

# Reviews



**ARCHAEOLOGY AND THE GALILEAN JESUS: A REEXAMINATION OF THE EVIDENCE**, by Jonathan L. Reed. Harrisburg, PA: Trinity, 2000. Pp. 256. \$30.00 (cloth).

Much has been written in recent years about how to characterize the precise relationship of Judaism and Hellenism in the first century B.C.E. and further about how that shapes and is reflected in early Christian literature, particularly that of the New Testament. A generation ago J. N. Sevenster asked, *Do you know Greek; How Much Greek Could the First Jewish Christians Have Known?* (Brill, 1968). More than once a similar question has surfaced from students in classes with a bit more focus: Did Jesus know or speak Greek? One could say that the agenda of this fascinating book by J. L. Reed is to address these questions with specific focus on the region of Galilee. What was the shape of the contemporary social context of Jesus' Galilee and to what extent did Jesus and his ministry fit with that environment? Thus this book joins the vast literature of contemporary historical Jesus research, but is refreshing in that it does so from a quite different vantage point than most—namely from the perspective of the contributions of archaeological research on Galilee.

Such contributions and the questions and disputes they have raised about the social context of Galilee have been especially focused by archaeological excavations at ancient Sepphoris, described by Josephus as the "ornament of Galilee," and situated about an hour's walk from Jesus' home town of Nazareth. With evidence of both

Jewish and Greco-Roman culture, the questions have naturally arisen as to which of these dominated at the time of Jesus. If Greco-Roman, does it seem likely that Jesus would not have known or been influenced by the culture of this apparently cosmopolitan settlement situated so centrally in the geography of Galilee? (For a recent rehearsal of these questions and arguments, see the issue "Spotlight on Sepphoris" in *Biblical Archaeology Review* 26:4 [July/August, 2000]).

While noting the contributions of previous historical Jesus research, Reed, who is co-director of the Sepphoris Acropolis Excavations, argues that historical Jesus research today must be bifocal. Such an approach to historical Jesus research focuses not so directly or uniquely on written texts, as has been so much the case with much New Testament literary interpretive work, but offers the alternative focus of the interpretation of Jesus within his social environment. Reed argues that it is the particular contribution of archaeology that it is able to provide data and methodology for the reconstruction of this social world (8). As Reed puts it:

These studies put the archaeological evidence front and center by synthesizing the available material, and then interpreting the material culture of first-century Galilee in such a way as to suggest some implications for Jesus and the Gospels. (xi)

This study first and foremost presents what we can learn about the social world of Galilee in the first century B.C.E. from recent archaeological investigations. Then, secondarily, it suggests some implications for historical Jesus research and the under-

standing of early Christian literature within that social context.

After an introductory chapter that makes this case for the important contribution of archaeology to historical Jesus research by its ability to reconstruct his social world, the remainder of the work presents a series of studies divided into three parts. Part one provides a broad overview of first-century Galilee, showing how its settlement history and material culture relate to the inhabitants' essentially Jewish ethnicity and religion, and then further sketches the effects of Herod Antipas's urbanization of Galilee in the early first century on demographics, agricultural production, land-holding patterns, and thus on the upper and lower classes. Part two focuses this more general study with a more detailed description of what archaeological research teaches us about the "city" of Sepphoris in comparison to the "village" of Capernaum.

That Jesus was more closely tied to the latter, a modest Jewish village on the fringe of Herod Antipas' territory, rather than the former, a wealthier, somewhat Hellenized yet still Jewish city, and the seat of political power, is illustrative of Jesus' social-economic class and original audience. (213)

With this picture provided by archaeological research in the background, part three then turns attention to examination of specific gospel texts, specifically the Sayings Gospel Q, seeking to show how these sayings fit with the Galilean social context thus far outlined.

The socio-economic and religious context for Jesus' teaching and for the essential message preserved in the early Gospel layers is the same, a point that helps bridge the gap between Jesus and the Jesus traditions. (213)

The picture that emerges for Galilee in the early first century is one of an essentially Jewish character shared with Judea. Thinly populated in the late second century B.C.E., Galilee saw an expansion in settlement under Hasmonean rule by settlers whose Jew-

ish material culture is evident in excavated data, as Reed stresses, of stone vessels, *miqwaoth* or ritual baths, burials in *kokhim* shafts with ossuaries, and diet in which pork is absent (217). It is with this culture and with the demographic and social-economic stresses created by the new urbanization under Herod Antipas that Jesus' essentially "prophetic critique" resonates (220).

