

Book Reviews

***The Church Comes From All Nations: Luther Texts in Mission.* By Volker Stolle. Translated by Klaus Detlev Schulz. St. Louis: Concordia Academic Press, 2003. 109 pages.**

This little book is a treasury of some of Luther's writings on the church's evangelistic mission. It is divided into three sections, the first dealing with the biblical foundation for mission. Here we see Luther teaching that throughout the Scriptures, from Genesis to Revelation, the gospel mission to all nations is clearly revealed. Luther views the patriarchs, Abraham and Jacob, as missionaries in the land of Canaan. He writes that Mary and Joseph proclaimed the gospel while they sojourned in Egypt, as did the wise men when they returned to their land. The second part deals with practical questions about carrying out mission work, including enlightening passages about Luther's concern for the conversion of both Jews and Turks. The final section deals with the history of mission as Luther understood it in his time.

Perhaps most significant for the church today is Luther's vigorous teaching about the priesthood of all believers. Luther speaks of every Christian as an active witness: "Once a Christian begins to know Christ as his Lord and Savior . . . he is eager to help everyone acquire the same benefits. . . . Therefore he steps forth boldly, teaches and admonishes others, praises and confesses his treasure before everybody, prays and yearns that they, too, may obtain such mercy"(23). Luther sees every believer as a proclaimer of the gospel. This selection of Luther's writings will be useful for understanding the historical roots of Lutheran evangelism and mission.

Eric Moeller

***Religious Pluralism in America: The Contentious History of a Founding Idea.* By William R. Hutchinson. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2003. 288 pages.**

The timeliness of this book by the Harvard Divinity School professor and dean of American religious historians is something that is at the same time both a strength and a weakness. There is little argument that religion and pluralism are hot topics of discussion in the American public square, and this book supplies a much needed historical perspective that has otherwise been lacking. In other words, Hutchison does a great job talking about what happened then, but a less than admirable job talking about what is happening now.

It is precisely because the topic of religious pluralism is so timely and compelling that the book ultimately falls short. The chapters in the book are taken in large part from lectures that Hutchison gave at Uppsala University in

Crusades), endorsed slavery (the conquests of the New World), and have worked against scientific progress (the condemnation of Galileo). These things, and others, are commonly seen as conclusive evidence of the harm of organized religion upon society throughout history.

Hill, however, felt this was an inadequate and unbalanced appraisal of Christianity and all that it has accomplished and continues to accomplish. Much of Christian history and its influence upon culture, the arts, architecture, education, society, lifestyles, and social action is unknown to its critics, something this book works to change. He is not attempting to defend Christianity or to evangelize people to Christianity; instead he is working to circulate a broader knowledge of Christianity, and its positive contributions to the world for the past two millennia. Through clear, accessible writing and a host of photographs and illustrations, Hill achieves this quite well.

Despite the author's desires for this book not to be an apologetic document, it innocuously does this anyway. Excuses are not given for the inexcusable, yet Christianity has contributed immeasurably to practically every facet of our lives, and Hill demonstrates this convincingly. Furthermore, Hill's account is not only historical; he offers appraisals of what has happened in the twentieth century, as well as what is happening now as Christianity interacts with and influences the world in which we live. An appealing and accessible volume, this could be the most popular and informative coffee-table style book a Christian could own.

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Is it insensitive to share your faith? Hard questions about Christian mission in a plural world. By James R. Krabill. Intercourse, PA: Good Books, 2005. 152 pages.

James R. Krabill, the senior executive for Global Ministries at Mennonite Mission Network, writes a life-experience book challenging Western churches to think beyond their own box and be positively conscious of what God's big, global, saving project is or intended to be. Krabill, though, is not the only one who has questioned the Western way of doing missions. Scholars and missionaries such as Don Richardson, Charles Kraft, Paul Hiebert, Andrew Walls, and Sherwood Lingenfelter have raised similar concerns. Surprisingly, through the author's experience and conviction, Western Christianity has imposed faith on other cultures by use of their economic status and civilized arrogance (7).

Citing the historical memories of Charlemagne (the king of the Franks), the 1099 Christian crusaders, and the 1495 Caribbean persecution, Krabill concludes that the name of Jesus has been misused to impose Western Christianity among mission targets. The author does not stop there but acknowledges that the Western intellectual legacy of people like Newton, Darwin, Marx, and Freud has shaped the West in its inquisitive thinking and scientific inquiry. Unfortunately, however, many missionaries from the West have forgotten that faith stands above science, logic, and philosophy. The fact is that the West, especially North America, is a multi-cultural and diverse context whereby most American Christians are still somewhat disoriented and largely ill-prepared (15). The author's concern about true Christianity, or certainties of the true way, becomes irreverent because these are concerns to which no human being will ever get answers (16). Here the author misses the point because he compares Christianity with other religions unlike Christianity while forgetting that these religions are philosophically and logically inclined. However, his concern speaks louder to Western Christians whose faith is practiced on Sundays, but the rest of the week, they fail to live the faith.

Covering the use of language and meaning, the author proposes difficulties associated with global meanings when communicating the gospel (21). The author's erroneous conclusion presupposes that "most West Africans believe there is one principal creator God" (23-24), only with several other subordinates. The greatest question though is, "Are all religious beliefs and practices equally good, right, and true?" (32). Krabill sturdily advocates for Jesus as the only way, truth, and life (36). In Chapter Five, the author criticizes the hypocritical lifestyles of most Western Christians, which continue to hamper the growth of Christianity. The true model and message that Christians preach to the world continue to dwindle due to Christian hypocrisy (68-69). Here Krabill proposes four Cs: 1) continuation of culture; 2) correction of culture; 3) completion of culture; and 4) creation of a new culture guided by faith convictions as a model for true Christianity (98-101). Ultimately, he argues strongly that "paternalism, provincialism, reductionism, romanticism and separation" (108-111) will continue to impact Western Christianity. Krabill concludes that it all depends upon Western Christianity, either to attract other non-Christians with a convicted faith lifestyle or to live selfishly and fail in our mission task.

In conclusion, this book will prove helpful for both seminary students and missionary practitioners. Though it is not meant for academic purposes, it does reveal how mission work can be practiced without imposing cultural and denominational presuppositions on others people while remaining a bold witness of Christ.

Saneta Maiko

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Harvesting Martin Luther's Reflections on Theology, Ethics, and the Church.
Edited by Timothy J. Wengert. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans
Publishing Co., 2004. 260 pages.

This impressive collection of essays by leading Lutheran theologians and Reformation historians represents the state-of-the-art in current Luther scholarship. Originally published in *Lutheran Quarterly*, these essays now appear under a single title in Eerdmans' new and promising series, *Lutheran Quarterly Books*. Organized under three headings, the Catechetical Luther, Luther and God's World, and Luther and Christ's Church, thirteen essays explore a variety of themes in the Reformer's writings with an eye toward the ongoing significance of these topics for Christian faith and life.

Mark Tranvik contributes an essay on "Luther on Baptism" demonstrating Luther's reformation of baptism from a sacrament of initiation to a sacrament of perpetual significance for the Christian life. "Luther on the Two Kinds of Righteousness" is the title of Robert Kolb's chapter. Kolb sees this distinction as crucial for Luther's overall approach to theology and ethics as it reflects both the horizontal and vertical dimensions of human life. Dietrich Korsch uses Luther's seal as a template for the hermeneutic of his doctrine in "Luther's Seal as an Elementary Interpretation of His Theology." Johannes Schwanke examines Luther's confession of creation on the basis of the Genesis lectures. There is much here that will enrich the pastor's catechesis of the First Article and strengthen him in the articulation of a Lutheran response to postmodern claims of autonomy. Gerhard Sauter shows how Luther provides an eschatological answer to *Anfechtung* in his chapter "Luther on the Resurrection," which rounds out the "Catechetical Luther."

"Luther and God's World" begins with Karl Froehlich's "Luther on Vocation." Originally a lecture given to seminary students, Froehlich uses Luther to raise questions of pastoral identity and formation in the broader context of the Christian calling in the world. Carter Lindberg examines Luther's understanding of poverty, both its cause and appropriate solutions in "Luther on Poverty." Ricardo Willy Rieth demonstrates that Luther attacks greed from the perspective of the First Commandment in "Luther on Greed."

Scott Hendrix writes on "Luther and Marriage" demonstrating that the Reformer both demoted and elevated marriage. Gregory Miller examines Luther's understanding of Islam as a historical, political, and eschatological reality in "Luther on the Turks and Islam."

