

Reviews



LIFE IN BIBLICAL ISRAEL, by Philip J. King and Lawrence E. Stager. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002. Pp. 440. \$39.95 (cloth).

Although the title might suggest broader coverage to a Christian reader, *Life in Biblical Israel* is a richly illustrated (228 plates) and lavishly presented discussion of daily life in Iron Age Israel (1200 to 586 B.C.). Authored by Philip King, former president of the American Schools of Oriental Research, and Lawrence Stager, director of the Leon Levy Expedition to Ashkelon, *Life in Biblical Israel* integrates current archaeological research, interpretation of texts from the Hebrew Bible, and the methodologies of social history to probe the “everyday realities and social subtleties experienced by the vast majority of the population” (xvii).

Life in Biblical Israel is a significant resource primarily for its movement away from archaeology’s former fascination with national events, leading individuals, and political institutions. Instead, *Life in Biblical Israel* focuses on the small things in order to recover the “complex of values, customs, and meanings that constituted Israelite culture” (1). After reconstructing the rhythms of life in the household of Micah and the Levite (Judges 17–18), *Life in Biblical Israel* treats in turn the Israelite house and household, the means of existence (farming, water sources, crafts and trade), the patrimonial kingdom (the city, water systems, warfare), culture and the expressive life, and religious institutions and practices (including burial).

The focus of *Life in Biblical Israel* on the small things is equally true in its treatment of texts. Frequently the authors will open a

topic by discussing passing references in minor texts that allude to daily life. Such references are then illumined by archaeological data. For instance, the discussion of hygiene examines texts from Leviticus, 1 and 2 Samuel, Ruth, and Micah, and then summarizes the excavation of latrines in the city of David, parasites found in coprolites (fossilized excrement), and ivory combs from Ashkelon (69–75). Many obscure texts benefit from this approach.

The reader who works sequentially through *Life in Biblical Israel* will notice a significant degree of repetition (for example, pillared buildings on 114, 187, 201). But for the casual reader who consults sections of the book as a reference, the repetition permits a broader field of data to be applied comprehensively to a topic. Transliteration of Hebrew makes the text useable by the non-specialist. Technical jargon is generally avoided, although the authors assume familiarity with contemporary biblical scholarship. A solid bibliography and usable indices of texts, modern authors, and subjects supplement the work. References to texts from the New Testament are rare but helpful. Even the occasional pun can be found (346).

Life in Biblical Israel is a worthy addition to the Life of Ancient Israel series published by Westminster John Knox. It will become a reference volume in university and seminary libraries and a standard resource for many courses. A similar work for the New Testament is needed.

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ACTS: THE GOSPEL OF THE SPIRIT, by Justo L. Gonzalez. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2001. Pp. 291. \$30.00 (paper).

This commentary offers a refreshing interpretation of the book of Acts from a Latin American perspective. The author, Justo Gonzalez, has written multiple books, in Spanish and English, whose purpose is to rethink Christian faith as a Latino. The commentary itself is a translation and revision of *Hechos* (Acts), published in 1992. Gonzalez is an accomplished New Testament scholar who knows his way in the academy, yet writes above all for the benefit of the church. This commentary will provide help for preachers and teachers and all who desire new lenses for reading the exciting story of the founding of the church by the Spirit in Acts. In addition, the repeated reflections by the author on the Latin American context will often shed surprising light on our own North American setting.

The introduction discusses the purpose and authorship of Acts. Gonzalez argues persuasively that Luke's two volumes have a central purpose: to provide encouragement and strength to disciples in times of conflict. Volume I, Luke's gospel, portrays Jesus in deadly conflict with both Jewish leaders and Rome, though Jesus is no Zealot. Volume II, the Acts of the Apostles, likewise narrates the history of the early church as one of opposition and martyrdom and ongoing conflict from Jew and Roman alike, until Paul's imprisonment in Rome. At this point, Gonzalez agrees with a growing number of interpreters that Acts is not a pro-Roman apologia (Richard J. Cassidy, *Society and Politics* [Orbis, 1987] 145–157; Walter Pilgrim, *Uneasy Neighbors* [Fortress, 1999] 125–143). Concerning Luke, the author, Gonzalez knows the debate about the "we" passages but he concludes they are written by the author, a travel companion of Paul (contrary to a majority of contemporary scholars).

