

*praxisorientierte Anwendungen. Besonders wohltuend ist der Geist der Demut, der das Buch durchzieht.*

The root of the word 'pastor' is found in the Latin for 'herdsman' and is derived from *pascere*—'to feed'. That the tautology 'pastoral care' has become a valid and necessary topic for a book reflects to some degree the distance our present concept of pastorhood has strayed from the original concept. Although mainly addressed to Christians in counselling positions, this book is helpful to anyone wishing to be a 'fruitful, effective, useful Christian' (p xii). The book has two broad sections, Part 1 dealing mainly with the minister, and Part 2 dealing entirely with counselling. In a society increasingly haunted by uncertainty, it is important for the Church to re-examine her position within and in relation to this shepherdless society. Unfortunately, the Church has very often become a mere repository of anxiety, if not adding to this *angst*, for example by apocalyptic preaching devoid of teaching about the Lordship of Christ. The frightened sheep have trampled many shepherds with their demands and criticism, and shepherds have often not been particularly caring towards each other either. Kay and Weaver understand this, both writing from a pastoral background. 'What on earth can the church say to a world that has rejected the concept of truth?', asks Clive Calver in his foreword (p. x). Kay and Weaver offer hope in the form of practical and biblical guidance. Studying this book, one becomes aware of the 'pastorhood' of all believers—in Christ, we are all called to care. Who dares follow the Master?

Every chapter has a similar three-fold structure. Starting off with a bible basis, it moves on to a discussion of the biblical text and context, ending with a set of implications and personal reflections to help the reader apply the texts to his or her present context. A handy list of references at the end of each chapter provides additional avenues for study. Throughout the book, Weaver's illustrations add life to the discussions with their wit, sensitivity and tongue-in-cheekiness.

Part 1 consists of ten chapters, dealing with context, calling, the cost of ministry, the pastoral task, the minister's gifting, personal responsibilities, congregation, youth work and community. To go into detail about the contents of each chapter would needlessly increase the length of this review without doing proper justice to the authors. They show a remarkable and broad insight into the orb of

challenges facing the minister in a pluralistic Western society. Kay's academic record complements Weaver's pastoral experience, by adding researched figures and percentages to an analysis of the situation facing counsellors today.

Part 2 deals with counselling. After discussing approaches in counselling and the practicalities of counselling, this is applied to bereavement, depression, family problems, low self-esteem, marriage difficulties and sexual orientation. While maintaining a biblical basis through-out, the authors draw in a variety of opinions on the topics. Their intention is to give direction to a topic without being dogmatic about systems and structures.

I did at times get the impression that Kay and Weaver optimistically underestimate the complexity of the counselling task, sometimes failing to anticipate possible critical responses to actions proposed by them, but it might just be my own cynical nature interfering with a perfectly good book. Since every chapter could probably be the basis of an entirely new book, this 'short-coming' actually highlights the need for more sensitive thought around the topic of counselling. The field of counselling, often thought to be full of heretical weeds or trampled to dust by 'pagans', still has plenty of food to offer to the flock of a discerning shepherd. The local congregation, ignoring the importance of pastoral care and counselling, effectively cripples any evangelistic interaction it might have with a post-Christian world.

This book is well-designed either for self-study, or study in a group, either by lay people, or by clergy. It reads easily, is well researched and thoroughly bible-based. It is a useful guide to all who take seriously the Shepherd's instruction to Peter: 'Feed my sheep'.

Frank Müller  
George East, South Africa

EuroJTh (2000) 9:1, 86–89

0960-2720

***Word Without End: The Old Testament as Abiding Theological Witness***

**Christopher R. Seitz**

Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge:

Eerdmans, 1998, xi + 355 pp., £18.99, pb., ISBN 0-8028-4322-0

**RÉSUMÉ**

*Cette collection d'essais traite de manière sti-*

*mulante une variété de sujet répartis en trois rubriques: la théologie biblique, l'exégèse et la pratique. L'auteur adopte l'approche canonique de Brevard Childs pour se faire le défenseur d'une lecture de l'Ancien Testament qui se veut chrétienne, et qui prenne au sérieux le canon en le considérant comme Écriture pour l'Eglise chrétienne. Alors que la méthode historico-critique tend à limiter la recherche aux questions historiques, Seitz a le souci de mettre en œuvre une lecture théologique de l'Ancien Testament qui n'accorde à cette méthode qu'une place préparatoire.*

