

Reviews



RECONSTRUCTING OLD TESTAMENT THEOLOGY: AFTER THE COLLAPSE OF HISTORY, by Leo G. Perdue. *Overtures to Biblical Theology*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005. Pp. 352. \$20.00 (paper).

If the mantra of the real estate business is “location, location, location,” perhaps the mantra of biblical studies is “interpretation, interpretation, interpretation.” While the biblical texts themselves have changed little since their composition, the ways scholars have approached these same texts seem to change constantly. It can be challenging for students of the Bible, particularly busy pastors who are a few years removed from their seminary studies, to keep up with the most current approaches. For this group (and others), Leo Perdue has written a helpful discussion of several contemporary approaches to biblical studies in general and Old Testament theology in particular.

Perdue states his purpose for writing as an attempt to “provide a basic introduction to recent and emerging approaches to Old Testament theology” (21). Readers should note, though, that this is not the first volume Perdue has dedicated to this task. His 1994 publication, *The Collapse of History: Reconstructing Old Testament Theology*, also described then-recent approaches to Old Testament theology, with much the same format. New approaches may have emerged in the decade since *The Collapse of History*, but Perdue maintains his basic argument from the first volume.

That argument, outlined in chapter one, is simple: “while there are major tensions between various approaches to Old Testament theology, there are significant points of contact that should allow for fruitful discourse” (23). Perdue laments the tendency

of modern-day interpreters to ignore each other rather than engaging in dialogue about the various methodologies being employed and the discoveries these methodologies produce. At the same time, Perdue also criticizes many contemporary approaches for their rejection of the historical-critical method, the Enlightenment’s contribution to biblical studies. He firmly believes that the historical-critical method’s emphasis on history provides the correct lens through which to view the Old Testament. Thus, Perdue judges every approach described in these chapters on the basis of their dependence on—or rejection of—history.

To make his point, chapter two diverges from his stated purpose of introducing *recent* approaches to Old Testament theology to review the eighty-year-old debate between those advocating a history of religions (*Religionsgeschichte*) approach versus a theological approach to biblical studies. He spends fifty pages reviewing the two methods, finally concluding that a combination of the two works best. Following this digression, the next six chapters provide an overview of the following contemporary methodologies: liberation theology, feminist interpretation, feminist/*mujerista*/womanist theologies, Jewish biblical theology, postmodernism, and postcolonialism. Each presentation lays out the basic hermeneutical premise(s) utilized by its various interpreters, reviewing the work of one or more well-known authors in that field to illustrate how the premise(s) get put into practice. In addition, each chapter includes a short section that applies that particular approach to the book of Jeremiah, demonstrating how the method interprets an Old Testament text theologically. Most chapters also include a final “evaluation” section that

summarizes the strengths and weaknesses of each approach, generally via the rubric of how dependent the approach is on historical criticism.

The chapters are long and involved, providing at times a sort of “Cliff’s Notes” overview of the major authors representative of each approach. And if it seems to the general observer that some of the people included in these approaches might overlap, they do: many of the same names appear in the chapters on liberation, feminism, and postcolonialism. Perdue is unrepentant about this, though. He states from the outset that one of his goals in writing this book was to shed more light on typically under-represented Old Testament theologians, many of whom are female and from formerly oppressed Third World countries. This goal he achieves quite readily, as his extensive bibliography and index of modern authors attest.

Still, the book’s achievements are slighted by a few flaws. Poor editorial work has left the book with numerous mistakes in spelling and punctuation, some of which lead to potential misunderstanding while one is trying to wade through long run-on sentences. Some sections on various interpreters seem choppy, as if whole paragraphs were taken out and inserted in another chapter with little reference to their surrounding context. More troubling than this, though, is the serious lack of references provided in his summaries of various scholars. Many pages of text pass without a single footnote or only a vague instruction to check the bibliography for works by this or that author. Perdue could stand to take a few lessons on citation from his two graduate students who contribute sections to his chapter on postcolonialism.

In spite of these things, I would recommend this book to those who would like a brief, one-volume introduction to the methodologies treated here and the major contributors in each field. For all of Perdue’s emphasis on the importance of history, and criticism of those who ignore it, his own proposal for doing Old Testament theology (outlined in chapter 9) provides a

rather balanced process that includes history but does not make it the be-all of biblical theology. He even manages to find a place for faith in Old Testament theology, a place that is too often evicted in the scholarly effort to appear “objective.” Perdue’s reconstruction may very well provide a firm foundation for building bridges between the academy and the church.

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CRYING FOR JUSTICE: WHAT THE PSALMS TEACH US ABOUT MERCY AND VENGEANCE IN AN AGE OF TERRORISM, by John N. Day. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2005. Pp. 199. \$14.99 (paper).

A simple proposition guides John N. Day: “[I]t is legitimate for God’s present people to utter prayers of imprecation or pleas for divine vengeance—like those in the psalms—against the recalcitrant enemies of God and his people” (109). When believers find themselves beset by periods of “sustained injustice, hardened enmity, and gross oppression” (15), prayers for God’s vengeance are consistent with the ethics of both the Old and New Testaments.

If the proposition can easily be stated, its demonstration remains slippery, especially since Day eschews what he calls a “systematic-theological approach” in favor of a “biblical-theological approach” (17), that is, a series of guiding hermeneutical principles about the nature of the Bible and its authority. Among these is the assumption that, because the Bible is inspired, any suggestion that the imprecatory psalms are sub-Christian or abrogated by Jesus’ teaching assaults the inspiration of the Psalms themselves (23). To the contrary, the imprecatory psalms represent an “extreme ethic” that is consistent with both God’s justice and the divinely instituted principle of *lex talionis*. Thus, it is incumbent upon

Christians to utter imprecatory prayers against vicious enemies of God and God's people; not to do so would be tantamount to surrendering hope in God's ultimate justice and the punishment of reprobate sinners.