The commentary proper follows the typical format of extended exegesis on each section of Acts. The outline is clear and

holds no surprises, except for the slight emphasis on the change to Paul's mission from 12:25 onward. The comments are thorough and helpful throughout. However, two characteristics give this commentary a special power and focus. The first is its emphasis on the Acts of the Spirit. Gonzalez states unequivocally from the beginning that the story of Acts is the story of the Spirit, not the story of the apostles. He rightly demonstrates that Luke's Gospel and Acts have two core events that shape their story. In the gospel, Luke 4 presents Jesus as the Spirit-anointed servant to proclaim good news of liberation, the servant who must suffer and die and be raised to fulfill God's redemptive plan for the nations. In Acts 2, Luke tells the dramatic story of the Spirit's anointing of the disciples, who continue the liberating work of Jesus. Since Pentecost, the church is living in the last days and so carries with it the presence and power of the Spirit. This dynamic theme of the Spirit's activity holds this commentary together. And here we find invaluable insight for preachers and teachers.

The second major factor is the extended reflection, throughout the commentary, on the interpreted texts. These reflections seek to draw out the meaning of each section for present-day interpreters and in particular the Latin American Protestant churches. Many of these reflections have striking titles (The Disadvantage of the Advantaged, Those Who Turn Justice to Wormwood, The Greatness of the Small). On the whole, these reflections are done with care, honesty, and theological depth. At the same time, their frequency leads finally to repetition and some forced exegesis, especially when applied to the Hispanic churches.

Gonzalez exhibits a wide knowledge of recent studies in Acts. Yet he relies too heavily on Haenchen's commentary for critical studies, while consistently disagreeing with Haenchen. His treatment of the last chapters of Acts, the surprise ending and the fate of Paul, needs more discussion. The index omits some studies found in the footnotes.

How good it is to have this commentary

available for use by scholars, pastors, and all who teach. With the growing Hispanic demography of our country, it is good and necessary to learn from and be challenged by one who thinks and writes from this perspective. The Spirit continues to be at work!

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FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE: THE MAKING OF A RADICAL THEOLOGIAN,
by Val Webb. St. Louis: Chalice, 2002. Pp. 363. \$34.99 (cloth).

On seeing the name Florence Nightingale *Word & World* book review readers may likely conjure up the image of “the lady with the lamp.” The care of wounded soldiers during the Crimean war is the familiar association the name bears. Val Webb’s book makes abundantly clear that there was much more “going on” with this woman. In Webb’s words: “While Crimea created Florence the nurse, nursing was her least important function there” (126). What was more important? Well, in Nightingale’s own words: “my one idea was not organizing a hospital but organizing a religion” (298). Thus it is as a study of “the making of a radical theologian” that this book makes its way into the pages of this journal.

Recognizing that she is working with a woman who is known only very selectively, Webb devotes a longer first half of the book to recounting key chapters in Nightingale’s long life. The wide range of productive engagement in bettering the condition of women is evident. The more famous names of the period (e.g., Charles Darwin, William Paley, Charlotte Brontë, Benjamin Jowett, John Stuart Mill) are in these pages for they were present in this remarkable life (in principle and often in person). The reader’s orientation is further served by a detailed “Time Line” and a comprehensive glossary, ranging from Jacobus Arminius to the W’s (Wesley, Whitehead, and the Wilberforces). The endnotes are detailed. One be-

comes aware of the extremely limited options available to women in this period (36, 98, 103). One meets Florence as a woman who would make a difference in that regard, as she set about to follow the “four audible calls to serve God” (28) that she received throughout her life.

