

Reviews



THEY CRIED TO THE LORD: THE FORM AND THEOLOGY OF BIBLICAL PRAYER, by Patrick D. Miller. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994. Pp. xvi + 464.

One of the many accomplishments of Geoffrey Wainwright's influential *Doxology* (Oxford, 1980), was to bridge the gap that has traditionally separated Roman Catholic and Protestant theologians regarding the relationship between worship and theology. The way we worship affects the way we believe as surely as what we believe affects the way we worship. This basic insight led Wainwright to rethink systematic theology along these more inclusive, ecumenical lines.

In *They Cried to the Lord*, Patrick Miller has succeeded in doing the same for biblical theology. His stated purpose is

to demonstrate the inextricable connections between faith and prayer, exploring the character of prayer in Scripture and in so doing uncovering the structure and shape of biblical faith. (1-2)

This impressive work, while broad and comprehensive in scope, is carefully argued and clearly structured in ten chapters that fall naturally into four sections. Following a brief introduction Miller begins with two chapters of prolegomena. Chapter one, "Israel's Neighbors at Prayer" (5-31), examines prayer in the ancient near east (especially that of Mesopotamia, but also Egypt and Canaan) in the belief that such an investigation will uncover areas of similarity as well as differences that will throw Israel's life of prayer into greater relief. As might be expected, several differences, probably due to Israel's monotheistic posture, are uncovered. More importantly, several intriguing similarities regarding basic form and structure invite closer examination of the universality of prayer. Chapter two, "Prayer by Any

Name" (32-54), completes the prolegomena section by surveying the vocabulary and terminology one encounters in prayer texts, as well as what can be known about the gestures, times, and places of prayerful address. Most important for the argument of the work as a whole, however, is the cluster of terms that suggest prayer is best seen as dialogical or conversational in nature.

Drawing especially upon the work of Gunkel, Westermann, and Aejmelaeus, Miller masterfully synthesizes research from a variety of Old Testament disciplines and adds a veritable treasure trove of his own insightful observations in presenting the case for a dialogical understanding of prayer in three chapters that form the heart of the book. In chapter three, "Prayers for Help" (55-134), the beginning of the conversation is examined. In times of affliction or distress, Israel would turn to God, not in rigidly set patterns, but in remarkably varied ways that testify to Israel's belief that God would listen and respond. Chapter four, "The Response of God" (135-177), is concerned with showing how the conversation initiated by Israel's "prayer for help" continues, becoming true dialogue rather than wishful monologue. The so-called "oracle of salvation" with its distinctive assurance of "Fear not/do not be afraid/I am with you/I will help you" is taken as our best indication that God does in fact respond to cries of distress. Chapter five, "Doxology and Trust" (178-232), deals with the prayers of praise and thanksgiving as the final aspect of the dialogue between Israel and God that is prayer. God's gracious response to Israel's cry in the midst of its distress is now answered with Israel's own response that calls the community together to praise the Lord for what has been done.

Chapters six through nine are more topical in nature than Miller's central treatment

of prayer. Chapter six, "Prayers Women Prayed," previously published in the *Lohfink Festschrift* (Herder, 1993), examines the prayers of Hagar (Gen 21:15-19), Hannah (1 Sam 1-2), and (less convincing in my opinion) the author of Psalm 131. While Miller's consummate skill as an exegete and expositor of scripture is as evident here as in the rest of the book, and the importance of inquiring how the experience of biblical women can help us in discerning the nature of prayer is self-evident, this chapter seemed somewhat tangential to Miller's main argument and least integrated into the work as a whole. Perhaps the same points could have been made at appropriate junctures in other discussions. Chapters seven through nine, however, return to the path by discussing three types of the "prayer for help" discussed in chapter three: prayers of confession and penitence, intercessory prayer, and prayers of blessing and curse.

Although Miller has peppered his study of prayer with pertinent insights and perspectives from the New Testament throughout, in chapter ten, "The Further Witness of the New Testament" (304-335), we are treated to a model of what biblical theology, recently so maligned, can and should be: careful exposition of the continuity as well as the diversity of the two testaments that refrains from disparaging either one as it seeks to understand the difference that Jesus Christ makes.

Miller has produced a work of immense value. The central focus upon the dialogical character of prayer, while not new, has now received its most comprehensive articulation since Westermann. His refusal to treat the Psalms differently than the prose prayers of the Old Testament, as has generally been the case in the past, has proven to be highly productive, as has his strict attention to the text itself. Of special importance in this regard is Miller's judicious use of those narrative texts with prose prayers to provide a "narrativized" or contextualized investigation of Israel's prayer that is not dependent upon prior assumptions regarding the cult. Often these stories provide direct testimony that God has, indeed, responded, testimony that one usually needs to infer from the Psalms. In addition, his observations on these stories, inter-

persed among his comments usually as illustrative material for the matter at hand, function as mini-commentaries on significant biblical passages. Among the best of these, in my opinion, are his wonderful retelling of the story of Ruth as an example of the prayer of blessing (290-293) and of Abraham's plea for the innocent in Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen 18:23-32) as an example of intercessory prayer (267-270). His refutations of Westermann's denial that thanksgiving can be separated from praise (402-404, n. 2), and Cruesemann's understanding of the form of the hymn of praise (Appendix 2, 358-362) are convincing and a much needed corrective. His discussions of The Lord's Prayer (328-335) and the imprecations or curses (299-303) are among the best theological treatments of these difficult passages that this reviewer has seen.

And this is Miller's greatest contribution. Beyond his cogent synthesis of the textual, form-critical, and scholarly material surrounding the psalms (often found in the almost 1,000 endnotes that document his articulation) is a pastoral concern that proclaims "prayer and theology exist in relation to each other in a correcting circle, the one learning from the other and correcting the other...Learning to pray teaches about God" (1). This book will teach you about prayer...and about God!

