



**EXPLORING THE GOSPEL OF JOHN: ESSAYS IN HONOR OF D. MOODY SMITH**, edited by R. Alan Culpepper and C. Clifton Black. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1996. Pp. 488. \$42.00.

D. Moody Smith began his career with a critical evaluation of Bultmann’s source theories, and subsequently has written on numerous topics in Johannine studies. The essays collected in this volume were written by well-known scholars and offer a valuable overview of developments in Johannine studies over the past several decades.

Historical questions are the focus of several essays. In current discussion “the historical Jesus” is usually a version of the Synoptic Jesus as reconstructed by modern scholars, but Marianne Thompson rightly insists that theological factors shape the presentation of the story of Jesus in each of the gospels. After pointing out elements in John that seem to be at least as early as those in the other gospels, Thompson proposes that John differs from the Synoptics not because it is theological and they are historical, but because John was written within a different interpretive framework.

The Fourth Gospel’s relationship to various social and religious currents in antiquity has long been a focus of attention. Essays by W. D. Davies, James H. Charlesworth, and Peder Borgen consider the Gospel’s relationship to Judaism, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and Hellenism respectively. On the question of the Gospel’s social setting, J. Louis Martyn argues that the preoccupation with the issue of Jesus’ relationship to God and the insistence that Christian confession does not violate monotheistic faith shows that the Gospel was forged in the conflict between the followers of Jesus and members of the Jewish synagogue. Other New Testament writings focus on the church’s relationship to the Gentile world, but Martyn argues that this is not evident in John. Although many interpreters (including myself) think that Gentiles as well as Jews fall within the Gospel’s purview, the way Martyn poses the question is as important as the answer he gives. Rather than asking where John’s ideas *came from* Martyn helps us to ask where John’s message is *going to*. Instead of inquiring whether the “background” of the Gospel is to be found in Judaism or Hellenism, we can more profitably ask where the Gospel’s frontier is to be found—and this question is as valuable for contemporary church life as it is for biblical studies.

Literary studies figure prominently in current scholarship. Many critics find that reading the gospel as a narrative using tools developed for the study of literature—such as analyses of plot, characters, metaphors, and irony—allows them to take the text as a meaningful whole. Attention to the Gospel’s irony, from this perspective, is a way of following the movement beyond appearances to recognition of the truth conveyed by the text. More radical critics, however, do not consider the Gospel’s irony to be a stable feature of the text that allows readers to discern higher meanings, but argue that the contrasts between appearance and reality finally lead to a collapse of meaning into paradox. In response, Alan Culpepper traces the theme of water and thirst to show that Johannine irony does convey the consistent message that Jesus gives

life by means of his death, and that living water flows at the cost of his own thirst.

Many current studies focus on the final form of the Gospel rather than on the history of its composition. When considering

the fact that the Gospel seems to have two endings (John 20 and 21), historical critics have attempted to reconstruct the stages in which the Gospel was composed and edited. Working as a literary critic, however, Beverly Gaventa finds meaning in the final form of the Gospel. She observes that Christians living after Easter were aware that the story of Jesus was not really over, and the inclusion of not one ending but two reinforces the idea that the Gospel resists closure. Historical critics have often attributed the repetitions and overlapping themes in Jesus' farewell discourse (John 14-17) to multiple layers of composition. In an essay on Johannine rhetoric, however, C. Clifton Black considers the discourses in their final form using the tools of rhetorical criticism. The circular redundancy of clauses and topics reflect an elevated rhetorical style known as "amplification," in which one wheels up one impressive unit after another, "not to construct an impeccably logical proof but to wield influence upon one's audience" (225).

The final sections of the book treat major issues in Johannine theology. Although John's gospel is noted for its preoccupation with christology, Paul Meyer takes up matters of the presentation of God in the Gospel, pointing out that the emphasis on God as "Father" and Jesus as the one "sent" by God prevent the Gospel's *theology* from being swallowed up in its *christology*. The Gospel's dualistic contrast between those whose origins are from below and those who are born from above has sometimes been taken to mean that human beings have a fixed origin that determines their destiny. Leander Keck, however, rightly develops a dynamic understanding of the encounter between God and people, stressing that Jesus makes it possible to "become" God's children. In recent years Bultmann's work on John has faded in its influence, but John Painter's concluding essay offers fruitful comments based on Bultmann's work. He notes that Bultmann was indebted to Augustine, who insisted that God created people for himself and that people are restless until they rest in him. Similarly, John's prologue declares that all things are created by the Word of God, and the narrative begins with those who seek and ask questions (1:19-51). Human beings are constituted in such a way that they refuse to accept meaninglessness; they are impelled by the question about God, consciously or unconsciously. And the issue of life and death is how that question will be answered.

Limitations of space preclude discussion of the other essays, but the volume includes valuable contributions by Robert Kysar, Johannes Beutler, C. K. Barrett, Fernando Segovia, Eduard Schweizer, Stephen Smalley, James Dunn, Wayne Meeks, and Hans Weder. Together, these scholars have given us an admirable series of studies that are worth reading and rereading.

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**THE CORINTHIAN BODY**, by Dale B. Martin. New Haven: Yale University, 1995. Pp. xviii + 330.

The human body has long been a battleground for inimical ideologies. We experience daily the phenomenon that what first appears to be a narrowly defined discussion of moral action concerning the body quickly (and justifiably) expands to include the issues of power, social class, and race. Presenting itself initially as unproblematic, the body turns out to be the site of conflict over deeply held loyalties and ways of viewing the world. The body is the society written small; society is the body written large.