That piety received extensive reflective expression, particularly in the 829 pages and three volumes of *Suggestions for Thought*. Webb speaks of the radical as “going to the center, foundation or source of something; fundamental; basic” and as “favoring fundamental or extreme change” (195). She is entitled to the adjective by both the life and thought of her subject. Her very close friend, Jowett, accused Florence of “trying to merge Enlightenment rationalism with medieval mysticism” (297). Webb’s lead chapter in the book’s theological half is well entitled “Liberation Theologian and Mystic.” That unusual range is evident even in a staccato recitation of principal themes. The call is to act (70, 84, 120, 138, 175) in accordance with God’s laws that can be discerned in nature (157, 176, 195). In doing this one is “creating heaven here and now” (chapter 10), even though there is “an ongoing life of the soul through repeated worlds, making the immortal soul one’s *permanent* existence rather than our temporary bodies” (170–171). In so acting one does imitate Christ; indeed, one joins him as a “savior” (107). In this life of service one joins all the religions in a common search after truth (285). No atoning savior is needed, for the human problem is not “sins to be punished, but lessons to be learned” (229).

Webb aligns this theological orientation with strands in feminist and process thinking. Thus it will not surprise that the book seems a labor of love, for Webb’s earlier writing (*Why We’re Equal* [Chalice, 1999], *In Defense of Doubt* [Chalice, 1995]) carries these “radical” approaches forward in persuasive ways. Webb does not endorse Nightingale’s reference to an Australian aboriginal child as an “animal” (210; cf. the poor “beasts” of Egypt, 49). But she pleads

that Florence, when asked, “had valid reasons not to commit time and energy” (112) to the cause of women’s suffrage. She does not back away from theological judgment, writing that “Florence *rightly* saw Jesus’ claims in this gospel [John] as sharing God’s *task* rather than *being* God” (171). In this book, as in her earlier ones, the reader will meet an author deeply engaged in addressing the issues of justice and intelligibility that Christian faith must face today.

Then is not now, of course. In closing the book I had a sense that “we have at least come a ways,” followed with the urgent sense that “we have a long way yet to go.” For what might one hope as one takes up the task of discerning appropriation of the thought of this radical theologian? It would be helpful, at least for the less venturesome among us, to have the fundamental insights of this wide-ranging thinking set within a recognizable structure such as might be provided by a specific faith confession. Webb warns against “enslavement to the male rules of coherency and generalization” where diversity is sacrificed to uniformity (191). Perhaps precisely the “looseness” of the weave of Nightingale’s thought can serve us here. Perhaps the energy she expended in seeking change will lead us to identify the repressive forces as involving something more than “mistakes” and lead us away from speaking of evil as being “*within* God’s plan” (218). Perhaps the efficacy of her witness will lead us to unpack the coherent cluster of affirmations held together in her phrase “the omnipotent spirit of love and wisdom” (212).

Or perhaps not. One also emerges from this engaging visit with this woman who got (and did) so much right with the question, “Why do we get it wrong so often?”

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CHRISTIAN CONTRADICTIONS: THE STRUCTURES OF LUTHERAN AND CATHOLIC THOUGHT, by Daphne Hampson. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001. 323 pp. \$60.00 (cloth).

This book is a rich resource for students of Reformation theology and of contemporary Lutheran-Roman Catholic relations. Professor Hampson’s work illuminates the root causes of their enduring differences. Her thesis is that Roman Catholic scholars of every stripe, from the implacably hostile to the conscientiously irenic, have failed to grasp the basic structure of the paradigm shift at the heart of Luther’s theology. Even when trying to read sympathetically, Catholic thinkers have viewed Lutheran teaching through Catholic lenses, interpreted it out of Catholic assumptions, and as a result, consistently misread it.

In successive chapters Professor Hampson lays out the substance of Luther’s revolution and then compares it to the Catholic alternative as set forth by the Council of Trent, in particular in its decree on justification. Of central importance to her analysis is the *extra se* nature of salvation for Luther. Hampson exegetes the following passage from the Galatians lectures of the early 1530s: “There is a double life, my life and an alien life.... Thus you see me talking, eating, working, sleeping, etc.; and yet you do not see my life. For the time of life that I am living I do indeed live in the flesh, but not on the basis of the flesh and according to the flesh, but in faith, on the basis of faith and according to faith.” The descriptor *simul iustus et peccator* refers to this double sense of self, which is also a double sense of time. The Christian lives from the future in that her sense of herself is now derived from her sense of Christ; her life is founded on something not in her possession, to which she has access only through the promise of the gospel. God’s saving future does not await her at the end of a process of transformation actively pursued in the present. By faith, the future breaks into the present rather than

emerges from it. Her life is now *extra se*; no longer turned in on the self, she lives in Christ. In contrast, Catholic Augustinianism sees the human as an independent entity in relationship to God by means of a faith formed by love. Hampson concludes that the two systems are not comparable. Catholicism simply cannot absorb the Lutheran *simul iustus et peccator*, the radical proclamation that God accepts and loves sinners as sinners. For the Catholic, the sinner can only be in relation to God in so far as she ceases to be a sinner and enters a state of grace.