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IN SEARCH OF WISDOM: ESSAYS IN MEMORY OF JOHN G. GAMMIE, edited by Leo G. Perdue, Bernard Brandon Scott, William Johnston Wiseman. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1993. Pp. 318.

WISDOM AND CREATION: THE THEOLOGY OF WISDOM LITERATURE, by Leo G. Perdue. Nashville: Abingdon, 1994. Pp. 420.

In the last twenty years scholarly exploration into scripture's wisdom literature has mushroomed. Interest has centered on

various aspects of wisdom including its theological emphasis on creation rather than history, its relation to the world and experience, its central role in intertestamental literature, its perspective on women and reference to the figure of Woman Wisdom, its practical interest in living a good life, and its fascinating and often unexplored links with the New Testament.

The central figures of this renewed exploration from the Old Testament field have produced a number of helpful works. Among them are special collections edited by James Crenshaw, John Gammie, Leo Perdue, and others; significant individual works such as those by Claudia Camp, Carole Fontaine, Norman Habel, Bernard Lang, Leo Perdue, and R. N. Whybray; and three fine introductions by Gerhard von Rad, James Crenshaw, and Roland Murphy. To this helpful array of literature can now be added two new works: one, a collection of essays in memory of John Gammie, and the second, a cross between an introduction and a theological exploration of creation in wisdom by Leo Perdue.

The collection of essays, which is prefaced by James Barr's touching remembrance of John Gammie, is geared primarily for scholars rather than beginning explorers of wisdom. Many of the essays take up very particular issues such as the concept of God in wisdom (James Crenshaw), wisdom in the psalter (Samuel Terrien) and wisdom in Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah (Joseph Blenkinsopp). One particularly perceptive essay by R. C. Van Leeuwen explores the wisdom redaction of the book of the twelve minor prophets centering on the use of the base text, Exodus 34:6-7. The essays on the more traditional wisdom books of Proverbs (Carole Fontaine), Job (Leo Perdue), Ecclesiastes (Michael Fox), Sirach (Alexander DiLella) and Wisdom of Solomon (David Winston) concentrate mostly on social setting and the thorny question of wisdom's historical development.

Theological topics are also present. Several of the essays, most notably those of Crenshaw, Perdue and Van Leeuwen, explore in some depth the relationship in wisdom between divine justice and divine mercy. Michael Fox carefully delineates

Qoheleth's radical understanding of wisdom, and David Winston adds a constructive discussion comparing Wisdom of Solomon to the teaching in the Dead Sea Scrolls.

One of most valuable aspects of this collection are those essays which deal also with wisdom in the New Testament. These essays address particularly the relation of wisdom and apocalyptic. After a perceptive introductory essay by John J. Collins, "Wisdom, Apocalypticism, and Generic Compatibility," the discussion is continued by Stephen Patterson (Q and Thomas), Richard Horsley (Mark), B.B. Scott (Matthew), E. Elizabeth Johnson (Paul), and Tina Pippin (Apocalypse of John). The fact that these authors do not agree, and even in some instances contradict one another, invites the reader into this rather complicated discussion. Here the closely detailed treatment is both the book's strength as well as its weakness. The importance of wisdom in the New Testament has often been contested on the grounds that the New Testament is grounded in apocalyptic. It is helpful that these essays explore the presence of and relationship of wisdom and apocalyptic without pitting them against each other. Thus the essays engage those whose interests center on this specific issue, but they provide little help to those looking for more of an introduction to issues of wisdom in the New Testament or those whose particular interests take them down different paths.

The second book, *Wisdom and Creation*, continues in the valuable and insightful direction we have come to expect from Leo Perdue in the area of wisdom. This book is not easily classified. The subtitle, *The Theology of Wisdom Literature*, would lead one to expect some sort of systematic or perhaps confessional approach to the intersection of wisdom and creation in the wisdom literature. What one gets instead is a remarkably thorough exegetical treatment of wisdom and creation approached through the lens of certain central metaphors. The reason for this approach is given by Perdue himself. In his final chapter he notes that

moves into the second order of theological language may have been made at the expense of the presentation, meaning,

and diversity of texts....To give an account of Old Testament faith we need to begin by paying attention to the language of the narratives and poems themselves. (325)

Thus Perdue's book is as much an introduction to wisdom literature and commentary on particular texts as it is a theology.

Some of the introductory material in each book might be a bit redundant for more advanced readers. However, Perdue's presentations are balanced and will be helpful for those who use the book as a textbook or as a reference work for pastors. The commentary centers on those texts which mention creation and wisdom, though other texts concerned with issues of justice, poverty, and history also have a prominent place. Perdue's close reading exposes significant word plays and textual subtleties not often brought to bear in theological discussions. The chapters on Sirach and Wisdom of Solomon will be particularly useful to those readers who are new to these books and to those looking for wisdom links between Old and New Testaments. Perdue lays the material out well and makes a clear distinction between these two works, not so much in their relationship to Hellenism as in their treatment of the figure of Woman Wisdom.

Perdue builds much of his discussion around certain cosmological metaphors (creation by birth, artistry, word, and battle), anthropological metaphors (one born and nurtured, artistic work, breath of God, king, and slave), metaphors for social reality (kingdom, household, city, and garden), and the metaphor of Woman Wisdom. Perdue's use of metaphor follows up and expands on his earlier book on Job, *Wisdom in Revolt*, and, not surprisingly, the chapter on Job is among the most insightful in the book. The strength of his use of metaphor lies less in his theoretical underpinning than in his thoroughgoing familiarity and use of Ancient Near Eastern material. This knowledge is particularly helpful in Perdue's extensive discussion of the figure of Woman Wisdom in Proverbs, Job, Sirach, and Wisdom of Solomon.

Both of these books are worth reading and can shed some light on the current, sometimes heated, discussions taking place in the church. Perdue's book particu-

larly can be helpful to those who want an introduction to wisdom books and an in-depth textual approach to the theological issues raised by the wisdom literature.