*Cet ouvrage apporte une contribution importante au débat sur l'avenir de l'étude spécialisée de la Bible. Il préparera peut-être la voie pour que l'enseignement théologique de l'Ancien Testament soit à nouveau entendu. Cependant, on peut se demander jusqu'où une lecture théologique de l'Ancien Testament peut profiter de l'héritage de la méthode historico-critique.*

## ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

*Bei Seitzes Word without End handelt es sich um eine zu weiterem Nachdenken anregende Sammlung von Essays, die sich unter den Überschriften 'Biblische Theologie', 'Exegese' und 'Praxis' mit einer ganzen Reihe von Themen beschäftigen. Seitz, der Childs' kanonischen Ansatz zustimmend aufnimmt, vertritt eine Auseinandersetzung mit dem Alten Testament, die bewusst und ungeniert christlich geprägt ist und die vom Kanon als der Schrift der christlichen Kirche ausgeht. Seitz nimmt vor allem an der unermüdlichen historisch-kritischen Beschäftigung mit ausnahmslos historischen Fragen Anstoß und ruft stattdessen zu einer theologischen Auseinandersetzung mit dem Alten Testament auf, die der historisch-kritischen Forschung lediglich eine vorbereitende Funktion zugesteht.*

*Das Buch, bei dem es sich um einen wichtigen Beitrag zur Debatte um den zukünftigen Kurs der bibelwissenschaftlichen Forschung handelt, ist darum bemüht, den Weg zu einem erneuten Hören des bleibenden Zeugnisses des Alten Testaments zu ebnen. Man fragt sich jedoch, inwieweit der Ruf nach einer theologischen Interpretation des Alten Testaments dazu beitragen kann, mit dem Erbe der historisch-kritischen Forschung zurechtzukommen.*

Seitz's *Word Without End* is a collection of twenty-two essays grouped under the three headings of 'biblical theology', 'exegesis' and 'practice'. What at first appears to be a random

assortment of largely unconnected articles turns out to be held together by Seitz's controlling concern to render the Old Testament theologically relevant for today's church. To those familiar with his earlier writings, Seitz's espousal of Childs' canonical approach will come as no surprise. This 'canonical perspective' is one of the book's characteristic features that informs not only the programmatic pieces in the biblical theology section, but also Seitz's exegetical work as well as his engagement with theological and ethical issues facing the church today.

*Biblical theology.* The nine essays comprising the first major part of the book cover a variety of topics, such as election and revelation (or 'disclosure', as Seitz prefers to call it), the legacy of Gerhard von Rad and the quest for the 'Historical Jesus'. Seitz also ponders the appropriate term for the first three quarters of the Christian Bible ('Old Testament' or 'Hebrew Bible') and discusses the use of the so-called 'three-legged stool', i.e. the Anglican principle of Scripture, reason and tradition, in the 'Baltimore Declaration'.

In 'The Changing Face of Old Testament Studies', Seitz reflects on the possibility of theological readings of the Old Testament in the post-Biblical-Theology-Movement era, which is troubled in particular by 'the lack of a clear and persuasive understanding of the role of "the author" and of intentionality' (p. 80). Pondering the likely impact of Childs' *Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments*, which Seitz fears will turn out to be limited, he urges that Childs' voice be kept 'at the center of the discussion' (p. 109).

*Exegesis.* In the second part, Seitz focuses primarily on the book of Isaiah, addressing issues, such as the quest for the author(s) and the unity of the book, the logic of Isaiah 40–66 within the book as a whole and the role of the reader in reading biblical texts. Seitz's 'canonical perspective' is manifest throughout, yet it can be seen at work most clearly in the articles dealing with the issue of suffering in Isaiah and Lamentations, the royal promises in Isaiah and the Psalms as well as in the essay looking at Isaiah in the New Testament, the lectionary and the pulpit.