In a preliminary chapter, Day outlines his main thesis and describes how other solutions to the problems posed by the presence of imprecations in the Bible have not been satisfactory. The commentary ranges from a defense of Old Testament morality to his views of progressive revelation and dispensationalism. A second chapter examines "curse" in its Near Eastern context. Reminiscent of the days of the biblical theology movement, Day sees Israel as standing against its ancient environment with respect to its antipathy to any magical understanding of curse, though he does locate the theology of the imprecatory prayers in the invocations and curses of ancient legal treaties.

Chapters on Pss 58, 137, and 109 follow. Day wastes no ink on form-critical distinctions but rather focuses on these psalms, first because they contain especially vitriolic imprecations and, second, because they represent imprecations against social, national, and personal enemies, respectively. Like others before him, Day associates these pleas for God's vengeance with principles of retributive justice and the idea of *lex talionis*. Day's contribution to the discussion is the syllogism that "since it is a grounding assertion that the nature of God does not change (cf. Mal 3:6; Heb 13:8), the principle of divine justice based on that nature, as en-cased in the judicial *lex talionis*, must remain fundamentally constant" (69). This quote, however, betrays a major flaw in Day's study: there is simply no acknowledgment that the Scriptures reflect an ancient historical context that included intercourse with other ancient cultures, the author's occasional nod to other ancient texts notwithstanding. To the contrary, Day evidently assumes that the Bible stands as a pristine reflection of the eternal and immutable will of God. This is especially peculiar given his focus on *lex talionis*, since that principle was not unique to ancient Israel and its appearance in the biblical corpus owes at least as

much to the influence of Israel's ancient neighbors as it does to direct revelation. Moreover, the assertion that the nature of God does not change does not mean that the methods God chooses to relate to the creation remain transfixed in a particular legal principle. That is at least part of the point of the crucifixion: God's dealings with the world at Golgotha seem not to be predicated on the principle of *lex talionis* but rather on God's willingness to nail the sin and suffering of the world to the cross of the innocent Christ.

Day deals with this problem in several chapters attempting to identify—and justify—imprecations in the New Testament with the idea of *lex talionis*. Thus, Jesus' curse of the fig tree in Mark 11 (not an imprecation, but a prophetic sign if ever there was one!) becomes a "not-so-veiled imprecation against faithless and fruitless Israel" (101). Similarly, all curses in the New Testament become imprecations, even Acts 13:10–11b and Gal 5:12. Day's linkage of the martyrs' cry for vengeance in Revelation 6:10 with the imprecatory psalms is more persuasive, though the conclusion he draws is unwarranted. The fact that persecuted first-century Christians understood heavenly martyrs to be empathetic to their own cries for vengeance does not make such prayers praiseworthy (108).

Is there then no justification for the presence and use of imprecatory prayers in the Bible? Doubtless there is, although that use is not to be found by identifying such pleas with the nature of God. Readers would have been better served with a discussion of the pastoral and provisional use of such prayers. The imprecatory psalms do give voice to real human conditions, and in the context of worship before a caring God. Indeed, a more natural and overarching biblical principle for contemplating the imprecatory psalms is God's undying love—in contrast to an accent on God's righteous need to punish sinners. Day confuses his accent on the latter with talk of "holy hatred" and "enemy-love." Nevertheless, it is confidence in God's compassion that emboldens us to offer in prayer even our most igno-

ble and hateful sentiments, secure in the knowledge that, in our anguish, God remains with us and for us. On the other hand, even when offered in faith, such prayers always call for caution, especially in this age of identifying national enemies with the enemies of God. Day himself errs in this way when, in a final homiletic chapter, he lumps all “Muslim-controlled countries” with communism and those who persecute Christians (117, 119).

Time-pressed readers of this book should go to Day’s conclusion, where he succinctly recaps his argument. There is sufficient detail there to reveal that this monograph is an earnest—if not altogether satisfactory—treatment of the problem posed by the presence of imprecations in the Bible.

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A NEW PERSPECTIVE ON JESUS: WHAT THE QUEST FOR THE HISTORICAL JESUS MISSED, by James D. G. Dunn. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005. Pp. 136. \$12.99 (paper).

Dunn’s purpose in this work is to provide readers with a new perspective on the historical Jesus that will help them “reexperience something of what the first disciples and churches experienced when they told again the stories about Jesus and reflected together on his teaching, and relived in turn the memories of Jesus’ first followers” (13). The perspective Dunn offers is “new” relative to that of the “long-running” quest for the historical Jesus, which in his view hinders us from perceiving Jesus via the impact he made on his early followers. Dunn’s critical thesis is that the mainstream quest for the historical Jesus has failed because it started from the wrong place, employed wrong assumptions, and viewed the evidence from the wrong perspective (15).

The three chapters comprising the bulk of the book come from the Hayward Lectures that Dunn delivered at Acadia Univer-

sity, Nova Scotia, in November of 2003. Each of these chapters develops a distinct yet interrelated critique of the quest’s methods and sets out an aspect of Dunn’s alternative perspective on Jesus. Chapter one is entitled “The First Faith: When Did Faith Become a Factor in the Jesus Tradition?” Its main point is that faith in Jesus was an originating feature of the Jesus tradition rather than a late distortion of it. Dunn challenges the quest’s assumption that the historical Jesus can only be found by stripping away the faith of his first followers. In articulating this challenge, Dunn distinguishes between the faith impact Jesus had during his lifetime and later evaluations of him, such as those expressed in the Chalcedonian creed. His critique of the mainstream quest centers on its inability to make this distinction.

What started as a protest against the artificialness of the creedal Christ, what began as an attempt to strip away the centuries-old layers of dogmatic and ecclesiastical contrivance, has ended up as a rejection of the Gospels themselves and their portrayal of Jesus and a deep-seated suspicion of the Jesus tradition as a whole. (22)

Dunn argues that we can only perceive the historical Jesus in and through the impact he had upon his followers. The Jesus we are questing for, he maintains, is the one who evoked the faith that gave rise to Christianity. And Jesus’ faith-impact began not at the cross or on Easter day, but with the making of disciples whose reflections on Jesus during his lifetime shaped the earliest forms of the Jesus tradition reflected in the gospel accounts. Moreover, against the notion that Q defines a community opposed to Mark’s presentation of the gospel, Dunn contends that Q’s distinctive features—its lack of a passion narrative and its Galilean character—are best explained by the hypothesis that the material “*first emerged in Galilee and was given its lasting shape there prior to Jesus’ death in Jerusalem*” (27). Dunn finally avers that the quest’s attempt to find Jesus by stripping away the impact he made is futile. “The historical Jesus at best can be none other than the Jesus-who-made-the-impact-which-is-the-beginning-of-the-

Jesus-tradition,” and the witness we have to this tradition is the Synoptic Gospels (30).

