

sides, presenting a helpful, irenic synthesis in this area. I find his critique of the tone of the reformed debate and critique of the charges against Wright beneficial and well timed. The bibliography reflects his balanced position where he topically presents central works both for and against the NPP. One typographical error of note within the bibliography is that Kevin Bush not Kevin Bywater is the webmaster of the NT Wright Page (<http://www.ntwrightpage.com>) (211).

Four of the seven main chapters – chapters three, four, five, and six – have been previously published in evangelical journals over the last several years. These republished chapters contain, I think, his most insightful work of the book, so it is beneficial to have them all in one place and set within a larger setting. However, this book does not suffer from the disjunction that collections of previously published essays sometimes do.

Bird has taken on the difficult task of presenting a nuanced position over against those who see issues as one-sided. This is especially helpful coming from one who is firmly within the reformed camp. However, this monograph is more important than just another discussion of NPP debates. It provides an insightful synthesis regarding Paul's understanding of justification, as his perceptive discussions of resurrection and incorporation show.

Benjamin C. Blackwell, Durham, England

Paul and His World:

Interpreting the New Testament in Its Context

Helmut Koester

Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2007, xi + 301 pp.,
– 19.44, hb, ISBN 978-0-8006-3890-0

SUMMARY

Helmut Koester has dedicated his life to the study of the New Testament world. This collection, made up of over two dozen essays derived from research that spans nearly half a century, walks the reader through his life's work. Koester is most impressive when he is dealing with issues of methodology and the appropriate use of tools and materials that are often utilised by NT scholars – particularly textual criticism, epistolography and archaeology. Additionally, he takes interest in the sociological and political aspects of the NT writings. Although occasionally an argument or theory of his is found wanting or misguided, we are in his debt for this excellent volume with much wisdom inside.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Helmut Koester hat sein Leben dem Studium der Welt des Neuen Testaments gewidmet. Diese Sammlung, die aus mehr als zwei Dutzend Aufsätzen aus einer Spanne von fast einem halben Jahrhundert besteht, führt den Leser durch sein Lebenswerk. Koester ist am beeindruckendsten, wenn es um Fragen der Methodologie und des angemessenen Gebrauchs von Werkzeugen und Materialien geht,

die oft von Neutestamentlern benutzt werden – insbesondere Textkritik, Epistelverfassung und Archäologie. Zusätzlich ist er an den soziologischen und politischen Aspekten der neutestamentlichen Schriften interessiert. Obwohl zum Teil eine seiner Argumentationen oder Theorien unzulänglich oder irregeleitet erscheint, stehen wir für diesen exzellenten Band, der viel Weisheit enthält, in seiner Schuld.

RÉSUMÉ

Helmut Koester a consacré sa vie à l'étude du monde dans lequel est né le Nouveau Testament. Cet ouvrage reprend plus de deux douzaines d'articles qui proviennent de près d'un demi siècle de recherche et donnent un aperçu de l'œuvre d'une vie. Koester est à son meilleur lorsqu'il traite des questions de méthodologie, de l'usage approprié des outils et documents sur lesquels les spécialistes du Nouveau Testament prennent souvent appui, notamment la critique textuelle, la rhétorique épistolaire et l'archéologie. En outre, il s'intéresse aux aspects sociologiques et politiques des textes du Nouveau Testament. Bien qu'on rencontre à l'occasion chez cet auteur un argument déficient ou une théorie erronée, on doit saluer ici un ouvrage excellent offrant beaucoup de sagesse.

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This collection of essays by New Testament scholar Helmut Koester, of Harvard Divinity School, is remarkable in many ways. First of all, the various journal articles and endowed lectures from which the chapters are derived span over half of a century. Second, Koester's interests and expertise are manifold and include epistolography, archaeology, classics, textual criticism, pauline theology, and early Christianity. The chapters are broken down into three main sections: 'Reading Paul: His Letters and Their Interpretation', 'Reading Paul's World: The Cultural and Religious Environment', and 'Reading Early Christianity'. The first section (on Paul) is made up of nine essays and is almost entirely dominated by discussions of the Thessalonian epistles. He demonstrates such hermeneutical acumen and methodological shrewdness that his forthcoming commentary on these letters (for the Hermeneia series) is eagerly anticipated. In chapter five he exposes the numerous errors and conclusions made by New Testament scholars who misuse/misunderstand ostensibly relevant archaeological materials. In particular, he makes a case out of Robert Jewett's 'chilastic movement' theory (based on materials about the Kabiroi) in Thessaloniki and demonstrates that Jewett works from too little evidence which often is *later* than Paul's time and/or *outside* of Thessaloniki. Koester, time and time again, pleads for methodological acuity and eschews exaggeration or *non sequiter* conclusions. However, one wonders if he does not commit the same fallacy in his hypothesis (in chapter seven) that the book of Philippians is a compilation of three authentically pauline letter fragments that were edited together into its canonical form as a 'testimony' to the Apostle's death – a death Koester thinks may have actually taken

place in Philippi (77)?