In *The Corinthian Body* Dale Martin explains the theological and ethical controversies evident in 1 Corinthians in terms of two different Greco-Roman modes of conceptualizing the human body. One view, held by the upper class or “strong” in Corinth, emphasized balance within the body and the hierarchical arrangement of its parts. Balance and hierarchy within the human body reflect the interest the elite had in human communities harmonized through the hierarchical arrangement of power. The other mode of constructing the human body drew attention to its extreme vulnerability to outside influences. The

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body has openings to the outer world through which forces such as demons (sometimes harnessed by magicians) invaded. This construction Martin attributes to the “weak” in Corinth for whom pollution was the greatest problem for the social and the human body. These persons were of low social status and vulnerable to the designs of masters, patrons, and others with power. Martin advances the groundbreaking argument that all of the topics which Paul addresses in 1 Corinthians, from veils to idol meat, can be best understood as conflicts generated between the strong and the weak over the construction of the human body.

With insights drawn from cultural anthropology and the close reading of ancient medical texts, which have become rich resources for other scholars of ancient culture but have until now not been employed for the investigation of the New Testament, Martin opposes the worst enemy of Pauline interpretation, anachronism. Both modes of constructing the body in the Greco-Roman context must be distinguished from the modern mind-body dualism articulated by Descartes. Descartes’ identification of the “I” with thinking itself is erroneously read into Pauline texts by modern interpreters. Instead of a dualism, Martin discovers in ancient medical writers and philosophers (even Plato!) a continuum between matter and mind. Mind is made up of the same stuff as arms and legs, only finer, lighter, and more subtle. This of

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course runs counter to the modern identification of the “self” with the mind in radical distinction from the body and leads Martin to claim that preoccupation with self distorts interpretations of ancient texts.

The book is divided into two parts, one with the heading “Hierarchy” and the other “Pollution.” In the first part, Martin explores the Pauline arguments in which the apostle’s chief rhetorical strategy is to bring about unity by acknowledging his own affinity for the position of the strong. Nevertheless, he simultaneously exhorts the strong to imitate his example of setting aside the prerogatives that their construction of the body provides and to side with the weak. This works very well in explaining the controversy over the Lord’s supper and the eating of idol meat. Martin builds on the work of Gerd Theissen, although Theissen’s notion of “love patriarchy”

as a description of Paul's position is appropriately rejected. A major contribution of Martin's book is his extension of the strong/weak framework to analysis of the controversy over speaking in tongues and the resurrection of the body. Here he demonstrates that the usual scholarly attribution of gnostic beliefs or a "realized eschatology" to the strong is unnecessary, since the position of the strong can better be accounted for in terms of the "knowledge" (reflected in medical writers and philosophers) held by the social elite about the constitution of the human body.

The second part of the book examines those moral issues that do not require Paul's accommodation to the weak, since in these instances he is already on their side. Here Martin analyses the concept of pollution. It is important to point out that Martin does not assume that Paul derives his understanding of pollution from Leviticus. The notions of the clean and unclean, pollution, and purification were by no means limited to ancient Judaism. Martin is able to show that among the lower classes disease was associated with pollution and that both were conceptualized as an invasion of the body. The strong of course would regard these beliefs as superstition. Instead, they thought of disease as an imbalance of the body's fluids.

Martin's treatment of Paul's statements concerning sex as the occasion for pollution (for the individual and the group) are especially intriguing, since he argues that for Paul the pertinent issue becomes the danger of desire, not the gender of the person desired. He makes a convincing case that those who have found Paul to be a champion of heterosexuality carried out in marriage have completely missed the apostle's antipathy to passion itself.

This book is a milestone in Pauline studies. It demonstrates that a consistent application of the theory of socially constructed knowledge is possible and fruitful for the interpretation of all of Paul's arguments, not simply those which explicitly mention social class. It is a "must read" for anyone engaged in the task of moving from Pauline texts to contemporary moral reflection.

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**THE JOHANNINE LETTERS: A COMMENTARY ON 1, 2 AND 3 JOHN**, by Georg Strecker, translated by Linda M. Maloney. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996. Pp. xlv + 319. \$46.00.

Georg Strecker (1929-1994) was professor of New Testament at the University of Göttingen 1968-1994. He earned a doctorate at the University of Marburg under Rudolf Bultmann. This Hermeneia volume is a translation of *Die Johannesbriefe übersetzt und erklärt* in the Meyer series, which was published in German in 1989. Strecker's commentary replaced the commentary on the Johannine letters by his teacher, Rudolf Bultmann, in the Meyer series (1962), which was also translated and published as one of the first volumes in the Hermeneia series (1973).

At the outset of this review, it is instructive to note the underlying presuppositions of the Hermeneia series. The series is designed to provide critical and historical commentaries. Volumes in the series utilize the full range of philological and historical tools, including textual criticism, the methods of the history of tradition, and the history of religion. The series is designed for serious students of the Bible with the expect-

tation that authors in the series “will struggle to lay bare the ancient meaning of a biblical work or pericope.” The purpose is not to move from text to proclamation, but to establish the literary and historical basis of the text within its context. The series purposefully abstains from a “homiletical translation of the Bible.”