The thesis of chapter two, “Behind the Gospels: What It Meant to Remember Jesus in the Earliest Days,” claims that the literary paradigm for understanding the transmission of the Jesus tradition is inadequate, and that therefore we must try to envisage the way in which the tradition was transmitted in an oral culture. It should be noted that this is also the theme of the book’s appendix, “Altering the Default Setting: Re-envisaging the Early Transmission of the Jesus Tradition,” which is a text version of an address Dunn delivered in 2002. Dunn’s critique of the mainstream quest in these pages is that the quest is excessively focused on the two-(written)-document hypothesis, and wrongly assumes that the character of transmission in an oral culture can be explained in terms of the modern literary paradigm. In developing this critique, he explores attempts to re-envisage oral tradition by looking at research into folklore and the way that memory works. He then examines five characteristic features of the oral transmission of tradition: (1) oral performance is unlike reading a text; (2) oral tradition is communal; (3) some members of an oral community have primary responsibility for maintaining and performing the tradition; (4) every oral performance is distinct from the *event* that originates the tradition, and is itself an original performance of that tradition; and (5) oral tradition seeks both to preserve what is important from the past and to illumine the present and future, and therefore combines “*fixity* and *flexibility*” (51).

The title of the third chapter is “The Characteristic Jesus: From Atomistic Exegesis to Consistent Emphases.” Dunn proposes that the quest should look for impressions, features, and themes that broadly *characterize* the Jesus tradition, rather than for a figure who contrasted with his surroundings. He criticizes the quest for trying to find a non-Jewish Jesus, and contends that it employs the wrong criteria for judging the historical reliability of data. In his view, the quest’s primary criteria make “too

much of what can be said about Jesus to depend upon a single saying or small group of sayings” (67). Dunn’s proposed criterion, on the contrary, looks across the tradition for an “overall impression.”

Any feature that is *characteristic within the Jesus tradition, even if only relatively distinctive of the Jesus tradition*, is most likely to go back to Jesus, that is, to reflect the original impact made by Jesus’ teaching and actions on several at least of his first disciples. (69–70)

He illustrates the effectiveness of his criterion with reference to such themes as the Jewishness of Jesus, the Galilean character of his ministry and his proclamation of God’s royal rule.

From my perspective as a student of systematic theology, Dunn’s focus on the faith-impact Jesus made during his lifetime is particularly helpful for maintaining the link between christological assertions and the Jesus of history. But more important than its contribution to second-order reflection is the work’s service to the church community that seeks to encounter Jesus. The book succeeds in its task of helping readers enter into the experiences of the early Jesus tradition. It also forms a concise and accessible argument for the reliability of the gospels’ witnesses to Jesus. Perhaps the feature pastors will find most beneficial, however, is its call for a renewed emphasis on the oral transmission of the Christian community’s tradition.

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THE WOUNDING AND HEALING OF DESIRE: WEAVING HEAVEN AND EARTH, by Wendy Farley. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2005. Pp. 208. \$19.95 (paper).

Emory professor Wendy Farley’s *The Wounding and Healing of Desire: Weaving Heaven and Earth* is an unusual theological work in that it has its own sound track (not

included). She references the music (separately available as a CD) because of the vital part “listening” played in the theological reflection she here undertakes. Her attention to oral traditions (folk songs, hymns, stories) gives them a voice they seldom have in serious theological work. Her hearing is very good. And if one is willing to listen to what she is saying, the hearer will be rewarded. This is a somewhat new vein of theological reflection and discourse, a new genre. Her ruminations carry her readers/hearers into unfamiliar territory, and “simply listening” also affords a way to let her thoughts provide background for one’s own thinking and reflection. In fact, as one listens to her, one is very much prompted to sing along, to join in thinking and reflecting. However, this is not exactly easy listening, this is no theological “lite” programming or Muzac; Farley requires attentiveness of her listeners.

Farley says, “There is really no readily established contemporary vocabulary for trying to draw the strangeness of our condition up to consciousness” (37). She suggests that the somewhat archaic notion of “the passions,” deeply ingrained dispositions, may still be helpful in attempting to do so. The human condition of which she speaks so profoundly is the Christian wisdom “that we are so wounded we do not know who we are. So it is as deluded and wounded lovers of Christ that we follow our hearts’ desire” (17). As she works her way reflectively into the depth dimensions of human desire to disclose its corruption and redemption, Farley catches refrains from the Christian tradition’s narrative and language that are not so often heard nowadays. Along the way, her phenomenology of redemption under the aspect of holy desire reclaims, renews, and refreshes such terms as *eros*, virtue, habit, sacrifice, ransom, pride, and the passions for powerful theological purposes. Profound insights about the realities of human evil and redemption resonate throughout. And hearing these classic themes again, forcefully given new voice, has a decidedly unsettling effect—disrup-

tive of long-standing ways of believing, thinking, and expressing.

Carefully unpacking desire as an element of the *imago dei* in each and every human, Farley traces the structural dimensions of human longing through their wounding (terror, rage, and addiction), disfigurement (malice—hatred, cruelty, and affliction), distortion (the temptations of morality, sacrifice, and love), and other harmful egotistical entanglements. She then turns to the persistent divine and loving *eros* that ever draws humankind heavenward as well, extricating us from bondage. Her route to this is a contemplative one as she explores meditative/contemplative practice and the dimensions of darkness that both rightfully and wrongly attend it. Her guided reflection opens up to a counterbalancing of the corruption of the passions with the healing power of the virtues (temperance, justice, courage, patience, compassion, joy, equanimity, faith, and hope). Here again carefulness is evidenced in the use of such terms. Farley cautions us that our healing involves “leaning into *power*, not impotence, passivity, neurotic patience, self-sacrifice, or the evacuation of our personhood” (148).