Shifting his attention from Isaiah to the call of Moses and the 'revelation' of the divine name in Exod. 3 and 6, Seitz presents a reading that challenges traditional source-critical interpretations of the two narratives (without however denying levels of tradition in principle).

*Practice.* The majority of the essays

grouped under this heading deal with contemporary issues that have caused a fair amount of controversy in today's church. This is true in particular for the question of homosexuality to which Seitz devotes two chapters. He argues that a Christian church guided by the authority of Scripture cannot condone homosexuality, as this is seen to be against 'Scripture's plain sense' (p. 333). In two articles that focus on much less controversial topics, Seitz looks at 'The City in Christian Scripture' and at 'The Lectionary as Theological Construction', calling, in the latter, for a new lectionary that seizes on the opportunity for rejuvenating interest in the Bible, and that does so by presenting a carefully worked-out biblical theology.

Finally, commenting on the current inclusive language debate, Seitz stresses that the use of masculine language for addressing God does not imply that God is thereby construed in male terms. Pointing out that earlier generations of readers, which were much more biblically literate than the modern churchgoer, understood that God is above human sexuality, Seitz argues that the present discussion is largely the result of a lack of reader competence. Thus, instead of attempting to sanitise and correct the Bible from the outside, which is a dangerous exercise open to all sorts of ideological interventions (cf. e.g. the Nazis' efforts at turning the Jesus of the New Testament into a non-Jewish Jesus by eliminating what was deemed to be repulsive), Seitz urges us to become competent readers. Competent readers, that is, 'of a scripture whose intention is not only to include [even by what "incompetent readers" might regard as non-inclusive language], but to address and judge and cleanse and save' (p. 299).

Throughout his work, Seitz adopts an approach that is self-consciously and unashamedly Christian, and that treats the biblical canon as Christian Scripture. For Seitz, this means, among other things, that what is needed today is a theological reading of the Bible that overcomes the historical-critical tendency to reduce the interpretive exercise to a purely historical enquiry. Commenting furthermore on competing calls for either a hermeneutic of suspicion or one of assent, Seitz talks about 'a hermeneutic of estrangement overcome' (pp. 41ff.) emphasising that it is only by God's grace that we, as Christians, have been entrusted with 'God's oracles' at all. Thus, it is not for us to judge whether we prefer to hear God's word in assent or suspicion. It is Scripture that judges us, not *vice versa*.

This is a stimulating and thought-provoking collection of essays by someone who passionately believes that the abiding theological witness of the Old Testament deserves, indeed, needs to be heard in the Christian church of our day. Seitz's book too, one is inclined to add, deserves a wide readership, and if only to spark further reflection on the issues he has raised. To sum up his contribution to biblical scholarship, Seitz offers programmatic proposals for the future direction of Old Testament studies, stimulating exegesis and engagingly written communiqués on a range of contemporary questions.

As space does not permit any in-depth interaction with Seitz's wide-ranging contributions, I want to end this review by simply pointing out one area where I believe more work needs to be done. Thus, while I sympathise with Seitz's desire to encourage theological readings of the Old Testament that do not get stuck in the muddy grounds of history, I fear that his work does not really help us come to terms with the legacy of historical criticism. This, however, seems to me precisely what is needed at a time when we witness not only a staggering variety of approaches, but—and this I believe is the real problem—also a breakdown of communication resulting in a situation where 'everybody does what is right in their own eyes'.

On the whole, Seitz does not appear to be too keen on historical-critical work, which in his estimate 'plays no positive theological role whatsoever' (p. 97), although he does grant historical criticism a role as a necessary preliminary to theological interpretation. In the light of the severe criticisms levelled against the approach on literary, theological and philosophical grounds, one wonders, however, whether it is adequate for a canonical approach somehow to seek to supplement the traditional methods of source, form, tradition and redaction criticism.

To be sure, in his own exegesis, Seitz occasionally does more than that (for instance, in his interpretation of Exod. 3 and 6, which, as we have already seen above, challenges traditional source-critical readings). Yet what is missing, especially in the programmatic essays in the first part of his book, is a sustained critique that engages the literary-critical, theological and philosophical presuppositions at work in the traditional historical-critical enterprise. Thus, to raise just one question that comes to mind, can we really be sure that the historical-critical methods are not wrong, but have only been put to wrong use (cf. p. 102

where Seitz notes that this was Childs' starting point)?