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PAUL THE APOSTLE TO AMERICA: CULTURAL TRENDS IN PAULINE SCHOLARSHIP, by Robert Jewett. Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster/John Knox, 1994. Pp. 192.

The premise that drives this new reading of Paul is the conviction that "contextual interpretations are a necessity for every cultural setting for the gospel to be effective, and that scholars from various cultural arenas can best contribute to the ecumenical dialogue if the distinctive insights derived from their situations are allowed to mature." (viii) Given this conviction, the author asks what a reading would look like that relates Paul's life and thought to the distinctive features of American culture.

The first five of the book's nine chapters are set under the heading "Pauline Scholarship Interacting with Cultural Trends," with the presuppositions of the book's argument set forth in chapters one and two—"Overcoming the Eurocentric View of Paul" and "Interpreting Paul in the American Context." While admitting the immense debt that is owed to European scholarship that has been so foundational in Pauline studies, Jewett argues for the overcoming of the resulting "Eurocentric" image of Paul—characterized typically by tenacious and defensive systems that emphasize Pauline hierarchical "authority" over the "cooperative solidarity that marked early Pauline communities" and by a certain pessimistic world view that assumes that the distinctive Pauline doctrines of salvation by grace and freedom from the law are only "in principle" and "could not have been socially embodied." (4-11)

In contrast, an American reading of Paul might be seen to grow out of an "affinity with Pauline radicalism."

Americans are the inheritors of [an] optimistic intellectual tradition...We have a

cultural affinity for the apocalyptic orientation of early Christianity, having shared it in the peculiar notion of being “the new order of the ages”... We are closer to Paul the founder of revolutionary, countercultural communities than are most Europeans.

Nonetheless, that does not mean that the American context welcomes Paul’s message with open arms. Jewett notes that scholarly treatments of Paul in America typically continue to show a lack of interest in the “culturally indigenous interpretation” that this work seeks to explore. (23f) Likewise, he notes the comparative silence of Paul in American pulpits and the kind of suspicion of him, for example in feminist or African American circles that tend to see him as “an authoritarian chauvinist who is fundamentally out of step with our democratic, egalitarian society” or as an alleged supporter of the institution of slavery. (15,17) It is this silence or suspicion that provides the “foil” for several of the issues addressed in the chapters. Together they argue that “a clarified view of Paul would place him, paradoxically, alongside rather than against many of his critics.”

Paul is on the side of freedom and equality. He is the defender of cultural pluralism....He is a preeminent advocate of a humane fusion between the seemingly incompatible strains of religious ecstasy, faith, rationality, and ethical responsibility. (17f)

After reviewing some of the promising directions toward “culturally contextual hermeneutics” offered by such recent Pauline scholars as E. P. Sanders, J. Christiaan Beker, and Wayne A. Meeks, Jewett concludes near the end of chapter two:

The American intellectual orientation is partially visible in the pragmatic pluralism of approaches, the lack of a single, dominating matrix, a suspicion of received systems of thought, and attention to the probable sequence of Paul’s letters. (30)

Chapters three through nine of the book represent this “pragmatism” — the agenda for the reading of Paul is set by a number of contemporary contextual issues of American society — and this “attention to se-

quence” — the argument of the book consistently depends on a historical reading of Paul that excludes those New Testament works (Colossians, Ephesians, 1 and 2 Timothy, and Titus) regarded by many as not written by the Apostle himself.

In chapter three, “Law and the Coexistence of Jews and Gentiles,” noting that “ours is one of the few remaining societies where Jewish and Christian scholars interact constantly,” Jewett tackles the complicated issue of the understanding of Paul’s view of the law and Christ and its relation to anti-Semitism. He argues that greater clarification of Paul’s position supports a dialogue of “respectful coexistence between Jews and Gentiles.” (33)

The Pauline hope of the unification of the world (Rom. 15:7-13) through the gospel of transforming love that produces respect between groups as diverse as the Jews and the Gentiles urgently needs to be placed on the agenda. (44)

In “The Sexual Liberation of Paul and His Churches” (Chapter Four), the author calls for a reappraisal of Paul’s attitude toward women, arguing for a recovery of a Pauline legacy that shows a

distinctive combination of gender equality with an affirmation of sexual differentiation [that] fell apart because of a changed social environment and the loss of the charismatic, apocalyptic, perfectionist, and transformationist elements of Pauline theology. (58)

With respect to the issue of slavery, chapter five, “Slavery and the Tactful Revolution of the New Age,” discovers that, when compared to ancient cultural assumptions, Paul’s authentic letters show a “revolutionary who struggled for the freedom of early church members in profound and successful ways.” Focus especially on the rhetoric of Philemon, notes in Paul a model of pastoral care that works by “persuasion rather than force” embodying a “revolutionary principle of fellowship and equality.” Such a principle, Jewett suggests, is instructive for a country whose commitment to freedom has not always been translated creatively to address concrete issues of slavery, prejudice, economic

subordination, and the lack of mutuality. (69)

The titles of the final four chapters, "Tenement Churches and Pauline Love Feasts," "Discharged from the Law of Consumerism," "Truth and Dark Mirrors: The Opening of the American Mind," and "Paul and the Democratic Prospect" similarly pursue other contextual issues under the heading "New Pauline Resources for the American Future." They address in turn the implications: of sacramental life and communalism for development of viable contemporary forms of economic cooperation; of the message of freedom for ones who no longer need be enslaved by conformity to consumerism and a self-centered world; of the ambiguity of the search for knowledge and truth that invites reliance on shared experiences and "dialogue with the countercultural visionaries of our time;" (109) and of Paul's development of "egalitarian, cross-cultural, democratic methods" (116) that, avoiding fanaticism, rather invite the practice of the "democratic arts of equal opportunity, equal participation, responsibility for the welfare of others, of freely speaking and carefully listening, and of public evaluation." (127).

