

This book is the mature fruit of many years of research and reflection. It offers a sound attempt to situate Paul's theology within its socio-historical context whilst avoiding reductionism. It is to be especially welcomed for its challenging alternative to the traditional Christian supersessionism that is still very evident in New Testament scholarship and to the two covenant theology that some have embraced. I found Campbell's main proposals to be persuasive.

The book covers a lot of ground but inevitably it raises as many questions – especially exegetical ones – as it answers. One inevitably finds oneself thinking 'But what about texts X, Y and Z?' And even when certain key texts are discussed (and Romans gets the most attention) the discussions are often necessarily brief with footnotes pointing elsewhere for those who want the detail. This is perfectly acceptable given the scope of the book but somewhat frustrating. For those not inclined to accept Campbell's position more will need to be said to win them over. But perhaps that is inevitable for any book that seeks to overturn a powerful paradigm. The book is a fascinating, insightful and important contribution to the current debate.

The model of unity in Christ that Campbell finds in Paul – one that recognizes and affirms group diversity – is exciting and of great relevance for the contemporary Church. As we are now discovering, European ways of following Jesus are not the model for all cultures. In particular the historical Christian belief that Jews who trust in Jesus as Messiah do not *need* to maintain their Jewish identity (or, worse, that they *must* not retain it) finds a strong challenge in this reading of Paul. If Campbell is right, and I think that he is, there is some major rethinking called for on our part.

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Matthew's Messianic Shepherd-King: In Search of 'The Lost Sheep of the House of Israel'

Joel Willitts

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Walter de Gruyter, 2007, xiii + 270 pp., € 99, hb,
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SUMMARY

Willitts argues that the phrase, 'the lost sheep of the house of Israel', only applies to the remnants of the lost ten tribes living in Galilee. In the process Willitts offers fresh readings of the geographical aspects of Matthew and the intent of the mission of Jesus and his disciples in Matthew; they were primarily concerned with shepherding the remnants of the northern tribes, not 'all Israel'. He also mounts a challenge to the usual view that Matthew (among other early Christians) has 'spiritualized' the notion of the Land. This thesis is important for its fresh perspective, if not alto-

gether convincing in its details.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Willitts argumentiert, dass sich die Phrase „die verlorenen Schafe des Hauses Israel“ ausschließlich auf die Reste der verlorenen zehn Stämme bezieht, die in Galiläa lebten. In der Durchführung bietet Willitts ein frisches Verständnis der geographischen Aspekte des Matthäusevangeliums und der Absicht der Mission Jesu und seiner Jünger bei Matthäus an. Sie befassten sich primär mit der Betreuung der Reste der nördlichen Stämme, nicht mit „ganz Israel“. Willitts stellt dazu die übliche Ansicht in Frage, dass Matthäus (unter anderen frühen Christen) die Vorstellung vom Land „spiritualisiert“ hat. Diese Dissertation ist im Blick auf ihre neue Perspektive wichtig, wenn auch nicht in allen Einzelheiten völlig überzeugend.

RÉSUMÉ

La thèse de Willitts, c'est que l'expression « les brebis perdues de la maison d'Israël » ne désigne que les restes des dix tribus perdues résidant en Galilée. Au cours de sa démonstration, il propose une nouvelle approche des données géographiques de l'Évangile de Matthieu ainsi que de l'objectif poursuivi par la mission de Jésus et des apôtres d'après Matthieu : elle concernait principalement les restes des tribus nord-israélites et non pas « tout Israël ». Il conteste aussi le point de vue courant selon lequel Matthieu (ainsi que d'autres chrétiens de l'Église primitive) aurait spiritualisé la conception du pays. Cette thèse est importante par la nouveauté de son apport, sans nous convaincre dans tous ses détails.

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Willitts opens his quest for the identity of 'the lost of sheep of the house of Israel' with a lengthy review of the question, exposing a lacuna he proposes to fill. He finds previous identification of the 'lost sheep' to be suspect and believes the answer to their identity can be found through a study of Davidic, Messianic Shepherd-King expectations in Matthew's milieu and in the text of the Gospel. 'The 'background of a concrete expectation for the restoration of Israel' sheds light on Jesus' mission, and Willitts believes that enough evidence can be adduced to show that the northern kingdom's remnants, members of the 'lost tribes', are Jesus' primary target (p. 31): '[T]he Matthean Jesus' Messianic missional scope in his first appearance was limited geographically to those who were residing in the northern region of the Land.'

In the second chapter Willitts seeks to establish what Matthew and his audience might have understood by the concept of a Messianic-Shepherd king. He explores the concept from the Old Testament through Matthew's contemporaries, including the DSS and *Psalms of Solomon* 17. Perhaps the most important conclusion was the political-national freight, including belief in the restoration of Canaan (to use the historical term) to Israel's possession, carried by the Messianic-Shepherd King concept in the primary sources.

