strong and timely emphasis that it is worship, rather than missions, which is the ultimate goal of the Church. The second chapter is on prayer, which is described as 'primarily a wartime walkie-talkie for the mission of the Church as it advances against the powers of darkness and unbelief'. Then in case we think of mission simply in terms of success, a third chapter underlines the importance of sacrifice, loss and suffering in the work of missions, as demonstrated in the lives of people like Raymond Lull, Henry Martyn, David Brainerd, Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Richard Wurmbrand.

In Part Two, 'The necessity and nature of the task', the major questions to be tackled include: Must people hear the Gospel of Jesus Christ in order to be saved? Is Jesus the only way to salvation? Will anyone experience eternal conscious torment under God's wrath? Piper argues strongly for a 'hell of eternal conscious torment', rejecting the position adopted by Clark Pinnock and John Stott, although he is gracious enough to quote in his footnotes a personal letter in which Stott pleads that his position has been misrepresented by Piper. He concludes that 'the contemporary abandonment of the universal necessity of hearing the Gospel for salvation does indeed cut a nerve in missionary education'. The following chapter explores the Great Commission of Matthew 28, addressing in particular the question: 'Is it Biblical to define the missionary task of the Church as reaching all the unreached *peoples* of the world or is it sufficient to say that missions is simply the effort to reach as many individuals as possible in places different from our own?' He concludes that 'the focus of the command is the discipling of all the people groups of the world'.

While I have found this book very challenging and refreshingly different from many of the other books on Mission that I read these days, I have to admit to some unease which revolves around the following three areas:

1. The emphasis is entirely on us and our (Western) churches sending missionaries overseas. There is hardly a hint that Churches are already established in most countries of the world. So, for example, we are given a vision of 'millions of "retired" people . . . engaged at all levels of intensity in hundreds of assignments around the world'. At this point I begin to appreciate all the more why the Mission I work with places so much emphasis on the concept of 'partnership'.

2. There is hardly anything about the content in which the task of Mission is to be carried out all over the world today. I can't remember any references to poverty and injustice. There's nothing about Third World debt, the arms trade, tribalism, corruption or any of the other issues that I would have expected to arouse some kind of prophetic (and missionary) indignation.

3. Many of the missionaries I know who have been sent out by western 'Missions' find themselves sooner or later wrestling with questions about the relationship between the Gospel and Culture, and with the huge theological and missiological questions about Other Faiths. Do the missionaries sent out by American Churches not share anything about these questions with pastors and churches at home? There is little of these dilemmas suggested in the book.

These reservations are largely to do with context. I can't help feeling that this book, with all its fire and passion represents a view of World Mission *from the perspective of a pulpit of a thriving Church in a huge American city.* But who am I to talk, when I am just as culture-bound as anyone else?

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Life's Dominion: An Argument about Abortion and Euthanasia
Ronald Dworkin
London: HarperCollins, 1995, 272 pp., £7.99, pb, ISBN 0 00 686309 4

RÉSUMÉ

Cet ouvrage est un effort louable pour stimuler une discussion profitable sur l'éthique de l'avortement et de l'euthanasie. L'auteur rejette la thèse du droit à la vie comme peu judicieuse et trop susceptible de polariser le débat. A la place, il met en avant une conception séculière du caractère sacré de la vie humaine. Il espère qu'une base commune pourra ainsi être trouvée, pour les conservateurs et les libéraux qui s'accorderont sur l'importance du caractere sacré de la vie. Le livre comporte trois sections: le développement de la notion du sacré, son application à la controverse sur l'avortement aux Etats Unis et ses implications quant aux décisions relatives à la fin de la vie. Malgré ses opinions tant soit peu discutables, cet ouvrage bien écrit et bien informé est un point de départ

utile pour examiner les problèmes moraux et politique difficiles qui se posent à propos de l'avortement et de l'euthanasie.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Das vorliegende Werk ist eine lobenswerte Bemühung, eine fruchtbare Diskussion über Ethik der Abtreibung und Euthanasie zu erleichtern. Der Autor weist das 'Recht auf Leben-Argument' als verfehlt und polarisierend zurück und stellt statt dessen eine säkulare Konzeption der Heiligkeit des menschlichen Lebens vor. Seine Hoffnung ist, daß auf diese Weise eine gemeinsame Basis erreicht werden kann, indem sowohl Konservative als auch Liberale der Bedeutsamkeit der Unverletzlichkeit des Lebens zustimmen. Das Buch gliedert sich in drei Teile: die Entwicklung der Idee des Heiligen, ihre Anwendung auf die Abtreibungskontroverse in den Vereinigten Staaten, und ihre Relevanz für Entscheidungen bezüglich des Lebensendes. Ungeachtet der zum Teil fragwürdigen Voraussetzungen, stellt dieses gut geschriebene und umfassend dokomentierte Buch einen hilfreichen Ausgangspunkt dar, die mit Abtreibung und Euthanasie verbundenen moralischen und politischen Probleme, die sich häufig einer Behandlung zu entziehen scheinen, zu untersuchen.

Further confirming his transatlantic status as an innovative thinker capable of bridging the disciplines of law, philosophy and politics, Ronald Dworkin has produced a pioneering work of great stature. Arguably, *Life's Dominion* is the first attempt by a contemporary thinker of this calibre to address thoroughly the twin conundrums of abortion and euthanasia from a rigorously academic and yet eminently readable cross-disciplinary perspective. Its billing inside the cover jacket as an entirely new basis for thinking about these seemingly intractable socio-political problems is certainly an accurate description of the book's contents.