This is a fascinating book to read, in part because of its different approach, but also because of the specificity of the archaeological data regarding public and private spaces, settlement patterns and population densities, and comparative levels of urbanization in Galilee. In parts it reads like a detective novel as it unfolds the evidence. It will of course appeal to the archaeology buff, but it will also probably lend some surprises to traditional conceptions about the geography, demography, and social context of Galilee at the time of Jesus. By its use of archaeology to reconstruct the environment of Galilee and the setting of the ministry of Jesus and his followers, this volume does not allow the agenda to be set first or last by the New Testament texts—and so it avoids questions of creed or canon or theology for the most part. Nevertheless, it does set the stage for a rethinking of the particular social setting against which those questions need to be set even in careful reading and interpretation of those texts.

The reader might find it helpful to begin by reading the more general material—chapters one and eight which outline and summarize the overall argument—and then follow with the more particular data and argumentation of the chapters in between. Though there is a table of abbreviations and an impressive bibliography, some more gracious help for the non-technical reader might be helpful. For example, there is no indication that in the numerous citations of sayings from Q the texts are cited according to their Lukan versification.

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**GOD FOR A SECULAR SOCIETY: THE PUBLIC RELEVANCE OF THEOLOGY**, by Jürgen Moltmann. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1999. Pp. 304. \$20.00 (paper).

This volume collects essays on various topics, all of which Moltmann wrote in the 1990s, and addresses the following broad issues: (1) the relationship between theology and politics, (2) theology in light of the changing values of the modern world, and (3) the relation between theology and religion. While these essays deal with the themes of political, liberation, and ecological theology that we expect of Moltmann, they also further his thinking by opening some important new areas of theological inquiry. These new areas include the following: (1) engaging political theory and not merely practice by tackling the Hobbesian rejection of covenantal theology, (2) recovering “slowness” as an antidote to our fast-paced, western “lifestyles,” (3) seeking divine ecology as a “sabbath for the earth,” (4) affirming the rights of the earth in opposition to human tendencies to favor themselves, (5) acknowledging the “other” as the basis for establishing a community of diversity, (6) questioning God’s almighty in light of Auschwitz, (7) moving the church beyond the fundamentalism and modernism debate, (8) investigating the nature of inter-religious dialogue, and (9) properly positioning the role of theology in the modern university. In all these essays, Moltmann consistently maintains his theological acumen and projects a refreshing prophetic vision.

The thread uniting all these essays is a concern for what it means for theology to be public. Moltmann maintains that a public theology “thinks about what is of general concern in the light of hope in Christ for the kingdom of God. It becomes political in the name of the poor and the marginalized in a given society. But it refuses to fall into the modern trap of pluralism, where it is supposed to be reduced to its particular sphere and limited to its own religious society” (1).

So, the task of theology includes one of merciless and relentless critique. It relentlessly and conscientiously critiques human domination and ambition over others and the earth for the sake of their perceived self-interest. In these essays, Moltmann particularly wishes to criticize modern western Christianity’s alliance with technology and its boundary-less abuse of the planet. For example, Christianity’s alignment with the “triumphant march of science and technology” confers on Christianity “the status of being the religion of the triumphant god” (8). Indeed, the current destruction of nature is an expression of a faulty human will to dominate (15, 97). The American “messianic” impulse both to conquer nature and to preserve the world for democracy can be seen as grounded in a triumphalistic approach to religion (9). Yet, this western standard of living can only be sustained at the expense of coming generations, the earth, and the needs of the people of the Third World (93). Hence, human expansionism is always a result of modern anthropocentrism (22), which has become entrenched in and promoted by much of Christianity. Furthermore, modern western humanity is unable to find its home in the earth as it has been created by God, and as it ought to be received. Increasingly we cannot accept even fundamental givens of our existence. Moltmann concludes that for modern western people, “[n]othing must be ‘just fate,’ not even a person’s gender” (85). Hence, Moltmann prophetically unmasks reason as not innocent with regard to human “interest.” It is a tool of domination over the world. He also points out that our culture has lost its *telos*: “[w]e no longer know where the project of the modern world is taking us. That is the ‘crisis of orientation’ which is so often invoked” (17).