This is a provocative book. One is attracted and stretched by the insights of Jewett's fresh contextual reading of Paul. Such a reading offers hope for the unification of the world through a gospel of transforming love that produces mutual respect and responsibility. Yet caution needs to be expressed regarding such an approach, if the agenda is set too readily or completely by the context, that Paul's theology not be dissolved into a "doctrine of tolerant pluralism" (33) nor his gospel of transforming love be severed from the particularity of his witness to the death and resurrection of Jesus the Christ. One senses, even hopes, that Paul's proclamation of the transforming power of new life in Christ is too profound to be too simply reduced to democratic principles of respectful dialogue.

This book is commended to all those who seek to preach in a manner faithful both to Paul and to the contemporary context. Aside from its challenging proposals, this book will also be of value to many as an introduction to current Pauline scholar-

ship. Jewett summarizes the contributions of numerous European and American scholars, and ample footnotes and indexes comprise approximately one third of the book's 192 pages.

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THE CORRESPONDENCE OF HENRY MELCHIOR MUHLENBERG. Vol. 1. Ed. and trans. John W. Kleiner and Helmut T. Lehmann. Camden, Maine: Picton, 1993.

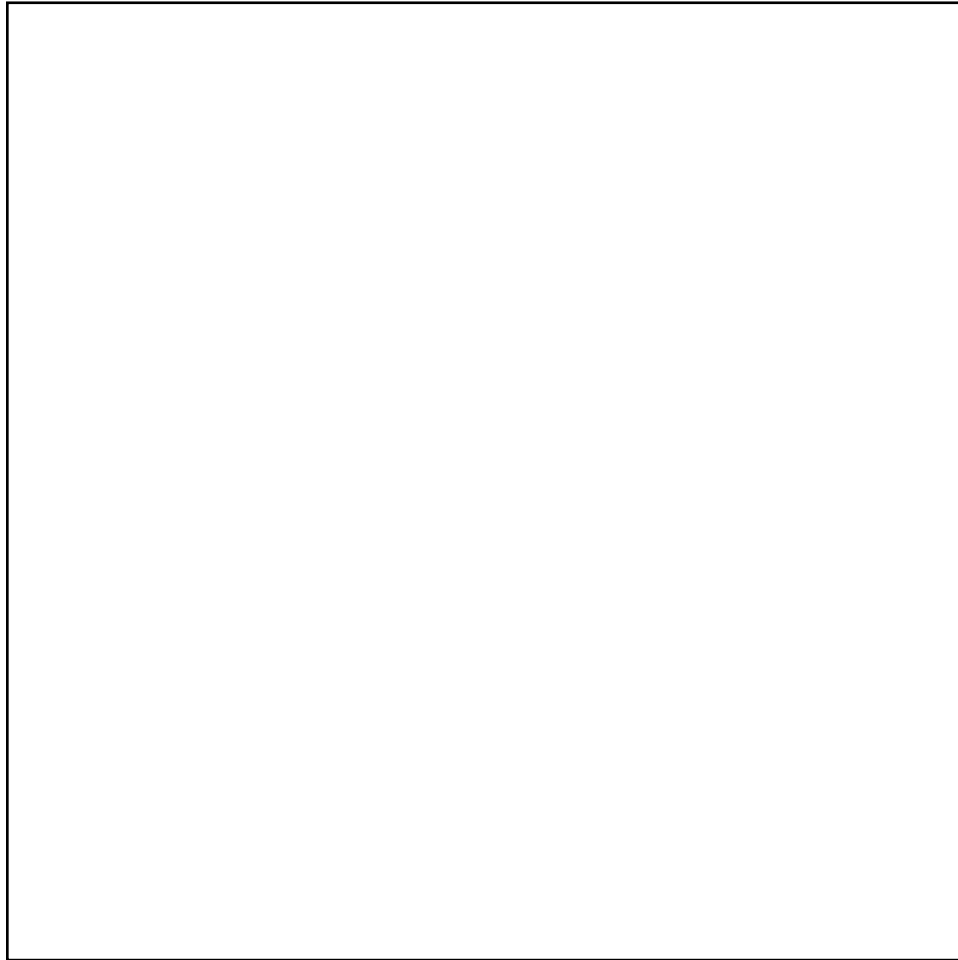
THE JOURNALS OF HENRY MELCHIOR MUHLENBERG. 3 vols. Ed. and trans. Theodore G. Tappert and John W. Doberstein. Camden, Maine: Picton., n.d.

THE ALBANY PROTOCOL: WILHELM CHRISTOPH BERKENMEYER'S CHRONICLE OF LUTHERAN AFFAIRS IN NEW YORK COLONY, 1731-1750, by William Christopher Berkenmeyer. Trans. Simon Hart and Sibrandia Geertruid Hart-Runeman and ed. John P. Dern. Camden, Maine: Picton, 1992.

THE RECORD BOOK OF DANIEL SCHUMACHER, 1754-1773, by Daniel Schumacher. Trans. with an introduction by Frederick S. Weiser. Camden, Maine: Picton, 1993.

RECORDS OF ST. MATTHEW'S LUTHERAN CHURCH OF HANOVER PENNSYLVANIA, 1741-1831. Trans. with an introduction by Frederick S. Weiser. Camden, Maine: Picton, 1994.

A small press can do heroic things. Picton Press in Camden, Maine is one. Regular publishers of genealogical and other resources, Picton has recently put out the first of several volumes of Henry Melchior Muhlenberg's correspondence in English translation along with reprints of hard-to-find and valuable sources in American Lutheran history. In addition to this, Picton continues to provide other valuable re-



sources for congregational and church historians.

