eric C. Forss, Frank J. Pies, and John T. Pless. ....	Louis A. Smith
<i>Paul Beyond the Judaism/Hellenism Divide.</i> Edited by Troels Engberg-Pedersen. ....	Holger Sonntag
<i>The Fingerprints of God: Tracking the Divine Suspect through a         History of Images.</i> By Robert Farrar Capon. .....	Timothy Maschke
<b>Indices for Volume 66</b> .....	381

## Book Reviews

*The Character of God in the Book of Genesis: A Narrative Appraisal.* By W. Lee Humphreys. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001. 284 pages.

How one reads any text necessarily affects how one reads any persons described therein. Genre guides interpretation. How Humphreys reads the Genesis narrative – as fact or fiction, or a splash here and a dash there of both – largely determines how he reads its central character: God. Our author reads Genesis as a closed literary world, that is, none of the events or characters necessarily exist as Genesis describes them. They are verbal constructions. The characters named Adam, Abraham, Joseph, and God in this story may or may not be more than mere words. Moreover, Humphreys reads Genesis not as one text inextricably bound – literally, literarily, and theologically – to a larger canon, but as a book without a sequel.

Who God is, what He does, what He says, are, therefore, interpreted as one might interpret the main character in, say, a Dickens novel. What Humphreys argues is that God begins where He wants to be – in control, predictable, methodical, and powerful. Similarly, at the end (chapters 37-50), He is on the road to recovery, struggling to recreate Himself in His old image. It is the in-between parts of the story where God is learning the ropes, “in process of becoming.” The problem is that over and over again, from disobedient Adam to irascible Jacob, humans frustrate God’s plans when He tries to engage them on their own turf. They try to build a tower that will trespass His homeland, old sterile women giggle at Him, His pet patriarchs lie about their wives or get drunk or nearly best Him at wrestling. Finally, after His bout with Jacob, God learns His lesson, swallows hard, and retreats to heaven to lick His wounds. Thereafter, He tries to recapture something like His Genesis-1 approach – majestically aloof but still in control behind the scenes. In all this, the Divine character develops, becomes complicated, multi-faceted, multi-faced. In short, the post-Genesis-1 God tries to slip back into His original suit, but it never quite fits the same anymore.

There is, of course, nothing unusual or unorthodox about a narrative appraisal of a biblical text. Indeed, reading Genesis not as a narrative but as the fourth volume of Pieper’s dogmatics is going to produce some less than satisfactory results. Problems invade, breed, and multiply, however, when one’s definition of narrative assumes that narrative equals fiction. It does not. One may have all the literary fun his heart desires with a fictional narrative by a Dostoevsky or a Grisham. But an historical narrative (an inspired and inerrant one at that!) about real people and a real God cannot be read rightly in the fashion of Humphreys. In addition, to interpret the Genesis of the canon as a book divorced from the rest of the Old Testament and New Testament witness is like trying to paint a lady’s portrait when all you can see is her left foot. The odds are not good that the lady will see herself in the artist’s finished work.

Perhaps the simile is too negative. Or maybe not. Humphreys does, indeed, provide valuable insights at times, writes cleverly and engagingly, avoids robotic summaries, and does not leave the reader snoring by overusing those infamous four letters—J, E, D, P. That being said, however, his basic approach is fatally flawed. Were his appraisal really true—and the redeemed world is thankful it is not—then this god would be unworthy of capitalization.

Chad L. Bird

*New Testament Greek Manuscripts: Variant Readings Arranged in Horizontal Lines Against Codex Vaticanus. Matthew.* Edited by Reuben Swanson. Sheffield, United Kingdom and Pasadena, California: Sheffield Academic Press and William Carey International University Press, 1995. 304 pages. Paper.