This is never light reading/listening. Her imaginative reclamation of nearly forgotten language demands attention. That is why a kind of mindful listening might be more appropriate to this genre of theological reflection than a close reading. Listening to Farley, I cannot help but be reminded of the psychological ruminations in Helen Luke’s *Old Age: A Journey into Simplicity*, and especially her marvelous chapter on “Suffering.” There are also echoes of philosophical works like Erazim Kohak’s *The Embers and the Stars*. These share with Farley a profoundly evocative character that emerges from the distinctive sort of reflection that belongs to such works. The overhearing of these intimate reflections on the experience of redemption makes this work especially valuable, I think, for those who wrestle with the speaking/proclamation of the gospel in addition to reflection on Christian faith. Preachers will hear things here that others

may not, especially those who prepare their sermons with the radio or a CD playing. For those of us who listen to a good bit of music, this offering stands as an open invitation to some serious theological reflection as we do. That is the way Farley's work strikes me, as an invitation. She invites one along with her in her meditations. She is not so much forwarding an argument, but follows a spirited logic nevertheless to encourage her readers/listeners to new insight, reflection on their own lived experience, and borrowing generously from many sources to nuance, correct, and embellish Christian tradition.

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THE NEW WESTMINSTER DICTIONARY OF CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY, edited by Philip Sheldrake. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2005. Pp. 704. \$49.95 (cloth).

Some twenty years ago, Gordon Wakefield edited the first *Westminster Dictionary of Christian Spirituality*. As is the case with most reference works, one would expect that the updating and fine-tuning of content would be periodically necessary in order to maintain such a dictionary's ongoing relevance and usefulness. This new volume, however, represents a more radical reconfiguration of the subject matter.

What has changed over these years to prompt such an extensive overhaul of this presentation of Christian spirituality? Certainly one could point to the burgeoning interest in spirituality. However, spirituality was already proving to be a popular subject when the first dictionary appeared, and thus was a major impetus behind that initial project as well as series such as the Classics of Western Spirituality published by Paulist Press. The more significant development, according to the editor of this new dictionary, Philip Sheldrake, is the emergence of Christian spirituality as a recognized academic discipline. As such, Christian spiritu-

ality has not only become the subject of extensive research and writing, but also the particular themes, concerns, and questions raised by this new field of study have made their presence felt in other related disciplines such as biblical and theological studies, as well as in pastoral theology.

While the status of Christian spirituality as an academic discipline does indeed reshape the content and structure of this resource, what especially stands out when comparing this new dictionary with its predecessor is the presentation of a more holistic view of Christian spirituality. With its concern for the integration of the whole person in relationship to God, the spiritual life is no longer viewed as the exclusive domain for a few spiritual exemplars but rather as a way of life for all people. This holistic understanding of spirituality has reshaped the new dictionary in two obvious ways. First, this dictionary contains no individual biographical entries, unlike the earlier one. For those interested in learning more about particular figures, whether it be Origen or Julian of Norwich, Simone Weil or Thomas Merton, an index of names and titles will assist them in tracking down all references to those individuals. In this volume entries are organized around regions, periods, movements, and themes. Not only does this organization of material create a richness of multiple references (for example, Luther appears not only as the prominent figure in the entry on Lutheran Spirituality, but is also referenced in over thirty other entries), but more important, this new structure places individuals within their larger historical-cultural context.

The second notable change is the addition of over two hundred completely new entries that reflect a more expansive and holistic understanding of Christian spirituality. Expressing an awareness of the significance of materiality and embodiment to the spiritual life, these new entries do much to overcome any false dualistic notions that spirituality is somehow an "otherworldly" way of life. Entries have expanded to include topics such as business, the body, children, cities, clothing, consumerism, sports,

and work, as well as several entries exploring different aspects of sexuality and gender issues, all in relation to spirituality. As Philip Sheldrake notes in his introduction, this more comprehensive view of spirituality means that it shares much in common with ethics; in fact, one can detect a “blurring” of any sharp divisions between the two subjects. Additionally, the newer entries also reflect the far-reaching changes that have taken place over the past twenty years due to numerous developments in science and technology. Other topics now included range from cosmology to the environment, as well as from cyberspace to media and communications.

The third most notable difference in this dictionary pertains more directly to Christian spirituality’s relatively recent status as an academic discipline. The inclusion of thirteen short essays immediately following the editor’s introduction is a most welcomed new feature. These essays by noted scholars cover issues such as methodology, interpretation, and mysticism. Several of the essays explicitly point to the interdisciplinary nature of contemporary Christian spirituality by examining its relationship to various fields such as the social sciences, worship, science, and psychology. Particularly helpful is Michael Barnes’s essay, “Spirituality and the Dialogue of Religions,” in which Barnes does a marvelous job of framing the nature of Christian spirituality in a way that encourages genuine hospitality and dialogue by honoring the particularities of other faith traditions without succumbing to the temptation to reduce spiritual traditions or religious experiences to their lowest common denominator. While there is some redundancy of certain issues and themes, on the whole these essays are remarkably succinct and informative. Furthermore, they are a helpful orientation to this emerging discipline as readers are exposed to a variety of issues pertinent to the discussions and debates taking place among scholars on how best to understand and deal with spirituality as an academic discipline.

This dictionary offers an impressive ar-

ray of entries and contributors reflecting the breadth and depth of the Christian spiritual tradition. One does not generally “read” a dictionary, but rather relies on it more as a reference work. This volume, though, could serve both functions equally well. Both the essays and entries offer suggestions for further reading while each entry provides insightful commentary. The new and occasionally surprising entries might spark the homiletical imaginations of pastors as they seek to preach the gospel with vibrancy and relevancy. Overall, this volume would be a wonderful resource for church libraries as well as the personal library of any learner or leader interested in seeking guidance for their study and practice of Christian spirituality.