In the chapters that follow, Professor Hampson persuasively demonstrates the consistent Catholic practice of assimilating Luther to a Catholic theological framework. She attributes this problem to the fact that their own system of thought and the philosophical framework underlying it are so axiomatic to Catholics that they cannot recognize the differences. The implications of this for ecumenical rapprochement are serious. The Lutheran confession is built around the dialectic of justification by faith: in saying that we are justified by faith in Christ alone we are also saying that we are not justified by anything else, particularly not by anything rooted in who and what we are. Justification by faith is not one doctrine among others but the central hermeneutic of Lutheranism. Catholicism, notes Professor Hampson, even when sympathetic to the Lutheran concern for justification, can only conceive of it as one particular doctrine among others in an ordered sequence. Catholics then want to move on to other things, especially to the pursuit of sanctification. To Lutheran ears this sounds distressingly like a reversion to the concentration on self rather than the freedom to serve in self-forgetfulness, which is the point of justification in the first place. Professor Hampson concludes that the most ecumenical discussion can achieve is a “differentiated” consensus statement, like the Joint Declaration. Its purpose is to remove obstacles currently preventing mutual recognition,

which is something quite different from a formula leading to unity.

Professor Hampson also explores what she regards as inherently problematic with the Lutheran dialectic and the Catholic linear structure respectively. The Lutheran emphasis on excentricity, i.e., our being grounded not in ourselves but in God, makes it difficult, if not impossible, to speak of the self as having an integrity of its own that allows it to respond in a dialogical relationship to God. The Catholic insistence on the continuity of grace with creation makes such a relationship possible but renders the necessity of revelation questionable. Hampson concludes: “How then could one find a way of both speaking of the human as grounded in God (and that through a salvation which is dependent on revelation)—so that apart from God the human is not him or herself and God is central to the self being itself—and at the same time allow for that inter-relationship between the human and God which is love?” (175). She evaluates possible resolutions to this quandary in fine analyses of the work of Barth, Bultmann, and Kierkegaard. In her judgment Kierkegaard is the most successful in producing a possible synthesis of the two traditions’ distinctive strengths. He maintains the Lutheran understanding of faith while introducing the idea of love for God as an other. He also does justice to the Enlightenment sense of the self truly coming to itself, a prerequisite for credible Christian faith in the modern world, according to Hampson.

The author is forthright from the outset about her position as a post-Christian theist. Indeed, part of the power of this book lies in its character as a kind of intellectual autobiography of a feminist scholar whose intelligence and integrity radiate throughout. She first took up the issues examined here more than twenty years ago as a student at Harvard Divinity School. Wrestling with them was part of the process by which she moved outside and beyond Christianity, because within Christianity she could find no way to see the self both as grounded in God and as able to interrelate with God.

The conclusion of this study leaves the reader in a peculiar place. Having weighed and responded to the author's careful delineation of the disparate structures of Lutheran and Catholic Christianity, having been guided through a detailed examination of the ecumenical consensus and its limits, the reader is confronted in the final pages with a different issue and one that would seem to make the preceding analyses moot. In a post-Enlightenment world, Hampson asserts, it is "epistemologically untenable" (289) to maintain the concept of particular revelation of the kind that Christianity claims. "The challenge consists not simply in changing the landscape within which Christianity is placed; it reaches to the heart of the faith. It is not then so much the debates of the sixteenth century which strike me as strange, given the epistemological presuppositions of the world in which these men lived. It is rather their continuation today against the backdrop of what we now know" (292). Hampson's book will help Lutheran and Catholic Christians acquire an honest, fair, and substantive understanding of both traditions and their structural differences. But this must take place within the framework of Christian dogmatics, a framework the author believes must be discarded. One is left wondering why Professor Hampson has made this superb contribution to Lutheran-Roman Catholic ecumenical understanding, which in the end may only help perpetuate what she has abandoned as Christian delusion.