One distinctive aspect of Koester's theological work is an interest in the social and political dimensions of Christianity – both at Paul's time and its implications for today. He admits that K. Stendahl's contra-Bultmannian approach has been very influential in his thinking on the impact of the gospel on the community. In the first essay of the book, 'Paul's Proclamation of God's Justice to the Nations' (first appearing in print in 2004), Koester repeatedly asserts that Paul's language of 'righteousness' should not be related primarily to 'piety and morality' (4) at the individual or existential level, but was intended to 'create righteousness and justice for people, for communities, and for nations' (8) – 'the building of the community of the new age' (11). Though a sociological focus aligns with other pauline scholars, Koester makes the mistake of drawing Paul's community boundaries so wide that the only criteria for inclusion is mutual love, respect and reciprocal servitude (13-14). This appears to gloss over some of the more weighty ethical injunctions (Gal. 5.19-21; 1 Cor. 6.9-10) in Paul and the seriousness of adherence to particular theological beliefs (1 Cor. 12.2-3). At the very least, though, Koester is right to emphasise that Paul frequently used political terms to (re-)describe theological realities offering a 'story of salvation' and testimony to a 'political vision of a new ecumenical community' (233). One wonders, though, precisely what Koester means by 'ecumenical'.

The reader will find the final essay most interesting as it is Koester's personal reflections on his academic journey beginning with his interest in training to become a Lutheran ministry following his release from an American POW camp in Marburg (1945) to his doctoral tutelage under Bultmann, to his research post at Heidelberg with Bornkamm, to his current post at Harvard. As Koester finishes his recollections, he notes that he has come a long way from his early intensive interest in 'demythologizing' the NT to his most worthwhile contributions – 'bringing archaeologists and students of early Christianity together' (289). This collection of over twenty essays is a demonstration of Koester's lifelong dedication to the field of New Testament scholarship and is loaded with numerous insights that will aid those who wish to understand Paul and his world better.

Nijay K. Gupta, Durham, England

***Paul and Conflict Resolution:
An Exegetical Study of Paul's Apostolic Paradigm
in 1 Corinthians 9***
(Paternoster Biblical Monographs)

Robinson Butarbutar

Milton Keynes, England: Paternoster, 2007, xviii + 275 pp., £19.99, pb, ISBN 1-84227-315-9

SUMMARY

The author aims to reconstruct the dispute over idol-food in Corinth and to interpret the function of Paul's defense in 1 Cor 9 within the larger context of 8.1-11.1. He argues that the dispute was provoked by the development of disproportionate societal boundaries, which were especially difficult to maintain in Corinth because of the pressure of the Imperial Cult. Set within this dispute, Paul's defense is integral to the coherence of 8.1-11.1 and primarily served as a pattern of self-denial to be imitated and applied in the existing Corinthian dispute. He also demonstrates that Paul's paradigm maintains the potential today for disassembling conflict in the contemporary church.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Der Autor beabsichtigt, den Disput über Götzenopferfleisch in Korinth zu rekonstruieren und die Funktion der Verteidigung des Paulus in 1. Kor. 9 innerhalb des größeren Zusammenhanges von 8,1-11,1 zu interpretieren. Er argumentiert, dass der Disput durch die Entwicklung unverhältnismäßiger sozialer Grenzen provoziert wurde, die wegen des Drucks des imperialen Kultes in Korinth besonders schwer aufrecht zu erhalten waren. In diesen Disput eingeordnet ist Paulus' Verteidigung ein integraler Bestandteil der Kohärenz von 8,1-11,1 und dient primär als Beispiel der Selbstverleugnung, das im existierenden korinthischen Disput imitiert und angewendet werden sollte. Der Autor zeigt auch, dass Paulus' Paradigma immer noch das Potential hat, heute Konflikte in der gegenwärtigen Kirche auseinanderzuidividieren.

RÉSUMÉ

L'auteur tente de déterminer les circonstances et le contenu de la controverse sur les viandes sacrifiées aux idoles à Corinthe et s'interroge sur la fonction du chapitre 9 de la première épître, où Paul défend son ministère, dans son contexte discursif. Il considère que la controverse avait surgi à cause de l'émergence de barrières sociales disproportionnées que l'on avait du mal à maintenir à Corinthe suite aux pressions résultant de la propagation du culte de l'empereur. Dans ce cadre, la défense de l'apostolat paulinien fait partie intégrante du développement de 1 Corinthiens 8.1-11.1 : il sert essentiellement à donner un modèle de renoncement à soi que Paul invite ses lecteurs à imiter dans leur manière de gérer le conflit existant. L'auteur montre aussi que ce texte offre une voie d'approche capable de désamorcer les conflits au sein de l'Église aujourd'hui.

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This volume is the author's revised doctoral thesis com-