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IN THE CONTEXT OF UNITY: A HISTORY OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF LUTHERAN BOOK OF WORSHIP, by Ralph W. Quere. Minneapolis: Lutheran University Press, 2003. Pp. 282. \$35.00 (paper).

At a time when ELCA Lutherans are again proposing a new book of worship, this detailed history of the development of the twenty-seven-year-old *Lutheran Book of Worship* (LBW) can nudge us to consider the implications and complexity of worship for a confessional and ecumenical church body. Ralph Quere served as secretary of the Liturgical Texts Committee of the Inter-Lutheran Commission on Worship (ILCW) and so had an insider’s view of the twelve-year process. A church historian at Wartburg Seminary, Quere provides a detailed history of the contributions of pastors, musicians, liturgists, theologians, hymn writers, and congregations to a worship source serving diverse North American congregations.

The book fascinatingly presents in minute detail the controversial, collaborative, ecumenical, and confessional work in-

volved in the making of various liturgies and a hymn collection for a diverse yet united church body that also reaches out to the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church. The book may help all who decide to put together “a new liturgy” for Sunday to pause and consider the church’s rich tradition of worship and its embodied theology.

The book’s title, *In the Context of Unity*, points to the unifying role of worship for the church. The work on a hymn collection sought to provide a common core of songs that would combine national and cultural traditions with the ecumenical tradition of the greater church. Several Lutheran church bodies agreed to work on this common worship book as an expression of their confessional unity. Quere traces the opposition to the unity implied by a common worship book. This opposition eventually led to the last-minute withdrawal of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod from the process, with the charge that “the real motive behind rejecting was the fellowship issue: that acceptance of LBW might imply accepting the doctrine of the other Lutheran bodies” (217).

On a more positive note, the adoption of an ecumenical lectionary, common translation of liturgical texts, use of ecumenical hymnody, and reflection of growing liturgical consensus pointed to a common core in worship and a shared common mission in the world.

The arguments and various perspectives of theologians and liturgists are presented with balance and summary detail. Quere emphasized that “the ILCW’s preparation of LBW raised the age-old question of *lex orandi, lex credendi*: the relationship of the rule of prayer to the rule of faith in its ecumenical, theological, and liturgical dimensions—balancing commitments to the Lutheran confessions and the worship traditions of the Church catholic” (10). He details various arguments but especially focuses on Holy Communion and the strenuous debate around the Eucharistic Prayer, Offertory, and communion practices.

Quere also traces the influence of church review committees, test congregations, theological conferences, responses from seminary faculties, musicians, and questionnaires sent out to congregations. Reading the diverse responses and conflicting recommendations reminds us of the diversity in every worshiping community even as we seek to live *in the context of unity*.

There are also fascinating quotes that show cultural influences on liturgies such as the marriage rite. Some objected to deleting the promise of the bride to “obey.” One pastor said, “In my entire 14 years in the ministry, I had only one request from a bride-to-be not to use the word ‘obey.’” Quere notes the pastor saw that as due to “the influence of the women’s lib movement” (32). This promise to “obey” by the bride was eventually kept in the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod’s marriage liturgy. Buried in the *Ministers Edition of LBW*, one of the suggested vows puts “obey” in brackets but here the implication is that *both* bride and groom would promise obedience to each other. Here and elsewhere Quere shows how single words or phrases echo deep societal and cultural commitments that still divide our contemporary American society, as witnessed in a *New York Times* article entitled: “Lutherans no longer require brides to be given by fathers” (33).

ALC and LCMS review groups both suggested the third stanza of “Once to every man and nation,” be omitted because “there are ‘no new Calvaries’ (not to mention no new Messiahs)” (129). These many detailed examples provide fascinating insights into the process of making a worship book that unifies yet also serves diversity, and demonstrate the care that went into the final revision and selection process.

Two quotes at the end of the book conclude that “the ‘new’ book will not solve our liturgical problems.” No new book will do that, either. Rather, Quere says at the end of his book: “It will not hurt to reiterate in this history of liturgies, the final warning of the Augsburg Confession: ‘We obtain grace through faith in Christ, and not through certain observances or acts of worship insti-

tuted by men.’ Worship is God’s gracious address to us which faith answers in prayer, praise and thanksgiving. The sacramental and sacrificial in worship may not be so neatly divided as some theologians wish, yet God’s Word has the priority and the initiative” (251).

Gene Brand, ILCW project director, pointed to a theme that has increasingly been emphasized as congregations have used LBW. “He pointed out the other danger of compartmentalizing God’s action in church and our action the rest of the week. Brand said that ‘a context of vital *diaconia* and vital *martyria*’ is needed if ILCW is ‘truly to succeed in its goal of vital worship’” (81). That continues to be a test for any worship resource.

LBW has served as the major worship resource for ELCA Lutherans for twenty-seven years. This detailed history of its complex development can help all of us think more thoughtfully and thankfully of how LBW and past worship books have passed on the grand tradition of worship that embodies the two-thousand-year gracious conversation between God and God’s people that we call the Christian liturgy. It helps us see the continuity and unity that any new worship resource provides, because any new book will really be an “old new book” in that the basic structure, content, and forms will still be visible in the next generation of resources.

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**LET THE PEOPLE SING: HYMN TUNES
IN PERSPECTIVE**, by Paul Westermeyer. Chicago: GIA Publications, 2005. Pp. 459. \$39.95 (cloth).

There have been numerous survey texts on Christian hymnody throughout the last fifty years. But, few have succeeded in giving pastors and church music practitioners a resource that integrates solid research with a contextual framework for the church’s hymnological tradition. Paul Westermeyer

gives us a basic and accessible text on the trends in hymnody and their historical context. His goal is “to help us make good choices based on what the Church has learned....help us isolate what tunes seem to work best for congregational song, make it most healthy, and [expose those hymns that] deserve to be sung and used as models” (395).

The chapter layout of *Let the People Sing* is mostly chronological (starting with “The Oldest Tunes and Congregational Song” and ending with “Twentieth-Century Tunes”). Within the chapters, specific hymns throughout time (and most prevalent in fourteen North American hymnals Westermeyer surveyed) are discussed both in general terms and analytically. To render the musical analyses more intelligible, musical notation is included for each hymn. Very helpful are the dark boxes in every chapter that set out key issues in hymnody. The closing chapter titled “Perspective” ultimately offers an overview of the entire text, perhaps best read first.