New Testament textual criticism blossomed in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as most New Testament scholars of that era took great interest in its theory and practice, but then waned as many exegetes directed their energies towards higher critical methodologies. By the time of the publication of the Nestle-Aland 26th edition of *Novum Testamentum Graece* in 1979, textual criticism was widely viewed as a discipline that needed to be practiced only by a select few, like Kurt Aland and Bruce Metzger, because little more could be said on the topic that had reached its zenith, unless some major new manuscripts were discovered.

The past two decades, however, have shown that the discipline is far from dead. Interest is evident from the number of new publications and practitioners in the field. For example, the Institute for New Testament Textual Research (Muenster, Germany) announced its multi-volume *Novum Testamentum Graecum: Editio Critica Maior* at the 1997 Annual Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature to an overflow crowd of several hundred scholars. The goal of this project is to put more and clearer information concerning textual variants in the hands of exegetes than could possibly be packed into the critical apparatus found in the Nestle-Aland 26th and 27th editions.

Reuben Swanson's *New Testament Greek Manuscripts* series is further evidence of the resurging interest in this discipline, but he travels a significantly different path in his work than the one chartered by the new *Editio Critica Maior*. This volume on the text of Matthew, following the same format found in his volumes on Mark, Luke, and John, offers the reading of Codex Vaticanus and horizontally lists the readings from about forty-five other significant Greek manuscripts in complete form below. For example, a very quick glance at Matthew 28:19 reveals the significant difference in manuscript D where the Great Commission begins with πορεύεσθαι νῦν ("Go now," an imperative) instead of πορευθέντες οὖν ("Therefore, when you go," a participle) as in the other major manuscripts. Evidence of orthographical variants, scribal errors, and the like is given in footnotes. The advantage of using Vaticanus as the baseline is that one begins

with a very fine manuscript of most of the New Testament that was actually heard and read in the church, unlike the eclectic modern editions of the Greek New Testament that are a careful "cut and paste" compilation from the vast array of manuscripts. Much can be observed and learned by going through the process of examining the evidence, rather than beginning with the end product (a modern critical text like that in Nestle-Aland 27th). This does not mean that Swanson uncritically favors the readings of Vaticanus throughout Matthew; he merely puts it forth as a good starting point and presents exegetes with the evidence of other manuscripts in order that they come to their own conclusions. This book is a presentation of textual evidence and not a text critical commentary.

Swanson, a seasoned textual critic and ELCA pastor with considerable parish and university experience, lists several advantages of his resource in the introduction. Primary among these are the immediate accessibility of the various manuscript readings and the ability to follow the reading of a particular major manuscript tradition through the Gospel of Matthew. Specialists and astute students of textual criticism alike will find a wealth of information presented in a format that is, unlike much detail in this discipline, relatively simple and clear.

Charles A. Gieschen

*The Archaeology of Early Christianity: A History.* By William H. C. Frend. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996. 412 pages. Paper. 1998.

If one is looking for a volume that introduces the theory and practice of archaeology or a volume that introduces the history of early Christianity, this is not the book to read. This volume, by the highly respected and prolific historian William H. C. Frend, is a history of archaeological activity that focused on early Christian sites. It assumes that the reader is aware of the basic theory and practice of archaeology, as well as the basic history of early Christianity through its first centuries. It also assumes that the reader knows that the study of early Christianity is not solely a literary endeavor and is convinced that archaeology is a vital part of the evidence that must be sifted, if possible, in such historical research. A reader who does not meet these assumptions will probably be frustrated and bewildered by this book. For the reader who meets these assumptions, however, this volume offers an abundance of information that will certainly enrich his knowledge of both archaeology and early Christianity.