The final section, "Luther and Christ's Church," offers three essays. Helmar Junghans traces the development and implications of Luther's liturgical proposals in "Luther on the Reform of Worship." Carl Axel Aurelius offers an introduction to Luther's evangelical use of the Psalms for lament and praise in "Luther on the Psalter." Another essay by Scott Hendrix, "Martin Luther's Reformation of Spirituality," notes Luther's continuity and discontinuity with the medieval tradition. Hendrix describes Luther's spirituality as a "guestly spirituality" as Luther understands the life of the Christian lived in a world where God is the host, and we are on the receiving end of divine generosity in creation and redemption.

The concluding words of veteran Reformation scholar, David Steinmetz, in his foreword to *Harvesting Martin Luther's Reflections on Theology, Ethics, and the Church*, aptly describe the value of this book: "Their work is a gift to Luther research and an important aid for the general reader who wants a reliable guide to Luther, a figure who has an undiminished capacity after nearly five hundred years to surprise and instruct us" (xi).

John T. Pless

***Ecumenical Dialogue.* By Angelo Maffei. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press: 2005. 109 pages.**

Many churches around the world have taken a step to be part of the ecumenical dialogue, while others (Evangelicals, Pentecostals, and the African Independent Churches) are totally opposed to this endeavor (15). This book analyzes the theo-historical foundations of ecumenism, critically looking at conciliar ecumenism and how the Roman Catholic Church has become part of that movement. This masterpiece written with a keen perspective provides the reader with two parts. Part one, comprising of chapters one and two, gives the historical information about ecumenism and how this movement came to be formed soon or after the 1910 Edinburgh World Missionary conference, which aimed at utilizing Protestants and Anglicans in setting strategies for evangelizing the world more effectively. Maffei shows that the reason behind the start of this movement was that, during the 1910 conference, it realized that diversity was causing more damage to mission endeavors and unity would enhance mission success. "The search for unity is, therefore, inseparable from the realization of the missionary mandate received from it and the condition for the effectiveness of Gospel witness" (13). In this section Maffei also shows

how the Roman Catholic Church has continued to establish several bilateral dialogues such as with the Orthodox churches (1980), the Lutherans (1965), the World Alliance of Reformed churches (1971), the Anglicans (1967), the Methodists (1967), the Pentecostal churches (1972), the Disciples of Christ (1977), the Evangelical communities (1977), the World Baptist Alliance (1984), and lastly, the Mennonite World Conference (1998) (41–45).

In part two, the author offers a methodical depth of the issues discussed in the ecumenical dialogue. Here the reader will realize the goals for discussions, the extent and people who were involved in the ecumenical dialogue. In chapter three, the book analyzes the methods and the scheme used in describing dialogue, which describes why and how ecumenical dialogue functions (64). The main question here is whether we can have one faith and different theologies. This book attempts to show how that works even as it fails to show the real meaning of faith and theology. There is another question, however: How does unity in diversity play in ecumenical dialogues where faith and theology are treated as two different entities? Only when faith and theology become a united truth in one's religious conviction will churches have a theological unity in diversity, otherwise they must settle for a social unity in diversity. Maffei's conviction that "The search for consensus in the expression of the apostolic faith necessarily, therefore, passes through the critical sieve of the forms in which the faith has been witnessed to and lived in history" needs to be given critical consideration (73). The last chapter provides the conditions for dialogue and the role ecumenical theology plays in the dialogue.

This book provides the theological and historical foundations of ecumenical dialogues and the main goals, methods, scope, and key persons in them. It is instructive, especially to both those who know little about ecumenical dialogue and those who see ways it has impinged theology and faith.

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***Reconstructing Pastoral Theology: A Christological Foundation.* By Andrew Purves. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004. 236 pages.**

Reading *Reconstructing Pastoral Theology* caused me to revisit another book by a Reformed practical theologian, Eduard Thurneysen's classic study, *A Theology of Pastoral Care* (John Knox, 1962). Using Karl Barth as his basis, Thurneysen constructed a practical theology of continuing significance. In a manner not dissimilar to the Swiss Barthian, Thurneysen, the American Presbyterian Andrew Purves uses the systematic theology of the Torrance (James and Thomas) to build a substantial pastoral theology.

Whereas Thurneysen sees pastoral care as the communication of the word of the living God to individuals, Purves sees the over-arching theme of pastoral care as union with Christ. After providing a very fine description of how the disciplines of the social sciences (Seward Hiltner, et al.) have shifted pastoral care from adequate christological and soteriological foundations to therapeutic techniques, Purves lays out a proposal for a renewed pastoral theology that is in concert with the classical tradition. Here he echoes the voice of Thomas Oden, Ellen Charry, and William Willimon. He laments the fact that "ministry today is skill-driven rather than theology-driven, and seems to incorporate little of the dynamically practical nature of theology insofar as it speaks about who God is and what God does" (3).

The book itself is divided into two parts. In the first part ("Jesus Christ: The Mission of God"), Purves develops the practice of pastoral care out of the high priestly office of Christ. Purves contends that modern use of the shepherding metaphor for pastoral care has largely become an imitation of Christ rather a participation in Christ. This, Purves contends, thrusts the pastor back on his own resources rather than God's grace in Christ, defining this as pastoral Pelagianism. Instead, Purves seeks to ground pastoral theology in the work of Jesus the High Priest, who is both the mediator sent from God and the Second Adam who represents humanity before God. "Pastoral theology, then, before it is a theology of what the church or the pastor does, is axiomatically and first of all a theology of the pastoring God, a theology of the living gospel of Jesus Christ" (4).

The second part of the book examines four dimensions of ministry in union with Christ. This ministry is a ministry of God's word, his grace, his presence, and his reign. In the final four chapters of his book, Purves works out both the present and eschatological dimensions of what it means to be a pastor who participates in Christ's speaking, hearing, and obeying the word of God. Following the lead of Thurneysen, Purves holds preaching and pastoral care together. Pastoral conversation moves away from inner resources to the Word sent from God.

Purves's book is a valuable contribution to the body of pastoral literature for several reasons. First, he seeks to recall pastors to the theological task in light of the infectious pragmatism that threatens to render ministerial work sterile. "The tag, 'mission unites, theology divides,' while perhaps at times true, is often taken to be a rationale to abandon theology for (an atheological?) practice. The turn toward developing pragmatic skills for preaching, when it means turning away from the proper theological foundation—that is, an understanding of what really happens in preaching—is a turn toward the death of ministry because it is a turn away from the Word of God on its own terms" (159–160). Second, this book challenges Lutheran theologians to do

what he has so ably done for contemporary Calvinism, namely articulate a pastoral theology consistent with Lutheran themes.

John T. Pless

***Praying for Reform: Luther, Prayer, and the Christian Life.* By William R. Russell. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2005. 96 pages.**

In *Praying for Reform*, William R. Russell claims that interpreters have neglected the formative role that prayer played in Luther's development, as well as the central role it played in his reforming work. Russell shows that for Luther catechesis is teaching believers how to pray. He points to Luther's view of the catechism as "more than a pamphlet of doctrines," and argues that we would do well to see it as Luther did: "as a handbook of theology and prayer, designed to guide Christians and lead believers to understand their entire lives as prayer" (13-14).

The book is a collection of three works of Luther: the *Personal Prayer Book* of 1522, *Booklet for Laity and Children* of 1525, and *A Simple Way to Pray (for a Good Friend)* of 1535. Each work links prayer with the texts of the Small Catechism. The translations have been slightly modified and brief sections of the latter two works are omitted. Russell has included an introduction, conclusion, and postscript to these works, highlighting the role of prayer in Luther's theology. He also provides questions for reflection or discussion at the end of his introduction and each of Luther's works.

The book is designed to be used by those interested in Christian prayer, Luther's development, and Luther's ideas, as well as teachers, families, and church schools (12). It serves these purposes well, providing an insightful and readable introduction to Luther's theology and practice of prayer.

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***The Book of Proverbs: Chapters 15-31.* By Bruce K. Waltke. The New International Commentary on the Old Testament. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2005. 589 pages.**

This volume completes Waltke's work on Proverbs begun in 2004 in the NICOT series with an introduction and commentary on Proverbs 1-15. The titles of the two volumes are somewhat confusing, since both claim to include Proverb 15. In fact, the first volume stopped with Proverbs 15:29, and this volume begins with Proverbs 15:30 and treats the last four verses of the chapter. This arises because Waltke treats Proverbs 15:30-22:17 as a major

section of Solomon's proverbs which he calls "The Lord and His King." Unfortunately, the commentary is rather confusing on this. The Table of Contents lists this section as 15:30-22:22 (vii), while the beginning of the commentary this section is listed as 15:30-16:22 (3). However, the subsequent commentary shows that this section ends at 22:17, with 22:18-22 treated as the beginning of the next major section of Proverbs.