Westermeyer is not afraid as a hymnologist and church music scholar to speak the truth about the theological underpinnings of various styles and genres nor does he hold back when addressing the musical and liturgical crisis in today’s churches. A discussion of the praise chorus, for example, a related but very different genre to the hymn, makes this evident: “[The praise chorus is] conceived as throwaway entertainment meant to attract, in a musical syntax for praise teams to sing and play with amplification....This is not congregational music....Its amplification alone...discourages congregational singing, and it does not have traction across an ecumenical spectrum of congregations who actually sing them” (393). Westermeyer’s section on gospel hymnody is frank and seldom seen in theological or church music literature (389):

It is even more convoluted when white congregations sing black spirituals as entertaining “fun” songs without meaning, then add applause as if worship were a show. This is not only a white temptation. Blacks have done as well as whites at turn-

ing their worship into commercial and profitable enterprise....The prophetic cry of Amos is not far away. (291)

The theological competence of the author can best be seen in his definition of the hymn as an embodiment of the priesthood of all believers (395) and in his comparison of Lutheran and Calvinist hymn traditions that cuts to hidden layers of truth: “The former fits a community that is not sure there is a third use of the law, while the latter expresses the third ‘and principal’ use of the law in sonic form” (86). Beyond its theological usefulness, this volume would be helpful to the parish pastor on several practical levels:

1. As a survey of hymnody, something missing in most seminary curricula.
2. As an aid that helps define what hymnody is as distinguished from cliché imitations (i.e., praise choruses, camp songs, etc.). In an age that labels all music in worship as “song” (a term understood by the musical world as an accompanied solo piece), this book brings the clarity to genres and their differences that the church desperately needs to recover.
3. As a solid resource when hymnological notes are included in the church bulletin or newsletter.
4. As a basis for adult Sunday school classes.
5. As a recommended text to the amateur church musician.

A few things that could be improved by Westermeyer need to be mentioned even if they do not outweigh the positive aspects of this book. First, there are several occasions where the author could be more helpful in pointing the reader to primary source material (e.g., 205, n. 15). In one instance, Westermeyer even quotes the English poet Robert Bridges from a secondary source (169, n. 42). Second, Westermeyer’s theological language, “Word, font and table” (395, and elsewhere), while it is very trendy in modern theological discourse, is overused and could be amended with more traditional wording to reflect the sacramental heritage of most of the book’s readers. “Word and sacrament” would serve this

purpose well. Third, the occasional language of musical and form analysis such as “phrygian half cadence” (70) and “second inversion tonic” (154) could cause problems for musically untrained readers. But, this could be remedied easily by consulting a professional musician or music theory text when the language is above the competence of the reader.

Paul Westermeyer (PhD, University of Chicago; MSM, Union Theological Seminary; and MDiv, Lancaster Theological Seminary) is a Lutheran pastor (ELCA) and directs the master of sacred music program at Luther Seminary, the only program of its kind in an American Lutheran seminary. His position and competence make him the most suitable person to write this book. While *Let the People Sing* contributes nothing new or original to the fields of hymnology or theology, it does provide the church with a new textbook on hymnody for students of church music and worship. It also gives pastors a tool by which they can better understand and educate others in the great

hymnological heritage of the church. Above all, this book’s valuable reminder to the faithful is that the church’s hymnody helps them to live out their priestly role in the world as the baptized people of God.

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THE TEACHING MINISTRY OF CONGREGATIONS, by Richard Robert Osmer. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2005. Pp. 347. \$29.95 (paper).

In *The Teaching Ministry of Congregations*, Richard Osmer, Thomas W. Synott Professor of Christian Education at Princeton Theological Seminary, lays out a rich and multifaceted understanding of the teaching ministry of local congregations. Osmer chooses to see this work not as a text in religious or Christian education, but rather as a practical theological examination of the teaching ministry of the local

congregation. He adopts this broad vision for two reasons. First, he believes, it opens up his work to richer cross-disciplinary and interdisciplinary conversations (a promise this book keeps). Second, and even more important to Osmer, such a perspective demands deeper theological reflection. He therefore takes a bold step in this project to envision the teaching ministry of the church not from the category of local educational expert, but local practical theologian. He explains that “practical theology is that branch of Christian theology that seeks to construct action-guiding theories of Christian praxis in particular social contexts” (xiv). This means that while the practical theologian does focus on issues of “how to” (e.g., how to teach a class, preach a sermon, raise children, reach out in mission to the world, etc.), the practical theologian also importantly attends to issues of “why to” (e.g., what is the reason for us doing this or that practice “in light of an interpretation of a particular social context and the normative claims of the Christian community”? [xiv]).

In the book’s first chapters Osmer examines Paul’s letters to discern the apostle’s teaching ministry. He comes to suggest that there are three central elements to Paul’s teaching ministry, which he calls *Catechesis* (handing on Israel’s Scriptures and the early Christian tradition), *Exhortation* (moral formation), and *Discernment* (teaching congregations how to understand their context and the world in relation to God’s promised future). Osmer believes that these three central elements should rest as the cornerstones of the teaching ministry of congregations.

In the spirit of his practical theological ambitions Osmer looks to test the legitimacy of these normative claims by explicating what is happening within congregational life, using a number of distinct disciplines to describe and interpret his findings. Here, in part two, Osmer researches three congregations (Somang Presbyterian in Seoul, Korea; Nassau Presbyterian in Princeton, New Jersey; and The Uniting Reformed Church of Stellenbosch,

South Africa) to examine if and how the three central elements of the teaching ministry are at work. Using a multiple disciplinary lens to examine these congregations, Osmer not only discusses how they are providing their members with identity and purpose, but also how that identity and purpose is engendered from the congregations’ theological commitments. Osmer looks at each congregation through what he calls multiple “frames,” discerning unique dimensions of each congregation’s teaching ministry. In the end Osmer finds the three central elements of catechesis, exhortation, and discernment present in each congregation.