However, for Moltmann, the theological task is not only one of critique, but also affirmation. In defense of political theology and in response to its critics, Moltmann contends that political theology “has no desire to politicize the church...its aim is to Christianize the political existence of the

churches and of Christians, and to do so by applying the yardstick of the discipleship shown us in the Sermon on the Mount" (44). Indeed, Moltmann notes that "[l]iberation from violence, brutality and poverty remains the theme of every practical theology and every theological praxis" (69). While focusing on the need for theology to contextualize itself, he claims that theology as such is inherently universal, and therefore "must be taken seriously everywhere" (59). Hence, it would seem that Moltmann tends to pit some modern values against others. We should affirm human dignity, but not human expansionism. We should affirm human equality along with a kind of equality for the earth, but not human exploitation. In light of the gospel, Moltmann rightly counters the Renaissance supposition still maintained today that humanity is the measure of all things (22). However, it is not clear how for Moltmann we can affirm both the need to expand the perimeters of human rights for wider circles of humans and the need to honor the earth for its own sake. With an increasing human population and "late capitalism's" technological "advancement" still raging, it is hard to see how the earth cannot help but be slighted.

Moltmann's work continues to remain vital and relevant since progress over the last several decades has been slow in the concerns he raises. While liberationist critique is upheld by many, there has been little impact on the wider economic systems, with the result that the earth's ecology is increasingly threatened, and Third World peoples are still to be found in debt, poverty, and malnutrition. Moltmann challenges the rampant, unabated materialism of America and Europe. With these essays, Moltmann maintains his nearly four-decade commitment to the view that the future is the locus of the human hope for peace and justice on earth. Indeed, it is through these structures that we must seek to cooperate with God's Spirit if we would be faithful to God's will today. Moltmann wishes to continue a cross-informed perspective on culture. God is coming, in his

view, not in our power, but in our suffering (18). Here we have not a "misery loves company" approach to theology, but one where God accompanies us in our pain in order to raise us from the dead.

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**THE RAGING HEARTH: SPIRIT IN THE HOUSEHOLD OF GOD**, by Nancy M. Victorin-Vangerud. St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2000. Pp. 220. \$27.99 (paper).

Economy, ecology, and ecumenical—all from the Greek word for household—are three intertwining English words fraught with conflict. I have enthusiastically commended this book on the Spirit in the household of God to students for its radical view of how the Spirit calls, gathers, enlightens—and transforms—the church.

It begins with a case study of the household of faith called the World Council of Churches which—in 1991 at Canberra, Australia—met around the theme, "Come Holy Spirit, Renew Your Whole Creation." In her major address, Chung Hyun Kyung, a theologian from Korea, incorporated Aboriginal fire-dancing, drumming, and music. She told the assembly they were on the holy ground of the Aboriginal people, and then gave this challenge: "Let us listen to the cries of creation and the cries of the Spirit within it" (10). The whole assembly erupted and the delegates were divided.

Some called it a holy moment, a Pentecost experience; others accused her of syncretism, paganism, and apostasy. Orthodox members charged that she had gone beyond the "limits of diversity." Evangelicals said she had neglected "the confession of the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Savior according to Scripture." The Spirit can set the household of faith on fire with controversy, conflict, and division.

The view in this book is that the Spirit brings conflict that should not be avoided. The "turn to the Spirit" in this book has

three elements. First, the traditional language of Spirit and church assumed a classical patriarchal view of the family, and then used it as the norm for the church as the household of God. Second, this view of the family and church structure implies that male-rule has divine sanction, and is the basis for an economy of domination in which the many are ruled by the One, so that, in the end, church unity depends on the obedience of the many to the One. Third, the book proposes an egalitarian model of family in which “Spirit language functions to differentiate, yet unite, household members in relations of mutual recognition” (41). The turn to the Spirit is a radical re-ordering of relationships, from patriarchy to mutuality.

The so-called “traditional family” endured little more than a century. In its short-lived form of family the male was the “good provider,” the female was the “good wife and mother,” and the chief role of the family was for child rearing. Instead of “family values” (which is code for the male-ruled nuclear family), the author says she “values families” in all sorts of forms. There is no “static, timeless, and universal conception of family structures.” The short-lived ideal called the “traditional family” is inherently a form that has enforced inequality, and has concealed the ugly fact of widespread family violence. A paradigm shift is underway from the model of headship to models of mutuality in which family members are empowered “to live toward relations of equal regard, shared authority, and diversity” (65).