Editors and translators John W. Kleiner and Helmut T. Lehmann have produced a splendid first volume of Muhlenberg's correspondence. Their translations are clear and fluent while precise. Notes and apparatus are illuminating but without the scholarly clutter that only experts need and that can easily be found in Kurt Aland's critical German edition. The letters themselves are every bit the feast that Muhlenberg's *Journals* are. They are rich with telling detail and repay careful reading. Read these letters and you will wish the English edition were already complete.

Those who have scoured bookshops for copies of Muhlenberg's *Journals* will wel-

come its reappearance as a Picton reprint. The reproduction is very good and in handy volumes a little smaller than the originals. Volume II of the reprinted edition is enriched with the addition of a thirty-six-page travel journal from 1772-1773 translated by Kleiner and Lehmann.

One nugget, from the travel journal for May 12, 1772, will have to do to represent Muhlenberg newly put into English.

I was taken nine miles farther on horseback to the outparish in the Valley to instruct more fully the young people whom my son, Henry, had taught with diligence....They praised young Henry's method and effort. It seems to me that the young people trust preachers and catechists more who are born here than the

old Europeans. Perhaps our terrible wigs and vestments are somewhat to blame for this situation; but even more to blame is one's inability to condescend to their limited concepts and make oneself understood by them. For that reason I wore only a cap and coat, and yet I had enough to do first of all to win a bit of their confidence, to contain their obvious tricks and schemes and curtail them with the moral cane. (778)

America was not Europe, and Muhlenberg figured it out quickly.

Another documentary source reprinted by Picton is the so-called *Albany Protocol*, William Christopher Berkenmeyer's account of Lutheran church life in the New York colony from 1731 to 1750. This document gives us a close look at colonial Lutheranism to the north of Pennsylvania. Telling a story very different from Muhlenberg's, it allows us to study Berkenmeyer's effort to impose European order and standards on Lutherans working out a way of life as dissenters under English rule. The *Albany Protocol* helps to explain why the Pennsylvania pattern rather than the New York one came to prevail.

Two other works from Picton are edited and translated by Frederick Weiser, a knowledgeable student of colonial Pennsylvania. *The Record Book of Daniel Schumacher, 1754-1753* is the ministerial diary of one of the many Pennsylvania Lutheran pastors to undertake work in the colony as a ministerial entrepreneur. A brief introduction by Frederick Weiser introduces Schumacher as a preacher, a poet (this section includes samples of his verse), and a folk painter and calligrapher. Weiser has also provided a translation of the historic *Records of St. Matthew's Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hannover, Pennsylvania, 1741-1831*, a volume that offers another glimpse of Lutheran life in the colonial and early national period. Weiser's introduction is quite short, but it indicates that he has written a complete history of the congregation published under its own imprint and obtainable by writing to the congregation.

Picton invites you to send a photocopy of this review and save \$20.00 on the *Muhlenberg Correspondence* (\$43.00 postpaid rather than \$63.00); \$15.00 on the *Albany Protocol* (\$38.00 postpaid rather than

\$53.00). Order *Muhlenberg's Journals* (\$202.00 postpaid) and get the first volume of the *Correspondence* free. The offer is good for 60 days after you receive this issue of *Word & World*. Write to: Picton Press, P.O. Box 1111, Camden, Maine 04843. Tell them the folks at *Word & World* sent you.

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THE EUCHARISTIC MYSTERY: REVITALIZING THE TRADITION, by David N. Power. New York: Crossroad, 1992. Pp. 370.

A former teacher of mine once wrote in a letter to me that a major reason for studying liturgical history is not so much to know or to return to the past, but to free us from the tyranny of current clichés. Another reason for such study, he continued, is to keep things in focus, to help us *locate* things within a larger whole, full of antecedents. David N. Power's *The Eucharistic Mystery: Revitalizing the Tradition* is certainly a work of focus and location—a comprehensive and critical discussion of the eucharistic tradition (one should say, Roman Catholic eucharistic tradition)—its texts, practices, theologies, and related spiritualities and how these all cluster around the breaking/blessing of bread and cup. As such, Power wants his work of systematic and practical reflection to open up the eucharistic tradition in such a way that not only will we better understand its purpose and significance; we will also be open to how it challenges our current social and ecclesial context.

This book is organized into five parts: "Stating the Question" (Part I - Chapter 1), "Eucharist in the New Testament" (Part II - Chapters 2 and 3), "Eucharist in the Pre-Nicene Church" (Part III - Chapters 4 through 7), "Eucharist in the Later Middle Ages" (Part IV - Chapters 8 through 11), and "Revitalizing the Eucharistic Tradition Today" (Part V - Chapters 12 through 15). A brief epilogue and selected bibliography of works in English bring the book to a close.

The motive for writing *The Eucharistic*

Mystery is Power's keen awareness that contemporary eucharistic celebration occurs "amid the ruins" of both traditional Roman Catholic piety and the convictions of modernity. A conventional piety, practice, and interpretation are insufficient because of the horrors of this century. Given this situation, how do believers hold the table memorial of Jesus in any meaningful way? Such a question is the one Power seeks to answer in this book, which he conceives of as a "conversation with the tradition." He is optimistic that such "conversation" with the tradition broadly conceived—which includes, as noted above, texts, official theologies, popular piety, and marginal movements—can lead to its "revitalization" and, hence, its "post-modern" renewal.

At the outset, Power provides the reader with a helpful (and necessary!) "road-map" for navigating through what is a very complex, dense, and sometimes tortuously written book. The discussion of each of the periods is guided by four principal themes (first articulated on page 14). The first is what Power calls "the canon of remembrance." This refers "to what is taken to be normative in the celebration of the Eucharist, in order that it be a faithful proclamation and commemoration of Christ's death and resurrection"—although Power quickly observes that "the normative" differs from age to age and from church to church. For instance, there has been variation in the eucharistic prayer, the reading of the scriptures, the actions of presider and people, chant and music, and the form of the bread and wine themselves.