The general characteristics of Waltke's first volume on Proverbs also found here. The same competence, great attention to philology, familiarity with scholarly discussion of issues in Proverbs, and frequent exegetical insights will benefit users of this commentary.

In this volume Waltke continues to point out that the various sayings in the "Proverbs of Solomon" (10:1-22:16) are not simply random sayings, but an organized collection using various schemes, including theme, wordplay, and catchword. The only drawback to Waltke's approach (which carries over from the earlier volume) is that his outline and commentary on this section could give readers the impression that he has set forth the actual subdivisions in the text as intended by Solomon. Unfortunately, there are no clear indications that the subdivisions that Waltke uses are the only possible way to view the organization of the text. In fact, Proverbs often defies finding neatly delineated subdivisions of sayings, and other ways of subdividing the text are also possible. The organization of wisdom texts such as Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, or Song of Songs is simply not as tight and linear as in other Old Testament books. Wisdom often is designed to get one to think across boundaries and to make connections to other contexts. Thus, Waltke's subdivisions in Proverbs 1-22 should be viewed as an organizational scheme that arises from *some* of the connections among the sayings in the text, but cannot take into account all of these connections. Waltke's subdivisions, like those in other commentaries on Proverbs, are simply imposed upon the text for the purposes of organizing Solomon's sayings around many, but not all, of these contextual connections among the sayings of Solomon.

Much of Waltke's commentary provides interesting insights into the text, and his work tends to be thorough and well-thought out. However, there are several cases where his assertions are questionable or incomplete. For instance, in treating the "Sayings of the Wise" (22:17-24:22), Waltke emends the very difficult occurrence of *shilshôm* ("formerly") to *shilishim* ("thirty") in keeping with the thirty chapters of the Egyptian *Wisdom of Amenemope* from which some of the subsequent sayings in this section seem to have been derived (but reworked). However, only twenty-nine sayings follow. To solve this dilemma, Waltke counts the introduction (Prov 22:17-21) as the thirtieth saying, since the introduction to *Amenemope* is one of its thirty chapters. This would be more convincing if all of the following sayings were based on *Amenemope*. Instead, I

believe that a better case can be made for retaining the difficult *shilshôm* and understanding it as an implied play on words with *shilishîm*, leading the reader to view it as an improved reworking of *Amenemope* and other foreign wisdom that has been made now to glorify Yahweh's divinely revealed wisdom instead of human intellectual achievement. God does not need thirty sayings—His wisdom surpasses human wisdom and can do it using only twenty-nine sayings!

Waltke's treatment of the Solomon's sayings copied by Hezekiah's men (Proverbs 25–29) is, for the most part, nicely done. Building on the work of scholars during the latter parts of the twentieth century, he acknowledges that this collection has several more well-defined sections that are built around the theme of kingship. Unlike the sections he sets forth in Proverbs 10:1–22:16, some of the sections in this collection are clearly demarcated in the text itself. However, since he often treats them in a manner similar to subsections in Proverbs 10:1–22:16, an uninformed reader may miss that fact that some of the subsections in Proverbs 24–29 are clearly demarcated by the text itself, whereas the subsections in Proverbs 10:1–22:16 are a scheme imposed on the text for commentary purposes.

In keeping with his comments in the introduction to Proverbs in the previous volume, Waltke treats Proverbs 30 as entirely the work of Agur, and Proverbs 31 as entirely the work of Lemuel (or his mother, who taught it to him, Prov 31:1). While I agree with him about Proverbs 30, I question whether the acrostic poem in Proverbs 31:10–31 came from Lemuel. Waltke's major arguments, based on arguments originally put forth by Kenneth Kitchen, are that the work of Lemuel would be "hilariously short" if the acrostic poem is excluded, that both the first part of Proverbs 31 and the poem are feminine in orientation, and that the poem would be the only anonymous portion of Proverbs. None of these arguments is convincing. Who is to say how short is too short? Could not an anonymous final editor have added the final poem, giving it a feminine orientation to fit into its immediate context? Thus, while the poem *could* derive from Lemuel, there Waltke provides no good argument that it does. Moreover, there are other indicators that the poem does not come from Lemuel. For instance, Lemuel's discourse contains quite a few Aramaisms in only nine verses. However, the same cannot be said of the twenty-two verses of the poem.

Despite these objections, Waltke's work offers much good commentary on the text and can be used profitably. His work illuminates meaning for any number of enigmatic proverbs and ties them to their context quite nicely. All this can be of great help to the user.

At the same time, Waltke's commentary, a work designed to be one of American Evangelical scholarship, has one major theological drawback that

runs throughout both volumes—he fails to find the gospel in Proverbs, and most of his treatment tends toward legalism. This is demonstrated in the first part of this commentary in his treatment of Proverb 15:30-16:15. This section contains, perhaps, the most densely concentrated gospel-focused sayings in Solomon's proverbs. Yet Waltke treats them all as merely moral instruction without seeing their application as the promises of God who rescues fallen humanity. Near the end of the commentary we find the same thing. When Agur asks the question, "What is his [God's] name and the name of his son?" (Prov 30:4) Waltke treats this as if the answers are simply "Yahweh" and "Israel" (see Exod 4:22). Yet Agur is in the midst of asking challenging questions to his audience, not ones that have relatively obvious and easy answers. The answer for the name of God's Son cannot simply be Israel, especially since it is set immediately after questions about creation, implying that the Son participated in creation (cf. Prov 8:22-31, which Waltke also fails to see as originally intended to be messianic). For Agur's original audience the answer had not yet been revealed. That is why Agur challenges his audience with the ironic "Surely you know!" (Prov 30:4) Agur is pointing forward to the Messiah, the unnamed Son of God mentioned also in Psalm 2, whose name is revealed in the pages of the New Testament. This is a messianic passage and was intended to be so by Agur. Yet Waltke treats this passage only as if the New Testament reinterprets this passage to be about Jesus, but only as Israel being a type of Jesus. Thus, for Waltke, nothing in Proverbs was intended originally by the authors to point to the Messiah. There is no real gospel of Christ in the book, and only New Testament typologizing can bring a patina of Christ to the study of the book. Thus, the book is reduced to mostly legalistic moralizing.

I can recommend Waltke's two volumes on Proverbs for their careful philology, discussion of scholarship on Proverbs (both ancient and modern), and for a number of good insights into the text. However, one must be careful not to imbibe the theological orientation of this commentary; for if followed consistently it will lead to legalism and not to the gospel. However, if used judiciously by the pastor who keeps the cross of Christ and his gospel in focus so as to correct Waltke's deficiency, these two volumes on Proverbs may supply a number of insightful comments that can be pressed into service for the preaching and teaching of God's word of both law and gospel.

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The Gospel According to the Simpsons. By Mark I. Pinsky. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001. 164 pages.

What happens in Springfield does not stay there. Love it or hate it, *The Simpsons* (the animated sitcom airing since 1989) is an extremely successful television program with a dedicated following that tunes in every Sunday night (and daily in syndication). For all the complaints about poor morals the sitcom depicts, Pinsky makes a compelling argument that there is much moral (even biblically-based) content to be found within the series. While Christian content in *The Simpsons* forms the bulk of the book, it also considers Jewish and Hindu concerns.

The book is entertaining, mixing quotations from the show with commentary and analysis, although it was surprising to find that the author of a book entitled *The Gospel According to the Simpsons* was not himself Christian. Pinsky, a devout Jew, marvelously relates the theological themes woven into the sitcom, but his theological analysis, especially relating to the Gospel, does not go beyond standard terminology and formulaic phrases. Despite this weakness, the content of the various chapters dealing with specific characters, topics, and faiths provides a thorough examination of how *The Simpsons* portrays religion. Tony Campolo's forward lends great value to the book, offering an example and explanation of why *The Simpsons* is so popular among Christians.

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Is the Reformation Over? An Evangelical Assessment of Contemporary Roman Catholicism. By Mark A. Noll and Carolyn Nystrom. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic Press, 2005. 272 pages.

I guess the fat lady has not sung, but maybe we are in the ninth inning. Noll and Nystrom tease us with the idea that the end of the Reformation could be near.

This book is well worth a pastor's time, especially if he wants to answer all those questions about what Catholics believe or teach and how we're different from them with something close to accuracy. To their credit, Noll and Nystrom go to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* as a primary source for what they will say about what Rome says. Granted, the difference between official teaching may be a good distance from what a priest says, and miles from what laity believe in a church that lives within the American religious smorgasbord and has adjusted to Vatican II in varying speeds. Moreover, Noll and Nystrom have taken their measure of the Roman Catholic Church primarily by

examining its American manifestation. While the authors give some attention to Catholicism in Europe and an occasional glance at the two-thirds World, such an approach is hardly exhaustive when about ninety percent of the world's Catholics live outside North America.