Strecker provides a thorough introduction to the Johannine letters, including witnesses to the letters from the patristic writings, the history of the Greek text, the place of the letters in the history of the New Testament canon, the identification of a Johannine school, and his suggested outline of 1 John. He identifies the Johannine letters and the Gospel of John as closely related in language and ideas. He proposes that a “school of John” was responsible for the writings, which accounts for the differences and agreements among them. While the evangelist of the Gospel of John and the author of 1 John are unknown, “the presbyter” (2 John 1; 3 John 1) is identified as the author of 2 and 3 John. He dates 2 and 3 John around 100, the earliest of the Johannine writings, and the writings of 1 John and the Gospel of John following in the first half of the second century. He notes that the ancient tradition of Asia Minor remains as the most probable place for the composition of the Johannine writings.

Because the Gospel of John and 1 John are “strikingly different in both form and content,” Strecker concludes that 1 John does not reflect knowledge of any tradition about the life of Jesus, and characterizes the Gospel of John as reflecting a christological orientation and 1 John as reflecting an ecclesiological orientation. He rejects the theory of his teacher, Rudolf Bultmann, that an “ecclesiastical redaction” is in evidence in both the Gospel of John and 1 John. He identifies 1 John as neither an occasional letter nor a theological treatise, but as a “homily in the form of a letter.” Noting that many exegetes have attempted to discover “a clear-cut form within the letter,” Strecker sees 1 John “as a relatively loose series of various trains of thought hung together on the basis of association” (xiv). Following an introduction (1:1-4), he proposes a division of 1 John into practical (parenetic) and theoretical (dogmatic) sections which alternate throughout the letter. There is parenthesis in 1:5-2:17, 2:28-3:24, 4:7-5:4a and 5:13-21, and dogmatic exposition in 2:18-27, 4:1-6 and 5:4b-12. The form of 2 and 3 John is that of a letter, with 2 John sent to a community and 3 John to an individual.

Although the literary divisions that Strecker suggests for 1 John are not convincing, this does not detract from his theological understanding of the letter. His underlying presupposition is that the indicative gift present in Christ is simultaneously connected with the ethical imperative. In dividing 1 John into parenetic and dogmatic sections, there will be overlapping words that express both the indicative reality and the imperative response. Thus Strecker introduces the parenetic section, 1 John 2:12-17: “The christologically grounded, indicatively promised forgiveness of sins is the precondition for the imperative of *agape*, and keeping the commandments is the mark of knowing God (2:2-3, 5-6)” (47). On 1 John 3:16 he writes: “The indicative of the Christ event founds the imperative of the Christian life (cf. 1 John 4:11; 5:12-13)” (115). Strecker’s theological work is a clear corrective to the interpretation of the Johannine letters as containing little more than a collection of moral maxims. He will often make theological connections with the writings of Paul, both by way of contrast and similarity.

There are nineteen excurses on words and themes throughout the commentary. These studies establish the history and use of the word or presence of the theme in other literature, and its importance in discerning the theology of the Johannine letters. The excurses include: life,

fellowship, joy, light and darkness, to abide, commandments, to anoint and anointing, the false teachers in 1 John (Docetism), confidence or boldness, being born of God, to love and love, to witness and witness, the textual tradition of the “Comma Johanneum,” second repentance, to know, the commandment of mutual love, the Antichrist, early Catholicism, and Diotrephes and the Presbyter. Strecker provides his own translation of the Greek text, together with grammatical insights and decisions

which illumine and clarify his rendering of the text. There are extensive footnotes throughout the commentary which carry on a running conversation, reflecting agreements and disagreements with major contemporary commentaries on the Johannine letters as well as references to the interpretation of the letters throughout history.

The volume concludes with an extensive bibliography of commentaries, representing the ancient church, the middle ages, the Reformation, the 17th-18th centuries, the 19th century, and the 20th century; individual studies related to the Johannine letters; indices to passages; and Greek words and subjects. This commentary is the most complete treatment of the Johannine letters now available, and it will be a major reference work for further exegetical work in these letters. The volume fulfills expectations of the Hermeneia series as a critical and historical commentary. It also provides interpretive insights into foundational theological themes present in these letters.

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**THE DOMESTICATION OF TRANSCENDENCE: HOW MODERN THINKING ABOUT GOD WENT WRONG**, by William C. Placher. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1996. Pp. xii + 222. \$19.99 (paper).

If we were to chart a course through the morass of postmodern theologies, we might begin to find our bearings by carefully examining the understanding of God in premodern theology and then what became of it in the modern period. William Placher, Professor of Philosophy and Religion at Wabash College, convincingly argues that what was lost in modernity was the once solid conviction of “the mystery, the wholly otherness of God, and the inadequacy of any human categories applied to God” (6). Placher argues that recent critiques of “classical theism,” which accuse premoderns of clinging to a distant, immutable, unapproachable and therefore irrelevant deity (Mark C. Taylor, Gordon Kaufman, process theologians), fail to appreciate how premodern theologians conceived God’s dynamic interaction with the world.

To substantiate his thesis, Placher examines the concept of God in the writings of three premodern theologians—Aquinas, Luther, and Calvin. Although contemporary philosophers pay great attention to the metaphysical implications (and limitations) of Aquinas’ doctrine of God (especially the five “proofs” of God’s existence), there is a general failure to recognize that for Aquinas knowledge of God culminates in christology. At the heart of Aquinas’ theology is not metaphysics and analogy (as in his “Thomist” summarizers, popularizers, and detractors) but the

wisdom of God revealed in Christ. Luther, in the climate of late medieval works-righteousness, rejects both the prevailing theological options of mysticism and the *via moderna* (Ockham and Biel). Instead he claims paradoxical knowledge of God only through the folly of the cross. God remains hidden where God does not choose to be revealed. Furthermore, for Luther, the cross ensures God remains mysterious even when revealed (unlike certain “Lutheran orthodox” systematicians). Calvin’s theology, according to Placher, is thoroughly “biblical, practically oriented, and consciously accommodated to human capacities” (53). For all these reasons, Calvin’s approach is anti-speculative, aiming to move human beings to faith and obedience but not to know God’s nature. Both his discussion of predestination and of the Trinity demonstrate Calvin’s respectful recognition of God’s transcendence (unlike “Calvinist” dogmatists).