The second principle is termed "ritual performance." For Power, this is primarily an anthropological and/or sociological matter having to do with matters of convention, belief, symbol, and institution. The important thing about "ritual performance," according to Power, is that it involves "a view of the world and of the world's relation to God" (17). As such, it is necessary to pay close attention to boundaries that ritual sets (including and excluding), rules about participation, uses of power and ideology, etc.

The third principle is the relationship between the eucharist and ethics. This rela-

tionship is to be understood on two levels—the embodiment of an ethical ideal in the eucharist itself and the ethics or praxis of the community itself as an embodiment of justice and charity. In our own time, the eucharist-ethics principle is seen most sharply in whether communities of faith are able to include the marginalized and to appropriate suffering into their vision of the world.

The fourth and last principle is the use of thought-forms available throughout the centuries to explain eucharistic meaning. Instead of looking for some pristine or ideal form of celebration and doctrinal understanding of what is said, seen, and done in the eucharist, Power advocates the necessity of paying attention to the available thought-forms that sought to assist explanation of such matters as "commemoration," "representation," and the "efficaciousness" of "the power and pasch of Christ." One proceeds in this fashion because "from the beginning the proclamation of the gospel and the memorial of Christ in the sacrament were affected by a variety of cultural patterns of thought" (19).

With these four principles in hand, then, Power embarks upon a fuller consideration of what he regards as "some key periods" in the historical development of the eucharistic tradition: New Testament beginnings, pre-Nicene church, and that part of the Middle Ages to which Thomas Aquinas' theology relates. For each of these periods, Power attends to texts, practices, spiritualities, and prevailing theologies. Of these periods as well, Power asks how they affect the current scene, for his goal is to have this critical look at tradition serve the eucharistic practice and theology of the church in our day.

As I read this book, I kept thinking about its significance and value for pastors in their work as practicing parish theologians. Would they care about a consideration of eucharistic practice and understanding from a predominantly, even narrowly, Roman Catholic viewpoint? I'm not sure, but I suspect that they, upon looking through this book, might turn to Chapter 11 and its consideration of the "Reformation and the Council of Trent" (250ff.). They might well be gratified to find Power's summary of the

characteristics of 16th-century Reformers' liturgies and wonder, as did another reviewer of this book, whether such characteristics might be "marks of the very 'Eucharist among the ruins' that he seeks," a Eucharist that is able to integrate persons, human realities, forms of prayer, the complexities of culture, a wider belonging and communion, concerns for justice and reconciliation of peoples, etc., into the promise that the gifts of Christ's body and blood offer. Yet to tweak Power for his lack of attention to Reformation thought and practice, as well as his omission of Orthodox thought and practice, is for the sake of reminding him that some of the practical initiatives and doctrinal issues of these faith-communities also need to be included if one is to really have a full-fledged "conversation with tradition" so that revitalization of practice might indeed occur.

An additional point needs to be made as well. It has to do with one of Power's principles of conversation—namely, that of "ritual performance." As noted earlier, his preference was to "unpack" this principle in a rather general anthropological and sociological manner. So, we were treated to a discussion of the purported power of ritual to allow participants to find their place in the world or its capacity to define boundaries, to articulate worldview, and to offer common identity bonding to those who take part in such activity. I suppose that Christian ritual can do these things. But I would call this principle something else—something like "ritual understanding" or "ritual strategy." "Ritual performance," on the other hand, strongly implies how the words and actions are actually *done*. For example, what is said and done with bread and cup? How are these things said and done? What do the "manual acts" of raising, elevating, and embellishing with a few signs of the cross *say* or *perform*? What do the other performatives of our ritualizing *say* or *intend*? Are they really the sort of discourse and practice that can function to promote trust in the God of Jesus Christ alone for salvation?

I should not conclude, however, on such a critical note. The book editor of this journal would remind me of my task to comment on the overall usefulness of *The Eucharistic Mystery: Revitalizing the Tradi-*

tion instead. What is done exceptionally well and often in a rather moving fashion is the unfolding of the relationship between eucharist and ethics, especially how a Christian self-awareness can go completely wrong as in the instance of the Holocaust. Given the preoccupation of some "contemporary worship" with inwardness and with promoting certain kinds of warm feelings of togetherness, Power's book can help us to realize how failure to tackle ethical considerations in our eucharistic practice and understanding can have frightening consequences indeed. Perhaps we are not as far beyond the need for repentance as our age has led us to believe. And, Power's four principles of a canon of remembrance, ritual performance, eucharist and ethics, and the adoption of current thought-forms to discuss practice and significance can guide us in our own tasks of eucharistic revitalization as well.

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THE CULTURE OF DISBELIEF: HOW AMERICAN LAW AND POLITICS TRIVIALIZE RELIGIOUS DEVOTION, by Stephen L. Carter. New York: Basic Books, 1993. Pp. 328.

It is hard to remember any book that has received as much applause from as a diverse an audience as *The Culture of Disbelief*. Stephen Carter's book has been cheered by such strange bedfellows as Bill Clinton, Pat Robertson, Ellen Goodman, George F. Will, *The Lutheran*, and *The Atlantic Monthly*. That *The Culture of Disbelief* has been recommended by such a wide range of thinkers is reason enough to read it. But the real reason for reading this book is the magnificent treatment which Carter gives to a difficult topic: the relationship between faith and politics in American life.

Carter examines legal precedents; discusses cultural patterns; investigates flash-point areas such as abortion, religion in public schools, homosexuality and capital

punishment; and examines historical data. Carter is uniquely suited to treat this topic—he is a self-avowed liberal, the William Nelson Cromwell Professor of Law at Yale, and an active Episcopalian.