Noll certainly comes to the task with significant credentials, having participated in the process of *Evangelicals and Catholics Together*, to say nothing of his general academic standing and intellectual honesty. He is therefore admittedly biased toward the assumption that great change has occurred on both sides in the perceptions Evangelicals and Catholics have toward one another. Nonetheless, the authors document their work more than adequately, and provide a helpful annotated bibliography of "Further Reading" at the end of the work.

The book flows through its topic effectively. The authors document the significant increase of good will between Evangelicals and Catholics before reflecting on the great divide that occurred from the time of the Reformation to recent history. Then they examine the changes in perception that have happened since Vatican II. Besides the Council's *Decree on Ecumenism* and the dialogue process it created, changing attitudes have been hastened by the growing vitality of Christianity in the southern hemisphere (where disagreements between different European groups do not immediately transfer), by experiential connections shared by Roman Catholics and Evangelicals (i.e., the charismatic movement), and, most particularly, by the ever-increasing affinity between U. S. Evangelicals and Catholics on culture war moral issues (e.g., the pro-life movement).

So, is the Reformation over? Despite significant progress, Noll and Nystrom answer, "No." The continuing areas of disagreement between Evangelicalism and Catholicism cannot be ignored. Ample citation is given to such points of division as Mariology, ecclesiastical authority, specific moral issues like divorce and birth control, the sacraments, and universalism—to name a few. Although these divisions continue, "a once-yawning chasm has certainly narrowed" (114).

Though I highly recommended this book, it is by no means unobjectionable. It also, to my mind, raises the question, "Where is Lutheranism and, specifically, Missouri, in this discussion?" The authors' discussion of the doctrine of justification focuses on the Lutheran-Roman Catholic dialogue and the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* (JDDJ). Despite noting strong concerns raised by some Evangelicals regarding the results of dialogues on justification, the authors still conclude: "If it is true . . . that *iustificatio articulus stantis vel cadentis ecclesiae* . . . then the Reformation is over" (232). That such a claim can be made so baldly ignores both Evangelical critics of JDDJ and the LCMS response (as well as some ELCA and German Lutheran pastors and

scholars). Second, the discussion of the sacraments pretty much ignores the reality of a significant Reformation perspective (i.e., the Lutheran view), which stands firmly between both Evangelical and Roman Catholic understandings, even as it leans far more toward the Roman than Evangelical view. Finally, disagreement in ecclesiology is characterized from an Evangelical perspective that the Lutheran confession would see as genuinely platonic ("the church is first spiritual," [234]). In each of these respects one must rue the inability of the LCMS to be vigorous participants in the work of ecumenism. Our isolationist tendencies have silenced a genuinely mediating voice between Evangelicalism and Catholicism.

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***Joshua.* By Adolph L. Harstad. Concordia Commentary. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2004. 906 pages.**

This new volume in the Concordia Commentary series continues the high standards set by the previous volumes. Harstad packs a wealth of theological reflection into its nine hundred pages. The introductory material includes comments on the book of Joshua's place and message in the Scriptures, the author and time of composition, the man Joshua, archaeology and geography, the dates of the events of Joshua, the Hebrew text of Joshua, the method of interpretation used in the commentary, the central theme and subthemes of Joshua, and Joshua's general outline.

The body of the commentary examines each section of Joshua in detail. After a new translation of the section, textual notes provide information on significant Hebrew words and phrases. Finally a commentary on the section provides corroborating evidence from archaeology, analyzes themes, evaluates alternative interpretations, and offers theological reflections. Scattered throughout the body are excursus on topics raised by the text: the name of Yahweh; the town of Jericho; the Jordan River; the seven peoples of Canaan; divine warfare; the city of Jerusalem; the geography and theology of the Holy Land; the Hebrew verbs in the border descriptions; and the covenant. Supplemental materials are found at the end of the book: suggestions for preaching texts from Joshua; a glossary of terms used in the book; eleven pages of maps; an index of subjects; and an index of passages.

It is good to find a modern scholarly commentary that interprets an Old Testament book as did Jesus, who taught that "these are the Scriptures that testify about me" (John 5:39), and who "explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself" (Luke 24:27). Harstad does not shrink from identifying the Commander who met Joshua before the battle of Jericho as "the

Son of God in his preincarnate state" (254). He identifies the Abrahamic covenant as pure gospel, that is, "the promise and gift of grace and life for the sake of Jesus Christ" (746). He also bucks the popular modern trend to expunge the Trinity from the Old Testament; instead he draws trinitarian implications from the mixture of singular and plural forms found with the Hebrew word for God: "This grammatical peculiarity is in harmony with the biblical doctrine that the three persons of the Trinity share one and the same divine essence and are only one God" (706).

It is also refreshing to read a modern scholarly commentary that relies on biblical evidence for determining authorship and dating rather than on the documentary hypothesis. But Harstad surely overstates when he says: "In the latter half of the twentieth century, the documentary hypothesis was overhauled by some higher critics and largely ignored by others in favor of other approaches at reconstructing the origins of the texts of the OT. The self-destruction of the hypothesis was inevitable because of the lack of evidence and contradictory conclusions reached by its advocates. That sterile kind of scholarship is now *passé*" (833). To say that a dominant theory such as the documentary hypothesis is sterile and now *passé* and to suggest that it has self-destructed is to make the same mistake as some make when they say that the theory of evolution has self-destructed. Though the theories may be seriously flawed and even dead wrong, they are still accepted as true by large numbers of experts.

Harstad's treatment of controversial passages with theological implications is both interesting and thought-provoking. For instance, it is undeniable that the Bible teaches that sin and its fruit, death, as well as righteousness and its fruit, life, are attributed to the world as a result of the acts of Adam and of Christ: "For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous" (Rom 5:19); "For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive" (1 Cor 15:22). But should the attribution to the world of Adam's sin be generalized as a principle of divine justice, as if God exacts collective retribution from people for specific sins that they did not commit? This is what Harstad proposes in the case of Achan: "The whole nation is held responsible for the unfaithfulness of one of its members . . . The sin of the one man Achan poisons the whole nation" (304; cf. 753, 701). If divine justice operates under such a general principle of collective retribution, then why did God so vigorously defend himself against the saying, "The fathers eat sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge" (Ezek 18:2), and teach on the contrary: "The soul who sins is the one who will die. The son will not share the guilt of the father, nor will the father share the guilt of the son" (Ezek 18:4)? It would have been helpful to see some discussion of how the principle of individual responsibility interacts with the principle of corporate responsibility in the

account of Achan, and how to react to the suggestion that the Israelites were punished because they shared in Achan's sin in some way, possibly through their negligence in guarding the devoted objects from Jericho to prevent this very sin.

Space does not permit a discussion of other thought-provoking treatments of controversial topics: how to understand the Israelites' decision not to exterminate the Gibeonites (393-396, 415, 467, 567); whether there is an unending requirement for capital punishment (643-647); whether God has commanded believers to marry only fellow believers (734); and how to understand Joshua's statement, "You are witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen to serve the Lord" (Josh 24:22), in relation to decision theology (783-799). For pastors and scholars who wish to mine the treasures of God's word in Joshua, this commentary provides background information, mature theological reflection, and stimulating suggestions for application that repay careful reading.

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Walking George: The Life of George John Beto and the Rise of the Modern Texas Prison System. By David M. Horton and George R. Nielsen. Denton, TX: University of North Texas Press, 2005. 288 pages.

Walking George, the book that focuses on the life of Dr. George J. Beto and the impact he had as a leader in both the religious and secular world, shares the story of a great man of God whose entire life was a demonstration of James 2:18: "... I will show you my faith by what I do." It is the inspirational story of a Lutheran minister who uniquely demonstrated the proper balance of law and gospel in his educational leadership within the LCMS, and the proper balance of secular law and spiritual gospel as head of the criminal justice system of Texas.

The book, co-authored by David Horton and George Nielsen, begins with a review of Beto's early years as a child and youth in Montana, North Dakota, and Illinois, and then focuses on his leadership contributions, challenges, and experiences in the following positions: Dean and President of Concordia Lutheran College in Austin, Texas; Governor's appointed member to the Texas Prison Board; President of Concordia Theological Seminary in Springfield, Illinois; Director of the Texas Department of Corrections; and Distinguished Professor of Criminal Justice at Sam Houston State University.

Some biographical books are dull and uninspiring. That is not the case with *Walking George*. The authors have done an excellent job of bringing George Beto to life as they share his humor, his relationship with students and adults,

his unique style of teaching, his fearlessness in addressing prejudice as well as opposition to change, and his pioneering approaches to Christian service in the church, community, and the world.