The classical Greco-Roman ideal of the patriarchal family was imported into the church, and mirrored in church life as divinely authorized. Victorin-Vangerud’s biblical and historical scholarship argues that patriarchal power structures have suppressed counter themes in the Bible and counter themes in interpretations of doctrine. These counter themes came into view with twentieth-century domestic revolution and corresponding church revolution. “Women’s ordination, the enfranchise-

ment of the laity, and a new sense of church mission in relation to secular society have forced not only renovations, but new foundations for the household of God. The democratization of churches, mirroring the democratization of families, challenges male headship patterns and provides new models of Christian community” (68).

In the old model the Spirit “played the role of maintaining order, consolidating unity, and conforming the will of the [many] human[s] to the will of the divine Head (and ‘His’ representative).” In the new trinitarian model, rather than a straight-line order from above to below, the “values of equal regard, shared authority, proper trust and diversity-in-unity” will inspire “congregations that will embody these values in ministries, families, neighborhoods and beyond” (88).

The “family values in the ancient Mediterranean world” were based on Aristotle’s theories of households and civil society, and depended on honor and shame to keep order. In contrast, first-century “house churches” were egalitarian, Spirit-empowered communities. Eventually, these gave way to “conventional patriarchal patterns of governance. In this process, the charismatic gifts of church household members are sacrificed for exclusive institutional offices.” The household of God became “kyriocentric” or master-centered, accompanied by a “corresponding shift in the way Spirit language functions” (118-119).

In master-centered households/congregations, the Spirit is domesticated and controlled and is made to serve the interests of the one (or few) over the many. Victorin-Vangerud poses this question as the guide toward her constructive proposal. “Is it possible to re-imagine God, our world, and God’s relation to the world according to the values of mutual recognition, dignity, reconciliation, partnership, and justice? Is it possible to embody a discipleship of equals, a community of multiple heads and multiple wills, rather than One Head and One Will?” (140).

The shift to trinitarian pneumatology

obliges Victorin-Vangerud to anticipate the charge that she, like Chung Hyun Kyung, is neglecting Christology. Her counter charge is that Christology has often been Christolatry, in which the maleness of Jesus validates the male as the norm or ideal of being human, and the female as a deficient human. Women's theological work, therefore, has focused on re-visioning Christology, from oppressive to liberating understandings. Patriarchal Christologies favor views of Jesus as a highly individualized heroic figure, whose relationships were incidental and not essential to his identity. This is the "model of the prophetic-iconoclastic Christ" and pictures Jesus almost like a Rambo figure beholden only to his own divinely sanctioned and lonely role, a divine "Lone Ranger." Instead of "individualistic self-hood" as the model for the reality of Christ, she favors "the profound reality of relationality." If the Christian message is to offer an effective vision of salvation, "relationship and community must become the 'whole-making, healing center of Christianity'" (178). By recovering a trinitarian doctrine of the Spirit, Victorin-Vangerud can propose a fresh way of speaking of God's relation to the world.

The social analogy of the Trinity ("the one God enjoys a trinitarian existence") has been important to feminist/maternal ways of thinking. From women's experience, there emerges a different conception of God's way of living and ruling in the world. The stress is on the relational qualities within God, as well as among individuals in the world who are constituted by relationships. Trinitarian thought de-centers the idealized autonomous, rugged individual. "Pneumatology becomes the key for sustaining the mystery of the Triune community within the social, interdependent life of this world" (185).

In this provocative study, diversity is the Spirit's way of de-centering the tyranny of the One over the Many. The vitality of the Many is the Spirit's antidote to the "poisonous pneumatology of domination." Following Hegel, the great philosopher of the

Spirit, we are led to think of the Spirit as the We of the Many who are different and yet One in mutual recognition.

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**AT THE ORIGINS OF CHRISTIAN WORSHIP: THE CONTEXT AND CHARACTER OF EARLIEST CHRISTIAN DEVOTION**, by Larry W. Hurtado. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000. Pp. 138. \$16.00 (paper).

For two decades, Larry Hurtado has devoted himself to the study of the origins of Christian worship. In this brief book, he reviews the findings of his research and presents them to the reader in a clear and useful manner. His first objective is to place the growth of the Christian movement in the context of the first-century Roman world, giving special attention to the ambient religious culture. Second, Hurtado identifies the distinctive features that set Christianity off from its religious surroundings. Finally, he seeks to draw implications from what we know of earliest Christian worship for the shape and theology of worship today. This book provides a brief, but fascinating glimpse into the world of Roman civil and religious culture and the life of the early Christian church.