Carter's thesis is that the culture of our country trivializes religious faith by treating it as irrelevant and irrational. "Religious practice is treated as a hobby—something sufficiently trivial that competing state interests can readily override it." The religious person is allowed to participate in public life, but only if he or she first translates values and ideas into non-religious terms (a translation, as Carter points out, which isn't always possible). "The message of contemporary culture seems to be that it is perfectly all right to *believe* that stuff...but you really ought to keep it to yourself..." (emphasis in original). This enforced translation requirement amounts to a separation of "church and self."

This trivializing atmosphere is dangerous for two reasons, according to Carter. First, it is a misunderstanding of the separation clause of the Constitution. Second, it discriminates unjustly against the religiously devout. As for misunderstanding the separation clause, Carter argues persuasively that the genius of the United States is that it originally allowed for religions to play a vital role in society. Today, religious freedom is widely seen as a necessary evil in a free society. But originally religious freedom was established in order to protect religions so that they could perform a positive good in society. Following Alexis de Tocqueville, Carter argues that religions are to "serve as the sources of moral understanding without which any majoritarian system can deteriorate into tyranny." The present atmosphere which trivializes faith and excludes religious rhetoric from public conversation, threatens to accomplish exactly what the free exercise clause was designed to prevent: the elimination of religions as independent voices capable of resisting evil.

Concerning discrimination against the devout, Carter writes that our culture permits a dehumanizing of religious people which we would never tolerate of any ethnic minority. "Religion...*matters* to people; it is real, and so is its influence on human

personality" (emphasis in original). "Religion, however, is treated as an inferior ground for objection." When legal judgments fail to take someone's religious convictions seriously, when faith is treated as a private hobby rather than a public part of one's identity, it is discrimination. To treat it as trivial is unjust.

Carter realizes that the clash between contemporary liberal society and religion is inevitable. Western epistemology is built upon distinguishing fact from value. But this is a distinction which religions do not acknowledge. Thus the inevitable conflict. But all the more reason to preserve the rights of religions, to value their separate ways of knowing, and to allow them to participate in society without being prejudged or trivialized.

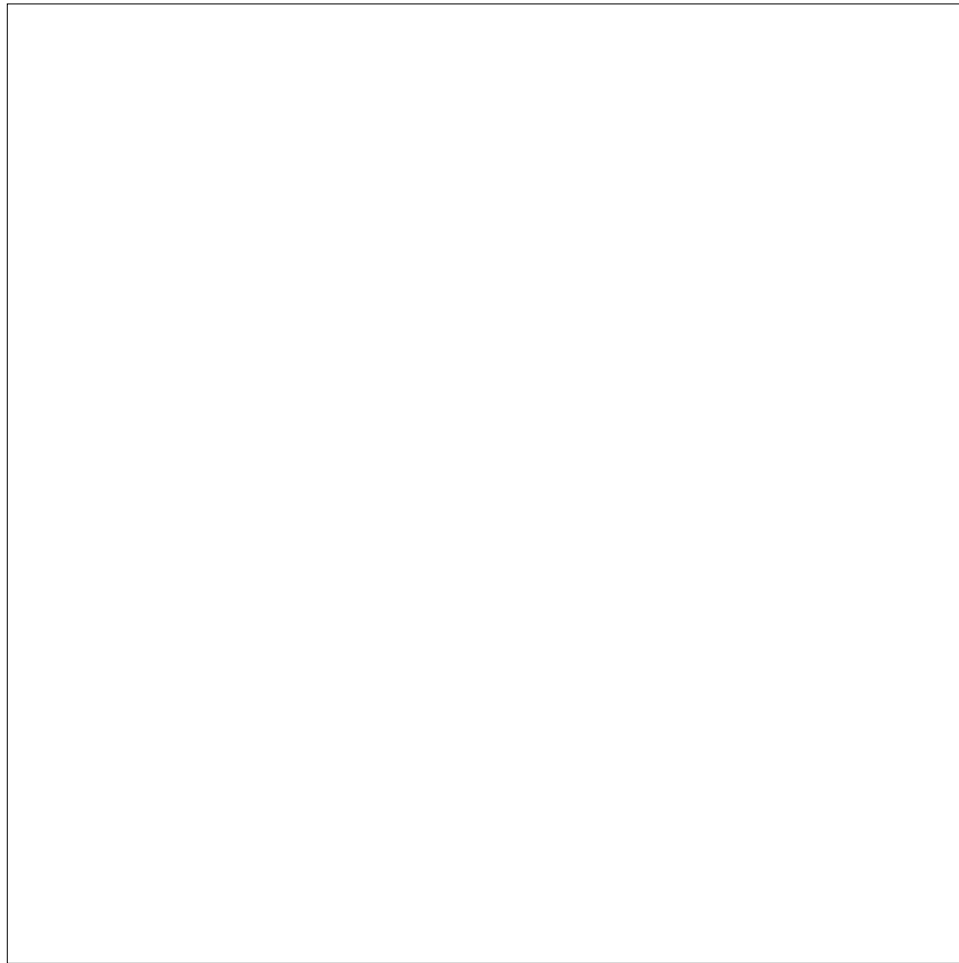
Carter's vision for the future is a public square in which everyone can participate. "What is needed is not a requirement that the religiously devout choose a form of argument that liberalism accepts, but that liberalism develop a politics that accepts whatever form of dialogue a member of the public offers. Epistemic diversity, like diversity of other kinds, should be cherished, not ignored, certainly not abolished."

Read this excellent book. Use it in a book group. Every chapter, every page yields grist for discussion mills. You and your communities will be richer for having done so.

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SOPHIE'S WORLD: A NOVEL ABOUT THE HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY, by Jostein Gaarder. Trans. by Paulette Møller. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1994. Pp. 403 including index.

Reviewers cited on the dust jacket of this book describe it as a popularization of the history of philosophy, contrasting it with the dry-as-dust texts dispensed by academicians from ivory towers. It's true—the book, authored by a Norwegian high school teacher, and written for "adults fourteen years and above," is an introduc-



tion to philosophy as none other. At last count, over seven hundred thousand in Europe and this country had purchased it.