Frend traces archaeology at an amazing number of Christian sites from Constantine to the modern period. Because evidence of early and medieval exploration is very sketchy and is addressed in the first few pages, the actual focus of this volume is archaeology done on Christian sites in the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries. Frend's treatment of these three centuries is basically chronological, focusing on the key people and countries engaged in archaeology. His chronological account gives ample attention to various types of archaeological finds: buildings (especially churches), burial sites, literary manuscripts, inscriptions, and much more. His narrative also takes the reader

across the wide geographic distribution of early Christianity (from parts of Europe to Asia Minor through the northern half of Africa), including many obscure areas that are unfamiliar territory to most readers. One weakness in Frend's geographic coverage is Israel, Syria, and Jordan, possibly because it is given ample coverage in books on New Testament archaeology. Very little is said of this earliest cradle of Christianity that has yielded important finds in the past few decades concerning the birth of Christianity and early Christian pilgrim sites.

There are three themes that continually resurface in Frend's analysis. First, one becomes acutely aware of the sins of past generations in "mining" archaeological sites with very limited interests, usually the uncovering of an ancient building or the discovering of spectacular artifacts for collectors, without carefully documenting the site and *all the evidence* in order that the destroyed site could be reassessed by later generations of archaeologists. Second, Frend repeatedly highlights the interplay between national politics and archaeology, from Napoleon's conquest of Egypt to the end of imperialistic archaeology with the advent of the World Wars, to the contemporary race to record several important sites before they are flooded due to the construction of dams. Third, the importance of archaeological evidence for understanding early Christianity is continually underscored, especially for assessing sectarian or heretical groups like the Donatists, who had a limited existence and whose literature has been largely lost or destroyed. Partly because of the limited literary evidence, there tends to be a significant focus on archaeological evidence of these groups in this volume.

Frend is a masterful teller of history who captivates interested and informed readers with his vivid accounts of people and events. He continually moves back and forth from the past few centuries of archaeological activity at Christian sites to glimpses of the early centuries of actual Christian life revealed by these finds. Although there are a few good maps and some interesting photographs, a volume dealing with such a myriad of archaeological sites that span several centuries would benefit from more visual aids. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that this volume will be an important resource for every scholar and serious student of early Christianity.

Charles A. Gieschen

***Figured Out: Typology and Providence in Christian Scripture.* By Christopher R. Seitz. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001. 228 pages.**

In this series of essays, Seitz endeavors to re-direct the church back to the two biblical testaments as unified Christian Scripture, univocally testifying to the Triune God revealed in the crucified Christ. That is no mean task, and perhaps Seitz has bit off more than he can chew, but one cannot but applaud his zeal. He writes primarily against the backdrop of the Anglican communion's ongoing challenge to hear any word as really divine, as well as historical criticism's desecralization of the Scriptures. The end result of Scripture's waning authority has been the "disfiguring" of both God and the writings he inspired. Typology and

allegory—termed by Seitz as “figural exegesis”—have been “figured out,” banished along with other “antiquated” items such as the Rule of Faith.

In the second half of his work, Seitz provides several examples of how the church should engage in figural interpretation, reading the New Testament in light of the Old and vice versa. Here he addresses topics such as the ending of John’s gospel, Jesus’ possession of the divine name, mission in the Old Testament, and the First Article of the Creed. Following the trail well-blazed by Brevard Childs, Seitz emphasizes the canonical shape of the Scriptures as of ongoing hermeneutical significance for the church. In his conclusion, he sounds this warning: “[The] teaching, life, cross, and resurrection [of Christ] are confessed as accorded and ‘typed’ or ‘figured in’ Israel’s canonical scripture. Pull any of these stable pillars apart, and the entire edifice is threatened. The Scriptures will be figured out, with the effect of the loss of collaborating convictions regarding election, providence . . . , and the two-fold character of scriptural witness, from a figurally united Old and New Testament Christian Bible” (196).

Despite the book’s admirable features, this reader found himself, at times, not quite satisfied. The essays follow no clearly logical, progressive order. The critique of Anglicanism’s disinterest in the Scriptures—and the impact of historical criticism in general—seemed unnecessarily long. Many of those pages could have been better served by more essays on the positive features of figural interpretation. Moreover, some of the essays Seitz did include, good though they were *per se*, did little to exemplify what the church has historically understood as figural interpretation (for example, “Booked Up,” 91-101).