To sum up my reservations, if the goal is to transform Old Testament studies, then the call for a theological approach that takes the canon seriously treating it as Christian Scripture, important though this is, may not be enough. Let me point out, however, that this criticism should not deter anyone from reading what, I repeat, is a stimulating and thought-provoking collection of essays that deserves to be widely read.

Karl Möller  
Cheltenham, England

EuroJTh (2000) 9:1, 89

0960-2720

### ***The Servant King: The Bible's Portrait of the Messiah***

**T. Desmond Alexander**

Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1998, 171 pp., £5.99, pb., ISBN 0-85111-575-6

#### **RÉSUMÉ**

*L'auteur montre comment s'élabore progressivement, à travers toute la Bible, le portrait du Messie. Ce livre nourrira la contemplation privée ou pourra servir de base à des groupes d'études bibliques. Mais il lui manque des principes herméneutiques clairs qui pourraient aider le lecteur à bien appréhender la relation entre les deux Testaments et le caractère historique des textes bibliques.*

#### **ZUSAMMENFASSUNG**

*Alexander skizziert in seiner gesamtbiblischen Studie das sich nach und nach entfaltende biblische Portrait des Messias. Das Buch eignet sich für das persönliche Bibelstudium bzw. für die Verwendung in Bibelkreisen; ihm fehlen jedoch hermeneutische Hinweise, die den Lesern helfen würden, das Verhältnis der beiden Testamente zueinander sowie die historische Dimension der biblischen Texte angemessen zu würdigen.*

Stressing the centrality of the concept of the Messiah as the unifying theme for both the Old and the New Testament, Alexander outlines its gradual emergence throughout the biblical corpus. Aimed at a general church readership, Alexander's sketch of the Bible's portrait of the Messiah consists of twenty short chapters, each of which is framed by brief summaries and conclusions designed to guide the reader

along. There are also questions for reflection and discussion at the end of each chapter, which make the book a useful tool for private contemplation or for the use in small Bible study groups. A 'further reading list' comes to the aid of those who want to delve deeper.

Alexander's little guide to the Bible's portrait of the Messiah is needed in a Church that is increasingly biblically illiterate, and that struggles to make sense of the Old Testament in particular. While providing a Christian reading of the texts that interprets the Old Testament through the lenses supplied by the New, Alexander is sensitive to the fact that the concept of the Messiah emerged and developed gradually. Yet it is in relation to this point that I have a quibble, for I suspect that readers devoid of Alexander's sensitivity and knowledge will be unlikely to do justice to the texts' historical dimensions. What is lacking in Alexander's treatment is some kind of explicit hermeneutical guidance, perhaps in the form of an additional chapter that explains the relationship between the Testaments, and that alerts readers to the historical dimension of the biblical witness(es).

Karl Möller  
Cheltenham, England

EuroJTh (2000) 9:1, 89-91

0960-2720

### ***Isaiah III/2 (Isaiah 49-55)***

**Jan L. Koole**

Historical Commentary on the Old Testament; Leuven: Peeters, 1998, xxv + 454 pp.; ISBN 90-429-0679-0; no price

#### **RÉSUMÉ**

*Ce volume appartient à une série qui prend au sérieux le contexte historique des textes bibliques et veut en tenir compte dans l'élaboration d'une théologie chrétienne. On y trouve une nouvelle traduction du texte, et une exégèse très complète embrassant des questions de philologie, d'histoire de l'interprétation, et la préoccupation pour le sens théologique du texte, en particulier dans son rapport avec le Nouveau Testament. Son ampleur dépasse celle de bien des commentaires existants. L'interprétation théologique se situe en gros dans la ligne réformée. La proclamation du salut à toutes les nations par le Serviteur naît de sa mission envers Israël et la prolonge. La question de l'identité du Serviteur reçoit un traitement méticuleux et est comprise à la lumière de la mis-*