In part three of the work, Osmer takes what he has learned from his biblical exegesis and qualitative research to discuss how the teaching ministry of congregations (catechesis, exhortation, discernment) can participate in what he calls the “Theodrama of the triune God.” In dialogue with Jürgen Moltmann, Osmer explores how the teaching ministry can participate in God’s ministry of creating, redeeming, and glorifying God’s creation. It is in this section that Osmer (with the help of Moltmann) reimagines Calvin’s doctrine of *Munus Triplex* (prophet, priest, and king) by adding two new dimensions of “transfiguration” and “open friendship.” Taking Calvin’s doctrine as updated by Moltmann, Osmer connects these now five offices of Christ with the five traditional practices of the church (e.g., Christ’s prophetic office with *Marturia* and open friendship with *Koinonia*). He then takes these even deeper, extrapolating three core practices under each traditional practice (e.g., under *Marturia* he places preaching, testimony, and evangelism, and under *Koinonia*, baptism, affirmation of gifts, and hospitality). By embedding the practices of the church in the person of Jesus Christ (and his continuing ministry, *Christopraxis*) Osmer offers an imaginative way of placing the practices of the church in rich theological soil. This, from my opinion, is one of the important contributions of this work.

In the final three chapters Osmer con-

cludes his practical theological method with a chapter on each of the three central elements of the teaching ministry (catechesis, exhortation, discernment), offering theory-laden models and methods to help guide the reader in the teaching ministry of his or her own congregation.

In *The Teaching Ministry of Congregations* Richard Osmer provides the church with a deeply rigorous interdisciplinary practical theology. It is a text that calls for attentive study both because of its rich scholarly content and its potential to cast a deeper vision for education in our congregations. The reader should beware, however, that this not a leisurely read—this is not a book to be read while lying on the beach or in a busy room; rather, this text demands the reader give it his or her full attention. If the reader does, the rewards are great.

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BLESSED WITH TOURISTS: THE BORDERLANDS OF RELIGION AND TOURISM IN SAN ANTONIO, by Thomas S. Bremer. University of North Carolina Press, 2004. Pp. 207. \$19.95 (paper).

I am one of those who think reading about a place and going on a tour there are the same thing. So I usually combine the pleasure by going places and reading books about them. Not only do you double the pleasure and engagement with the place; it's also a useful activity to peruse the bookshelves of tourist sites and museums, because it usually tells you what kinds of books the tourists are buying in these places, and what kind of picture those who manage the monuments and attractions have of themselves.

So it was with some surprise that I came across Thomas Bremer's book in the gift shop of Mission San José, one of the missions of the San Antonio Missions National Historical Park. The book represents a level

of self-awareness (not to mention academic press-ishness) often absent from tourist and historical site alike. Both are usually so focused on lauding the place they are in that they do little analysis of the being-there of being there.

Bremer's book is an examination of the intersection and relationship between tourism and religion in America, with a special focus on the history of religious and tourist life in San Antonio. In his introduction, Bremer identifies four aspects of tourism that bear a close resemblance to lived religion: (1) the "sacralization" of space, (2) the creation or narration of identity through these sacralized spaces, (3) the aestheticization of the world by those whose identity is formed through these spaces, and (4) the inevitable commercialization of these places.

San Antonio is an especially fruitful place to study the interplay of religion and tourism because the major tourist attractions in San Antonio are and were missions, and continue to function as religious sites for many Catholics yet today. In fact, although the Alamo is an icon of American history (one might say a mecca for American civil religion), the San Antonio Missions are managed by the National Park Service *in cooperation with* the Roman Catholic Church. Relationship between religion and tourism indeed.

Although the book is classified as a work on tourism, and appears to be a sociological analysis of tourism in San Antonio, it is actually a history of San Antonio told as a history of tourism in San Antonio. Bremer makes a compelling case for his claim that the history of San Antonio is shaped by the phenomenon of itinerancy, travel, and tourism. Whether it was Fray Massanet, the head of the Spanish colonial expedition sent to the northern border of Spain's colonies, or the indigenous peoples who traveled—and periodically settled—in the area, all those who have lived there bear witness to the fact that itinerancy has been the norm. San Antonio has been "touristic" since its inception. The fact that modern San Antonio is a major tourist and convention center

destination simply further substantiates this claim.

The historical sites now preserved in San Antonio have, over the decades, experienced periods of neglect and restoration. For example, San Antonio as we know it today is the location of one of our nation's "sacred ruins," the Alamo. Not long after the famous battle waged there, tourists flocked to the mission and tromped all over it, giving little thought to its continued survival and preservation. Today, preservation and management of the site is much improved, even if certain attempts at preservation have themselves been less than historically faithful.

Furthermore, the Alamo's function as a tourist site has been a mixed blessing. Does it honor the courage and self-sacrifice of the Texans and Americans who fought there? Yes. Does its preservation as an interpretive site for the battle of the Alamo reinforce a certain racism against those who settled there, and cover up the history of slavery in the area? Yes again.

Furthermore, the Alamo is now sacred because it is sacred. It is a popular tourist destination because it is a popular tourist destination. Chapter three of Bremer's book is a brief history of the preservation efforts undertaken by church leaders, artists, and residents of San Antonio. Again, the history is mixed. At times the preservation resulted in restorations of buildings and facilities to historically inaccurate "replicas." Reconstructionism rather than restoration. At other times, projects really did preserve buildings that were on the verge of falling into ruin, and some projects have resulted in the missions once again being used for one of their original purposes, worship.

This last phenomenon exhibits the kind of synergy Bremer is examining: "As a cultural resource, the living parishes at the park contribute to the production of a civic space in which a national identity can be narrated. But as dynamic communities of worship, they produce their own spaces of sacramental practices at the missions. The inhabitants of these two sets of spaces, the civic and the sacramental, share the mis-

sions—sometimes harmoniously, sometimes in conflict, often quietly disregarding one another" (118). Tourism and religion sometimes share space by making and sacralizing the same space in different ways. At other times, the two overlap to such a degree that tourism and religious observation become virtually indistinguishable.