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A GRACEFUL LIFE: LUTHERAN SPIRITUALITY FOR TODAY, by Bradley Hanson. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 2000. Pp. 200. \$14.99 (paper).

A search of the catalog of the Library of Congress reveals almost 3000 entries under the subject of spirituality, and authors continue to write on the topic. With such an overabundance of materials, one is left wondering if there is anything new to be said. Yet it is precisely by saying something *not* new that Hanson adds a helpful voice to the contemporary conversation on spirituality. Rather than looking for answers to questions of spirituality in the latest religious fad, in this study book written for the "average person" Hanson guides the reader to the spiritual gifts of the Lutheran tradition. As he writes, "I am convinced that the Lutheran tradition is solidly anchored in the gospel of Jesus Christ, emphasizes a core of practices that have a biblical promise to mediate that message, and has the freedom to incorporate other practices that are consistent with that gospel" (8–9).

The book begins with a discussion of the general nature of Christian spirituality within the American context. On one hand, at its best spirituality simply refers to the understanding that faith is part of one's own daily life and experience. On the other hand, what is called spirituality more often than not refers to the ways humans try to manage their relationship with God. Yet Hanson emphasizes that genuine spirituality is not a human creation but a gift from God (12). Although he gives general characteristics of spirituality, Hanson notes that in reality a general spirituality does not exist, rather only specific spiritualities (11). As part of his introduction to spirituality, therefore, he briefly discusses the many spiritualities of Christianity as well as the place of Lutheranism within these spiritualities.

Following the introductory chapter Hanson moves to a discussion of the key aspects of Lutheran spirituality itself. He emphasizes seven major features:

1. *Conviction that alienation from God is the deep and persistent root of our problems as individuals and communities.*
2. *Trust that God's merciful grace undergirds all of life.*
3. *Reliance on the word of God in Scripture, proclamation, and music as the primary source of spiritual nature and guidance.*
4. *Confidence that God's grace is present in the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper and may also work through other rites, gestures, and physical objects.*
5. *Participation in the communal life of the church with responsibility for the nurture of one another.*
6. *Deep loyalty to core church traditions as expressed in the classic creeds and Lutheran confessions and both respect and freedom toward secondary traditions.*
7. *Conviction that God's twofold rule summons all people to seek justice and calls Christians to faithful service in their daily relationships in life.* (18)

A chapter is devoted to an explanation of each characteristic, including a discussion of its strengths and weaknesses. To aid in the discussion for both individuals and groups, each chapter ends with a section of questions and suggestions "For Reflection and Practice."

On the whole Hanson provides solid introductions to the seven characteristics. Not only does he seek to present a specifically Lutheran view but he does so by discussing the features in ecumenical terms so that those familiar with other traditions might have a means of comparison. This ecumenical perspective can be helpful, but at times it distorts the particular Lutheran aspects. The most significant example of this distortion comes in the chapter on grace. He suggests that for Luther there were two forms of grace: transforming and accepting (47). In fact, Hanson argues that many Christian traditions have this dual understanding of grace and they differ simply in which form they emphasize (45). Nevertheless, this understanding of grace is not really compatible with Luther's theology, and if anything most closely resembles

the thought of Thomas Aquinas. Because grace is foundational to all Hanson's characteristics of Lutheran spirituality, this distortion also can be seen within the other chapters.

The problem of such an understanding of grace is that grace itself can become a substance that must be received in order to be accepted and transformed. In effect, grace can replace Christ. True, Hanson does not go this far in his description, but this does open the door. For Luther, on the other hand, the gracious act of God in Christ was seen not in this mechanical scheme but rather eschatologically. Thus, rather than using the concepts of transformation and acceptance, Hanson could have provided a stronger Lutheran perspective by discussing God's gracious work in the eschatological language of death and resurrection or the old and new being.