Dworkin sets the stage for his argument by painting a vivid picture of the abortion controversy which is fracturing American society. Indeed, this initial focus on abortion in the American milieu sets the tone for the rest of the book. In the first two chapters he provides thumbnail sketches of several European countries' legislation on abortion and euthanasia, notably Germany and Ireland; sadly, this sparse treatment of the issues in a European context, to say nothing of the absence of any mention of non-Western nations, makes it rather difficult to embrace fully his claim that his argument and its conclusions are designed to be universally applicable. His operation throughout seems to be centred round finding a solution to the problem plaguing America, which he then believes can be transported neatly to other cultures—an assumption which there may be good reason to challenge.

If it is fair to say that Dworkin is primarily concerned with the American situation, it seems equally fair to say that his central focus is abortion. Roughly four of his introductory twenty-six pages deal with euthanasia directly, and this bias is apparent in the remaining seven chapters, only two of which are concerned chiefly with the end of life. With the practice of euthanasia in the Netherlands and elsewhere on the increase, it is rather disappointing that Dworkin does not address its moral and legal implications in greater depth.

Having shown, however, that the abortion debate is an impenetrable forest of slogans, hyperbole and misunderstanding, Dworkin proceeds to offer his explanation of this deeply divisive conflict. His basic tenet is that the anti-abortion politicians and public are fundamentally confused in their objection to it. While they march under the banners of 'right to life' and 'abortion is murder', what they are really up in arms about, says Dworkin, is not rights at all but the violation of human sanctity. The former position, which he characterises as a derivative objection to abortion, relies upon the existence of fetal rights and interests; the latter, detached objection does not depend on rights or interests at all but rather on life's sacredness.

At this point it seems that Dworkin is on the threshold of the realm of theology, a suspicion which he quickly dispels by defining 'sacred' in completely areligious terms as that which is intrinsically valuable, or having value apart from utility. Indeed, this development of the concept of sacredness is so vital to his argument that Dworkin spends the entirety of his third chapter on its elucidation. He likens the intrinsic value of a human life to that of a great painting, one which is protected and respected because it is aesthetically superior and one whose destruction would be a great desecration even if quality reproduction of it were available for public enjoyment.

The status of sacredness is attained in one of two ways, according to Dworkin. Firstly, something may become sacred by virtue of its association with values which are already

sacred. For instance, the Christian Church contends that human life is sacred because humans are created in the image of God; by virtue of this connection with God, they become intrinsically valuable. Secondly, something can be sacred because of its history of existence. Things which are the product of either nature's or humanity's creativity are invested with this exalted value as well.

It is this second, secular force of sacredness which Dworkin makes the centrepiece of his ethic. For him, to destroy a human life through abortion is to disregard not only the creative evolutionary processes that produce new lives from old ones, but also to take no account of the deliberative human creative force which brought together the genetic components of the fetus. Given this apparently strong sanctity-of-life stance, it is perhaps surprising to encounter Dworkin's conclusion that abortion ought to remain a matter of personal conscience rather than public legislation. He insists that respect for a life's sacred status must be translated into a primary concern for one's own self-respect. That dignity, which he argues is threatened by government restrictions of personal freedom, must be preserved at all costs. While we may wish that others shared our views about abortion or euthanasia, we must allow them to make their own choices and exercise their own dignity-bestowing freedom. In the end, Dworkin maintains, a government is obliged to guarantee the right to freedom of conscience about these matters to its citizens.

Throughout the book Dworkin is guilty of a plethora of assumptions. He assumes in turn that euthanasia will be motivated by kindness, that humans are not necessarily persons (an all too familiar functionalist approach), that fetuses cannot have interests or rights, that nearly everyone in the pro-life camp shares the detached rather than derivative objection to abortion. In his eagerness to reconcile the irreconcilable, Dworkin perhaps has overextended himself with the result of skating over some quite real criticisms of many of his views. There is much here of which to be sceptical, and there is certainly plenty of fertile ground for engaging with his conception of the sacred.

The work is divided into three sections. Following his introductory characterisation of the abortion dispute as intractable and resting on a confusion of detached and derivative objections, Dworkin proceeds to construct an alternative account of the controversy, one phrased in terms of sacredness rather than the right to life. With this tool in hand he dissects the American Supreme Court case *Roe v Wade*, delving deeply into issues of constitutional interpretation along the way. Having defended the Court's decision for women's freedom of choice as a necessary corollary of First Amendment freedom of religion, he addresses in the final two chapters what this personal freedom means at the other end of life. Death, he argues, should be an affirmation of human dignity and hence a matter for the dying individual in question to decide for himself.

Despite its problematic assumptions, proportionally scant treatment of euthanasia, and cultural preoccupation with the American socio-political scene, this work is a major step toward a fresh debate about life and death decisions, developing as it does a new language of sanctity and dignity in which greater numbers of concerned participants may converse. Extensive notes, a helpful index and a highly accessible style make *Life's Dominion* a useful catalyst for generating multi-disciplinary discussion of these issues.

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Sprachliche Stilfiguren der Bibel: Von Assonanz bis Zahlenspruch: Ein Nachschlagewerk

Walter Bühlmann, Karl Scherer

TVG Monographien und Studienbücher 385, 2. Aufl., Gießen: Brunnen, 1994; 125 S., DM 23.-, broschiert, ISBN 3–7655–9385–0

SUMMARY

This volume supplies a brief reference-tool for the figures of speech used in biblical language. It provides helpful definitions, (mostly OT) examples and often extensive bibliographical notes on each figure. The booklet is not always helpful on how to interpret a particular figure of speech once it has been identified. Though similar in approach it is much more user-friendly and clear than E. Bullinger's monumental volume.

RÉSUMÉ

Ce livre apporte un bref outil de référence pour les figures de langage utilisées dans la Bible. Il fournit des définitions utiles, des exemples