So, unlike these three exemplary premodern theologians who instinctively honored God’s otherness even while witnessing to God’s revelation in Christ, their theological heirs knew all too much about God. Whether Roman Catholic, protestant, or philosophical in orientation, the trend in the seventeenth century was to claim that analogy and reason can give definitive knowledge of God. Placher cites ample evidence from authors of this period (e.g., Suarez, Quenstedt). This leads to what Placher calls “the domestication of God”

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just as parallel trends among pietists, Jansenists, and Puritans lead to “the domestication of grace.” With the eighteenth-century enlightenment deism it only got worse as reactionary apologists unwittingly submitted to the rationalist terms of debate. Modern theologians simply presume to know too much about God and God’s way of working in the world.

Contrary to charges by the current critics of classical theism, neither Aquinas nor Luther nor Calvin ever claimed to solve the problem of evil. While each was convinced that all things occur within the scope of God’s providence, never did they presume to explain *how* God accomplishes such. Again, God’s transcendence sets a limit on human knowledge. Likewise, the modern theological problems of God’s location, miracles, and the relationship between grace and works never became urgent in an age when God was conceived as both transcendent *and* immanent. Another indication of the shift which occurred in modern theology is the marginalization of the Trinity.

Placher’s two concluding chapters underscore his diagnosis of a central illness in contemporary theology: “theologians get in trouble when they think they can clearly and distinctly understand the language they use about God” (181). Either they begin to describe God as simply another agent in the world (although sometimes using superlative language) or they describe divine and human agency in mutually exclusive terms. Instead, Placher argues, we must retrieve a premodern sense of the transcendent mystery of God even while attending to the biblical narratives which tell us of God’s character. This biblical revelation points us to those acts of God in the world which have particular significance for discerning the meaning of all of history. The inner testimony of the Spirit leads us to see with the eyes of faith God’s hand in history. “Thus, by way of initiatives from God, we come to know a God who remains utterly transcendent” (200). A theodicy which would dare to say too much about God’s motives is precluded.

One great value of *The Domestication of Transcendence* is that it brings a theology like Luther’s into encounter with contemporary debate. Placher’s argument opens a potentially

refreshing dialogue, providing needed oxygen both for those still breathing the stale air of theological bomb shelters from the Thirty Years' War and also for those adrift in the rarified air of postmodernity. For instance, Placher argues that a premodern like Luther is needed to instruct a postmodern world in taking the reality of God *qua* God seriously. "Let God be God!" (Watson). Informed at every turn by the theology of Karl Barth and committed to narrative theology, Placher assists the reader to see very clearly what has been at stake in the shifts from premodern to modern to now postmodern thought. One learns much from Placher's rich use of references to theologians past and present. Placher is an erudite guide in pointing out what must not be sacrificed in any attempt to construct a postmodern theology: the mystery of a transcendent God who chooses to be revealed in human history, even on a cross.

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**MANY GODS, MANY LORDS: CHRISTIANITY ENCOUNTERS WORLD RELIGIONS**, by Daniel B. Clendenin. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995. Pp. 189.

Daniel Clendenin, graduate staff member at Stanford University for InterVarsity Christian Fellowship, offers a conservative evangelical response to the challenge of religious pluralism. His basic question is: "How should people who are convinced that Jesus Christ is the only way to the Father (John 14:6), and the only name by which we must be saved (Acts 4:12), respond to the many and wildly varied competing truth-claims of other world religions?" (10). In his attempt to deliver an answer, Clendenin starts with four strong chapters, but ends with two strange and weak chapters-and finally loses what is at stake in the question.

Chapter 1 is devoted to clear definitions of the various meanings of pluralism, reasons for our new awareness of this phenomenon, and basic introductions to the

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three well-known paradigms that have typified the Christian response: exclusivism, inclusivism, and pluralism (the third paradigm here referring to the more technical theory of how to handle the empirical fact of religious pluralism and the whirl of competing truth claims). We are now set to see how these paradigms compare to one another and hold up under philosophical analysis and biblical scrutiny, but Clendenin is careful to set the tenor of the ensuing discussion by confessing that, regardless of our conclusions, "God will act in such a way as to treat all people with perfect love, justice and mercy," and by enjoining us to personal theological modesty about our positions (32).

In chapter 2, Clendenin examines some "prevailing views about religion in general," moving from a total rejection of religion as represented in such thinkers as Comte, Feuerbach, and Marx to a radical pluralist option which considers all religions as "true and good," that is, "as limited but valid human apprehensions of the infinite divine reality" (49). The problem with both of these positions, the author rightly holds, is that they attempt to prove too much; either all religion is little more than an illusion or all religions are basically true and good. Clendenin's own perspective is a media ting position based on the Christian tradition and what we know from



human experience—what he calls a “Christian realism”—which acknowledges that “human religiosity is an ambiguous phenomenon that sometimes contains elements of truth, goodness, and beauty, but also elements of error, evil, and ugliness” (51). To support this judgment, Clendenin examines the scriptural witness and reflects a bit on our common experience about natural or general revelation, defined as “what all people everywhere can learn about God without any special divine assistance” (51). So, why finally the ambiguity at the heart of the religious phenomenon? It all depends, Clendenin says, upon the human response. “The subjective human response to the free grace of God is the decisive element in whether the religious impulse manifests itself in primarily good or evil ways” (56). Clendenin explains:

Not all people have equal access to the Christian gospel; some people never hear. But all people have similar if not equal access to the natural revelation of God in his creation, his providence, and their consciences. Unfortunately, though, not all people respond to God’s natural revelation in equally positive ways. Some people respond in ways that conform to truth, beauty, and goodness—and these the Christian freely acknowledges. Others respond in counterproductive ways, bringing forth evil, falsehood, and ugliness. (56-57)

Despite whatever truth one might find in this way of putting things, the basic flaw lies in its enormous abstraction, which would become apparent to Clendenin if he were actually to apply his talk about “general revelation” to most major religious traditions and their adherents. The painfully obvious fact is that many religions claim to be, at least in some sense, revealed religions, and anyone who attempts to evaluate—morally or theologically—the phenomenon of “religion” by applying beforehand the rubric of “special” revelation to Christianity and “general” revelation to all other religions is engaging in reductionism and not a little question-begging. Whether those “special” revelations are true is another question; the point Clendenin has missed is that one cannot in fairness deny the category to others. People of other faiths respond to the (often “revealed”) particulars of their traditions, not merely to abstract notions of God in “creation, providence and conscience.”

In chapter 3 Clendenin moves to a more in-depth examination of those three paradigms mentioned earlier which suggest how we might view the religions and their unique truth-claims in relation to one another, and he presents fairly even-handed and nuanced treatments of each position. In chapter four (“The Failure of Pluralism”), however, he takes off the gloves and does a smashing good job of smashing the pluralist position, systematically attacking, *inter alia*, its *ad hominem* argumentation, dubious historical and epistemological presuppositions, reductionist christology and misguided notions of dialogue and toleration.

So much for the pluralist position. I now quite naturally expected a showdown be-

tween the two remaining paradigms (exclusivism and inclusivism) in the remaining chapters of the book. And I was disappointed. The question dies at the beginning of chapter 5. In chapters 5 and 6 Clendenin says that he intends to “leave behind these paradigms [exclusivism and inclusivism] in order to explore the biblical narrative on its own terms to see what exactly is the nature of the relationship between biblical faith and the world religions” (118). Why? What

happened to the long-expected bout between the remaining paradigms? The answer is that it has overdosed on theological modesty.

Clendenin says that there may indeed be persons who are saved by Christ even though they do not or cannot call on him. Generally, he says, Christians have recognized three such kind of cases: believers before the time of Christ, babies who die in infancy, and mentally handicapped persons. Whether people of other religions might constitute a fourth exception is “another question” (I was under the impression that it was *the* question Clendenin was attempting to answer), but clearly, the author says, since the ordinary and biblically-authorized way people get saved is by calling upon the name of Christ, it is “impossible and unwise to comment” upon any exceptions. This, he assures us, is in line with that theological modesty proffered in chapter one. “Except for any pious hope we might have about those who have not heard or cannot hear the gospel, we should remain silent as to the particulars of this matter. At times honesty dictates a confession of ignorance, and I believe that to be true regarding the extent of salvation among peoples of other religions” (119).

Further, our practical obedience to the Great Commission must be unambiguous, and this need for evangelism seems to Clendenin to undercut any real need to develop the inclusivist position. While chapter 5, which focuses on the Old Testament, brings to light instances of God’s redemptive work beyond the boundaries of the covenant community, the upshot of Clendenin’s examination of scripture in chapters 5 and 6 amounts to a pretty unrelenting exclusivist position. This is an unpopular position, but what else, Clendenin asks, should believers expect? “Christians should recognize that scorn of exclusivist views has been a common response since the time of Christ himself. I do not at all mean to sound cavalier, but rather than biting our nails or experiencing a craven loss of nerve, we might just as well shrug our shoulders and ask, ‘What else is new?’” (158).

In sum, while this book might be helpful on account of its clearly-written introductory material and its solid critique of the pluralist position, the really interesting question never gets much treatment. The reader comes to this book in hopes of finding some insight as to how to respond to “the many and wildly varied competing truth-claims of other world religions.” He or she reads nearly two-hundred pages only to be told that (a) theological modesty and obedience to the Great Commission forbids us to comment upon the possibility of those who are saved apart from calling upon Christ, and that (b) exclusivism, despite its dialogical warts, is obviously the only position warranted by scripture. What fuels the real question has for the most part been forgotten. Many inclusivists, especially those of the more moderate persuasion, would argue that their position attempts to account for tensions precisely within the scriptural witness—which careful theological reflection cannot deny—and that inclusivism is by no means inimical to the Great Commission. It seems strange to have to point this out, since Clendenin himself does a good job in chapter 3 of pointing out inclusivism’s many scripturally-based and theologically responsible warrants. The back cover of this book gurgles that “provocative, painful questions” dealing with God’s revelation through one or many religions and the eternal destiny of people of other faiths are of great interest to Christians. True enough. Clendenin just hasn’t worked through enough of the theological neuralgia to offer a very helpful response.

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**MARY THROUGH THE CENTURIES: HER PLACE IN THE HISTORY OF CULTURE**, by Jaroslav Pelikan. New Haven and London: Yale University, 1996. Pp. x+ 267. Illus.