Willitts then proceeds to analyze a variety of citations

in Matthew where the Messianic-Shepherd King motif is employed. He studies in detail Matthew 2:6, 9:36 and 26:31 in chapters three through five. He determines that each passage possesses the shepherd motif and its characteristic elements, including emphasis on a political-national restoration of Israel in a 12-tribe state, as well as a critique of Israel's current political leadership. He summarizes, 'The mission of Jesus as construed by Matthew is focused on the restoration of Israel as a nation-state, particularly the future reconstitution of the twelve-tribe league of political Israel within the ideal Land.' The presence of these features, especially their manifestation in a commitment to Israel's territorial restoration under a Davidic King, leads him to look at the theme of Land in Matthew in some detail (chapter 6), a theme regularly anticipated throughout the earlier chapters. Willitts argues that a strong Land-Kingdom motif appears throughout Matthew. The evidence here includes the geographic interest Matthew evinces at crucial points in his text, the Old Testament territorial background in the various shepherd passages, and (relevant but receiving less focus) passages such as Matthew 5:5 and 19:28. Territorial restoration also encourages him to explore this theme as a key to the question of 'the lost sheep of the house of Israel'. After analysis in the final chapters of the verses and contexts where the phrase appears, he settles on the remnant of the lost northern tribes still living in the confines of 'Ideal Israel' as the answer.

One appreciates the significant emphasis Willitts places on Davidic Messianism and eschatological restoration in Matthew, in fulfillment of Israel's Scriptures. He employs his own version of composition criticism, audience-oriented criticism and genre criticism; none of which over-burden the research. Aesthetically, Willitts makes some of the denser argumentation accessible and attractive with clear charts featuring comparative material. Moreover, the particular topics addressed by Willitts are interesting ones far too often left off the scholarly radar altogether; thus his thesis is more important and more intriguing than the average dissertation. However, I am not entirely persuaded by his thesis. Several issues require comment.

It is certainly possible that Matthew sees Jesus reaching the remnants of the 'lost' northern tribes. Willitts is correct that geography is an important aspect of Matthew's Gospel, too often overlooked in recent literature. There are other possibilities, particularly the socio-cultural, political and narrative option (focused on opposition in Judea and especially Jerusalem) for Matthean geography, resurrected and modified by France in his NICNT commentary only last year (pp. 5-8) and elsewhere. Willitts's thesis is thus all the more timely. France's alternative viewpoint must be weighed as well, although perhaps the views of France and Willitts are not necessarily mutually exclusive. One suspects that lost Judeans, Levites and Benjamites might well count as 'lost sheep', in light of Matthew's analysis of their leadership from Herod to Pilate and the various Jewish leaders

in between. Granted the possibility of an interest in the 'lost tribes', Matthew does not seem to posit a purely 'lost tribes' ministry. Were the latter two tribes not in disarray as well? Why does Matthew bother to include those from 'Jerusalem and Judea' in Jesus' ministry in 4:25? Willitts certainly has the argument on his side that Matthew casts Jesus' ministry in historic geographical terms, including names of tribes, the traditional term 'Canaanite' in Matthew 15, and (probably) the ideal boundaries of the Davidic Kingdom. One must balance this with numerical data, however. If Jesus is sending out *twelve* disciples (a figure Willitts rightly makes much of), does this not imply that they and Jesus are attempting to reach all twelve tribes?

Speaking of the parable of the Weeds in Matthew 13:36-43, Willitts acknowledges a global dimension to the kingdom of YHWH in light of Jesus' own interpretation of the parable (p. 136), but then states at the conclusion of the same paragraph that 'the kingdom to which Jesus is referring and to which he looks forward in hopeful anticipation, is the territorial kingdom of Israel.' I myself cannot see this link; neither the narrator nor Jesus choose to emphasize it. Matthew's primary concern in this parable and elsewhere is for the whole world, the real territory at stake (4:8-10; 6:10; 28:18). Arguably this is true even in Matthew 19:28: focused as it is on the twelve, it also speaks *explicitly* only of 'all things' being restored, not specifically of the political-territorial restoration of Israel (though the latter may very well be implied). Jonathan Pennington's recently published thesis persuasively makes the case that heaven-earth polarity sheds light on the extent of Matthew's focus on the Kingdom. If so, it is an Earth-Kingdom motif that Matthew evinces. Surely it is an overstatement to speak of Matthew's 'keen interest in the geographical/territorial redemption of Israel' (p. 137; Matt 5:5 is a possible exception). Willitts hurts his case by the use of a mistranslation of *Didache* 3:7, which he cites as 'inherit the *Holy Land*' (emphasis his, p. 160); there is no 'holy' in the text.

With Willitts, I look forward to seeing what scholars say as more Jewish and Christian texts are analyzed for their perspective on the land/earth. While Willitts is certainly free to limit investigation to shepherd passages and Jewish literature outside the Old Testament (and thus implicitly the New Testament), relevant NT data certainly begs the question as to what methodology(ies) and which text(s) for comparison provide the best means of weighing Matthew's intention(s). Researchers must take up such methodological and exegetical questions in the future. Would Hebrews and Paul count as (Jewish) texts committed to Davidic messianism, as valuable for the study of Matthew's perspective as *Psalms of Solomon*? With respect to Land, Paul taught the restoration of all creation (Rom 8) and that Abraham was promised not just Canaan, but the whole world (*kosmos*; Rom 4:13). One also finds this *physical* universalization (it should not be termed 'spiritualization') in Abraham's search for a

land/city in Hebrews 11; the object of his search was not Canaan, but New Creation, New Jerusalem and eschatological rest. On this reading, Justin's comments (*Trypho*, 113.3-4) may be a sound reading of the New Testament. A focus on Jewish inheritance of Canaan could distract from the New Testament's explicit interest in Abraham's one family inheriting the world.