*Figured Out* is one more example of what Seitz himself noted as “a genuinely illuminating reappraisal of typology and allegory” (vii) in the church today. One can only hope such reappraisal continues and expands. Both typology and allegory, rightly understood and rightly applied, have a rich and salutary history in Lutheran preaching, catechesis, and hymnody. Together they testify to the many and various ways God spoke to his people of old by the prophets, and still speaks by those same prophets today.

Chad L. Bird

***Love Taking Shape: Sermons on the Christian Life.* By Gilbert Meilaender. Grand Rapids: William. B. Eerdmans, 2002. 143 Pages.**

In this book we meet Gilbert Meilaender the preacher. Twenty four homilies are presented, falling under five categories: Lent, the Commandments, the Sermon on the Mount, the seasons of life, and Eschatology. The fact that many of these sermons are more didactic than they are kerygmatic may be excused, considering Meilaender’s long and distinguished career in the classroom. But then these sermons are not intended as sample sermons for other preachers, but as public meditations on how the Christian life is shaped by love. They are offered with due respect for those who week after week must step into the pulpit with

something fresh to say. "Some things," Meilaender observes, "should be preached and others taught . . . the two tasks are not the same. I have little doubt that, of the two, preaching is the more difficult" (xi).

Conscientious Lutheran preachers will be enriched for their difficult task by these meditations. While none are overtly textual, all of them are thoroughly biblical. Here we see that Christian ethics is not legalism, but rather the product of love that flows from faith. The law presented here is unrelenting in its demands; the gospel unlimited in its gifts. Thus the Christian life is Christ's own life taking shape among His own. For example, the reason Christians speak up on behalf of the unborn is ". . . not because they are such lovable little things, not because their potential is great – but in order to be in this world the epiphany of the God who came to us as Mary's child."

This book is to be recommended both to those who preach and those who hear them preach. The preaching and the hearing will be all the better for it.

Harold L. Senkbeil

*Shepherd the Church: Essays in Pastoral Theology Honoring Bishop Roger D. Pittelko.* Edited by Frederic W. Baue, John W. Fenton, Eric C. Forss, Frank J. Pies, and John T. Pless. Fort Wayne, Indiana: Concordia Theological Seminary Press, 2002. 307 Pages.

My intention in this review is to encourage as wide a readership of this handsome volume as I can. I hope that it will find its way into the hands of Lutheran pastors in all synods. With that in mind, let me get my minor gripes out of the way first. I have but two and they both deal with form, rather than content. First, there are several misspellings and other typos in the volume. A book of this one's overall quality should warrant a better job of proofreading than this. In some instances it is as simple as finding an "is" where an "it" should appear, or vice versa – perhaps someone depended too heavily on a computer spelling checker.

My second complaint is less directed specifically to this book than it is to the modern printing industry. I am a chronic note reader. I think that I have learned more from following notes to their sources than from anything else. For that reason I like my notes to be "footnotes" where they are readily accessible to the reader. But in accord with the vast bulk of modern printing, this volume has the notes as "endnotes," which means no end of frustration for me as I try to follow up the arguments.

Now that I have gotten that off my chest, let me get on to why one should read this volume. The eighteen major essays are organized under three categories: "Liturgy and the Parish," "The Pastoral Office and the Care of Souls," and "Evangelical-Lutheran Missions." Of course, the categories are not neat boxes and so there is some overlap. This is only to be expected in a volume that gathers together the contributions of eighteen different authors. If variety is the spice of



life, perhaps this volume is the spice of theological life. In any event, the reader will find here a variety of nuanced commentary on Holy Communion ranging from the concept of "Eucharistic Sacrifice" to sacramental practice and piety, and the "Eucharist and Eschatology." There are several essays that deal with the rites that adorn the Divine Service, reaching from the matter of hymnody to matters of the public reading of the gospel and the ritual elements of liturgy in the city. There is even a brand new hymn. The reader will also be challenged to think on weighty matters concerning the call to the Office of the Holy Ministry and the vocation of the universal priesthood. Every one of these matters is a piece of the serious conversation and even controversy that is going on in American Lutheran life at the onset of the twenty-first century.