The book does not attempt to picture Beto as a saint, and knowing my departed friend and mentor as I do, he would be disappointed with such a depiction. As one begins reading his biography, you are introduced to the actions of a preacher's kid who was both sinner and saint, sometimes devoutly religious, at other times developing the reputation in the community as being one of the town's leading pranksters. His published letter in which he challenges the editor of the *Lena Weekly Star* and requests an apology is a classic worth the cost of the book.

During his student years at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, his gift of leadership was discovered by both students and faculty, resulting in his selection as the leader of numerous seminary events, projects, and organizations. He enjoyed the seminary; however, the authors of the book also give us a brief glimpse of Beto's resentment of professors who tried to bind his conscience in certain teachings that he later discovered, through study and experience, were wrong.

After graduating from the seminary in 1939, Beto accepted the offer to become assistant professor at Concordia College, Austin, Texas. The book provides interesting insights into Beto's unique teaching skills, influence on his students, and great sense of humor. Students usually received either a nickname or some clever reference associating them with their hometown.

As the authors review the twenty-year ministry of Beto at Concordia, Austin, one comes to know and appreciate this man as not only an outstanding teacher in the classroom but also a very talented administrator, communicator, fund raiser, and visionary. From an entry-level teaching position, Beto through the years was assigned an ever increasing number of leadership responsibilities, and was chosen to serve as president of Concordia less than ten years after his arrival. Admiration and appreciation of Dr. Beto increases as one reads about some of his accomplishments: expanding the campus facilities; increasing the enrollment; transitioning the school to welcome female students; and resisting the deeply engrained southern segregation against blacks by welcoming the first black student on campus. These accounts translate into very exciting reading.

During this demanding period in Austin, he still had time to marry a lovely Austin lady with strong Lutheran roots, earn a Master's and Doctor's degree from the University of Texas, and accept the governor's appointment to the Texas Prison Board, where he began to make his mark as a reformation leader of the Texas prison system. The authors give a detailed and revealing

understanding of the Texas prison system, the politics involved with people in high places, and the initiation of George Beto into this new adventure. It is interesting to read how this gifted man of God expanded his leadership ministry to serve effectively both the church and the government.

Beto's impact on the LCMS was expanded when he accepted the call to serve as President of Concordia Theological Seminary, Springfield, Illinois. The book relates how Beto, during the three years he served as president, brought about major improvements, including campus building expansion, increased faculty, school accreditation, and an increased enrollment, which resulted in Springfield having the highest enrollment among all Lutheran seminaries in the country.

Three years after assuming the presidency of Concordia Theological Seminary, Dr. Beto was notified that he had been chosen to serve as Director of the Texas Department of Corrections, following the untimely death of his friend and legendary prison administrator O. B. Ellis. He turned down the offer, but the Texas Board of Corrections, determined to get their man, and knowing his spiritual commitment, added the title "Chief of Chaplains" to his job description. Beto accepted, and moved back to Texas.

During his years of service as Director of the Texas Department of Corrections, he succeeded in bringing about major reforms aimed at rehabilitating prisoners, including a system of schooling for inmates through the college level. This was the first of its kind in this country, and helped to establish Beto as one of the best prison directors in the world, not only for the improvements he created in the institutions, but also for his personal interest in and care for each inmate. Beto came to be known as "Walking George" because of his routine of walking through the prisons talking, listening, and responding to prisoners who wanted a word with him.

The book, in detail, covers both the good days as well as the frustrations experienced by Beto in his attempt to make the Texas prison system the best in the world. To develop his new projects required state money, lots of it, and the authors reveal the process Beto undertook to convince top leaders of the state, including the governor and state legislators, as to the importance of their support for financing the prison projects. His outstanding reputation and gift of communication usually translated into success in fulfilling the project's financial needs. During his ten years as head of the Texas prison system, Beto was a strong force in the creation of the Institute of Contemporary Corrections and Behavioral Sciences, later to be known as the College of Criminal Justice, at Sam Houston State University. In 1972, he resigned from the directorship of the prison system to accept the position of Distinguished Professor of Criminal Justice at the University, where he taught until he retired in 1991. It was a fitting conclusion to the outstanding career of Dr. George Beto that he would

end his ministry where it began some 52 years earlier, in the classroom, adored by his students, molding and influencing their lives for future service in God's world.

Dr. George J. Beto died a few months after he and his wife, Marilyn, returned to Austin, where he had been named Chief of Chaplaincy Services for the Texas Youth Commission. But for many, he will remain alive in the influence he has had upon countless individuals, the changes for good and for God that he initiated in both the church and society, and the example he set for leaders in how to function within political situations, whether church or society, while refusing to be identified with any political conflict, in spite of the efforts of some to place on him the label of being liberal or conservative.

While reference is made to the fact that some identified him as a liberal because certain Springfield seminary professors he recruited later became involved as liberal leaders in the Synodical conflict, the book fails to mention, probably because the authors were unaware of it, that Beto was also accused of being identified with the conservatives. Two of the professors he had recruited, Jack Preus and Robert Preus, later became prominent conservative leaders in the Synodical conflict. To those accusing him of being either liberal or conservative, George Beto gave the same response: "I hired them because they were outstanding professors in their field, and not for their politics."

The book will reveal to its readers one of the most influential Lutheran leaders in the twentieth century, who accomplished what few have ever done, namely, become a positive change agent for both the religious institution of the LCMS, and the secular institution of the criminal justice system.

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***Dust to Dust or Ashes to Ashes? A Biblical and Christian Examination of Cremation.* By Alvin Schmidt. Salisbury, MA: Regina Orthodox Press, 2005. 134 pages.**

In this thin yet comprehensive volume, Dr. Alvin Schmidt, a former Fort Wayne seminary professor, argues that widespread acceptance of cremation in the English-speaking world is unbiblical and detrimental to the faith. The church has given up her opposition to cremation based on the misunderstanding that the Bible does not condemn cremation. Many in the church argue that cremation cannot be opposed outright because the Bible does not forbid it. Yet Schmidt presents compelling evidence from the Bible and Christian tradition that indicates cremation is indeed opposed to God's will.

Amos 2:1 indicates God's wrath against one who burned the body of another: "For three transgressions of Moab, and for four, I will not revoke the punishment, because he burned to lime the bones of the king of Edom." Yet this single verse has been overlooked by many in the cremation debate. Perhaps many theologians simply see God punishing the king of Moab for general violence against Edom, or overlook the details in this one of many punishments listed in the first chapters of Amos. Nevertheless, the specific reason for his punishment is named as his burning the bones of the king of Edom. Schmidt challenges those who tolerate cremation to consider the full significance of this statement in Amos.

Schmidt develops his argument by pointing to the biblical and Christian practice of burying rather than cremating the dead, especially as modeled by God (who buried the body of Moses) and Jesus (who was buried only to be raised again in three short days). Burial is the most ancient way of caring for a dead body. The Hebrews practiced it, not as imitators of the Egyptians (for Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob all practiced burial prior to the sojourn in Egypt), but as determining not to do as the pagans did. Christians, also, in the Roman Empire, buried rather than cremated (a typical Roman practice), to distinguish themselves from the world.

Schmidt skillfully counters the contemporary Christian statement: "Well, God is powerful enough to resurrect even a burned body, so there's no problem with cremation." Certainly God can and will resurrect the faithful who have been cremated. But, according to Schmidt, cremation upstages faith in the resurrection. By placing a body in the ground Christians see the reality of death caused by sin, but also confess that this body will one day be raised up out of the ground. The story of the body is not over. Cremation implies that the body has fulfilled its purpose and is done. Furthermore, it is the willful and active destruction of a human body that God alone has the authority to destroy and raise up. We cannot simply say that because the body will decay we do no wrong in speeding up the process; it is rather that only God has authority over the human body. In a day when many Christians do not understand that their actual bodies will be raised up and rejoined with their souls, resisting the convenience of cremation reminds us of God's love for us, both soul and body.

Dust to Dust can easily be recommended to laity yet is insightful also for pastors. Schmidt relies on his expertise of Christianity and culture to provide a thorough refutation of cremation from all angles. He notes that burning is an act of judgment, that the phrase "ashes to ashes" is not biblical, how cremation disrupts the grieving process, and the offense cremation gives to non-Western Christians. Although Schmidt at times fails to summarize his argument in the

most convincing and concise manner, his work, taken as a whole, provides the proper perspective and understanding for the care of bodies after death.

