

work. Of course, the choice of figures and texts and the character of their exposition itself constitutes a series of analytical-historiographical judgments about what is really going on in the course of this intellectual history. Such judgments can be read off, for example, Wilson's decision to relate this history without reference to contemporary developments in Roman Catholic theology, as well as his reticence regarding the resurgence of confessional Lutheranism in the early 20th c. (Holl, Elert, Althaus). They are also decisively displayed in the prominence Wilson gives to philosophical – and even more narrowly epistemic – matters in the story of modern theology, rather than, for instance, to developments in biblical scholarship, the social sciences, or the rapidly shifting socio-cultural circumstances of the churches and academies of Germany and America. Readers of these fine expositions would have been greatly aided by provision of a direct and extended account of the historiographical principles with which the author has worked in connecting them all together.

Philip G. Ziegler

Identity, Ethics, and Ethos in the New Testament
(Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche
Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche
141)

Jan van der Watt (editor)

Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2006, 645 pp., €148, hard-
cover, ISBN 978-3-11-018973-5

SUMMARY

This collection of essays connects the field of ethics with that of 'ethos' and 'identity'. Personal and social identity is recognized here as the basis and motivation for ethics. Ethos involves those concrete actions that define a particular community based on their ethics. A noteworthy element of this volume is its scope – every book of the New Testament is treated (except Jude). Although the collection is weak in the area of clearly defining its methodology for analyzing identity and ethos, it is a sign of the times that scholarship must recognize the interconnectedness of 'theology' and 'ethics' in the NT. This book paves the way for more work on the significance of identity formation in the NT documents.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Im Versuch, einen nuancierteren Ansatz im Bereich neutestamentlicher Ethik zu bieten, verbindet diese Artikelsammlung das Gebiet der Ethik mit dem von „Ethos“ und „Identität“. Persönliche und soziale Identität werden hier als Grundlage und Motivation für Ethik anerkannt. Ethos beinhaltet diejenigen konkreten Handlungen, die eine bestimmte Gemeinschaft auf der Grundlage ihrer Ethik definieren. Ein bemerkenswertes Element dieses Bandes ist die Bandbreite – jedes Buch des Neuen Testaments wird abgedeckt (außer Judas). Auch wenn die Sammlung

im Blick auf die klare Definition der Methodologie schwächelt, mit der Identität und Ethos analysiert werden, so ist es doch ein Zeichen der Zeit, dass die Wissenschaft die gegenseitige Verbundenheit von „Theologie“ und „Ethik“ im NT anerkennen muss. Dieses Buch bereitet den Weg für weitere Arbeiten zur Bedeutung von Identitätsbildung in den NT-Dokumenten.

RÉSUMÉ

Cette collection d'articles vise à produire une approche nuancée de l'éthique du Nouveau Testament en abordant ce sujet sous l'angle de l'«ethos» et de l'«identité». La question de l'identité personnelle et sociale est ici considérée comme la base et la motivation de l'éthique. L'ethos comporte les actions concrètes qui déterminent l'identité d'une communauté particulière en fonction de son éthique. L'étendue du champ couvert par cet ouvrage mérite d'être signalée : chaque livre du Nouveau Testament reçoit un traitement (à l'exception de Jude). L'ouvrage pêche par manque d'une méthodologie clairement définie pour analyser l'identité et l'ethos, mais on peut discerner un signe des temps dans la reconnaissance par la recherche académique des liens étroits entre la théologie et l'éthique dans le Nouveau Testament. Ce livre ouvre la voie de la recherche sur l'importance de la formation de l'identité dans les textes du Nouveau Testament.

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The subject of New Testament ethics has seen a flurry of interest in the last couple of decades with contributions from expert scholars such as Richard Hays, Frank Matera, Wayne Meeks, John Barclay, and Brian Rosner. There are a number of reasons for the burgeoning attention from NT scholars. In recent years there have been attempts to integrate further the fragmented and estranged disciplines of theology, ethics, and biblical studies. Also, the weight of modern ethical concerns (the environment, sexual ethics, violence, poverty, etc...) has driven some to turn to the NT for answers. And scholars with an interest in social history or the social-sciences (such as A. Malherbe) have made more recent attempts to compare the social ethics of the Greco-Roman world with that of the earliest Christians.

But studying 'the' ethics of the New Testament has always been tricky business. This presumes (1) that there is *one* primary orientation towards morality in the NT and (2) that it is best described with the term 'ethics'. The modern scholarly consensus is that this approach is misguided regarding both of these. In an attempt to provide a more nuanced approach to the subject, this collection of essays (originally papers from two conference at the University of Pretoria) connects the field of ethics with that of 'ethos' and 'identity'. This method of analysis recognizes that identity 'provides the basis, the motivation for...ethics' (p. 474) and that this is expressed through 'specific, unique, and repetitive actions of a particular group' (= 'ethos', p. v).