When it comes to matters that are at issue in current American church life, can there be anything more at issue than what is know as the "Church Growth Movement"? I doubt it. So read the essays by Baue and Vogel and learn why this movement is not a value neutral method that can be accommodated to any theology, but, quite otherwise, a modern theological movement that is carefully plugged into the heresy of all modern heresies, the sovereignty of the autonomous self. Whether it is the heresy of so-called "decision theology," which presumes to decide "for Jesus" (Just what kind of a *Lord* is it who sits around waiting for would-be servants to decide?), or whether it is the ultra-modernist GLBT (gay, lesbian, bi-sexual, trans-gendered) agenda, which presumes to decide about who we might be sexually (the given-ness of our plumbing must yield to our self-will) the enemy is the supposed autonomous self that, in our theological tradition, is known as the "Old Adam." He is thoroughly enshrined in the Church Growth Movement. Baue and Vogel will help you identify him, expose him, and ward him off. What is presumed to be the attractiveness of Church Growth to laity receives an antidote in John Pless's "Reflections on the Life of the Royal Priesthood."

Most of the other essays will help the reader put Old Adam in his proper place (under law and gospel, which will kill him and raise a new person in his stead) and suggest what might be put in the place of his Church Growth technique. In this regard, I want to single out Jobst Schöne's essay on confession and absolution. The loss of "the third sacrament" in our church life is, I have come to believe, devastating and largely responsible for our vulnerability to the religious novel and bizarre that harass us these days. How does one move to overcome the loss? Here is a "beautiful" contribution to the recovery.

Let me single out one last essay for its uniqueness. It comes from Bruce Adams in Australia and deals with the life and martyr's witness of Robert Barnes; "Unser Robertus" Luther once called him. Barnes and other Reformation era Lutherans in Great Britain need to be better known among us, but the literature is scant and far less than well known. Adam's essay will begin to correct that and following his notes will carry the reader further along the road.

Throughout the history of the church, there have been theological movements that have been identified with academic place-names: the Wittenberg theology of the sixteenth century; the Erlangen or Lundsian or Tübingen or Wauwautosa theologies of the century just past. Might we now be confronted with and offered a "Fort Wayne theology," of which the present volume might be a representation? True, not all the contributors to the volume are presently connected to that seminary; nor are all graduates thereof. Still, it seems to me that this volume may be taken as representing such a "school" of theological thinking. What might be its characteristics? I would offer the following:

1. It is exegetical. Thorough encounter with, respect for, and exposition of Holy Scripture *and its dogmatic content* are always in evidence.
2. It is thoroughly confessional, but never mere repristination. The classic Lutheran slogans – the proper distinction between law and gospel, the sola, a magisterial ministry, and others – are living theological tools rather than mere historic bench marks.
3. It is genuinely catholic. The heritage of the catholic creeds and the patristic witness are an integral part of the method.
4. It is authentically ecclesial. The actual practice of actual parishes is the goal of this theology. It lives to inform and enliven the work of faithful pastors and the life of Christ's flock.

I hope that I am right in this guess. So, while the reader is enjoying his or her way through the volume, as worthy of its honoree as he is of it, I hope that they will test the thesis and see if they agree.