People who bake bread say it is a task that cannot be accomplished swiftly. Time and care must go into the process, from the mixing, through the kneading, to the baking—not to mention the eating. If something similar can be said of good books, then Jaroslav Pelikan offers a similar testimony in his *Mary through the Centuries*; he admits that he was already contemplating this study of Mary well before the 1985 publication of his previous work, *Jesus through the Centuries*. Indeed, the subject of Mary seems to have occupied him even longer as a scholar, for this book is a conclusion to his fifty years as a classroom teacher. The material *has* been well mixed, kneaded, and baked to near perfection; the result is a nourishing book that should satisfy nearly everyone's taste.

Pelikan confesses at the outset that his subject is endlessly fascinating. 'Mary' has been the most common woman's name for nearly 2000 years. She has provided an image of what it means to be feminine in a way that her son Jesus has not for the masculine (1). Moreover, Mary has been portrayed in art, music, and literature more than any other woman in history, a claim the author illustrates profusely in the course of his narrative.

The Virgin Mary has a pivotal position in the history of western spirituality, social history, and popular religion. In sixteen chapters, Pelikan examines the ways in which Mary has been regarded, the impact she has had on the life and devotion of Christian believers, and her place in the history of culture. If, as Pelikan claims, the Virgin Mary has been an inspiration to more people than any other woman who ever lived (2), then her influence is based on very little direct literary evidence. If all the scriptural references to Mary were printed sequentially, the manuscript would be only a few pages long.

That the tradition has made so much of Mary is a result of what Pelikan calls "the methodology of amplification." That is, "the process of appropriating this (relatively sparse) material for the purposes of Marian devotion and doctrine, which may be described as a methodology of amplification, was, on one hand, part of the much larger process of allegorical and figurative interpretation of the Bible, to which we owe some of the most imaginative and beautiful commentaries, in word and in pictures" (25).

In two early chapters Pelikan introduces fifteen terms or images by which Mary has been regarded over the centuries. These terms range from the devotional (*Ave Maria*) to the typological (*The Second Eve*); from the theological and doctrinal (*Theotokos*) to the moral (*The Model of Faith in the Word of God*); from the inspirational (*The Woman of Valor*) to the apotheosizing (*The Assumption of the Mater Gloriosa*). Then, in more extended chapters, the author discusses the titles and images at greater length, usually by juxtaposing additional titles and images.

For example, in a chapter entitled "The Second Eve and the Guarantee of Christ's True Humanity" Pelikan traces the parallel between Mary and Eve. Mary, of course, came to be regarded in the early centuries of the church as the second Eve, because the mother of Jesus exercised saving obedience, in contrast to the calamitous disobedience of our first parent. But, in a theme that is repeated elsewhere in the book, Mary also performs a function that impacts on the

way in which Jesus himself has come to be regarded. Summarizing the witness of early church figures, Pelikan observes: “it was the voluntary and virginal obedience of Mary by which the voluntary and virginal disobedience of Eve was undone and set aright, [and] Mary became, by that voluntary obedience, both the Second Eve and the principal guarantee of Christ’s humanity” (50).

Moreover, in this role of Second Eve, Pelikan finds the first in a series of ways in which Mary has come to be seen as Our Lady of the Paradoxes. Here she is Virgin but Mother, Human Mother but Mother of God. Later she will be regarded as epitomizing the glorification of virginity over matrimony as well as, paradoxically, the celebration of matrimony, but not virginity, as a sacrament (113).

Not only has Mary many titles, but she also performs many functions in the life and theology of the Christian tradition. In a very provocative chapter Pelikan describes Mary as the Heroine of the Qur’an. Seeing her as a bridge, a *pontifex*, between the Christian and Muslim worlds, Pelikan traces the evidence of Mary in the holy book of Islam and draws a startling conclusion. “The urgent need to find symbols and concepts in our several cultural traditions that can perform the function of a *pontifex*, the function of priestly mediation and bridge-building, suggests that there probably has been no symbol or concept in Christendom that has carried out this ‘pontifical’ vocation of mediation with more success and more amplitude than Mary” (78). In the discussion between Christians and Muslims, Mary has a way of defining who Jesus was. In Christian orthodoxy Jesus was God’s son and son of Mary; but for Muslim orthodoxy, antithetically, God does not have a son. Therefore, for Christians and antithetically for Muslims, “the key to the correct understanding both of who Jesus was and of what he did was Mary, his mother” (75).

The book is filled with insights and historical information. In a few paragraphs Pelikan compresses the history of the rosary (98f.); elsewhere he gives a thumbnail sketch of the medieval rationale for Mary’s being born without sin. Citing Scotus, Pelikan observes that “Mary needed Christ as Redeemer more than anyone did...not on account of the sin that was present in her, but on account of the sin that would have been present if that very Son of hers had not preserved her through faith” (197).

It is hard to fault Pelikan’s encyclopedic grasp of his subject. At times, though, his narrative becomes very dense, especially for a reader who is not familiar with the issues under discussion. The discussion on Mary as Theotokos, for example, is very technical, requiring some rereading of the linguistic and theological distinctions between *mneme* and *chreia*. Elsewhere, in his chapters on the figure of Mary in Dante’s *Divine Comedy* (chapter 10) and Goethe’s *Faust* (chapter 12), the discussion may not be completely accessible to those unfamiliar with these works.

Nonetheless, it is in its frequent references to literature, poetry, music, sculpture, and art that the book is most illuminating. Mary’s influence in art is seamlessly folded into the narrative so that virtually no chapter closes without some reference to a work of art. Two examples will serve for dozens. In discussing the unequalled reign Mary has had in art and music, Pelikan cites the composers Verdi and Boito: “but Arrigo Boito’s adaptation of Shakespeare’s *Othello* for Verdi’s opera in 1887 followed Gioacchino Rossini’s opera *Otello* of 1816 in adding an *Ave*

*Maria* to Shakespeare's text for Desdimona to sing just before her death" (2). It makes one want to go out and acquire CDs of the three works just to listen to the virgin's influence.