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***Matthew and the Didache: Two Documents From the Same Jewish-Christian Milieu?* Edited by Huub van de Sandt. Assen, The Netherlands and Minneapolis: Royal Van Gorcum and Fortress Presses, 2005. 310 pages.**

In the late nineteenth century, a document now known as the *Didache*, most likely from the first century, was uncovered. An extra-biblical document provides a glimpse into the life of an early Christian community without explicit apostolic origin. Such things as its Two Ways, the Lord's Prayer, and the trinitarian formula suggest a connection with Matthew. On April 7-8, 2003 about fifty-five scholars specializing in New Testament, Second Temple Judaism, Liturgy and Patristic Studies gathered at Tilburg University to untie the riddle of its origins and the relationship of the documents. The editor acknowledges up front that matters remain unresolved.

An introductory chapter provides a summary of each essay. Only one contributor argues that the author(s) of *Didache* had Matthew in hand, two argue that they emerged from the same community, and the rest see them as unrelated. The subtitle assumes that both documents came from Jewish-Christian communities, but at issue is when did each evolve from the older to the new older religion. The first two contributors answer differently. Bas ter Haar Romeny places the *Didache* in a Jewish community, and Clayton N. Jefford places both Matthew and *Didache* in the Jewish segment of the Christian community of Antioch where Ignatius led the Pauline faction. Wim Weren traces the Matthean community from Galilee to Golan and then to southern Syria where Gentile Christianity evolved. Aaron Malavec argues that the *Didache* was a training manual for Gentile converts, but agrees with the majority view that its compilers had little if any knowledge of Matthew's community. Kari Syreeni holds a similar view in identifying the *Didache* as a prebaptismal manual. John S. Kloppenborg examines to what extent the *Didache* made use of Q through Luke. Noting that the Sermon on the Mount and the *Didache* have similar regulations on fasting and prayer, Peter J. Tomson is inclined to see the two documents coming from the same community. Gerard Rouwhorst notes that while Matthew and the *Didache* have much in common, their Eucharistic prayers are inexplicably different. Among the contributors Andre Tulier argues for the earliest date for the *Didache* at AD 70. According to his calculations, charismatic leadership yielded to a structured church government. Huub van de Sandt, the editor, holds that

the Matthean and the *Didache* communities independently incorporated Qumran's rules. In comparing their eschatologies, Joseph Verheyden is the only contributor to hold that the *Didache* is dependent on Matthew. Jonathan A. Draper follows Romeny in holding that communities that produced Matthew and the *Didache* were still at home in the embrasive world of Judaism. To this van de Sandt files an editorial dissent. He argues that the concentration of rabbinic authority in Jamnia propelled the Matthean and the *Didache* communities out of the mainstream of Judaism. This is substantiated by the absence in the *Didache* of such characteristic elements of Jewish prayer as the restoration of Israel, Zion, and the temple.

Readers can pick and choose among the essays to support their own views of the matter, a privilege now taken. What is striking is that Matthew's the Father-Son-Holy Spirit formula appears in the *Didache*, but not replicated in any other New Testament books. This formula suggests, along with the absence of Jewish prayers for the return to Israel, that both communities are closer to their Christian destinies than their Jewish origins. Both documents are catechetical manuals for Gentile converts. With the exception of Tulier, the contributors implicitly place both documents around AD 100 when Jamnia was giving form to Judaism. For this view Syreeni posits an extensive argument, but the evidence that such a Jewish council took place is not totally convincing. *Jamnia* is better understood as a code word for the solidification of rabbinic Judaism with an anti-Christian tinge as a reaction to the temple's destruction. Not offered is dating Matthew and the *Didache* between AD 39 and 55. Jewishness of expression might suggest this. An embassy claiming the authority of James (Gal 2:12) places the earliest Jewish-Christian conflict in Jerusalem. A temporary resolution was provided by the Jerusalem council in 49 (Acts 15:1-30) at which the Jewish party known as the Pharisees took part (v. 5). Though it is popular to place Matthew's origin in Galilee or Syria (the view Werer represents), this Gospel's reference to the complicity of the Jewish leaders with Roman authorities in bringing Jesus to trial (27:2), the sealing of the tomb with the Roman governor's approval (27:62-66), and the fabrication that Jesus' body was stolen (28:13-20) all point to a Jerusalem provenance. Matthew virtually invites his hearers to see the Field of Blood for themselves (27:8) and to listen to accounts still circulating that Jewish leaders had bribed the tomb guards (28:11-16). Just how would the first hearers of this Gospel react, if the field and an intact tomb were not accessible to them, and they had not heard the rumors about the body stealing? If Verheyden's argument that the *Didache* dependence on Matthew is not convincing to his colleagues, it seems that both drew on a Jesus tradition that had solidified in those Jewish-Christian communities, which, in the face of the influx of Gentiles, wrestled with what elements of the older religion had to be preserved. Matters of indifference, the *adiaphora*, often prove to be the most disruptive. Identifying the same or similar expressions in Matthew's Sermon on the Mount and the

Didache is only the first step since, as Syreeni and Draper point out, the writers often had different understandings. It could have been that the Didachist was the first of many to follow who wrestled with Matthew's intentions in the Sermon on the Mount. Matthean scholars do not agree on interpreting the Sermon on the Mount. So the task of asking this Gospel's relationship to the *Didache* may forever remain elusive, but one which must be undertaken.

Provided at the end is an accumulative bibliography and indices of biblical sources in the original languages and translations, the pseudepigrapha, Qumran, Greek Jewish writers, the Q source, early Christian writings, rabbinic literature, inscriptions, manuscripts, papyri, the *Didache*, and pagan Greek authors. This is followed by indices of subjects, personal names, geographical names and modern authors. Anyone needing an introduction to the topic or doing advanced research can take advantage of the scholarship done by others.

David P. Scaer

***The Role of Justification in Contemporary Theology.* By Mark C. Mattes. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2004. Paper. 198 pages.**

Polemics is hardly a popular pursuit among fashionable theologians. In a day of constructive theologies driven toward ecumenical convergence if not consensus, facing up to the hard edge of the particularity of doctrine is not an enterprise that many theologians are inclined to take on. This is especially the case when it comes to the doctrine of justification by faith alone. The *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* (JDDJ) has just celebrated its fifth anniversary with a variety of local, national, and international festivities. Lutherans and Roman Catholics who have not whole-heartedly embraced JDDJ are looked upon as obstructionists. Actually, Lutheran theologian Mark C. Mattes spends very little time on the JDDJ. His book digs deeper as he seeks to describe accurately and access the place of the doctrine of justification in five living theologians. In doing so, Mattes provides a reliable roadmap to the twists and turns taken by representative Protestant theologians. In charting this terrain, he provides readers with a polemic against any reduction of the doctrine of justification as the critical feature of Christian theology that cannot be compromised by programs of ecumenism or ethics. Yet squarely facing the truth of justification will be of ultimate benefit to both ecumenical engagement and the grounding of ethics.

Eberhard Jüngel is the first theologian examined. Of the five, Jüngel is arguably the most complex. Coming at Luther by way of Hegel, Barth, and Fuchs, Jüngel sees justification as a speech event that has implications for the ontology of both God and human beings. Central Reformation themes are reworked to critique modernity's inability to distinguish person from works.

Justification, for Jüngel, keeps humanity human. Jüngel sees atheism as an apologetic ally in unmasking Platonic conceptions of God.

The doctrine of justification is highly experiential for Jüngel. Mattes observes that this reveals a critical flaw: the privatization of God. "The privatization of God adopted by secularism and accepted by Jüngel simply gives permission for the idea that there are no boundaries with respect to human endeavor, since the public realm can be seen to be divested of divine law, thus becoming a fertile field for the uninhibited self-development of the unencumbered, autopoietic self. Instead, we ought to affirm that the public realm is never, this side of the eschaton, divested of its idols of legitimation. Humanity will have some kind of faith. The true faith is that we owe our very being to God" (54).

Wolfgang Pannenberg works out a doctrine of justification structured by a dual commitment to an approach that sees the finite brought to eschatological participation in the infinite and a loyalty to ecumenical reconciliation. Pannenberg's metaphysical commitment to a teleology of convergence of all things in Christ leads him to speak of law and gospel as epochs in God's dealing with humanity, while Luther sees law and gospel as interactive realities. Luther's view comes under criticism from Pannenberg as failing to do justice to what he sees as the participatory character of salvation. Building on the work of Tuomo Mannermaa, Pannenberg sees *theosis* as taking precedence over imputation.

Mattes faults Pannenberg for his insistence on a mimetic participation in the life of God, which expresses the very synergism rejected by the Lutheran Reformation. In Mattes's reading, Pannenberg appears to have more in common with Aquinas than with Luther. This might lead to a theology useful for ecumenical endeavors but does not serve Christian proclamation: "The gospel is lost in a *contemplatio* by which to ground both metaphysics and ecumenics" (84).