The first of the book's four chapters presents a first-century sketch of the religious life of Roman culture outside Palestine. The society is revealed as a deeply religious one in which it was common for the citizenry to be highly involved in varieties of religious activity. The menu of deities to be worshiped and opportunities for pagan devotion were, as Hurtado puts it, "dizzying." "Earliest Christian faith did not represent religiousness over against irreligious culture, but had to enter the 'traffic' as a new movement on a very crowded and well-traveled highway of religious activity" (7). The author's fascinating claim is that Christianity represented what would have been

considered an odd religious option for Romans: it was monotheistic, austere, and exclusive.

The distinctive features of first-century Christian worship are described in the second chapter. Hurtado identifies it as home-based, with an emphasis on intimacy, egalitarian participation, fervor, and strong expectation of divine presence. The way this chapter answers the question of religious competition is of particular interest: If Christianity were oddly monotheistic and its places of worship and ceremonies were simple and plain, what did it offer the adherent that could compete with the vast, celebrative ceremonies of other religions?

The discussion of the character of early Christian worship takes a new tack in the third chapter. Here, Hurtado argues that first-century Christianity was monotheistic, but not in an expected trinitarian formulation. He contends that it had a distinctly “binitarian shape,” principally emphasizing the notion of God as Father and Son. Although early Christians understood the Holy Spirit to be an agent of divine power, the author explains, “in the earliest observable stages of Christian worship in the New Testament, devotion is offered to God the Father and to (and through) Jesus” (63). Though the argument represents a departure from common assumptions, it usefully suggests a corrective for modern modes of devotion which blur the identities of the persons of the Trinity.

Pursuit of such correctives is undertaken in the final chapter. Here, Hurtado offers historically based reflections on modern Christian worship. For pastors and worship leaders who wonder if there is anything normative or instructive for modern worship that derives from the practice of the early church, Hurtado offers several observations. The first deals with a theology of muddled monotheism, wherein the roles of “Father” and “Son” are confused. The author suggests that refocusing on the strict historic monotheistic construal of divine roles will clarify present-day confusion. Second, Hurtado deals with the question of

Christian identity. Worshiping God “in Jesus’ name and through Jesus” (107) helps us to see that our relationship to God as heavenly Father is not “an expression of some ill-founded sentimentality about God’s ‘daddy-hood’” (108). Rather, it is an expression of our status as siblings of Jesus who have entered into relationship with the one whom he called “Father.” The particulars of this argument will be of special interest to feminists, whose theology the author seeks both to thank and to correct. Similarly, Hurtado derives from his work an instructive word about patriarchy and the human tendency toward idolizing aspects of our creaturehood such as gender. A fourth corrective is drawn from the early church: that worship was and should now be transcendent. “We modern, westernised Christians could well do with lifting our liturgical eyes beyond the alternatives of either shallow notions of ‘relevance’ or...frozen formality” (114) to see that worship takes place in the presence of God and in communion with the heavenly host. In its final pages, the book also briefly addresses the issue of worship and eschatology and the politically charged notion that Christians worship one whom we call “Lord.”

There is much to appreciate in Larry Hurtado’s book. First, he offers the reader the stuff of historical and biblical research in a manner that is neither donnish nor tedious. Second, for those who love a view of history that comes through windows like the History Channel, this book will provide fascination. Third, though summary in fashion, it is based on solid scholarship and will appeal to the academician for its remarkable conclusions. And finally, for the ministry professional who seeks an understanding of Christian worship and the means by which to design and lead it today, there are useful guidelines to correct theological confusion and to challenge common assumptions. A single caveat: though published in the United States, the manuscript is written in the Queen’s English. Thus, many words are colourfully spelled (fer-

vour, characterised, etc.). For the pastor who is used to proof-reading texts prior to publication in a church newsletter, the eye slows frequently while the mind pauses to cancel the default spelling corrections. Nevertheless, the mental exercise is worth the effort in a text that is both interesting and useful.

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**A ROYAL “WASTE” OF TIME: THE SPLENDOR OF WORSHIPPING GOD AND BEING CHURCH FOR THE WORLD**, by Marva Dawn. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999. Pp. 377. \$18.00 (paper)

While it may not always be true that you can tell a book by its cover, it is sometimes true that you can tell a book by its title. That was certainly the case with Marva Dawn's popular 1995 book *Reaching Out without Dumbing Down*. It is also true (one hopes in a properly nuanced sense) of that book's sequel, *A Royal “Waste” of Time*. To convey the idea that worship is not utilitarian, the author bluntly affirms at the outset that “[t]o worship the Lord is—in the world's eyes—a waste of time. It is, indeed, a *royal* waste of time, but a waste nonetheless. By engaging in it, we don't accomplish anything useful in our society's terms” (1).