Elsewhere, in discussing the iconographic and theological development of the doctrine of the immaculate conception, Pelikan cites the visual evidence of paintings and panels devoted to the "childhood of the Virgin." "The almost naturalistic depiction of her childhood was evident in Peter Paul Rubens' *Anna Teaching Mary*, which could be taken to be the picture of a normal bourgeois family, with the mother teaching and the daughter learning. But as it has done with the doctrine of Mary throughout history, Christian art often anticipated the development of dogma" (194). Many of the works Pelikan discusses (though unfortunately not all) are reproduced in the book. Eighteen colored illustrations present a handsome and instructive artistic history of the Annunciation.

Pelikan may very well be correct when he says that Mary's influence extends even to those who do not especially believe in or care about her or her influence on the development of doctrine. At one point he compares the parallel developments of the doctrine of the Trinity and the doctrine of Mary. Then he deftly twits those who accept the former but not the latter, since neither is a doctrine based in scripture (14). He also challenges those who have an interest in piety and spirituality to do some systematic thinking with regard to Mary. This challenge is especially strong in his chapter on appearances by the virgin—the latest one apparently being her image in rainbow hues on the side of the Seminole

Finance Corp. building in Clearwater, Fla., as reported and illustrated in an Associated Press article of December 20, 1996.

Anyone interested in lucid writing, in perceptive historic, artistic, and theological musings, and in the development of doctrine and spirituality will certainly enjoy reading *Mary through the Centuries*. There would be no Jesus if he didn't have a mother. Pelikan honors the one by honoring the other in this book which admirably concludes his own half-century of teaching.

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**THROUGH THE EYES OF WOMEN: INSIGHTS FOR PASTORAL CARE**, edited by Jeanne Stevenson Moessner. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996. Pp. 352. \$22.00 (paper).

*Through the Eyes of Women: Insights for Pastoral Care*, edited by Jeanne Stevenson Moessner, is a collaboratively produced collection of essays by women, bringing to bear a feminist perspective on the practice and theory of pastoral care. It was preceded in 1991 by another such collection, *Women in Travail and Transition*, co-edited by Moessner and Maxine Glaz. Both projects had their genesis in the meetings of the Society for Pastoral Theology, to which many of the essays' authors belong. Both collections stand, along with Christie Cozad Neuger's *The Arts of Ministry*, as key texts outlining the state of the questions for feminist or womanist scholars and practitioners in the field of pastoral care.

How is pastoral care changing as women are given a voice? What does pastoral care look like when informed by a feminist analysis of relationships, systems, and individual development? The essays in this collection return repeatedly to several benchmarks of a feminist pastoral care. First, there is the commitment to listen to women's experience, in all its particularity. Second, there is the conviction that one cannot hear women's experience accurately without an analysis of systemic forces such as sexism. Third, there is a revaluing of the relational matrix of selfhood, which has been symbolically relegated to woman's sphere and consequently devalued in the dominant culture.

Do we need feminism to teach us to listen to women? Most people trained in pastoral care intend to listen to women's experience as attentively as to men's, and to hear it in all its particularity. There are vivid examples in these essays, though, of how well-meaning caregivers fail to hear a woman's experience because they are responding to her out of generic assumptions or projections associated with cultural constructions of gender, race, age, class, or sexual orientation. A white CPE student visits an African-American woman in a hospital, and comes away idealizing her "strong faith," feeling inadequate to offer her pastoral care, and believing that she probably doesn't need anything in the way of spiritual care (Snorton, 50). A man hears a woman tell of her anxiety in her pregnancy and her frustration that all the caregivers she encounters express concern about everyone in her family except her. He offers to pray for her, and proceeds to say a prayer focused entirely on "the baby in this mother's womb" (Bohler, 29). A seventy-year-old woman, after a mastectomy, wants to consider the option of reconstructive surgery, but meets resistance from her family and doctor, who think she shouldn't worry about losing a breast at her age (Henderson, 210-11). Being well-meaning is no guarantee of hearing women's experience, when all the "isms" stand in the way.

The authors agree that one cannot hear women's experience without a systemic analysis that highlights the pervasive distortions of sexism. It is all too easy to see a woman's eating disorder, or her depression, or her "excessive" grief at her mother's death, to be a matter of individual pathology, when a systemic analysis might help one see the symptom in a much broader context, leading to very different (and more empowering) forms of care. It is often a crucial part of this care for the woman herself to gain this systemic perspective on her own situation, so that she knows she is not alone, and can see the societal pressures and power dynamics contributing to her dis-ease.

One of the insights setting the tone for new forms of care is the revaluing of relationality. The work of building and maintaining personal relationships has been largely women's work in our culture, and while sometimes idealized, it has been undervalued in comparison to self-assertion, competition, and independence (or nondependency). Feminist thinkers such as Judith Jordan, psychologist at the Stone Center, have been building a more balanced theory of human development, where the self is always a self-in-relation. This concern for relationality, together with a realistic awareness of how relationships are skewed by power differentials, leads the authors of these essays to pay careful attention to the nature of the relationship between givers and receivers of pastoral care. It also leads several of them to emphasize the importance of group settings (retreats, women's study groups, support groups) where women can come to themselves in the company of other women.