This volume is unique in other ways as well. Firstly,

the majority of the scholars are South African which offers a unique (non-American/British) perspective on the subject. But other contributors include Richard Hays (introduction), Cilliers Breytenbach (Gospel of Mark), Michael Wolter (1 Corinthians), Petrus Gräbe (Philippians), Patrick Hartin (James), Ben Witherington III (Colossians) and Hans-Josef Klauck (Hebrews). Some of the scholars working in South Africa include Jan van der Watt (Gospel of John), Gert Steyn (Acts), and Dirk G. van der Merwe (Johannine epistles). A second unique feature of this collection is its scope. In similar kinds of treatments on the New Testament, the canonical Gospels and the letters of Paul are often highlighted to the neglect of other books. However, every book of the New Testament is treated here (except Jude) and 2 Clement is included as a final chapter before the summary.

The first essay, 'Mapping the Field: Approaches to New Testament Ethics' (R. Hays), is one of the strongest chapters with a survey of the how scholars in the past have approached the topic. He divides approaches to NT ethics into five categories: (1) Ethnographic Description of the Social World of the Early Christians (e.g., W. Meeks), (2) Extraction of Ideals or Principles (e.g., R. Niebuhr), (3) Cultural Critique of Ideologies in the New Testament (e.g., E. Schüssler Fiorenza), (4) Character-Formation and 'the Ethics of Reading' (e.g., S. Hauerwas), and (5) Metaphorical Embodiment of Narrative Paradigms (e.g., R. Hays). Hays does not evaluate what approach the essays in this book take, but it would seem that the contributors were aiming at a simple descriptive, exegetical approach with a view towards finding, what van der Watt calls, 'some golden threads that could be identified as running through all the documents' (p. 611).

As often is the case with collections of essays, the quality of the chapters varies considerably. Particularly noteworthy for clarity of thought and original expression are those on the Gospels of Mark and John, Romans, and the Apocalypse of John. As a whole, though, there are some weaknesses in this book. Though there is intentionality in the freedom of each contributor to focus on whatever he may wish regarding ethics, ethos, and identity, it seemed a bit too haphazard. A major contribution to this problem was the lack of research on and representation of what 'identity' is, how it is changed, and how discourse (or rhetoric) affects it. The book, then, would have benefited from some more preliminary work on *why* identity and ethos are important. There is a great deal of research on social identity and the relationship between ethos and identity in social-scientific studies, but this resource seemed to be untapped by the authors of this volume.

These criticisms should not prevent anyone with an interest in NT ethics from reading this book. Its fresh approach and perspective, if a bit inchoate, brings an important contribution to the topic. In the epilogue, van der Watt underscores the significance of such 'golden threads' as the will of God, the example of Christ, and

the aid of the Holy Spirit as recurring elements in the ethical orientation of the New Testament. Hopefully such research will provide a stimulus for more work in NT ethics that considers how ethical behavior is carried out in communal life (i.e., ethos) and the existential and cognitive influences on ethics (i.e., identity).

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Imitating Jesus:

An Inclusive Approach to New Testament Ethics

Richard A. Burridge

Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007 xxii + 490pp.,
£19.99, hb, ISBN 978-0-8028-4453-3

SUMMARY

This book sets out a reconstruction of New Testament ethics grounded in the Jesus of history. It suggests that the genre of the gospels implies that the New Testament as a whole proposes an ethic of imitation of Jesus, and moves from the historical Jesus through the writings of Paul and the gospels, taken in chronological order. It is suggested that the New Testament as a whole points to an inclusive and pastoral ethic subsuming the rigorist teachings of the New Testament.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Dieses Buch legt eine Rekonstruktion der Ethik des Neuen Testaments vor, die im Jesus der Geschichte gründet. Burridge regt an, dass das Genre der Evangelien impliziert, dass das NT als Ganzes eine Ethik der Imitation Jesu vorschlägt. Er geht vom historischen Jesus aus und geht dann in chronologischer Reihenfolge durch die paulinischen Schriften und die Evangelien. Burridge schlägt vor, dass das NT als Ganzes auf eine inklusive und pastorale Ethik hinweist, die die rigoristischen Lehren des NT subsumiert.

RÉSUMÉ

Ce livre vise à une reconstruction de l'éthique du Nouveau Testament en se fondant sur le Jésus de l'histoire. L'auteur considère que le genre littéraire des Évangiles implique que le Nouveau Testament dans son ensemble invite à une éthique de l'imitation de Jésus. Il part du Jésus historique, puis traite des écrits de Paul, puis des Évangiles, en les considérant dans l'ordre chronologique. Il pense que le Nouveau Testament dans son ensemble pointe vers une éthique englobante et pastorale, qui canalise ses enseignements rigoristes.

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Imitating Jesus begins with the important observation that the literature on New Testament ethics rarely focuses on Jesus and his teaching. In this discourse, the ethics of the various New Testament books or writers are the main theme to the detriment of direct reference to Jesus himself. Richard Hays' influential *The Moral Vision of the New Testament* is an obvious exemplar of this, providing