By establishing the theme that worship is a “royal waste of time,” Dawn defines her ground in sharp opposition to those who would use worship for purposes of evangelizing, entertaining, meeting felt needs, or marketing. These themes are reiterated throughout the book. “With the proliferation of amusements and diversions in the U.S.-driven world monoculture, some worship leaders sacrifice content for entertaining form and confuse worship with evangelism and evangelism with marketing” (64). For those concerned with today's worship wars, this book presents a sus-

tained argument against the perceived misuse of worship.

*A Royal “Waste” of Time*, however, is not pure jeremiad. Dawn makes positive proposals about worship, beginning with the book's subtitle: “The Splendor of Worshiping God and Being the Church for the World.” In the course of 31 chapters (many of which have appeared elsewhere), 9 sermons (2 of which are children's sermons), and 6 composed hymn texts (songs for the church), the author directs the reader to God's splendor as the primary focus of worship. Repeatedly Dawn proposes worship as the church's primary activity. Worship keeps God at the center of the life of the church. At the same time, worship upbuilds the body of believers and nurtures them in faith and life. From these premises the book's spirited narrative flows.

Some of that narrative is a critique of contemporary culture. The author identifies a number of unmistakable targets: entertainment worship, television, consumer culture, church growth, and cyberspace. Since the book does not contain an index, it is not easy to locate all the references to these matters. But they stick up in the course of the discussion like red flags in a cow pasture, markers warning against slippery footing in the surrounding landscape.

Such flag-waving can get a little wearisome, though, as it sometimes did in Dawn's earlier book. In the present book, for example, she lists 10 dangers to worship caused by media consumption, including wasting time and developing smaller brains (76-84). “It is this *orientation* and this *process* (i.e., the influence of TV) that are so dangerous, for most of the values of that shaping are inimical to the message of Christ and the priorities of the kingdom of God” (75). Such matters are worthy of discussion, to be sure. But demonizing television may cause some readers (myself included) to feel somewhat scolded in this regard. Surely it is possible to be both faithful while still taking innocent pleasure in viewing *Masterpiece Theatre* or *Monty Python* reruns.

Likewise, other aspects of the book may not suit all tastes. Much of the material has been gathered from previous essays and speeches, which creates a great deal of repetition—something Dawn herself admits (7). Her otherwise admirable insights about the dangers of consumer culture lose their immediacy, however, when that particular tub is thumped every 10 pages or so.

Much of the narrative effect of the book depends on anecdotes from the author's personal experience, as in *Reaching Out*. Doubtless personal witness can be used to illustrate a point. But anecdotes tend to become repetitious over time. A certain defensiveness is noticeable on several occasions when she takes umbrage at reviews of her earlier book. Her response to the analogy of worship as gourmet food as opposed to Burger King (60-63) is a case in point (though there is a kind of word play and punning here that has a certain appeal). She seems to resolve the argument about 130 pages later by offering a new gustatory metaphor: "Under such authority the congregation cannot engage in battles over taste that make worship like the large chain restaurant, where nothing is prepared well and no one cares whether the customers eat anything good for them. Rather, worship will be like home cooking...so that the food is nutritious as well as a delight to the eye and the soul. It will be the Bread of Life that worshipers receive" (199).

Ruffles and flourishes like this will please some readers and chafe others. Since virtually all the critical examples of worship practices fall on the "contemporary" side of the fence, both chortling and chafing are inevitable. Her pointed comment about singing narcissistic ditties (68) for example, will doubtless stretch a few guitar strings. Whichever kind of tune one prefers to sing, however, this book contains many observations worth considering and discussing. The seven core questions of human existence as discussed in pages 22-36 are provocative, though the use of Douglas Coupland's *Generation X* as a homiletical device seems a bit stretched. Moreover,

Chapter 4, "Pop Spirituality or Genuine Story? The Church's Gifts for Postmodern Times" (originally published in *Word & World*), is a very helpful discussion of such matters as spirituality, postmodernism, the church's meta-narrative, and the six acts of the Revelation.