This book will be of interest to all students of American church history, especially those interested in examining how the very narration of America's religious history contributes to the formation of a culture and continued historical narrative. Bremer's book is faithful to the complexity of this phenomenon, and his book, though specialized in content, should appeal to a broad readership.

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THE BONHOEFFER LEGACY: POST-HOLOCAUST PERSPECTIVES, by Stephen R. Haynes. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2006. Pp. 224. \$22.00 (paper).

In his preface to *The Bonhoeffer Legacy*, Stephen Haynes states that "the present study focuses on one aspect of the Bonhoeffer legacy—its relevance for Christian understandings of Jews, Judaism, and Christian-Jewish relations" (xi). This second book is a sequel to *The Bonhoeffer Phenomenon: Portraits of a Protestant Saint* (2004, Fortress Press) that was a "meta-analysis of Bonhoeffer's reception over time." "The premise of this (second) book is that while the Bonhoeffer legacy contains real significance for post-Holocaust Christianity, this has been neither fully explored nor accurately described. Among the reasons for this are superficial reading, hopeful interpretation, and overactive speculation." With these comments, Haynes launches into a groundbreaking exercise that is contextual, critical, and constructive.

Haynes is all too aware that the malignancy of anti-Judaism that contributed so

significantly to the church's (lack of) response to the Nazi horror of the twentieth century still exists in the life, teachings, and witness of the church in the twenty-first century. As a scholar who has also focused on the words and witness of Dietrich Bonhoeffer for nearly two decades, Haynes knows the "persistent ambivalence" (105) in Bonhoeffer's legacy, a legacy rich with both solidarity with Jews and scrutiny of Judaism. Haynes shares in *The Bonhoeffer Legacy* what Rabbi James Rudin has described as "the ambivalences, ambiguities and complexities" (xv) of Bonhoeffer's legacy regarding Jews and Judaism. It is a book discomfiting to both uncritical adulators and unsympathetic critics of Dietrich Bonhoeffer; in Haynes's work both groups will be challenged to be critical and sympathetic.

Stephen Haynes has succeeded in contextualizing the life and theology of Dietrich Bonhoeffer with regard to Jews and Judaism. He is self-consciously "post-Holocaust" in

his awareness, yet he labors to preserve Bonhoeffer's *Sitz im Leben* of Nazi Germany with all its attendant "ambivalences, ambiguities, and complexities." Haynes details elements of the context of Bonhoeffer's life (inherited views of Jews and Judaism, "Witness Myth" theology, the German Church Struggle, and Nazi racial ideology, to name only four) for the purpose of understanding his (Bonhoeffer's) early and later writings that are problematic when seen from a "post-Holocaust perspective." In "The Church and the Jewish Question," from April 1933, like the *Bethel Confession* of the same year, we hear words of Bonhoeffer about Jews and Judaism that today sound dangerously anti-Judaic and troublesome for open conversation between Christians and Jews. Haynes accurately contextualizes these essays so that readers can appreciate the "ambivalences, ambiguities, and complexities" of Bonhoeffer's setting and sentiments. While not removing the problematic nature of the utterances

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(post-Holocaust), Haynes offers a sympathetic solidarity given the situation. Likewise, in moving to Bonhoeffer's later writings (*Ethics and Letters and Papers from Prison*), Haynes keeps alive Bonhoeffer's theological struggle with Judaism (*vis-à-vis* a Christ-centered view of reality), while attentive to some evolution and affirmation of Israel's covenant with God *per se*. Here we are well served to remember a post-modern concern that truth is always discovered/lived within a particular context. Haynes has succeeded in contextualizing the life and theology of Dietrich Bonhoeffer with regard to Jews and Judaism.

Second, one can observe in *The Bonhoeffer Legacy* a critical edge of great significance. Haynes is aware of, and details in chapter one, "Bonhoeffer and the Jews in Popular Memory," the ways Bonhoeffer's witness has been received. Rhetorically he asks, "Who are we to find fault with a man who sacrificed himself in the struggle against tyranny and hate, and who undertook a variety of courageous deeds on behalf of the Jewish victims of Nazism?" (xii). Yet—and perhaps it took these sixty years since Bonhoeffer's death—there comes a time when critically assessing what he said becomes necessary for the sake of the future and in the name of truth-telling. Bonhoeffer's sacrifice of life need ever remain a deed worthy of our highest respect; his reflections and writings need always to be open for critique and construction. Haynes, while keenly aware of the context out of which Bonhoeffer's words arise, moves ahead to critically assess their relevance and limitation for post-Holocaust Christian self-understanding and Jewish-Christian conversation. He offers a critical edge of great significance.

Finally, and cautiously, one can detect constructive elements from *The Bonhoeffer Legacy* for a post-Holocaust perspective. It is clear to any reader that no pages or chapters are devoted to particular, concrete ways that Bonhoeffer's words or witness might contribute to a truly post-Holocaust reconstruction of Christian theology regarding Jews and Judaism. Bonhoeffer struggled to understand the legitimate place for God's Israel in a world re-constituted in Jesus Christ, but he did not resolve the issue in a way now being envisioned by post-Holocaust Christian theologians. The theological supercessionism Bonhoeffer inherited as a Lutheran Christian never fully found its way out of his worldview. Stephen Haynes wants the church to honor Dietrich Bonhoeffer most by going "Beyond Bonhoeffer." "One way post-Holocaust Christians must surpass Bonhoeffer is in their willingness to engage Jews and Judaism on their own terms" (147). Haynes would say that any truly constructive use of Bonhoeffer begins with honestly contextualizing and humbly criticizing those things that reveal Bonhoeffer's humanity . . . good, bad, and ugly.

Subsequent works on Bonhoeffer's relevance for Christian-Jewish relations will refine particular aspects here only briefly mentioned. Yet, Stephen Haynes has certainly made the case that "ambivalences, ambiguities, and complexities" are elements of any significant encounter with the truth. Dietrich Bonhoeffer is an example of a dynamic encounter with the truth.

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