The book traces the history of human reflection from the natural philosophers of the sixth century B.C., through Socrates, Hellenism, the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, the Enlightenment and Romanticism to Darwin, Marx and Freud. In ingenious attention to the necessity for illustration and the transfer of learning, author Gaarder highlights the similarities and differences between thinkers separated by centuries. For example, Kant's position between the rationalist Descartes and the empiricist David Hume is described in tandem with Empedocles' stance between the Eleatics with their insis-

tence on the impossibility of change and Heraclitus' argument that everything is in flux. All throughout, the instruction is larded with example after graphic example from ordinary life. Note Gaarder's illustration of the expanding universe:

If you have a balloon and you paint black spots on it, the spots will move away from each other as you blow up the balloon. That's what's happening with the galaxies in the universe....(389)

But the book is more than a history of philosophy. It is a novel, the instruction in the form of notes and letters penned by a mysterious Alberto Knox, sent to Sophie Amundsen of Lillesand, Norway, on the verge of her fifteenth birthday. The first

two notes read "Who are you?" and "Where does the world come from?" followed by a packet commencing the course of instruction. It is prefaced by the suggestion that the universe resembles a white rabbit pulled from a magician's hat, deep down into whose fur most of us live, while thinkers are always struggling up its hairs to stare into the magician's eyes. At times, the missives are addressed to a certain Hilde Møller Knag, but in care of Sophie, who races off to read her letters in a hole behind a hedge at the corner of the garden of her home.

Ultimately, conversations between Sophie and Alberto take place at a red cabin on the edge of a little lake belonging to a certain "major," and are perforated by appearances by Pooh Bear, Aladdin, Little Red Riding Hood, Alice in Wonderland, Scrooge, the Little Match Girl, Noah, Adam and Eve, an Emperor minus his clothes, Disney figures, and a goose from a contemporary Swedish tale!

The unknown addressee, whose personal effects mysteriously turn up in Sophie's possession; the appearing of comic characters without any apparent link to the plot; the dog "Hermes" that functions as Sophie's mailman; as well as the portrait of the Irish philosopher George Berkeley on the wall in the cabin beside the old mirror, from behind which not Hilde's but Sophie's, not Sophie's but Hilde's face appears, are clues to Sophie's identity and her world. That world is a fiction, a figment of the imagination of Major Albert Knag, UN observer in Lebanon, who has authored the text as a birthday gift to his daughter Hilde, and on occasion demonstrates his God-like role by introducing the unexpected and absurd.

Near the end of the novel, at a "philosophical garden party" turned orgy for Sophie's fifteenth birthday, Alberto reveals the secret of their existence:

After a thorough philosophical study—which has led from the first Greek philosophers to the present day—we have discovered that we are living our lives in the mind of a major who is at this moment serving as a UN observer in Lebanon. He has also written a book about us for his daughter back in Lillesand. Her name is Hilde Møller Knag,

and she was fifteen years old on the same day as Sophie. The book about us lay on her bedside table when she woke up early on the morning of June 15. (367-368)

The possibility that the major and his daughter, Hilde, are also creations of the imagination had earlier occurred to Alberto, once he had tipped to his own fictional self:

It is possible that a completely different author is somewhere writing a book about a UN Major Albert Knag, who is writing a book for his daughter Hilde....

Sophie then asks whether or not that "completely different author" might not himself be the creation of still another mind:

He is sitting somewhere, hiding both Hilde and me deep inside his head. Isn't it just possible that he, too, is part of a higher mind? (275)

Are the positioning of the chapter on the Irish philosopher at the mid-point of the novel, the obvious allusion to the same in the naming of Hilde's home (Bjerkely), and the assigning of an active role to Hilde from this point on in the novel clues to Gaarder's own world-view?

Everything we see and feel is "an effect of God's power," said Berkeley. For God is "intimately present in our consciousness, causing to exist for us the profusion of ideas and perceptions that we are constantly subject to." The whole world around us and our whole life exist in God. He is the one cause of everything that exists. We exist only in the mind of God. (219)

At any rate, Sophie and Alberto, awake to their identity as pawns, resolve to escape their author's control. Hilde likewise has tipped to their identity, and with help from relatives in Copenhagen, where her father will change planes on the flight home from Lebanon, peppers the airport with equivocal and ambiguous notes calculated to render him uncertain of his Olympian status. At her party, the invisible Sophie and Alberto disappear, reappear in Oslo, step into an invisible red convertible and head south, emerge at Hilde's, the daughter now happily reunited with her father but full of presentiments of things unseen. At the conclusion

of the novel Hilde remarks: "They simply disappeared from the garden party. It was as if they had vanished into thin air..." Her father replies: "The story had to end somewhere. It was just something I wrote." Then Hilde: "That was, yes, but not what happened afterward. Suppose they were here..." (392).

On the novel's last page the major tells of his visit to a bookstore and library in Kristiansand, of finding nothing about philosophy "suitable for young people," and of his resolve to attempt the project on his own. Hilde replies: "It's as if we are sitting at the very tip of the fine hairs in the white rabbit's fur."

The translator of *Sophie's World* is at times given to the reduction of sentences, to bowdlerizing, and to substitutions. For example, it was church, not school that

Hilde had cut on her birthday, and as a result tricked herself out of a round of congratulations (231). And lines from Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson's "Psalm II," not from Thomas Hardy's "Transformations," second the notion of our sailing ship-like through life with a "cargo of genes" — a curious substitution in light of the retention of lines from the far less celebrated Arnulf Øverland (327-328, 344).

If Alberto, the Major, Gaarder, the author of the book about the book, did not succeed in summoning to dizzy heights the *New York Times* reviewer who admitted a preference for Jonathan Livingston Seagull, he at least seduced over seven hundred thousand others to start the climb!

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