Jürgen Moltmann's work is guided by the theme of liberation. Justification for Moltmann is not a linguistic event determined by the speaking of a promissory word of forgiveness, but the announcement of a reality that does not yet exist. It is justification by hope not faith. The church is not the company of the forgiven but the assembly of those who are being transformed. If Pannenberg sought to make law and gospel sequential epochs, Moltmann seeks to unify them. In doing so, he confuses them: "Moltmann's *Schwärmer* view of the kingdom makes the proper distinction between law and gospel impossible, because it moralizes the gospel and makes the law the impetus for the self-realization of our compassion. Love here becomes a sign of the kingdom's advent. Consciences are wrongly directed to look at their

compassion. This inflates the foolish, who actually magnify their prowess as compassionate, and manhandles the sensitive, who are all too much aware of their shortcomings" (100).

The sole non-Teutonic theologian examined in this volume is Robert W. Jenson. Mattes spots a mid-career shift in Jenson's thinking on justification. The early Jenson spoke of the "meta-linguistic" function of the doctrine. That is, the doctrine is the grammar of theological speech so that Christ is always the subject of the verbs of salvation. Hence the law must be distinguished from the word of promise. The later Jenson moves away from a forensic model of justification to an ontological view in keeping with his Trinitarian and ecumenical commitments. "For Jenson, the heart of theology should no longer be the attempt to distinguish law and gospel properly, but to speak on behalf of the church for the sake of its future visible unity, narrating the life of that one organic body as it increasingly grows into its proper place within God" (119). Hegelizing tendencies identified in Jüngel, Pannenberg, and Moltmann are diagnosed in Jenson as well.

Oswald Bayer of Tübingen is the final theologian to come under Mattes's scrutiny. Clearly Bayer comes closest to Luther's articulation of the doctrine of justification and is viewed by Mattes as the most promising of the five theologians examined. In Bayer's work, the doctrine of justification penetrates every article of faith in such a way as to become the basis and boundary for all theology. Like Luther, Bayer sees the gospel as a performative word of *promissio* that accomplishes what it offers. Drawing on the work of Johann Georg Hamann (1730–1788), Bayer does the work of an apologist as he skillfully demonstrates how humanity engages futile attempts at justification of the self. His rigorous scholarship and his robust thinking challenges those who would see justification by faith alone as either a sectarian or antiquated theological category. Mattes's treatment of Bayer is a fine introduction to a German theologian who deserves a wider hearing in the English-speaking world.

In his conclusion, Mattes observes: "Other than Bayer, the theologians examined tend to ask the church to adopt agendas that confuse the church's mission. Thereby the church becomes a confessional church of many different, even conflictive confessions. Such fundamental theological pluralism within the church subverts the confessional loyalty that can foster the collegiality that could uphold a vibrant ministry in the midst of today's increasing individualism and secularism. The church's leadership tends to manage this theological diversity, mimicking the diversity within the American Academy of Religion. But such management can only be so successful. Various agendas compete with each other within the church, undermining the one distinctive

agenda, delivering the promise, which would actually make a difference in the world. Under these circumstances of bureaucratically managed confessional pluralism, it becomes difficult to discern the shape of faithfulness, in opposition to faithlessness, with respect to Scripture and the church's confessions. The question of heresy has been overridden by the goal of novelty" (185). Mattes's book is engaging and vigorous as he demonstrates how elusive the doctrine of justification is not only within ecumenical dialogue but also among significant theologians who represent present Protestant thinking. For those tempted to over-estimate the significance of the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification*, this book will be a sobering reminder of unfinished Reformation business (i.e., *simul iustus et peccator*) that cannot be effectively managed by church officialdom.

John T. Pless

Caritas et Reformatio: Essays on Church and Society in Honor of Carter Lindberg. Edited by David M. Whitford. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House Academic Press, 2002. 270 pages.

If the chief purpose of a *Festschrift* is to honor its recipient through essays that reflect and build upon the celebrated scholar's life work, this volume has accomplished that purpose splendidly. Carter Lindberg's career as a historian of the sixteenth-century Reformation(s)—the plural reflects his emphasis on the diversity of the period—has focused largely on the effects of ecclesiastical and theological changes on society and its manifold institutions and ideals. While taking very seriously the importance of doctrine and belief among reformers and their followers, Lindberg went beyond the study of theology and doctrine to evaluate their impact on life. Specifically, as in a host of articles and in a book published in 1993 (*Beyond Charity: Reformation Initiatives for the Poor*), Lindberg showed how doctrine and life went hand in hand for Protestants (including Lutherans, despite a common caricature). Furthermore, Lindberg's work as a historian has emphasized the implications of the past for church and society today, in its broadest ecumenical context.

Caritas and Reformatio comprises sixteen articles by colleagues and former students that contribute further reflection on these themes. Editor David Whitford has arranged the articles according to a plausible framework: the first five deal with the issue of the integrity or congruence of the church's message with its life, especially in the early years of the Reformation; the next six with developments in the second half of the sixteenth century (second-generation reformers); and the final five deal with the influence of the Reformation on the church today. Whitford offers a brief review of the contents in the Preface (10–13). Rather than duplicating his effort by offering my own cursory review of

the whole, it seems prudent simply to list the authors and titles and then to make some observations that might be of special interest.

The articles are: Priscilla Baumann, "Sermons in Stone: Grave(n) Warnings Against Usury in Medieval France;" Kirsi Stjerna, "Katie Luther: A Mirror to the Promises and Failures of the Reformation;" Gregory J. Miller, "Fighting Like a Christian: The Ottoman Advance and the Development of Luther's Doctrine of Just War;" Gottfried Seebass, "Confessionalization and Tolerance: Early Resistance against the *Cura Religionis* in the German Imperial Cities;" John Witte Jr., "An Evangelical Commonwealth: Johannes Eiseremann on Law and the Common Good;" David M. Whitford, "The Duty to Resist Tyranny: The Magdeburg Confession and the Reframing of Romans 13;" Oliver K. Olson, "Matthias Flacius Faces the Netherlands Revolt;" Scott Hendrix, "The Reform of Marriage in Calvin's Geneva;" Robert Kolb, "Preaching the Christian Life: Ethical Instruction in the Postils of Martin Chemnitz;" Jeannine E. Olson, "Protestant Deacons in Geneva and Europe after John Calvin;" Marygrace Peters, "One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic? Themes and Issues in Reformation Era Catholic Preaching;" Peter Vogt, "*Ecclesia Simul Justa et Peccatrix*: Speaking about the Holiness of the Church from a Reformation Perspective;" Bill J. Leonard, "An Almost Reformation People: The Search for Baptist Identity;" Oswald Bayer, "Toward a Theology of Lament;" Dennis Bielfeldt, "Luther and the Strange Language of Theology: How 'New' is the *Nova Lingua*?" and James M. Kittelson, "Leading the Least of These Astray: 'Evangelical Catholic' Ecclesiology and Luther."

Listing the titles requires a good deal of the space of a review, but they give a clear indication of the topics covered. All focus on the sixteenth-century Reformation and its implications for the church today, with the exception of the piece by Boumann, a medievalist who studied with Lindberg and others at Boston University. Boumann instead draws parallels between Luther's warnings against usury and eleventh-century reform in France which inspired, she argues, powerful iconic warnings against usury through the medium of sculpture on the interior capitals of three churches in the province of Auvergne.

The inclusion of this article and the one by Peters argues for the diversity of reform in church history: not only a Protestant phenomenon and not only in the sixteenth century. Yet when the sixteenth-century Reformation is so viewed as part of a diverse body of movements that extend throughout the history of the church and include all kinds of reform, there arises the question of whether the sixteenth century can be considered as a distinct period in history at all ("the Reformation Era"). Social historians have denied it this status. Systematic theologians who have argued for an evangelical catholic ecclesiology on the basis of Luther and Lutheran texts can be viewed as part of

this same paradigm, but Kittelson's article sharply dismisses the view as unsupportable by historical evidence. These issues uncover a problem in Lindberg's own work, as well as in the ecumenical appropriation it has received and the influence it has sustained: viewed in terms of its diversity, reform, including the sixteenth-century Reformation, tends to lose its significance. It's the same song over and over again. All church history is an age of formation and reformation.