Although I am not persuaded (at present) by Willitt's thesis, the critical attention given here is not intended as a dismissal of his thesis, but to indicate its importance for a number of both well-known and neglected themes, and to invite further reflection by Willitts and others. There is a fair bit of sound judgment in this work, and one hopes that Willitts turns his attention and scholar's intuition toward such topics again. I myself will certainly turn to this thesis again, which would be a worthwhile addition to any library concerned with Matthew, Messianism, geographic and territorial concerns in early Judaism and Christianity, and early Christian mission.

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The Question of Providence

Charles M. Wood

Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008, v + 120pp.,

£10.99, pb, ISBN-13: 978-0-664-23255-9

SUMMARY

Charles Wood's book has been written with the author's understanding that the traditional doctrine of providence has not only 'fallen on hard times' but has become irrelevant for a majority of Christians in the Western world. This short work (116 pages) seeks to address why this may be the case. Wood looks again at certain features of the traditional understanding of providence in assessing their accuracy and helpfulness and offers some suggestions which he hopes will re-shape our thinking on the doctrine. His objective in this process is to offer a fresh understanding of what it means for God to work within the world in a way which complements the gospel message and is Trinitarian in nature.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Charles Woods Buch wurde in der Überzeugung des Autors geschrieben, dass die traditionelle Lehre von der „Fürsorge“ Gottes nicht nur „schwere Zeiten erlebt“, sondern für die Mehrheit der Christen in der westlichen Welt irrelevant geworden ist. Die kurze Arbeit (116 Seiten) widmet sich der Frage, warum das wohl der Fall ist. Woods schaut sich zum wiederholten Male bestimmte Merkmale des traditionellen Verständnisses von der Fürsorge Gottes an. Er bewertet die Richtigkeit dieses Verständnisses, fragt, wie hilfreich es ist und bietet einige Vorschläge, von denen er sich eine Neugestaltung unseres Denkens über diese Lehre erhofft. Sein Ziel in diesem Prozess besteht darin, ein frisches Verständnis von dem anzubieten, was es für Gott

bedeutet, innerhalb der Welt auf eine Weise zu wirken, die die Botschaft des Evangeliums ergänzt und von ihrem Wesen her trinitarisch ist.

RÉSUMÉ

Charles Wood aborde le sujet de la providence divine avec l'idée que la doctrine traditionnelle de la providence, non seulement « n'a plus trop la cote », mais a perdu toute pertinence pour une majorité de Chrétiens occidentaux. Dans ce petit ouvrage (116 pages), il réfléchit sur les raisons de cet état de choses. Il reconsidère certains éléments de la doctrine traditionnelle pour en évaluer la justesse et l'apport positif et il offre quelques suggestions dans l'espoir de remodeler notre approche de la doctrine. Il vise à renouveler la compréhension de l'œuvre divine en ce monde d'une manière qui enrichisse le message de l'Évangile en prenant en compte la nature trinitaire de Dieu.

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Charles Wood's overall aim in his short book is to 'contribute to the renewal of reflection on the Christian doctrine of providence' (xii), and he proceeds to do this in a two-fold manner. Firstly, he looks at how this doctrine has historically been expressed. Secondly, he is 'proposing a reorientation of the doctrine around the central Trinitarian and christological commitments of Christian faith and indicating what such a reorientation may involve' (xii), as he is not satisfied with the traditional understanding of the doctrine.

Wood questions whether the historical understanding of providence as expressed in such documents as the Heidelberg Catechism is necessarily the correct Christian view. In answering this question he includes a brief discussion of what doctrine, teaching, faith and confession consist and what particularly makes a Christian doctrine 'Christian'. His key point is it is legitimate and necessary to question whether or not historical Christian doctrine is actually Christian. Wood says, 'The basic affirmations of the Heidelberg Catechism regarding God's providence remain embedded deep within the understanding of a great many Christians. At the same time, fundamental questions have, for many of those same Christians, rendered those affirmations so problematic as to leave them nearly useless' (20). Therefore there is scope to critique the traditional understanding of providence.

Wood proceeds to examine William Sherlock's *A Discourse Concerning the Divine Providence* (1694, Sherlock was an Arminian Anglican) with the aim of providing a clear understanding of the traditional view of providence, and includes a helpful discussion on the use of the term 'providence.' This chapter was for me the strongest of the five chapters because it engaged at the greatest depth with the doctrine of providence. In the final two chapters Wood begins by identifying his position with Barth's critique of the doctrine of providence (76), that historically this doctrine has been lacking what would make it most Christian – a Christological and Trinitarian understanding. Wood believes that the traditional doc-