Louis A. Smith  
Waynesboro, Virginia

***Paul Beyond the Judaism/Hellenism Divide.* Edited by Troels Engberg-Pedersen. Louisville, London, and Leiden: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001. x + 355 pages. Paper. \$39.95.**

In which context is Paul interpreted best? While former generations of critical scholars usually pointed either to Judaism or Hellenism, the contributors to this book – David Aune (Notre Dame), Wayne Meeks (Yale), Margaret Mitchell (Chicago), among others – pursue a different approach: Judaism and Christianity are seen as variations of, or subcultures within, the complex Hellenistic culture of the eastern Mediterranean. Thus, Paul's theology appears as a creative patchwork that, within this cultural macro-paradigm, reassembles and reinterprets whatever seemed best to him to convey certain ideas or solve certain problems he encountered in his congregations.

The first three main essays of the book, which grew out of a 1997 conference in Copenhagen organized by the editor, explore the changing historiographical content and the multifaceted historical nature of Judaism and Hellenism. The next

four essays focus on Pauline Christianity as a whole over against Hellenistic (pagan and Jewish) schools, and on Paul's strategies – as seen in his letters to the Corinthians – to construct Christian identity in view of the similarities to the surrounding cultures. The last four essays treat concrete exegetical problems in Paul's Corinthian epistles.

Besides providing information on ancient thought and the history of critical exegesis, the essays point to the fact that good theology always takes place in dialogue with culture, also by employing elements of any given culture to make itself understood to contemporary people. Yet how much *independent* "meaning" should these elements convey? According to Paul, none (Acts 26:22-23; Galatians 1:11-12). Most contributors, however, are methodologically blindfolded to the categorical difference between God's word and man's culture. For them, Paul is simply a part of culture (2-4), the Holy Spirit is a skeptic (61), Christology and eschatology are myths (96, 193), the Lord's Supper has to be interpreted as symbolic (98), heaven is a place (193), the church as a "community of interpretation" needs religious experts (184, 102), and the gospel is easily comprehended by well-meaning pagans (80). After all, the cross is a symbol of transformation (14-15)!

The (post-)modernist implications of this exegesis are described by the editor in a recent essay along the lines of "Paul the Hellenist" (*JSNT* 86 [2002]: 113, compare *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 62 (January 1998): 28-29, 36-37). Sound scriptural exegesis that locates Spirit and meaning in the text of Scripture, not in self-chosen extrabiblical contexts (see *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 41 (July 1977): 53) is the answer Christian theology will give.

Holger Sonntag  
 Concordia Theological Seminary  
 Fort Wayne, Indiana

*The Fingerprints of God: Tracking the Divine Suspect through a History of Images.* By Robert Farrar Capon. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2000. 163 pages. \$15.00.

Many readers may already be familiar with the writings of Robert Farrar Capon, an Episcopal priest and a poetic and prolific author. If so, they will enjoy this exacerbating excursion into biblical and contemporary images. If you are a new reader of Capon, this book is certainly worth putting on your list for summer reading. From baseball and beach parties to Julian of Norwich and the Jesus Seminar, Capon dashes over the literary, scriptural, and theological landscape with paradoxical aplomb.

As he introduces his second last chapter, Capon explains his approach to writing: "For me, writing a book has always been an exercise in juggling images. My custom is to accumulate a deskful of them in the course of my preaching, lecturing, and random rumination and then try to turn them into something

presentable. But metaphors sitting in the mind do not a book make; they're just a basket of wash that not even I (let alone anyone else) can see as a coherent whole. Long ago, therefore, I developed an image for what I do as an author. When I write, I see myself as hanging theological laundry on a clothesline: until I can find the right rope to pin my wash to, no book is possible. . . . This book is an attempt to deal with some three or four years' worth of theological shirts, socks, and underwear that have been daring me to get them hung out intelligibly" (123). Whether he presents fresh linens or dirty laundry is at the heart of this review. The images have been collected.