Hanson, however, does capture well a particular gift of Lutheran spirituality when it comes to the question of the shape of the Christian life in the world. It is summed up in the biblical phrase "faith active in love" (146). And this activity of faith takes place in the basic relationships and roles of everyday life. In Luther's understanding, God continues to be creatively active through these basic functions of human life (148). The Christian then is called by God to serve their neighbors in and through the relationships of daily life; this is vocation. In such vocations Lutheran spirituality finds its deepest connection with everyday life. But this emphasis on the communal nature, rooted in common, everyday life, is not only true of vocation but each of the characteristics of Lutheran spirituality discussed in this book. Here Hanson is at his best.

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SPIRITUAL MATURITY: PRESERVING CONGREGATIONAL HEALTH AND BALANCE, by Frank A. Thomas. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2002. Pp. 98. \$10.00 (paper).

The critical issue that stimulated the writing of this book is articulated by the author on the first page of his preface: “The maturity, skill, and ability to disallow chronic complainers and the regressive element to dislodge the church from its mission and vision is what I mean by the title of this book....It is designed to provide tools for the church to preserve health and balance in the congregational body and to stay on track for its mission and vision” (ix). The author goes on to say that this book is about encouraging and calling forth personal responsibility in decision making so that one chooses “one’s destiny and calling in response to what one has heard from God” (x) and not to be the victim or resort to blaming in wrestling with differences.

Thomas assumes that maturity is critical for the congregation in order for the church to accomplish its mission. He sees maturity as analogous to the role played by the immune system in the physical body. The majority of the book is taken up with the author’s explication of the “concrete principles” that define and characterize personal and corporate maturity. Three of his principles are founded on the freedom of an “inner spiritual reality and identity” that Christ gives and from which “social, economic, and political rights, responsibilities, and freedoms” (10) flow. The author’s expected outcome is that his “principles of maturity will give readers the power to make a difference in the state of their own health” and, by implication, health and balance in their congregations (3).

I found the content of the book to take seriously Luther’s understanding of the paradox of human nature he described in the Latin phrase, *simul iustus et peccator*. The author takes seriously the daily dying and rising that characterize our life of faith as we grow toward maturity. However, I

find that his term for a life of faith, “the victorious Christian life,” a misrepresentation of his nuanced and helpful content. For me, “the victorious Christian life” implies triumphalism, a promise that I will live a life absent of failure and pain, appearing to others as having it all together and insulated from suffering.

I am reminded of Luther’s sermon at Co-burg on April 16, 1530, in which he challenged his listeners to live a life of suffering love founded on the promise and hope of Christ’s victory over sin and death (*Luther’s Works*, volume 51, pp. 197–208). Hope born out of God’s overabundance of grace through faith calls the believer to a life of suffering with others, bearing witness to the uncompromising hope of the gospel. Neither Mother Theresa nor Martin Luther King Jr. lived lives characterized as “the victorious life” but rather a life of faithfulness based on the hope of Christ’s victory, not ours.

Happily, however, the book’s content is a clear articulation of the grace-filled life that is reflected in a believer’s capacity to own his or her own decisions and actions, freeing others to own their choices and graciously encourage differences of opinion in search of consensus with a congregation’s vision and mission.

The book’s structure is user-friendly for congregational small group study. The four chapters are designed as learning modules made up of lessons that could easily be translated into an adult forum series. Each lesson is characterized by a Scripture passage and theme statement followed by a presentation on the theme that is designed to provoke the reader to discussion. While this sort of dying and rising rhythm worked well, at times Thomas seemed to be trying to find Scripture passages that fit each theme rather than informed it. But at its heart, *Spiritual Maturity* provides a blend of theology and psychology that serves leadership well for sharing with their congregation.

I encourage the reader to buy this book,

read it, discuss it with your faith community, and let it provoke healthy change.

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CHRISTIANS IN SOCIETY: LUTHER, THE BIBLE, AND SOCIAL ETHICS, by William H. Lazareth. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001. Pp. 274. \$22.00 (paper).

William H. Lazareth, former bishop of the Metropolitan New York Synod and former Director of the Faith and Order Secretariat in the World Council of Churches, has been a regular voice in the ecumenical movement. This proclivity affects his venture in Luther scholarship. The book epitomizes the tendency to impose questions and agendas on historical sources and figures rather than allowing them to stand on their own terms. The products of this method are draped throughout the text.