The collection includes several different sorts of essays. A few thought pieces address pastoral care broadly, assessing what it would mean for pastoral care to be female-friendly (Bohler), for caregivers to pay as much attention to public policies as to personality types (Couture), for spiritual care of women to include critical analysis of the structures and systems within which women live (Liebert). Several essays tackle thorny issues in theological anthropology of great import to women: anger, aggression, love as self-sacrifice. Many of the essays discuss particular situations facing women and offer insights for care in those situations. Especially clear and thought-provoking are the essays on caring for women who are developing lesbian identities (Marshall), women undergoing mastectomies (Henderson), and older women who share long-kept “shameful” secrets (Justes). Stinson-Wesley’s chapter on survivors of rape gives clear guidelines to caregivers, and Glover-Wetherington’s essay on women entering ministry is a well-researched discussion of the systemic issues that surface in and around placement, internships, and collegial relationships. Put this collection together with *Women in Travail and Transition*, and you will have a range of essays covering most of the significant “women’s issues,” as well as an up-to-date theoretical discussion of the effect of systemic analysis on the field of pastoral care.

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**AMAZING GRACE: THE LIVES OF CHILDREN AND THE CONSCIENCE OF A NATION**, by Jonathan Kozol. New York: Crown Publishers, 1995. Pp. 272.

Many excellent resources are available to help the faithful enter more deeply into the word. Jonathan Kozol’s challenging book, on the other hand, draws us into the other half of this journal’s name, the world. Yet the title of Kozol’s book might warn us that having made this profound journey into the world, we might also find a more poignantly true word of God’s amazing grace.

Jonathan Kozol is a sensitive writer and oral historian who spent over two years walking the streets and meeting in the homes of people in Mott Haven, one of the poorest communities in the United States. He shares with us the conversations that he had with the people of this area of the South Bronx and thus gives us a new perspective on life in the ghettos which our nation has created. Through those conversations, the poor cease to be for us an abstraction about which we can debate or a problem which we need to eliminate. They become for us people whose lifestyle and character are at least as complex as our own. We are given a glimpse of the people of Mott Haven which exposes the illusions of the conventional portrayals of the poor. And we become aware of how the way of life which many of us enjoy is purchased at a great price ultimately paid by many others. Kozol takes us across a great divide so that Lazarus might be seen outside the gate.

We listen to the stories of longtime Mott Haven resident Alice Washington. She is the one of twenty-seven men, women, and children in her apartment building who

have contracted AIDS. A woman of great dignity and courage, she shares with us many of the indignities that she has had to face. After working two jobs for almost twenty years, she needed to “turn for mercy to the City of New York.” Yet “mercy” does not describe in the least what she has received. Mrs. Washington tells us of four-day waits (not four-hour, four-day!) in hospital emergency rooms. She shares with us the experience of having her assistance cut off for weeks, numerous times, due to computer or human error.

She gives witness to the people she has known, many of whom have died brutal deaths. She speaks of her hopes for her son, David. We are with her when she proudly announces her son’s acceptance into City University. Throughout the book, she responds to media coverage and politicians’ questioning of her people, offering us a very different perspective on contemporary America. And she asks some very tough questions like, “Do you think America likes children?”

Mrs. Washington is not the only person we meet. We listen to the poetic ruminations of South Bronx writer and historian Juan Bautista Castro, as he talks about the context in which he lives or about his favorite opus, Milton’s *Paradise Lost*. We see young children at play and listen as they pause to tell Kozol what heaven must be like. We stand with Reverend Overall on 96th street in Manhattan. Looking downtown toward mainly white Manhattan we see incredible opulence; gazing toward the black and Hispanic residents at 97th street and above we see immense poverty. Throughout the book we hear the observations of these people as they live their lives. We listen as their own interpretations of that life continue to evolve. Sprinkled amidst these sustained conversations are one-time discussions with others who dwell in Mott Haven. This book as a whole offers us a very different view of this part of the world than that which we are normally fed by the media, politicians, and long-standing prejudice. We are allowed to glimpse the lives of complex people who are doing what they can to survive graciously in an impossible situation. During his conversations, Kozol repeats the observations which “experts” have made about the poor to the people of Mott Haven themselves. Statements that had seemed cool and innocuous enough when spoken at a safe distance outside of the ghetto are revealed in all their absurdity when repeated in the presence of the complicated, hard reality itself. And Kozol offers us some tough observations about his own community. At one point he states,

Many of my white friends who live in New York City, I believe, would...insist that they are personally “imposing” nothing on the people we have met within this book. They might say that they have simply come to New York City, found a job, and found a home, and settled in to lead their lives within the city as it is. That is the great luxury of long-existing and accepted segregation in New York and almost every other major city of our nation nowadays. Nothing needs to be imposed on anyone. The evil is already set in stone. We just move in. (164)

This book is powerful, moving, and troubling. Kozol introduces us to the complexity of our contemporary situation by introducing us to the poor yet grace-filled people of Mott Haven. He offers us no quick fixes to the quandaries which the conversations raise. The book gives us a broad context within which we, stripped of the safety of mere abstractions, can hear the scriptural words about the poor. Of course, the troubling thing about the book is that not only are the poor concretely known, but also we become aware of who the rich are. Kozol invites us to know



ourselves as we have been known by particular others. This book gives no easy answers about racism, violence, drugs, wealth, or poverty. Rather, *Amazing Grace* leads us to ask some of the right questions and that is a very good beginning. For those ready to experience a troubling in their souls, this book will be worth engaging. For through its pages, not only Mrs. Washington, but God, is asking us, “Does America like its children?”

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