Several of the "footprints" detected by Capon are worth noting. For example, he writes: "The Bible is held together by *icons*, by word-pictures like Light, Word, Water, Marriage, the Garden, the Tree, the Blood of Abel, the Paschal Lamb, the Blood on the Doorposts, the Rock in the Wilderness, the Bread from Heaven, and finally the City. . . . It's these icons, these sacraments of the real presence of the Word himself, that make it a whole" (14). These and many others are elegantly elaborated in this nuanced and somewhat annoying anthology. Capon admits that his images of God are based on Scripture's revelation and that "The Holy Spirit was pleased to let their imagery stand *wie es steht geschrieben*—as it lies before us—in the one and only Bible we have" (163). Drawing his ideas from the biblical text is refreshing, although when one sees how he applies them concerns are readily raised.

Criticism of the book can be made on several fronts. At times the reader wonders whether he is reading the stream-of-consciousness ramblings of a mad-fool or the challenging, disconcerting, provocative, dismaying insights of a modern prophet. As a writer, Capon is rhetorically rich and imaginatively poetic, filling the pages with wild metaphors and engagingly contemporary images. As a theologian, his paradoxical approach leads to alarm as he struggles between theologically conservative and liberal views—he is critical of the Jesus Seminar, yet questions Pauline authorship; he affirms Luther's reformation, yet critiques his medieval mind; he espouses universalism, yet shows that Jesus is the only way; he is strongly Trinitarian, yet falls into several heretical tendencies regarding the person of Christ; he understands the centrality of the person of Christ, yet undermines the redemptive work of Christ. And, as a historian (in the second part of the book), he draws broad brush-strokes fairly accurately over centuries of Christian conversations, yet is sometimes overly simplistic in how these views should be perceived in our present society.

Homileticians will find Capon helpful in the ways he draws together biblical images that occur throughout Scripture. For example, he says: "The rock, therefore, is one of the choicest illustrations of the Spirit's hand in Scripture. Starting with a rock standing alone in a desert, he can lead Isaiah to say the Lord's people were quarried out of a rock that already contained them, Paul to declare that the rock was Christ, the Gospel writers to proclaim the rock as a cornerstone, and Peter to make the cornerstone an image of the scandal of the cross and the

paradox of the mystery of Christ" (16). The breadth of images are relished through his eyes.

Knowing the theologically paradoxical nature of this book allows readers of this journal to be critical, yet find help for their ministry. Almost in a self-disclosing manner, Capon warns at one point: "The very plausibility of most heresies makes them easier to grasp, and to sell, than orthodoxy. For the essence of heresy isn't a fondness for wrong ideas. It's a preference ("heresy" is from *hairein*, "to take," "to select") for one aspect of a truth over a paradoxical wholeness of that truth" (99). Such erratic jumping around is evident when he bounces from compelling criticism of higher criticism to his own rejection of the Pauline authorship of several New Testament epistles. Similarly, his tendency toward universalism rather than rejoicing in God's universal grace in Christ is disconcerting, as is his rejection of the possibility of hell, yet he relishes the imagery of fire and brimstone. Unfortunately, he is fascinated with recapitulation Christology, but rejects forensic justification, which he calls "transactionalism" (61-62).

Every pastor who reads this book will benefit from the imaginative stretching that Capon provides. This little work is not for the weak, but for those who are awake theologically. With a strong Lutheran base, pastors gathering in circuit Winkels will enjoy the stimulating discussions from his questionable and questioning propositions, which will naturally erupt from this work.

The structure of the book breaks the mold of expectations, too. Immediately after the table of contents, there is a page-long "bibliographical Note," which would normally be at the end of a scholarly work, but Capon draws it front and center. And right after that, he presents an "Index of Images," almost 300 stronger (132) and weaker (116) images, again something usually reserved for the last pages of a book, but abruptly and intentionally pushed to the fore. The two parts of the work, too, are rather disparate; yet they provide a unit of thought. This reviewer is certain that this will not be the last book of this kind, as Capon notes, "But in theology, the last word seldom gets said" (98).

Timothy Maschke  
Concordia University Wisconsin  
Mequon, Wisconsin