The book is divided into three parts. Part one provides the background for the argument, highlighting Lazareth's concern for a social-ethical grounding in the Lutheran tradition. Following a review and critique of "twentieth century Protestant misinterpreters of Luther's theological ethics in terms of nineteenth century quietistic German Lutheranism" (x), the author appropriates Jaroslav Pelikan's interpretation of Luther's biblical hermeneutic. While arguing that Scripture wholly determined Luther's ethics, Lazareth's ecumenical posture bears fruit as he presses for Luther's "evangelical catholic" principles of biblical interpretation.

Part two is integral for understanding Lazareth's foundation for an ethical appeal. Asserting that God's command to love must govern Christian behavior, Lazareth surmises that "Baptized believers...are being transferred and called to fulfill in the 'new creation' the same kind of loving lifestyle that God had originally intended for his primal image the first Adam" (84). As he expands his argument, questions concerning

the credence of the scholarship arise. Lazareth's primary sources are Luther's 1535–1545 "Lectures on Genesis" and the 1516 "Lectures on Romans." The authority of these texts is marginal at best. It is standard knowledge that the "Lectures on Genesis" is corrupt. The text is not from Luther's pen or even a direct transcript of his lectures. It is a transcript that has been reworked and edited. The "Lectures on Romans" Luther himself discounts as a source of his final views on Paul. In the "Preface to the Latin Works" Luther declares that following his breakthrough on justification he went back and rethought all he had previously said concerning righteousness.

The authority of the argument is further undermined as the author's ecumenical bearing continues to show itself. Catchphrases that are absent from Luther's own thought are continually inserted. Two examples suffice: Summarizing some of Luther's thoughts describing how the word of God distinguishes the true church from the false church, Lazareth inserts the phrase "mediated by a divinely set-apart ministry" (41). An examination of the referenced text along with the preceding and ensuing pages finds that no such terminology or even similes exist. A second example is found in a simple translation of the phrase *coram*. Lazareth interprets *coram Deo* and *coram hominibus* as meaning "in communion with both God and Eve" (62) rather than the correct interpretation of "in the presence of God and Eve."

The purpose of part three is to "develop Luther's paradoxical biblical teaching on God's sovereign but highly dialectical response to all this cosmic evil and human sin" (110). Depicting the function of the law and the gospel in "God's twofold rule" Lazareth asserts that, for Luther, Christian liberation from the law through the gospel is for the purpose of ethical service. The twofold use of the law (the political and theological functions) is truly governed by one loving will of God. The "proper work" of God through the justifying act of Jesus Christ and the sanctifying act of the Holy

Spirit brings about the ethical goal through a transformed inner renewal of the Christian.

Part three does nothing to quell the questions concerning the credibility of the argument. Rather, it typifies a school of thought that tends to bring questions and agendas to the sources rather than allowing the sources to stand on their own terms. The fruits of such methods are found in the application of quotes. For instance, Lazareth uses a block quotation to portray a continuous thought from Luther. A careful reader, however, may wonder if it is an unbroken thought when noticing in the footnote that the single block has two distinct quotes that are separated by fifty pages (62). Such occurrences are common throughout the book. One instance finds a block composed of two quotes that are separated by twenty-three years, let alone chronologically backwards (232). This method can mislead the reader and does not allow Luther to stand on his own terms.

The desire for moral improvement of society is meritorious. Certainly Luther was concerned about the conduct of individuals living in society. Nonetheless, coming to a clearer understanding of the foundations and ramifications of Luther's thought is not aided by the method applied in this book. The preface declares the book ought to serve as a basic text for seminaries and universities. Yet, given the book's fundamental failings in its use of the sources, assigning it for course reading would accomplish no more than to make the instructor's life more difficult. After all, no one likes to assign a book that one must constantly correct.

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CULTURAL CHANGE AND YOUR CHURCH: HELPING YOUR CHURCH THRIVE IN A DIVERSE SOCIETY, by Michael Pocock and Joseph Henriques. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2002. Pp. 238. \$16.99 (paper).