Overall, *A Royal "Waste" of Time* is just that—and probably in the sense that Dawn means it. If worship is reduced to a function or a program, it tends to diminish what worship has been and should be in the Christian community. If Dawn states her views strongly—and she does—she does not do so as a crank. Her concerns patently arise out of genuine concern for what the church is or isn't up to in worship, its most crucial activity. "Healthy churches will worship God deeply and will be formed by their practices and education....They will not fall prey to the idolatries of numbers or success, spectacle or power, emotional highs or simply what is new, but will instead be the servants and cross-bearers and witnesses Christ called us to be" (239). One could cite dozens of similar intriguing observations that would make for fruitful table conversation—even if one chose to dine at a Burger King and watch *Mystery* later on.

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**THE ESSENCE OF THE CHURCH: A COMMUNITY CREATED BY THE SPIRIT**, by Craig Van Gelder. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000. Pp. 207. \$18.99 (paper).

This is a down-to-earth, theologically astute, no-nonsense book that seeks to help pastors, theologians, seminary and college students, and judicatory committees think "deeply, yet practically, about the church" (9). Van Gelder wishes to contribute to the opportunities that are opened for the church's mission now because the church no

longer has a privileged position within North American culture. Hence, the church “is rediscovering its fundamental missionary identity to live as a new community demonstrating God’s redemptive reign in the broader society” (43). His chief governing metaphor for understanding the role of the church in society is that the church is “God’s demonstration plot” in the world (100). Just as geneticists provide demonstration plots for farmers in order to experience the value of a new hybrid, God provides the church in order to demonstrate that “his redemptive reign has already begun” (100).

Van Gelder’s work is theological, dependent on Scripture and classical ecclesiological thinking. However, he also has done work in Urban Administration and deftly integrates sociological and administrative categories in his theological analysis of the church. For Van Gelder, the church is “holy and human” (118), and is properly subject both to theological and sociological inquiry. Van Gelder’s genius is his ability to intertwine these diverse methods in a winsome and convincing way. He uses sociological categories to interpret the development of denominational mission strategies in American history and to understand fundamental American attitudes about faith. However, it must be noted that he uses sociological categories with caution. After all, the “church is not just another human organization that happens to have a different mandate for its life and ministry. The church is about human behavior that is being transformed through God’s redeeming power, and about patterns of life that reflect redemptive purposes” (24).

Van Gelder notes that a “social contract” ideology has prevailed in American political life, and that this theory of human association has likewise been imported into the church. Hence, North Americans, following John Locke, are apt to see the church as a “voluntary association of self-selecting individuals” (67). It is important to analyze this model, because its pervasiveness has definitively shaped the church’s identity.

Under the prevailing social contract perspective, people tend to focus on the “rights and privileges associated with membership” in a congregation, and “not on a covenantal commitment to the community and its values” (67). A major purpose in Van Gelder’s mind for this book is that if the church is truly to begin to take its missional identity seriously, it is this latter attitude which must begin to prevail in the North American context. Historically, the “social contract” theory of voluntary association that became deeply embedded in ecclesiology “produced an ecclesiology with a strong bias toward treating the church primarily as an organization” (69).

Early in the book, Van Gelder offers a fine typology of denominational development in North America that documents diachronically the organizational structures of churches. First, from 1600-1800, the “Ethnic-Voluntarism Denomination” prevailed. Here, the denomination was composed of a coalition of ethnic immigrant churches. Second, from 1800-1850, the “Purposive-Missionary Denomination” came into being. In this mode, denominations became national organizational structures that sought to introduce new churches to the frontier. Third, from 1850-1900, denominations developed extensive institutional systems to serve various needs of people, and thus created the “Churchly Denomination.” From 1900-1965, churches became “Corporate Denominations” with multiple agencies within extensive bureaucratic hierarchies which managed the ministries of member churches. And, finally, from 1965 to the present, the “Regulatory Denomination” has become established. It seeks to use rules and policies to secure compliance from member churches (17). It should be noted that any given congregation within a denomination might represent various phases of this historical growth. Hence, we find “ethnic-village congregations, purposive-village congregations, institutional congregations, organizational congregations, and lifestyle

congregations, all within the broader system of denominations" (19).

At the heart of Van Gelder's work is the supposition that the church does not exist to be self-serving or self-preserving. Instead, at the church's very heart must be mission. Thus, a model of covenantal commitment, and not a social contract, best accomplishes this goal; and, living "in covenantal relationship with God and one another requires more than a personal choice to be a committee member. It requires the transforming power of God working through the agency of the Spirit" (118).