But as Peters and Hendrix both observe in their articles, sixteenth-century Evangelicals and Roman Catholics did not view each other as varieties of reform which—as only a later generation believes it can see—could join together under an evangelical catholic ecclesiology and an ecumenism that might reconcile all that lovely diversity in a reunified world Christianity. Evangelicals considered their Roman Catholic opponents not only as erring Christians but as idolaters (Hendrix, 118–122), and Roman Catholics viewed Evangelicals as heretics who had, by abandoning the Holy See of Peter, abandoned the foundation stone of the church and thereby destroyed its unity (Peters, 176). This fact of division, made concrete and lasting from the 1530s onward, together with its effects on society and its politics, helps to bring into focus the unique nature of the Reformation Era and its impact on subsequent European and world history.

The articles by Miller, Seebass, Whitford, and Oliver Olson reveal how sweeping in their effects the sixteenth-century Reformation and the division of the Western Catholic Church were. Seebass demonstrates that confessionalization—that is, the societal and often the legal process of making concrete the religious changes and divisions of the Reformation—developed early in the century and that individuals from various parties (not only Anabaptist, but also Lutheran, Catholic, and Reformed) resisted the claim of temporal rulers that they had the right (*cura religionis*) to oversee and enforce that process. The arguments of these dissenters constitute an early apology for religious tolerance two centuries before the Enlightenment. Whitford illustrates how Gnesio-Lutherans developed an interpretation of Romans 13 that legitimized resistance to tyranny—an important contribution especially for Lutherans who have in subsequent centuries read that text solely in terms of its upholding of the divine institution of civil government. Olson, on the other hand, chronicles how for Lutherans that duty to resist was hardly a license for rebellion as advocated by Calvinists. Fine lines indeed, especially important today for defenders of the divine right of kings, a view that is strongly held among some (hopefully only a few) confessional Lutherans.

These and each of the other articles are important contributions not only for understanding the Reformation but also for evaluating its impact on later history, including the present. As a good *Festschrift* should, *Caritas et Reformatio*

honors its recipient by illustrating how vital his scholarship is, not only for understanding the past but also for grappling intelligently and honestly with the issues facing church and society today.

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Studies in Matthew: Interpretation Past and Present. By Dale C. Allison Jr.
Grand Rapids: Baker Academic Press, 2005. 282 pages. Cloth.

Allison is considered the leading Matthean scholar in the English-speaking world and rightfully so. Readers will recognize him as co-author of the Matthew commentary in the International Critical Commentary series. His *The New Moses* (1993) is already out of print and commands a well-deserved high price on internet web sites. *Studies in Matthew* is a collection of thirteen articles, each of which is self-contained. This makes for easy reading. The first six deal with how portions of Matthew were interpreted by the early church fathers and the last six result from Allison's own literary and historical studies. He follows his ICC style in putting forth several options and then favoring one without eliminating the others. Thus readers can entertain Allison's views without surrendering fixed exegetical opinions.

One intriguing hypothesis is that the star in the account of the magi may have been an angel, a view found in the early church fathers (ch. 1). In both biblical and extra-biblical sources, stars could refer to persons or angels. Allison refers the promise that the pure in heart will see God to seeing him in others (ch. 2). This fits with the final judgment that those who have shown kindness to Jesus' brothers have done it to him. For this reviewer a more compelling view is the crucifixion scene in which the centurion sees God in Jesus. In the spirit of the author even the other options can find a place in one's theological thinking. One marvelous insight is Allison's conclusion that the story of Cain and Abel is operating behind the requirement that peace must be made with an offended brother before offering a gift at the altar (ch. 3). This chapter is worth the price of the book. "Darkness at Noon" (ch. 4) will attract preachers preparing for Good Friday. Here the range of options go from a physical darkness to a darkness that afflicts the soul of Jesus. "Touching Jesus' Feet" addresses the problem why Jesus forbids this in John (ch. 5). Allison sees that in Matthew this constitutes worshiping the resurrected Jesus, which the disciples also do in seeing him. In the last chapter of this section (ch. 6), he explains how the differing views of the church fathers can be complementary without one excluding the others. "The Configuration of the Sermon on the Mount and Its Meaning" (ch. 10) takes up the structure of the Sermon. Matthew shows an interest in numbers, for example, the triple listing of

fourteen generations, and organization of Jesus' teaching into five discourses. Prominent in the Sermon is the triad construction. Afflictions suffered by the infants and the apostles prepare and are incorporated into Christ's own passion (ch. 11).

Allison not only applies his analytical skills to Matthew, but he penetrates, or so it seems, into the deep recesses of the Evangelist's mind. Allison has gone where every interpreter of this Gospel wishes he had already gone. The book's concluding sentences say it all. "Suffering shared is more easily endured. And as in Hebrews, so in Matthew: the principle has become christology. It is not just that one does not suffer alone, but precisely that one suffering in the company of Jesus, God's Son. This must mean that the divine does not remain aloof from suffering, for God knows the Son (11:27) and the Son knows suffering. . . . This does not, to be sure, do anything to unravel the mystery of iniquity. It does, however, put God on the side of the hapless Rachel weeping for her children, and on the side of the disciples tossed grievously to and fro by persecution. And perhaps that thought matters far more than any rational apologetic" (264).

David P. Scaer

The Reform of Baptism and Confirmation in American Lutheranism. By Jeffrey A. Truscott. Lanham, MD: The Scarecrow Press, 2003. 319 pages.

Jeffrey Truscott, an instructor in liturgics at Japan Lutheran College and Theological Seminary in Tokyo, has produced a sympathetic but not uncritical history of the process that led to the rites for baptism and confirmation in the *Lutheran Book of Worship* (LBW). Drawing extensively on personal interviews and correspondence with the architects of LBW such as Eugene Brand, Hans Boehringer, and Frank Senn as well as archival material, Truscott has laid out the intricacies of the debate both theological and church-political that led to the inclusion of these rites in LBW.

Among the valuable features of Truscott's book is the documentation of the theological shifts that led to the crafting of the LBW rite. Truscott demonstrates the influence of Peter Brunner, Edmund Schlink, and Georg Kretschmar on the liturgical and theological thinking of Eugene Brand. The influence of Aidan Kavanaugh and post-Vatican II attempts at the renewal of baptismal theology and liturgical practice are duly noted. Arthur Repp's *Confirmation in the Lutheran Church* (1964) is given credit for surfacing the need to devote theological and pastoral attention to the rite of confirmation. Truscott makes mention of the critics—especially James Nestingen, Oliver Olson and the faculty of the LCA's Philadelphia seminary. Attention is also given to the reaction of the LCMS under the presidency of J. A. O. Preus.

The ecumenical atmosphere of the 1970s made it difficult for Lutherans to work their way through the proposed changes critically. Liturgical activism dominated the day and with it an ever so subtle synergism expressed itself. The forgiveness of sins is seen as only one dimension of baptism, while incorporation into Christ and participation in the church now become dominant. Not surprising, then, is a lessened accent on original sin and deliverance from the wrath of God and the devil. Emergency baptism is thus seen as something of a relic that best be catechized out of existence. Water takes on increased significance as witnessed in the preference for fonts capable of accommodating immersion and the insertion of a baptismal epiclesis on the water. Symbolic ornamentation of baptism with anointing, bestowal of the baptismal robe, and giving of the candle feature prominently in the new rite. It is suggested baptisms be "stored up" for certain days (i.e., Easter Vigil, Pentecost, Baptism of our Lord). The focus shifts from the bestowal of the forgiveness of sins and rebirth (the Lord's work) to ritual significance (work of the community). The "welcome ceremony" has now become a celebrated element of the new order. Symbolic accretions tend to blur or obscure the fact of baptism itself, leading to what Kenneth Korby called the "cultification of baptism." This was Luther's criticism of the medieval rite.

Baptism is increasingly described as one of the rites of initiation. This fits well with the Roman Catholic understanding of sacramental grace where baptism initiates one on a journey toward salvation. This language is foreign to Lutheranism, which confesses the present-tense reality of baptism. Luther's robust theology of baptism holds that the whole of the Christian life is a return and approach to baptism for in this washing sinners are given the forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Spirit. Baptism is the enactment of justification by faith not justification by participation. Hence Lutherans see infant baptism as the paradigm. When adults are baptized they become like little children. Thus the reading of Mark 10:13-16 is appropriate at all baptisms. Truscott observes that the *LBW* rite was criticized for what was perceived as a downplaying of infant baptism.

Truscott notes the importance of the Anglican scholar, Bryan Spinks, in the evaluation of current Lutheran baptismal liturgies in light of Luther's achievement. Unfortunately the bulk of Spinks's work was done after the publication of *Lutheran Book of Worship* and *Lutheran Worship*. Jonathan Trigg, David Scaer, and Mark Tranvik have also made valuable contributions in this area. Their work should be useful in establishing a baptismal practice that is more coherently Lutheran.

John T. Pless