Because of the arrival of increasing numbers of culturally diverse peoples in the United States, Michael Pocock and Joseph Henriques see America as a vast mission field with international dimensions. While this reality is not new in our consciousness, the authors—both children of immigrants—seek to provide a resource and discussion guide for existing congregations who discover that they are in a culturally changing context. The text is also intended to serve as a resource for any group that intends to develop a new congregation in a multicultural community. While the book has a particular interest in helping churches do ministry among international peoples who have come to the United States, it has value for ministry development in any culturally changing or diverse community. Pocock says, “We long to see people of every national, ethnic, and cultural background fellowshiping together in churches nationwide” (10).

Both authors have had extensive experience in culturally diverse ministries and are currently teachers and leaders in evangelical institutions. Michael Pocock is professor of world missions and intercultural studies at Dallas Theological Seminary, and Joe Henriques is the dean of the Moody Graduate School in Chicago. This book is meant to be a very practical guide for development and redevelopment of ministry based on past experience and practice. The preface states that they want to help us “understand how and why America is changing and how to respond in a biblically effective manner” (11). The metaphor of a kaleidoscope is used to help the reader appreciate the ever changing cultural scene in America and the cultural realities that make church development a challenge.

The enduring question for the church is:

Why do congregations have such difficulty with mission and ministry in culturally diverse contexts? Why is there a reluctance to engage in multicultural ministry?

Henriques lifts up three major factors that damage our interaction with those from a different culture. First, he lists ethnocentrism—the tendency to use our own values as the standard to judge and measure all other cultures. He suggests that we as Christians need to understand our own “ethnocentrism,” and appreciate the importance of specific cultural experiences of others. The second factor is “nationalism” and “patriotism,” which degenerate into isolationism and protectionism. The remedy here is for Christians to realize that they have a dual citizenship—in heaven as well as on earth. Traditionalism is the third major inhibiting factor. While traditions need to be cherished and seen as conveyors of community structure, they are not more important than God or the gospel. He asserts that leaders need to be “sustainers, breakers, and blenders” of traditions—all for the sake of the gospel (53).

For those who think that transitioning from a homogeneous congregation to a multicultural one is neither desirable nor doable, Henriques asserts that “if we believe it is God’s purpose for a church to become multicultural, it is possible for that church to do so” (141).

So what might be the cultural model for church development/redevelopment in our culturally diverse realities? The authors describe assimilation, separation, and integration, but opt for a new model that they label, “mutual accommodation” (130). Including some of the elements of assimilation and some of the benefits of integration, congregations need to adopt programs and resources that meet the needs of different cultural groups in the community. And the groups must, in turn, be open to adopting practices of the existing family (133). Henriques sets forth a detailed plan modeled after the strategy of the Air National Guard that includes eight focus areas and fourteen

goals for intentional development/redevelopment of a congregation (142). This plan is a creative and pervasive strategy, worthy of any congregation’s attention and examination.

The authors assert that strong leadership is the key to multicultural ministry (184). Pocock lists five steps that strong leaders and congregations must do: (1) Recognize the realities in the community. (2) Assess the needs and resources. (3) Recast the church’s vision—a rethinking of purpose, mission, values, and strategy. (4) Implement the vision—beginning with pilot programs. (5) Evaluate and refine the strategy (198). The book concludes with a “call to action.”

Each of the ten chapters includes a summary of the content and then ends with “Discussion Starters” that are designed to structure group process and discussion for church leaders, individuals, or a class. While some of the suggestions and questions seem very elementary, I believe a sensitive leader could use the material to facilitate a group in developing a culturally diverse mission and ministry strategy for a congregation or community.

For a book that uses the metaphor of a kaleidoscope to help us see the ever changing and colliding cultural realities of American communities, and uses the Bible to challenge and construct strategies for mission and ministry, I would like to suggest an additional biblical assertion from the Apostle Paul that sustains me and gives hope and vision for mission and ministry in multicultural contexts. As the kaleidoscope is turned, it creates a new view, a new reality, and a new vision. In 2 Cor 5:17 Paul describes the ministry of reconciliation. He states that if we are in Christ, “there is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.” The gospel in all its power is not just about transforming others to my belief system and my understanding of Jesus (ethnocentrism), but is about an encoun-

ter with the one who initiates transformation in everyone involved. That is what happens with Cornelius and Peter in Acts 10–11. This is much more radical than “mutual accommodation” or conversion. Reconciliation with others becomes possi-

ble first and foremost because God acts to bring about a new creation.

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