Van Gelder offers a penetrating, concise, and provocative ecclesiology. He has the ability to address groups as different from each other as evangelicals and liberationists, which have both praised his work. His ability to blend sociological analysis with theological conviction is remarkable. Perhaps Van Gelder holds the key that will permit congregations to move beyond the "tribalism" or "clubism" that currently fetters their outreach and be the witnesses and centers for mission that Jesus Christ intends for his church.

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**YOUTH MINISTRY IN MODERN AMERICA: 1930 TO THE PRESENT**, by Jon Pahl. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2000. Pp. 248. \$16.95 (paper).

In this book, Jon Pahl documents the historical development of youth ministry in America from 1930 to the present. Based on this, an analysis and reflection regarding the problems, success, and future of youth ministry is also given. In order to chronicle the breadth of youth ministry during this time, Pahl draws four "portraits" of youth ministry in chapters 1-4. These four portraits "represent what are probably the most significant groups of Christian believers in the second half of the twentieth century" (3).

The four portraits are Walther League (Lutheran), Young Christian Workers (YCW, Catholic), Youth for Christ (YFC, Evangelical), and African-American congregational youth ministries (Methodist, Baptist, and United Church of Christ).

As an example of mainline Protestantism, Walther League is described as a movement that sought to educate Christians in the hope that they would, in turn, serve society. According to Pahl, Walther Leaguers were taught to balance the paradox of Christian knowledge and service ("inwardness" and "outwardness"). As time progressed, however, the balance tilted towards Christian service. This created conflict within the church and, with funding resources redirected to other areas, Lutheran youth ministry became an increasingly local effort.

Pahl describes Young Christian Workers (YCW) as a movement that sought to form and educate "lay apostles" within the Roman Catholic Church. During the '30s, when YCW was formed, there was a need to help youth transition into the work force. Later on, when more youth were finishing high school and going to college, YCW refocused its efforts towards traditional Christian education. This created tension during a time when young people desired "practical Christianity," which resulted in the dissolution of YCW.

The next chapter describes the birth and development of Youth for Christ (YFC). Led by Billy Graham in its earlier years, this ministry sought to encourage youth in their witness for Christ. In the beginning, YFC's concern for a personal relationship with Jesus was coupled with patriotic themes. In recent years, however, YFC's concern for patriotism and moral purity has given way to concerns regarding social and political reforms. YFC is still an active ministry that has branched out into other related ministries.

Like the other youth ministries, African-American Christian congregations taught youth the balanced paradox of inward purity and outward action. Because of the so-

cial climate, African-American churches encouraged social involvement earlier than the other ministries. In fact, Pahl writes that this social concern was a significant factor contributing to the momentum of the Civil Rights movement. He also writes favorably regarding the rites of passage offered to youth within African-American churches.

In the remaining four chapters of *Youth Ministry in Modern America*, Pahl compares and contrasts the different examples of youth ministry and draws a number of conclusions. A number of common problems arise. The most significant of these is the church's oscillation between purity and practice. The book goes on to analyze the various factors that influenced the church's gradual shift from purity to practice. These factors include: the policies and practices of the United States, Christian tradition and internal developments within the church, and choices and activities of the young themselves. In his final chapter, Pahl draws together a number of conclusions and submits a number of suggestions regarding youth ministry in the twenty-first century in America. He maintains that the most significant challenge facing youth ministry is the creation or revitalization of meaningful rites of passage. According to Pahl, churches have historically failed in offering youth meaningful transitions into adulthood. This is especially troubling given the

rites of passage often provided by secular culture.

This book meets a significant need. There has long been a need for someone to chronicle the development of youth ministry. Pahl has done so and done it well. The breadth of material that Pahl utilizes in weaving together this history is impressive. He is both a skilled historian and a theologian. Drawing together the various historical-contextual threads of politics, church, and youth culture, Pahl carefully describes the environment that has surrounded the development of youth ministry in the last seventy years. The most practical aspect of this book is the insight gained by understanding the background and method of other youth ministries. As a youth minister, I seek to avoid the stagnancy brought about by "tunnel vision." To learn of the development and direction of ministries outside of my context is both encouraging and challenging. Furthermore, it is important to learn from those who have gone before us within our own tradition and what significance it may hold for our future. In the field of youth ministry, learning from the past and looking to the future are crucial tasks. This book serves as an excellent resource to further these tasks.

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